



for more rapid results....

www.engineeringbusinessgrowth.com

We all know the old adage “*time is money*” and when you’re running your own business it couldn’t be more true. We’ve all thought at some point or other “*If only I had more time in the day I could move my business forward so much faster.*”

The truth of course is that time is finite, so the best we can do is look to get the most out of it. This workbook is designed to just give a few pointers and help with a some techniques to maximise your time.

It all centres around **T.I.M.E.**

T = Take time to make time

I = Imagine yourself at your best

M = Maximise your output

E = Eliminate distractions

Now its important to say up-front there is no silver bullet to time management. We’re looking to address habits here, and habits are things that can be challenging to change. The key is to keep making small shifts to achieve incremental improvement and you’ll be amazed at the accumulative results. If you feel able to apply all these principals at once that would be fantastic, but even if you just take one a month and work on them to make marginal gains this could have a huge impact over time.

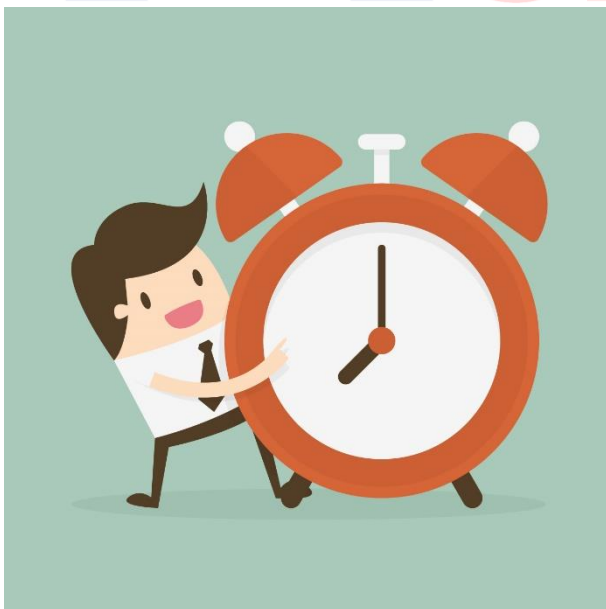


Let's suppose you apply one of these principals a month for the next 4 months and each make a 4% improvement on your productivity (the equivalent of 20 minutes in an 8 hour day). What would the impact be in a month assuming a 40 hour week and 4 weeks in the month

Month	Hours	% Improvement	Equivalent hours
1	160	4	166.4
2	166.4	4	173
3	173	4	179.9
4	179.9	4	187

The table shows if you were able to make a 4% improvement in time usage month on month for the next 4 months, it would be the equivalent of gaining 27 hours in the month based on the way you currently use time – almost a whole week! If you have a team and you could get them to do the same imagine the accumulative effect of that. So we're sure you'll agree it's something worth working on.

So let's get started.....



“ Take time to make time “

It may sound counter-intuitive, but one of the most fundamental things you can do to make the most of your time is to take time out to plan effectively. Its easy when it comes to our days, or particular tasks or projects, to jump straight in to the middle of what needs doing and its tempting to do so beause it makes us feel better because we're doing something.

But whether it be simply planning and prioritising for a given day or week, or doing it for a particular project in the business, by taking some time out to plan you will see a number of benefits, making sure that:

- Everything you are doing contributes to the end goal
- You take the shortest possible route from A to B
- You complete tasks in a logical sequence
- You ensure efforts are not duplicated
- You are able to delegate efficiently and effectively

In order to plan effectively we would recommend using the below simple framework of questions which can be applied to a period of time (a day or week) or a specific project.

- 1) What do I want to achieve?
- 2) What different tasks or milestones do I need to complete in order to achieve that?
- 3) Are any of the answers to question 2 reliant on each other? If yes what sequence do I need to do them in?
- 4) How much time will the tasks take?

This is a very simple framework, but the principal is simple and it's the principal we apply to all of our strategic planning – start with the end in mind and then break that end goal down into bite sized chunks and plan them in.

As we say it can be applied to a day, a week, a month, or a specific project. The key discipline is once you've done this simple planning, to look at the total amount of time you have available, the total amount of time you've worked out it will take



to complete, and block out the time in your diary to get the tasks done in the order necessary.

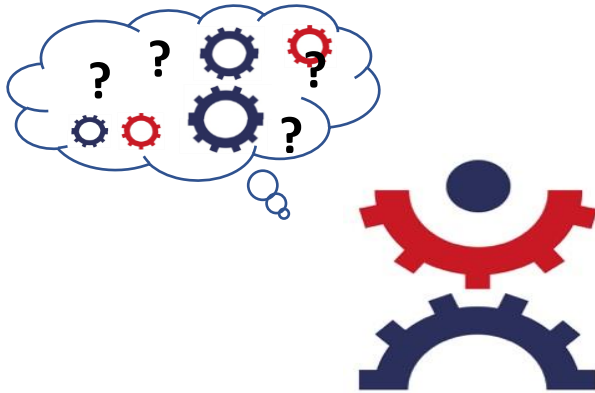
If you have team members make sure you get them to do the same. Make sure for the larger projects, that within that planning, you put in place deadlines and measurable milestones that you can hold yourself or others to account on and commit to them. If you're not good at sticking to your own deadlines, tell someone else about them who will hold you to account on it. After all its very easy to let ourselves down but not so easy to let someone else down.

Make a note here of what areas of the business your going to commit to make a plan for - we've made some suggestions to get you started

- Recruitment
- Marketing
- Sales
- System implementation
- Daily / weekly time management



ENGINEERING
BUSINESS
GROWTH



“Imagine yourself at your best “

At Engineering Business Growth we always stress that we take a 2 pronged approach to business improvement, working with the business leader to improve

themselves and working with them to work on the business to make improvements. The “I” in time is to do with the business leader side of this – working on ourselves and in particular in this case our beliefs.

Our beliefs about ourselves are what ultimately underpin our behaviour. For example

“I’m not sporty” is a belief that ultimately is likely to result in you not taking part in sport or exercise or doing it poorly when you have to.

“I’m not good with numbers” is a belief that is likely to prevent you from taking the time to get to grips with the accounts in your business or managing your finances effectively.

“I’m not good with computers” is a belief that is likely to prevent you from benefiting from the productivity benefits technology can bring.

These are known as limiting beliefs – they are limiting our potential by interfering with our mindset.

Performance

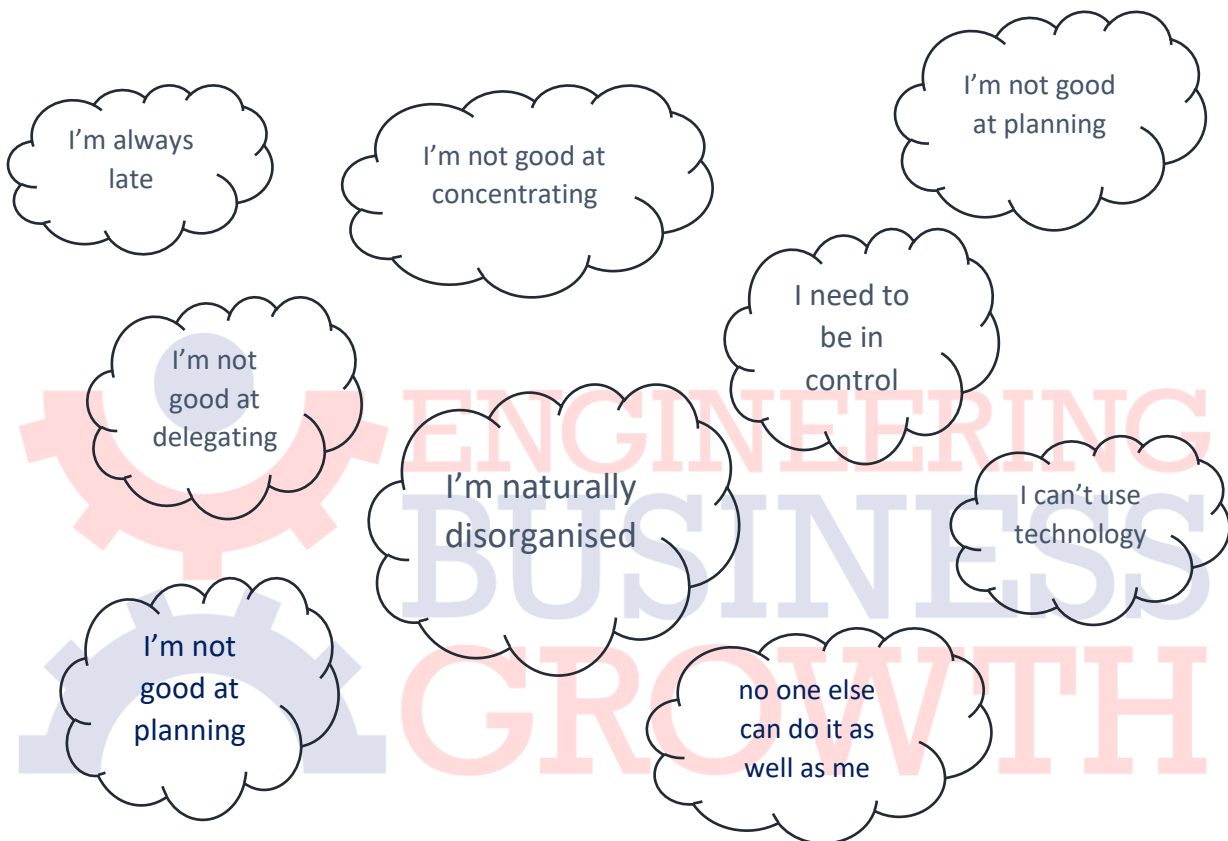
=

Potential - interference

The truth is that some people are factory built to be better at certain things or have more interest in certain things than others. But so much of our limiting beliefs are based on an experience we’ve had or something that has been said to us in the past, that doesn’t actually have any basis in reality - It

is just the way we've learned to see ourselves, and those beliefs can be holding us back.

So we want you to have a think about and identify, do you hold any limiting beliefs about yourself relating to your management and use of time? These might be things like:



Make a note of any beliefs you think underpin poor time management behaviour that you have. To help you identify them, one thing is to think about what situations do you procrastinate in. Procrastination often occurs around tasks we do not feel confident in or think we are no good at. Are there any beliefs underlying your lack of confidence?

If you are still struggling with this have someone ask you the following questions:

- What behaviour is having a negative impact on your use of time?
- Why do you behave like that? What attitude is underpinning that behaviour?
- What do you believe about yourself that has resulted in that attitude?



You've now done the hardest part in changing your mindset around limiting beliefs relating to your time management which is identifying them. The important thing now is to go to work on them and change them. There are two ways to do this.

1 - Write out a counteracting statement

e.g. "I'm disorganised" – "I can be organised when I put my mind to it" or "I am organised.."

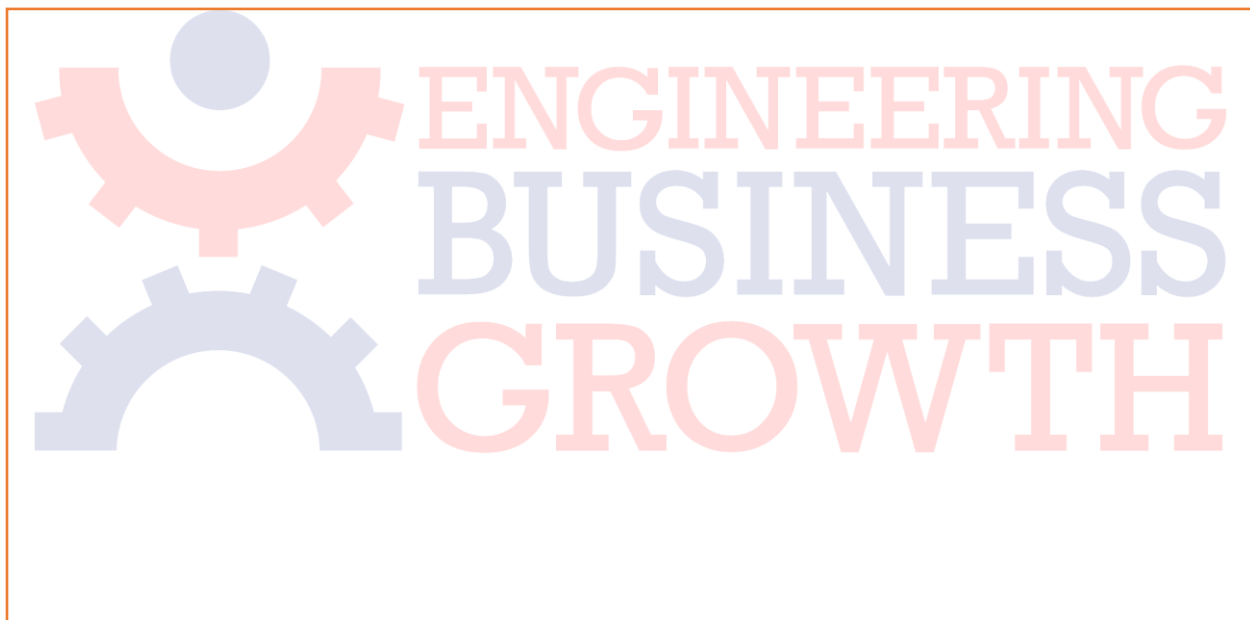
"I'm no good with technology" – "I can learn to use technology" or "I am learning..."

"I can't delegate effectively" – "I can delegate effectively when I take the time to do so"

You can use these statements in two ways.

First use them in the moment you think them, to counteract the negative behaviour that is resulting from them. Second you can use them as a mantra to remind yourself of on a daily basis to ultimately reprogramme your mindset towards them. You may want to tackle one at a time when doing this.

The good thing is that by bringing them to the forefront of your mind you have already developed your awareness of them, so you should automatically start to pick yourself up in moments when they're effecting you and you should be able to counteract them more effectively. Make a list below of counteracting statements for the beliefs listed above.



2 – Imagine yourself performing at your best

Elite athletes make use of a technique of envisioning how they will play or what they will be doing in a given moment or when executing a particular skill. They find this helps them to actually execute better on the field of play. The same principal can be applied to our time management behaviour. If you know there is a certain behaviour that is undermining your productivity, whether it be poor delegation, distraction, poor use of technology, then try

to imagine yourself performing well in the situations where that typically occurs. A good way to start with this is to think of a time when you did respond well. It might be a day that started out badly with lots of distractions but you managed to pull it back and ultimately get a lot done. What happened in order to enable that? What were the key elements? Start by re-living that as a way of starting to reprogramme the response in your mind.

The reason for doing this is so much of our behaviour is pre-programmed. If we've had something stressful happen we might make a cup of tea or eat a cake – something that gives us comfort. These behaviours become hard wired into our brains so that a given situation naturally leads to a certain response – it is like addiction, certain situations or emotions automatically trigger the need to feed the addiction – it is the escape mechanism. The same can be true of time wasting behaviour, we may have certain situations which naturally lead to us engaging in a distraction. By rehearsing a different response in our mind, we can start to embed a different pattern of behaviour.

Make a quick note of a situation you know results in you making poor use of time. Next to it note how you would want to respond in that situation.



“Maximise your output”

There are two elements to making this happen. They are maximising your time management skills and your time management systems. There are a lot of resources out there relating to time management that look at skills and systems so we are just going to focus on those we think are most important.

Skills

Prioritisation : The ability to prioritise is fundamental to time management. It is very easy for our time to become absorbed with things that we naturally are drawn to or activities which waste our time. The first step in making the best use of our time is to identify those activities that we need to complete which are going to make

the best use of our time. For this we find Stephen Covey’s ‘Urgent, Not Urgent, Important, Not important’ quadrant a very effective tool. He recommends using this to categorise all of the things you do or need to do under these four headings in a quadrant like the one shown above. Boxes one and three tend to take up a large amount of our time as it’s easy to get absorbed in urgent items. The items that fit into box one are the things that have to be managed, we have to make time for them but the key is to fit them in in ways that don’t take up all of your time.

The most important box for moving the business forward (and the activities that we often don’t get round to) generally come into box 2. This takes us back to booking in time like we talked about under “Take time to make time” – it is important to schedule time to complete the activities in box 2 otherwise they tend to not get done.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1. Manage - Deadline driven projects, meetings, preparations - Crisis and pressing problems	2. Focus - Purpose – Vision, values clarification - Planning - Relationship building
Not Important	3. Avoid - Needless interruptions - Unimportant meetings, phone calls, mail - Other people’s minor issues	4. Avoid - Trivia activity - Some phone calls - “Escape” activities - TV/excessive relaxation

The most important boxes in relation to time management however are probably boxes 3 and 4. These are the areas you lose time. By identifying them you can start to work on how you can avoid and eliminate them and managing that would save significant time.

Have a think about the things you are currently spending your time on and try to categorise them using the 4 boxes below.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		

The second element to prioritisation is doing it as a daily practice. On any given day we will have a number of tasks to get through. Prioritising and categorising them is an important daily discipline to ensure you stay at your most effective and productive, and deal with the most important items on the agenda. One system we like to use for this is to go through our 'A, B, C, D, E daily task list' and categorise it as follows

A: Must do
D: Delegate

B: Should do
E: Eliminate

C: Could do

By sorting in this way, it helps to get real clarity on what to do with your tasks and what order to tackle them in, which again will save time in the delivery and ensure time is not wasted on jobs others could be doing for you or trivialities.

A second skill that can have a big impact on your time management is learning to **FOCUS**. In the modern world we tend to applaud the concept of multi tasking. At EBG we would actually stand against this arguing that while there are some activities you can do on autopilot (such as drive a car), you cannot focus with intent on any two activities at the same time.

A UC Irvine study found that people spend an average of 11 minutes on a project before they get interrupted, and it then takes them an average of 25 minutes to get back to the point they were at before they were interrupted.

FOCUS as a acronym stands for *'Follow One Course Until Successful'* and we would argue that this is a skill it can be hugely helpful to master. Imagine how much time you add to any task if you allow yourself to be distracted every 11 minutes and it takes 25 minutes to get back to it!

A lot of enabling focus is about preparation and environment. It is important to do what you can to get in the right frame of mind and put yourself in the right environment to be able to focus on the task in hand. Answer the following questions to start to build a picture of your best focus environment:

What are the key features of your optimal environment to be able to focus?
(e.g. low noise, limited people around etc)

What is the time of day you work at your best?

Are there any activities that prepare your body and mind to function better?
(meditation, exercise, stretching etc)

How can you protect your FOCUS time?



The last skill we want to cover is effective delegation: **Delegation** is the one of the most effective time management skills as it means you no longer have to put our own time into actually delivering the task that has been delegated.

However delegating effectively is a skill that ties in closely with taking time to make time. When we are busy in our businesses, when we have someone to delegate to it is tempting to throw work at them with relief that it is off our plate! However the likelihood is that person will come back again and again with questions, ultimately not giving us the full benefit of the delegation. By taking time to properly plan work that has to be delegated, carry out necessary training and explain tasks in detail, you are likely to reap the rewards in the long run.

It's also best if you can delegate your weaker / less productive areas , and find someone who is strong in them to delegate to. As people we all have relative strengths and weaknesses and activities that we enjoy more or less. The beauty of the human race is that different people thrive doing different things. You will create the best business when you can find people who will thrive in each of the different roles, so when you are looking for that person to delegate to, try to find someone who enjoys and takes pride in the tasks that you would much rather be rid of, that way you can both excel. Make a note below of those areas within the business you would like to or could delegate that you are not currently delegating now.



Systems

The second part of maximising your output is considering what systems you could put in place to ensure greater efficiency within the business and when you're completing tasks.

These tend to fall into two categories:

- IT based systems
- Workflow systems

There are innumerate IT systems and apps available now for helping to deliver greater efficiency and therefore better use of time within business. These include...

- Financial Management and accounting systems
- CRM systems
- Marketing Systems
- Operational Systems
- Scheduling systems
- Personal productivity and task management systems
- Project management systems

...to name but a few. Name a function within a business now and chances are someone has built an IT solution to try to manage it and make it more efficient. The key with bringing any of these systems in to your business is to make sure they are fit for purpose. This means not starting with a particular system in mind, but rather starting by working out what you want a system to do for you, and then go looking for the system that most closely matches that. Introducing systems and the systems themselves can actually be a huge drain on time if not managed correctly and if you don't have a clear spec for the system you're looking for. A system that requires too many workarounds usually isn't saving you any time at all.

Take a moment now to consider one type of system or area of business that might benefit from the introduction of an IT solution in order to drive greater efficiency. Then take the time to list the key features it would need to have and then commit some time to going to investigate the market and see if there is a solution to meet your needs.

Area IT system could benefit:

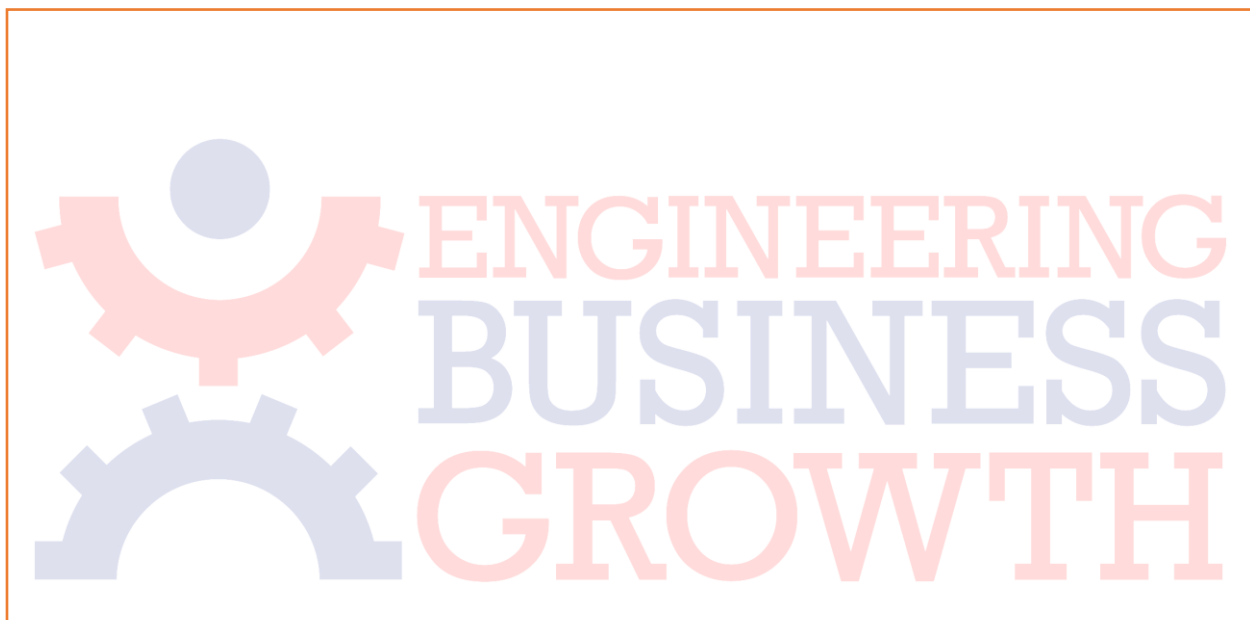


Key features required:

The second type of system that can be introduced to the business is a simple workflow. If your business is to grow efficiently, all of the processes you

complete on a regular basis should be standardised, mapped out and made as efficient as possible. Mapping workflows generates two benefits in time management. Firstly by seeing the steps on paper it can help to identify if there are any inefficiencies within it. Secondly by mapping out the processes it makes it easier for new staff to be trained and for them to deliver which itself saves time.

Make a note of any processes in the business that you want to map out a workflow for.



“ Eliminate distractions “

Last but by no means least in TIME is the E – eliminate distractions. Technically this is really another time management skill, but it has such a significant impact that we thought it deserved its own mention. We live in a world now that is full of distractions. It’s the age of instant communication and information. In so many ways this has made us much more efficient, however it has also made us that much more susceptible to distraction.

As we’ve already mentioned a couple of times, a recent study has shown that it takes an average of 25 minutes to get back on task once distracted. So

eliminating the things that most distract you could have a massive impact on your productivity. These could be things like

- Smartphones
- Phone calls
- Browsing the internet
- TV
- Interruptions from staff
- Interruptions from clients

Obviously you can't necessarily eliminate these things all the time, but most things can be eliminated for the time periods when you want to FOCUS. Even if you can just identify your main distraction and take some steps to eliminate it, it can have a massive impact. One of the best and most simple steps we find is often just turning off alerts. Having your phone or computer make a noise, vibrate or something flash up on the screen every time something comes in can be hugely distracting. Turning them off allows you to immediately take more control over when you choose to look at them. Take time now to identify your no.1 distraction and make notes as to how you can eliminate it.

What is your no. 1 distraction?

Make a note of what you can do to eliminate it:

If you have a team, what is their no. 1 distraction?

Make a note of what you can do to eliminate it:

We hope you have found this resource useful.

If “time” and capacity are proving to be the biggest blocks on you moving forward with the business right now, there is a good chance some key business growth related decisions need to be made! This can be daunting so if you would like some help getting clarity why not attend our next event:

‘How to DRIVE your business to the next LEVEL’:

<https://engineeringbusinessgrowth.com/next-level-masterclass/>

For more top tips on how to drive your business forward why not check out our blogs at www.engineeringbusinessgrowth.com/blogcw/ or our growth club <https://engineeringbusinessgrowth.com/next-level-club/>

