

the productive biz

THE 7 KEYS TO RUNNING
A PRODUCTIVE BUSINESS

SAMPLE CHAPTER



MARK TITTLE

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PREFACE

You stand at the start of an adventure that could radically change your business. My hope is that this book will help you deal with the challenges you may have been facing in running your business.

So welcome to The Productive Biz journey where you will learn, not just a few tricks or hacks to handle a few parts of your business, but a way of thinking and acting that will open a doorway to a whole new way of operating and enable you to create the future that you have barely dared to dream about.

If you are willing to embark on this journey and if put aside time each day for at least the next 30 days to implement what you learn in these pages you will radically transform your business.

I invite you to journey with me as you internalise what you read; use the tools you learn and download and complete the workbook which has worksheets for each key.

This is your doorway to running a truly Productive business.

What one thing excited you as you read the Preface?

How would you like things to be different in your business?

INTRODUCTION

After years of having people ask me to help them get organised in 2019, I collated everything I knew about being productive – and out popped a little book – or rather let me say that I birthed it over 3 decades. The book was called *The Productive Life: 7 Keys to Living a Productive Life*.

This is the follow up to that book which was inspired by the comment of a dear friend, Ed Ramsami who said: “Do you know that the 7 Keys are just as applicable to running a business as they are to running your life?” It did not take me long to put together a workshop to train and coach the concepts while writing this book.

It became clear that senior executive teams and even smaller teams gained great value from the journey they completed with me and were able to describe ways in which they had become more **effective** (doing the right things) and more **efficient** (doing things right) - in other words they were Productive Businesses.

Watch Your Dismount!

Imagine being a gymnast and you have just completed a near flawless routine on the apparatus but as begin your dismount your hand slips off the bar and you fall to the mat. Imagine the frustration you feel and the shame at the less than swan-like ending to a new flawless performance. As you wait for what seems like an hour for the judges to hold up their score cards you know that you are not going to get the score that you had spent months training for. Obviously, that last movement in your routine is critical to the entire performance. The judges would probably give you credit for your brilliant performance before the dismount but that dismount is the difference between a brilliant routine and a less than perfect performance.

As you reflect on that story you are probably already thinking about the importance of ensuring that all aspects of your business are doing well as excellence in a few areas is simply not acceptable.

In which areas of your business could your dismount improve?

Resource Downloads Folder

I have created a Resource folder on Google Drive in which additional resources are freely available. Throughout this book you will be directed to download resources from the folder. You can check out the Downloads that go with the Sample Chapter Download using this link: https://bit.ly/TPB_Sample_Downloads

UNDERSTANDING PRODUCTIVITY

*Productivity is about making more time
for what is meaningful to you.*
Andy Lamont

Before I introduce you to the 7 Keys to Running a Productive Biz, let me clarify what I mean by productivity.

For me, productivity in business is all about being excellent and doing great things through every part of your business. It is not just about being busy but active, proactive and productive.

The more holistic you are in running your business the better it will be for you, your stakeholders, your staff and your customers – so working on your whole business will be a priority as you seek to make it productive!

In the next seven chapters I am going to share 7 Keys for Running a Productive Business. These keys have shaped the way in which I run any business I am involved in whether it is a company that I have started or a company in which I am employed.

I trust that as you embark on this journey with me you will do whatever it takes to not only read along, but also take action to implement every one of the keys. You will soon discover that I will keep asking you to take action as you read. You could choose to skim through each chapter and then return to start the process from the start but be sure to take action to implement each key before moving on to the next chapter.

The 7 Keys to Running a Productive Business are:

- 1. Live Your Mission:** Live your Mission through every area of your business.
- 2. Manage Your Actions:** Do everything you do with excellence.
- 3. Build Your Habits:** Build good habits and break bad habits to grow your business.
- 4. Plan Your Time:** Plan ahead to achieve goals in key result areas.
- 5. Focus Your Mind:** Stay focused on your mission when distractions come.
- 6. Know Your Self:** Understand yourself and your business to be productive.
- 7. Renew Your Energy:** Generate personal, business and staff energy.

The 7 Challenges and the 7 Keys:

There are 7 Challenges you will encounter that could sabotage your efforts at running a Productive Biz and there are 7 Solutions linked to the 7 Keys:

1. Uncertainty. When we lack clarity about what we are doing in our business we end up bouncing around trying anything available and hoping for the best. Instead of being uncertain we can get **Clear** by defining our mission, identifying our KRAs, creating our goals and working our plan as we will cover in **Key #1: Live Your Mission**.

2. Overwhelm. When we are overwhelmed by everything that we have to get done we can be paralysed because we don't know what to do next. Instead of being overwhelmed we can get

Calm by downloading, deciding, doing and reviewing everything we need to get done as we will cover in **Key #2: Manage Your Actions**.

3. Inconsistency. When we lack the habits needed to operate our business smoothly our efforts and our results are inconsistent. Instead of being inconsistent we can get **Consistent** by creating good habits, breaking bad habits, stacking our habits, creating goal habits, tracking our habits and starting new habits as we will cover in **Key #3: Build Your Habits**.

4. Inefficiency. When we miss deadlines due to a lack of advanced planning, we become reactive, increase our costs and reduced our productivity. Instead of being inefficiency we can get **Efficient** by using a planner; planning in advance; create goals and scheduling goals as we will cover in **Key #4: Plan Your Time**.

5. Distraction. When we are distracted from our key objectives, we lose our direction and struggle to focus on what is really important to our business and our customers. Instead of being distracted we can get **Focussed** by operating in our passion, training our brains and limiting our distractions as we will cover in **Key #5: Focus Your Mind**.

6. Uninformed. When we lack knowledge about ourselves and our clients, we don't experience synergy and lose our competitive advantage. Instead of being uninformed we can get **Informed** by profiling our staff; defining our values, crafting our intent; refining our roles; charting our responsibilities; assessing our business; and creating our profile as we will cover in **Key #6: Know Your Self**.

7. Depletion. When we lack energy as individuals and as a business, we find that doing anything is beyond our capacity. Instead of being depleted we can get **Renewed** as we generate personal, business and staff energy as we will cover in **Key #7: Renew Your Energy**.

You will also discover that there is a connection between the different keys and a workflow that you will implement in your business as seen in this image:



Here are quick guidelines before you start your journey:

* There is no hierarchy among the 7 Keys but it would be best if you follow the order in which they are presented in the book.

* For each of the 7 Keys I have recommended one book that you should invest in and read as

soon as possible.

* I have included practical exercises throughout the book so you can implement what you learn.

* Be sure to check out the Downloads folder for additional resources for the book.

What have you learnt so far about productivity and your business?

Which of the 7 keys grabbed your attention as you read the list, and why?

What are the 3 challenges you need to work on the most in the future?

What is one expectation you have as you start reading this book?

Take the Productivity Test:

The Productive Biz Test will help you to score how well your business is doing in seven areas of productivity and reveal which key (or keys) you need to work on the most. Read each of the seven statements and give yourself a score between 1 and 10 - where 1 is NOT AT ALL LIKE US and 10 is TOTALLY LIKE US.

#	Statement	Score
1	We are clear about our mission and where we add the most value.	
2	We have a comprehensive system to track everything we are doing.	
3	We have clearly defined habits that keep us efficient and effective.	
4	We plan in advance and get everything done in good time.	
5	We focus our efforts around our key objectives despite distractions.	
6	We use systems and tools to learn about ourselves and our clients.	
7	We do our work and engage our clients with high energy levels.	

Now plot your results on this chart to create a horizontal bar graph of each Key:

1. Live Your Mission
2. Manage Your Actions
3. Build Your Habits
4. Plan Your Time
5. Focus Your Mind
6. Know Your Self
7. Renew Your Energy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

You can download a digital version of the full Productive Biz Test in MS Excel format to complete. It uses 21 questions and will build the graph for you and also reveal challenges you may be facing. The link is: http://bit.ly/TPB_TEST

You can buy the eBook version of The Productive Biz at: http://bit.ly/TPB_Book

Key #1

LIVE YOUR MISSION

the
productive
biz

*Your mission statement becomes your constitution,
the solid expression of your vision and values...
the criterion by which you measure
everything else in your life.*
Stephen Covey

The first key to running a productive business is to **Live Your Mission**. Your Mission is lived through your Key Result Areas by achieving your Goals and Planning your business. This is about figuring out what your business is all about. And by business, I mean your whole business - not just what you do in some areas of the company, but in every area.

The one book you should read for this Key is: ***How to Grow Your Small Business*** by Donald Miller.

Preview:

In the first key you are going to explore four steps to live your mission:

- (1) Define Your Mission
- (2) Identify Your KRAs
- (3) Create Your Goals
- (4) Work Your Plan

Step #1: Define Your Mission

The first step to live your mission is to define your mission. Here are some definitions to help you understand what I mean by “mission”:

Mission is what you want to create of yourself and the world around you. (Peter Senge).

Mission is what you want to be, do, feel, think, own, associate with and impact by some date in the future. (Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones).

Mission is a clear mental picture of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances. (George Barna).

While these authors are describing a life that is intentional – the implication is that a great business is one that creates a better future, that involves radical change both internally and externally – this is a Productive Business.

Creating that kind of a Business starts with writing a mission statement to describe the kind of business you want to be and the difference you want to make in the world.

Stephen Covey said that: “A mission statement is not something you write overnight... But fundamentally, your mission statement becomes your constitution, the solid expression of your vision and values. It becomes the criterion by which you measure everything else in your life.”

During my training of leaders across the continent of Africa, I adopted a four-step process to writing a mission statement based on answers to four questions. As you work through the questions, be sure to complete each step of the process either with a pen or your keyboard.

Craft your business mission statement in four stages: (1) What must we be to succeed? (Descriptive Noun). (2) What must we do to succeed? (Verb of Impact). (3) Who will we target? (Target Audience). (4) What will the result of our impact be? (Result of Impact).

1. What must we BE to succeed?

The first question forces you to start with your “being” rather than your “doing”. As you answer this question, think about the kind of business you want to run Choose a noun that describes what you want to be. Imagine the best version of your business. Keep it as short as possible – use a single word, or a hyphenated phrase or, at most, three or four words.

Our Descriptive Noun is:

2. What must we DO to succeed?

The second question focusses on what you must do as a business to live out the noun you chose in the first question. Write down three ways in which you will impact people to bring change in the world using verbs – i.e., action or doing words.

Our Verbs of Impact are:

3. Who will we target?

The third question is all about the different groups of people that your business will impact as you live your mission. Make sure that it is as broad as possible. Try and end up with 3 groupings of people that cover all your target groups.

Our Target Groups to impact are:

4. What will the result of our impact be?

The final question deals with what you believe your impact will accomplish in the people you target. Here you are describing the change you want to see in your target audience.

The Result of our impact will be:

The next part of this process is to move towards writing out your mission statement in one sentence using as few words as possible. Take the words or phrases you identified using the four questions and add them to the following sentence:

We are _____ (*descriptive noun*)
who _____, _____, _____ (*verbs of impact*)
to _____, _____, _____ (*target groups*)
so _____ (*result of influence*).

Now you are ready to write your mission statement in one sentence, memorise it, display it and connect with it every day as you run your business.

Our Mission is...

Sample Mission Statements:

CQ Africa: We are social architects who move leaders, managers and staff towards inclusivity in a diverse world.

Imvelo Consulting: We are an outstandingly reliable company who plans, delivers and reviews for government, municipalizes and contractors to secure contracts, strengthen relationships and access opportunities.

Productive Biz: We are productivity developers who train, coach and resource individuals, teams and companies to be effective, efficient and excellent in all they do.

Many businesses write mission statements but they often get filed away or don't actually result in significant life change or impact. To avoid this happening to you, it is critical that you take the next three steps to live your business mission

Step #2: Identify Your KRAs

The second step to living your mission is to identify the Key Result Areas (KRAs) through which you will live your mission. Your Key Result Areas are the Areas you must focus on and track to achieve our mission. Here are 7 things to do to identify and develop your Key Result areas:

1. List Possible Areas To Focus On

Do a brainstorm of all possible areas that are important to your business. Consider your product, staff, customers, revenue, processes, etc.

Our Possible Areas:

2. Group The Areas Into Categories

You may be feeling a little overwhelmed with that long list of Areas but don't give up just yet because the next two steps will help you as to group related Areas and reduce them to categories or groups of related Areas. First put them into group.

Our Areas in Categories:

3. Select Six Areas To Focus On

This step will give you a manageable set of Areas to focus on as you live out your mission. If you have done the hard work of grouping your many Areas in the last section, it should be fairly easy to select 6 Areas that cover your whole business.

KRA 1	
KRA 2	
KRA 3	
KRA 4	
KRA 5	
KRA 6	

Sample Key Result Areas:

CQ Africa: Management, Partners, Sales, Content, Delivery, Clients.

Imvelo Consulting: Clients, Staff, Suppliers, Labourers, Meetings, Projects.

Productive Biz: Managing, Researching, Marketing, Onboarding, Delivering, Resourcing.

4. Write Descriptive Statements For Each KRA

The descriptive statement describes the condition we must reach for each Key Result Area to be considered operational and working well.

KRA	Descriptive Statement
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

5. Do a SWOT Analysis On Each KRA

Look at each Key Result Area and consider the Strengths, Weaknesses, opportunities and Threats that will impact on it. Strengths and Weaknesses relate to conditions that exist now and that are internal to the business while Opportunities and Threats relate to conditions that may come up in the future and that are external to the business.

KRA	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

6. Identify Critical Issues For Each KRA

Look back at the SWOT analysis for each Key Result Area and identify any critical issues that were raised – things you must do something about in the near future.

KRA	Critical Issues
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

7. Create An Action Plan For Each KRA

Finally, create an Action Plan for each of the Key Result Areas by answering five questions: (1) What is the KRA? (2) What is the Critical Issue? (3) What do we need to do about it? (4) Who will take the action? (5) When will it be completed by?

KRA	Critical Issue	What to Do?	Who will Do it?	By When?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Step 3: Create Your Goals

The third step to live your mission is to create your goals. Now that you have defined the KRAs you will focus on for your business you need to create goals for each KRA. You could use the SMART goal approach and create goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

You can create goals by asking yourself: “What is the most important thing we could do this week to have the greatest positive impact on this KRA.” While many goals may come to mind, you should limit yourself to just a few important goals for each KRA. With your mission statement in mind, look over the work done in Step 2 for each KRA and create 2 goals for each area.

KRA 1	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

KRA 2	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

KRA 3	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

KRA 4	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

KRA 5	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

KRA 6	GOALS
	Goal 1:
	Goal 2:

Sample Goals:

CQ Africa: *Clean up Folders; Develop Standard Operating Systems; Grow existing relationships; Find new partners; Post to social media weekly; Formulate Sales Strategy; Publish Own Content; Learn Platform Functionality; Improve Delivery Process; Promote Our Services; Improve Lead Generation.*

Imvelo Consulting: *Build New Client Relationships; Improve Marketing Strategies; Train Current Staff; Improve Work Environment; Improve Communications with Labourers; Schedule Monthly Meetings; Follow-Up Meeting Items; Appoint Project Managers; Monitor Quality, Time & Costs.*

Productive Biz: *Develop Notion System; Develop Financial System; Develop Resource Library; Research Marketing Techniques; Develop Social Networks; Encourage Client Referrals; earn Onboarding Skills; Coach Current Clients; Train and Release Coaches; Resource Productivity Coaches.*

Step 4: Work Your Plan

The fourth step to living your mission is to Work Your Plan using a **Business Planner**. Check out the Downloads folder for a full-sized version of the Planner to edit or print.

There are 9 steps to follow on the Business Planner (you will complete Steps 4 to 9 during the coming chapters):

- 1. Add Your Mission:** Fill in your Mission Statement to ensure whatever you do is linked to your mission.
- 2. Add Your KRAs:** Fill in your Key Result Areas which will drive your business forward.
- 3. Add Your Goals:** Fill in the Goals you have crafted for each of your Key Result Areas.
- 4. Add Your Priorities:** Fill in the Priorities you need to focus on for the next quarter and the next month.
- 5. Add Your Projects:** Fill in the Projects you need to move forward in the next four weeks.
- 6. Add Your Tasks:** Fill in the Tasks you need to get done in the next four weeks.
- 7. Add Your People:** Fill in the People you need to connect with in the next four weeks.
- 8. Add Your Habits:** Fill in the Habits for each of your goals to help you achieve your goals.
- 9. Track Your Progress:** At the end of each week and month evaluate your progress towards achieving your goals.

OUR MISSION						
KRAS	GOALS	PRIORITIES	PROJECTS	TASKS	PEOPLE	HABITS

Check out the Downloads folder for a Sample completed Business Planner.

What can you do to be more effective in planning your business?

Review:

In the first key to running a Productive Business you explored four steps to live your mission: (1) Define Your Mission; (2) Identify Your KRAs; (3) Create Your Goals; and (4) Work Your Plan.

Challenge:

Clearly define your Mission and live it out through your KRAs using Goals with Projects and Tasks that you track in your Business Planner.

Preview:

In the second key to running a Productive Business you are going to learn how to **Manage Your Actions**.

THANKS

A huge expression of gratitude goes to my wife, Debbie, who extended grace to me as I devoted time over and above my day job to write this book.

Thanks to my friend, Ed Ramsami, for his out-of-the-box thinking in suggesting that the 7 keys to living a productive life can be equally applied to running a business.

Thanks to Quinton Pretorius at CQ Africa (<https://culturalintelligenceafrica.com>) for allowing me to test drive the concepts in this book through onsite and online sessions.

Thanks to Enock and Ayanda Cele at Imvelo Consulting for being early adopters of the Productive Biz process.

Thanks to the countless people that I have had the privilege of either leading or working alongside in businesses over the past four decades – every engagement and collaboration ultimately adds to who we become and what we pass on to others.

Thanks to God who has given me breath and who is always with me to enable me to do so much more than I could ever have imagined.

THE AUTHOR

Mark Tittley has devoted his whole life to the pursuit of living productively in every area of his life and business. He launched and developed an organisation called Sonlife Africa and had the privilege of training thousands of leaders across the continent of Africa. He lives in Cape Town, South Africa with his wife and has 3 adult children. You can connect with Mark and his resources in the following ways:

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