

## Now for Actions

While you were going through the eight areas some things must have struck you as more important than others. We'd like you to think of a set of traffic lights in front of you. The red light is stopping your personal and business progress, amber is keeping you waiting and green lets you go to wherever you want.

Now list the red things that are stopping progress and need action.



Lined writing area for listing red things.

How would you prefer to take action to turn the red lights to green for go? Our discussions with entrepreneurs suggest the following checklist, but you may have further ideas.

Talk over with a trusted business friend, family member or colleague.

Talk over with a fellow entrepreneur who has dealt with a similar red light.

Attend a short course aimed at dealing with the problem area.

Attend a more general longer-term course.

Undertake an Internet based short course on the problem area.

Obtain advice from a business professional who specialises in the problem area.

Appoint a non-executive director to help deal with the red light.

Read a fact-sheet and checklist on the problem-area.

Join an entrepreneurs club to share ideas and turn the red lights to green.

Create a staff forum to address the red lights as a team.

Share ideas with entrepreneurs using the Internet.

Speak to a Business Link advisor who is knowledgeable about other services in your area.

Another way not listed above.

Now list which of the actions you are going to take to overcome the things stopping progress.



Lined writing area for listing actions to overcome things stopping progress.

Now you have decided the way forward the key thing is to take action. We have an Internet sign-posting system at [www.managementandleadershipcouncil.org/BITE](http://www.managementandleadershipcouncil.org/BITE) that will help with these actions.

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## Business Improvement Tool for Entrepreneurs

“...because I am involved in the business I do not always get enough time to sit down and think about the business. What this does is prompt you to think about things.”

This quote is from one of the entrepreneurs who had just completed the Business Improvement Tool for Entrepreneurs (BITE). They enjoyed the opportunity to sit back for once with a trusted friend or advisor and decide what steps they could take to develop themselves and their business further. What you will get from BITE is entirely personal; you won't receive any formal assessment, feedback or results. The benefit of going through the questions is developing your own way forward. All your answers remain confidential.

## Eight Key Areas

The questions below cover eight key areas that entrepreneurs say are important to success. Do not feel obliged to slavishly answer every part of BITE, if an area or question isn't working for you then move on. For example, the questions in areas 4 and 5, *motivating others* and *delegating to others*, are most appropriate to those entrepreneurs who employ staff.

### 1. Decisions, strategies and setting goals

- Can you smile happily, knowing that the business is achieving the things you set out to achieve with it, or might your smile be hiding some frustration? Why do you feel this way?
- What important decisions did you take in the last year which had a really positive effect on your business? What decisions were less successful? How do you feel about making these tricky, 'need to get it right' decisions?
- Do you have a clear vision and strategy for your business? Who knows about what you want to achieve? Would it help to involve more people in taking important decisions? Why?
- If you wanted to sell your business tomorrow, how ready would you be and could you put a value on it?

**How could you improve your decision making and goal setting capabilities?**

### 2. Creating personal drive

- Is your get up and go still there or has it nearly got up and gone – just how motivated have you felt in the last year? Why do you feel this way?
- What things in the business perk you up and make you really want to make things happen? What things just sap your drive, confidence and willingness to keep pushing the business forward?

**How could you increase your get up and go still further?**

### 3. Communicating with others

- Have you got the 'gift of the gab' or do you find it difficult to communicate with others?
- How well do you communicate with staff, customers and others? Do they buy into your vision and are they inspired to think the world of you and your business?

**How can you improve your communication with others?**

### 4. Motivating others

(Feel free to skip this area if you have no staff)

- Do your staff enjoy their day at work or are they watching the clock? Why is this? What is your staff turnover? Is this too high?
- Are you and your staff team players or can you occasionally spot a knife in the back or a solo performance that leaves the rest of the team in disarray?
- Are you putting enough into developing your staff? What opportunities are provided for them?

**How could you improve your ability to pep up your team?**

### 5. Delegating to others

(Feel free to skip this area if you have no staff)

- How well do you manage your time?
- If you either had to (for example – illness) or chose to (for example – a holiday of a lifetime) take three months away from the business, what would your business look like when you came back? How happy would you be with this?
- What examples can you give, over the last year, when you've delegated to others? How did it go?

**How could you improve your delegation?**

### 6. Winning business

- What made the difference between the best deals you struck this year and the ones you'd rather forget?
- Are you doing as much as you can to win and keep customers? Why is this?

**How could you improve your ability to win and keep business?**

### 7. Keeping control of quality and administration

- If 'wow' is for super-efficient, all singing, all dancing and 'yuk' is for 'seat of the pants' not very efficient ways of keeping everything going – do your systems feel closer to 'wow' than 'yuk'? Why is this?
- Do you feel happy that your systems protect you from disaster or someone robbing you of your data or dosh?
- Is the Internet and e-business doing the business for you? If not, why not?

**How could you improve the performance of your quality and administrative systems?**

### 8. Dealing with money

- How comfortable do you feel dealing with your accounting and finance?
- How do you feel outsiders like banks judge your finances?

**How could you improve your control of money and finance?**

#### QUICK SUMMARY

We've now looked at eight areas that are important to success. In answering the questions on these areas – which are the most important things you've raised that you feel you must do something about? (Somewhere between four to ten points are certainly enough). KEEP THESE IN MIND AND TURN OVER THE PAGE – and we'll try and prioritise these things and look at ways you can deal with them.

Please turn over >