

# Business **S.O.S.**



**173 Proven, Fast-Acting Strategies  
to take Your Business from Surviving  
to Thriving!**

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by

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## Dedication

Writing this book has been challenging at times, and would not have made it into print without the help and support of some exceptionally talented people who have encouraged and pushed me when I needed it.

My thanks go to Sarah for her copywriting and editing skills, to Karrie for her layout and design flair and to my wife Sue for being so understanding as I took time away from her and JJ to write and to Angela, who keeps me and my businesses on track.

They say behind every great man is a woman and I have been blessed to have four of the best on my team.

I would also like to thank all of my coaching clients and Wealth Club members, too many to mention personally here, for the opportunity to be a part of their lives and businesses. For the learnings and insights they help me to have and for the encouragement to put strategies and ideas from our sessions into print.

Finally I would like to dedicate this book to an amazing person who has been in my every waking thought since passing away in November 2008 – my Mum, Christine Avins.

Her positive, I-can-overcome-anything attitude inspired me so many times in my life, and still does, proving to me that no matter what circumstances we face we always have a choice, so choose to play the game on your terms and win if you can!

I love and miss you so much Mum.

Paul Avins, 2009



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## Chapter 1:

# Facing A New World Reality

*“The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do!”*

—Steve Jobs (Founder of Apple Computers)

### **Introduction: A Shock to the System**

There is no getting away from the fact that since September 2008 the world has gone into a financial meltdown triggered, as we all now know, by the banks buying billions of pounds worth of toxic assets.

This was the trigger that shot down the global economic boom that many had thought would see the end of the boom-and-bust cycle forever. In fact, many politicians even said so publicly. With so many people buying into this new vision of “easy money and profits” emotionally, when the crash came it shook people’s belief systems to the core. Businesses that had seemed invincible and at the heart of our way of life disappeared in just months. Woolworths and MFI to name just two. Even major institutions like the banks and insurance companies had to be saved from collapse by tax payers and governments all around the world.

The ripples of these events are now starting to be felt in all markets. Some of the ripples bring opportunity, other ripples bring pain. The latest figures from top insolvency specialists Begbies Traynor say that over 40,000 small or medium businesses in the UK will go bust in the next 12-months, further adding to the unemployment numbers which are rapidly heading for 3 million in the UK alone. This figure will be 18% higher than at the peak of the 1990 recession.



When a shock occurs some people freeze up and see just red stop lights everywhere, while others assess the situation and look for the way forward.

Wherever there is great uncertainty there is usually great opportunity, if you know how to see it, and then how to exploit it. This book is designed to give you the tools to do both.

If you have been caught at an emotional red light, STOP blaming yourself. When you use language like “I should have done this or I could have done that...” all it does is focus you on the past – and there is no business there. We all have 20/20 hindsight, but the reality is that nobody predicted the speed of this recession, so shake off any sense of guilt or blame and get ready to start profiting while others are panicking.

## **1. The Only Constant IS Change**

A question I am consistently asked by business owners all over the world who hear me speak at my seminars or as a guest at others' events:

*“How can I possibly succeed in the current recession as my margins are being squeezed and demand is down?”*

It's a fair question and I know how they feel. After all, I have had many clients since September '08 experience the same problem. What I found is that the clients who are willing and open to change, change their products, change their service, change their pricing structures, even change their banks, are finding new markets, coming up with new ideas and new value propositions that are moving them towards the success they desire.

The challenge is that most business owners want to have a different outcome without having to change what they are currently doing.

OK, time for a reality check:



### CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT!

Anything else is just an illusion. Change brings Opportunity and Opportunity brings Wealth. Just look what happens when new technology enters a market or a change in government legislation occurs. New businesses spring up to take advantage and wealth is created. Before the creation of eBay in 1995, who would have thought that millions of people could sell their unwanted junk for a profit to a worldwide market from their own bedrooms? The first mobile phone call in the UK was only made in 1985, but that industry has already created a number of millionaires and even billionaires. And it was the de-regulation of franchise laws in the US that led to Ray Crock taking the blue print of a successful local restaurant and turning it into the global phenomenon that is McDonalds.

It's a universal law that we are either growing or dying, there is no standing still, and in the current climate change is happening faster than ever, so you better be on the road to change or you run the risk of being one of the next 100,000 businesses to perish!

Sometimes the death of something, a business, an industry or an economy has to happen before the re-birth or a new birth can take place. We are heading into a new economic time and it's natural for old business models to die out, so don't be alarmed by this. Do be alarmed if your business is running one of these old models!

## 2. The Birth of a New Economy

Ask any parent, including me, about the birth of their first child. Usually it was a long-drawn-out process involving a lot of hard work, considerable pain at times and huge amounts of emotional worry but in the end it was all SO worth it.

The same is true for the global economy right now. What you are experiencing is the first few hours of labour. When it's all over we will all be left with a new world and a new economic reality, which is why expecting things to go back to the way they were before is just NEVER going to happen.

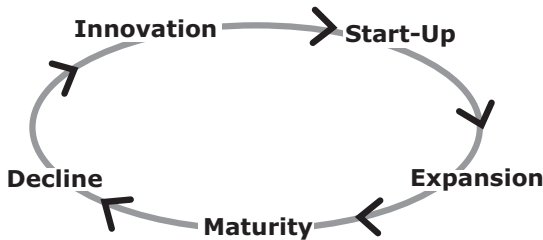


The largest shifting demographic in history is happening right now with the “baby boomer” generation about to start hitting retirement in the next few years. This WILL drive massive change as people in their 60s and 70s have very different spending habits and have very different disposable incomes.

Add to this the fact that the life cycle of a business has been speeded up by new technology and what used to take 5-10 years to work through in total can now happen in just 3-5 years, and, in some markets, such as on line, it can be even faster than that!

### 3. The Business Cycle has been Speeded up – Forever

**Innovation** or Start up–Rapid Expansion–Market Maturity–Market Saturation–Decline & Destruction → Innovation



As well as adding speed into the business mix, almost like a spark in a fuel injector, technology has put power in the hands of your customers like never before. Over 85% of people now research a purchase online before buying it.

Internet shopping is predicted to hit \$145.1 billion in the coming year says Google, a significant 14% increase – despite the recession!

Today’s customers are more educated, know more about your competition and how good your prices are, than ever before. Add to this the fact that, through Social Networks, bad customer service is broadcast to thousands in just minutes and you’ll see that, if you’re not in tune with these shifts, you’ll be out of the market in record time.





The web has been at the heart of the Information Age, but people are now overwhelmed with information so what they want is distilled advice they can trust. We are at the start of the Referral Age™ and what business owners hunger for most these days is – trusted advisors. More on this in the Sales section of the book.



When you are looking at what is happening from this positive point of view, I am willing to bet you get excited about where you and your business could be 3-5 years from now.

But there is a warning that could kill your new-found energy..

#### **4. The Killer Number in Your Business**

When I do Strategic Planning with my clients we look at lots of different areas of the business. We conduct a SWOT analysis (assessing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and look for the future hot markets in their sectors. There is a critical question that I find identifies where the potential problems of the future may spring from and it's this:

“Where in your business does the number “1” occur?”

Let me explain...

When you have 1 of anything you could find yourself with problems. Here are just some of the areas you may want to review:

- 1 Major Customer generating large profits for you
- 1 Major Supplier that you rely on for the majority of your sales
- 1 Bank Account / Finance source
- 1 Lead Source or Marketing Method
- 1 Key team member who knows how to perform a critical function
- 1 Top Sales Person who brings in all your business
- 1 Referral System



## Chapter 3:

# Marketing

*“A business has but two functions –  
Marketing and Innovation.”*

—Tom Peters, Management Guru

## **Introduction: The Power of Response-Driven Marketing**

I believe that becoming a great response-driven marketer is one of the most important skills that an entrepreneur or business owner can master.

After all, as the great copywriter John Carlton once said, “There is no business problem that can’t be solved by a great sales letter.”

The skill is to get prospects and customers to raise their hands and say, “I want to buy more from you!” If you can do this in these tough economic times, your business will thrive on a level higher than you’ve ever imagined up to now.

In this section, you’ll find a mix of fundamental marketing concepts and ideas that you’ll need to master, along with easy-to-implement techniques my coaching clients are using right now to grow their businesses.

The only area not covered here is Internet Marketing as I feel this is so important that I have given it its own chapter.

OK... let’s get stuck into the strategies. Make sure you have a highlighter handy to select the ones you want to implement right away.