

*This e-book is meant for the small business owner
looking for independence and financial freedom by
building a self-sustaining business.*

How to Get Out from Under Your Business

Creating Sustainable
Business Success

By Dino Eliadis



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This e-book is meant to educate and assist small business owners of on-going concerns that are stuck between the survival and self-sustainability stages of the business growth model. It describes to frequently overlooked aspects of business growth. Applying the methods found within this guide can increase a small business' chances of achieving business self-sustainability which gives a business owner independence and financial freedom they dreamed of when they started their business.

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Introduction

Let me start by saying I admire and respect you. Why? Because you are a small percentage of people out there that are willing to work toward their life dream. But not just that, you were willing to take destiny in your own hands and take the risk of having your own business.

Plenty people are working toward their dream, but are on the 30-year grind to get there. You took a shorter path to get there – business ownership. However, if you're like many business owners, it doesn't feel that way most days!

Like most business owners, you started your company to make money. However, making money was just a means to an end. What you really want is independence and financial freedom – RIGHT?

I can tell you, after working with small business owners, and being one myself, for more than two decades, most owners are far from achieving their dream of *independence and financial freedom*. But, why is that? I can confidently tell you because they're getting bad advice and guidance, and nobody is telling them how to get there. As a result, they feel trapped and miserable with their business and life in general.

What if I told you that you could have *independence and financial freedom* in 3 – 5 years. Would you be willing to read a little further to find out how? That is the topic of this e-book, how to create [business self-sustainability](#) within 3 – 5 years so you can have the *independence and financial freedom* you dreamed of when you started your business!

To get started click the image below to [watch a video](#) to better understand what may be holding you back.



Does the business grow trap have you caught? If what you've seen in the video is representative of you and your business, you're caught in what I call "*nowhere land*." Ask yourself the following question and be 100% honest with yourself in your answer:

"Could you leave your business tomorrow and still live your current lifestyle?"

If your answer is "NO" or "it would take me a couple of years to get my house in order" ***you are stuck in nowhere land!***

The purpose of this e-book is to help you understand the steps that you can take to get yourself out of the trap and begin rapidly getting "your house in order" so that you become independent and financially free in 3 – 5 years or less!

What does it Really Take to Get There?

This question can be answered in one word – *entrepreneurship!* The term entrepreneur gets thrown around very loosely these days. It's used to describe business owners from Steve Jobs and Richard Branson all the way to anyone that starts a business.



I take a much clearer view of entrepreneurship.

New comers along with all the others stuck in *nowhere land* out there are business owners. They are not yet entrepreneurs, but *entrepreneurs in training!*

So, what's the difference? This is a very good question and one that more people in business should be asking. The problem is the general media keeps telling you that you are an entrepreneur so why would you ever question them? You just assume they know what they're talking about and move on to more important things, like running your business so it continues to profitably grow!

Based on my many years of experience and research, here is my conclusion and definition. A *small business* owner views their business as **a job**. An *entrepreneur*, on the other hand, builds their business as **an asset** that will ***generate income on its own!*** Entrepreneurs create **business self-sustainability**.

Do you see the distinction? If not, then you have your first new objective. You need to become a better student of business by learning the difference.

If you do get it, then why haven't you made the transition for your business? What we often find is that business owners understand the concept but they don't have the knowledge or skills necessary to make the transition themselves. That's our mission! Providing small business owners with the [knowledge and tools](#) to support their transition from small business owners to entrepreneurs!

How to Become an Entrepreneur



A small business owner can become an entrepreneur by mastering the process and skills necessary to grow their small business into a self-sustaining entity. The book [Business Growth Simplified: How to Rapidly Create a Self-Sustaining Business](#) was written to map out the goals and objectives at every stage along the way to successfully growing a small business.

Based on published research from the Harvard Business Review, most notably "[The Five Stages of Small Business Growth](#)" (Neil C. Churchill & Virginia L. Lewis, 1983) and "[Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow](#)" (Larry e. Greiner, 1972). The research found that two sets of

characteristic directly impact small business growth – *owner* and *company* factors. The owner factors relate to [leadership skills](#) necessary to achieve the objectives for each stage of the growth cycle. This is the "*personal change*" we speak of in our tagline – *personal change, business leadership, life success*.

The company factors relate directly to [business management](#). That is, does the company have the business systems, personnel, and financial wherewithal to accomplish what is required at each stage of the company's growth? Again, if you don't understand these aspects of management, your company is suffering as a result. Become a student of business and step over an obstacle that stands between you and entrepreneurship!

Entrepreneurship is all about mastering both set of skills – leadership and management. Don't worry, you don't have to walk this road alone. We offer [coaching and consulting](#) services, to assist you along the way. We're here to help you achieve these skills so you too can aspire to the title of **entrepreneur** and have the professional success that you want!

Achieving Business Success: *Business Growth Simplified*

Funny thing about business growth, it is a very well defined process. If you knew what to do; when to do it; and how to execute wouldn't growing your business be much easier? That is why the title of book is Business Growth Simplified. Let's take a quick look at the model.

The business growth model has 5 defined stages:

1. Foundation
2. Survival
3. Self-Sustainability
4. Rapid Growth
5. Maturity



Also, important to the model are the two factors mentioned earlier – leadership and management. Each has 4 characteristics that consistently influence business growth at every stage. They are as follows:

4 Leadership growth factors

Owner Goals — how the owner has decided to use the business as an asset that supports their personal dream.

Operational Skills — how well the owner understands what the business does to generate revenue.

Managerial Abilities — how well the owner understands how to direct the management growth factors towards achieving the owner's goals for the business.

Strategic Thinking — how well the owner understands outside influences and applies the management growth factors to react to opportunities and threats to maximize their return on the investment.

4 Management growth factors

Financial Assets — the money- resources necessary to achieve your business goals.

Personnel Resources — the team necessary to achieve your business goals.

Systems — the processes, procedures, and technologies used to achieve your business goals.

Business Assets — those tangible and intangible things that a business both owns and that give value to the business, such as equipment, facilities, customer lists, intellectual property, and so on.

Critical to all of this is the fact that there is one, and only one, goal in each stage. By focusing on these 8 factors to achieve the goal for your growth stage is what simplifies business growth. Here are the goals for each business growth stage.

Stage 1: Foundation

Goal: Get monthly cash flow to the point of consistent breakeven.

You might think that the foundation stage is the same as the startup stage of a company. But in fact, there are many businesses that have existed for years and still cannot breakeven month-to-month.

Businesses in the foundation stage need better owner leadership and management that is focused on creating consistent monthly cash flow. In a later section, you'll learn about strategies to help you get out of the foundation stage and move on to making real profits.

Stage 2: Survival

Goal: Consistently achieve owner-established profit requirement.

The shift at the survival stage is to move from breaking even every month to profitability. As an owner, you have invested time, money, and hard work into your business. Now that you are breaking even, you need to begin getting rewarded for your effort with a solid return on investment (ROI).

This means going beyond just making enough to keep the doors open. You must begin expanding the systems created in the foundation stage to consistently meet a profit requirement you have set for your business. *Notice it's a profit requirement and not a goal.* That's because to become independent and financially free, there is a certain amount of income that the business must generate for you.

Your level of business knowledge needs to increase, too, or your business will begin to stagnate. In a later section, you'll see why so many business owners get stuck here in the survival stage. As I said earlier, it's what I call "nowhere land."

Stage 3: Self-Sustainability

Goal Path A. Sustain the business's success created to this point.

or

Goal Path B. Rapidly grow the business to a large corporation.

When you achieve the self-sustainability stage, your business consistently generates a profit without you. It is here that you have the independence and financial freedom to choose your next goal.

Sustaining success means you are choosing to let your business run itself in a way that keeps it the same size until you are ready to act on your business succession or exit plan. Rapidly growing means you are choosing to grow your business into a large corporation with the help of an executive team.

But beware: self-sustainability is where many owners get mired between self-sustainability and survival. In fact, many owners think they are in self-sustainability when they are still actually in the survival stage. So, how do you know if you are firmly in self-sustainability? Take the self-sustainability litmus test.

Litmus test: Does the business consistently generate profit without owner intervention?

If your answer is “Yes,” then your business is self-sustainable and has real value because it is running itself. If your answer is “No,” then your business is stuck in survival because it relies on you, the owner, to consistently generate profit. And being stuck in survival has consequences: you still have a job; and it will be difficult, if not impossible to do what you really want to do, whether it’s to stay the same size until you act on your succession or exit plan or to move to rapid growth.

Stage 4: Rapid Growth

Goal: Assure that growth does not outpace assets, resources, and systems.

The rapid growth stage is based on an owner’s decision in the self-sustainability stage to grow the business into a large corporation (as opposed to disengaging and keeping the business the same size).

Self-sabotage can be a problem in the rapid growth stage. Many business owners started their business to get out of the corporate grind. Being part of the corporate grind means you are a cog in a self-sustaining system because you are serving in an operational role. It stands to reason, if you continue in an operational role in your business, you’ve created your own corporate grind and.

In the rapid growth stage, large sums of capital are needed as the business takes on more and more customers and therefore requires more people, equipment, and materials. The resources needed to service these new customers seems ever expanding. Properly executed, it is in this stage a small business becomes a big company. If not managed properly, this stage can be the death of a business. Yet many business owners resist and sabotage their rapid growth efforts by refusing to give up their operational roles.

You can combat this problem using the Personal and Business Goal Assessment. You can find this tool on our website.

Stage 5: Maturity

Goal: To diversify the company by offering related products or services to existing customers or by entering new markets.

Once it achieves rapid growth, a business moves into maturity. The all-too-typical characteristics of businesses in the maturity stage are that they are big and lethargic. The business has again reached a plateau. It has saturated its market or outgrown its management team’s ability to manage the business’s growth. Businesses in the maturity stage often cannot react to major shifts in the market and die as a result. But well managed businesses in this stage begin to diversify in ways that allow the company to continue to grow.

Work in the maturity stage is accomplished by moving into other markets or finding related products for the existing customer base. These other markets or products are really entities in earlier stages of the growth model. So, you may see different parts of the business begin working at different stages of the growth model.

For example, you might look at new product development as a strategy here. The new product is just another application of the foundation stage. So, the growth model can operate at various levels within a business that offers several products or serves more than one market.

Why Are You Stuck in Nowhere Land?

If you've been in business for more than 3 -5 years, then why haven't you achieved the self-sustainability stage? Some people will say they have. But, I go back to the question I asked earlier...

“Could you leave your business tomorrow and still live your current lifestyle?”

The reason many small business owners get stuck is because they confuse *personal success* with *business success*!

Let me explain what I mean. If you consistently create a profit then you would consider yourself successful – right? I would too. But are *you* creating that consistent profitability or are *the systems you created* generating this consistent profitability. ***This is a very important distinction!***

Systems are the key differentiator between *survival* and *self-sustainability*! Systems are what create ***sustainability*** and growth potential! Guess what, it's also a major criteria investors use to evaluate a business. So, if your business doesn't run on systems, your ability to sell your business just went down dramatically!



If your business is not sustainable, it has moved into the 80% that do not sell. Ask any business broker and they'll tell you systems are a key factor in their ability to find a buyer for your business. Can you afford to be there!?

This reality may sting a little bit. But, I am here to tell you that it can be fixed, if you are willing to make the change in your mindset and make self-sustainability the goal for your business!

How Do You Get Unstuck?

Ok, so where do you get started? Well, that can be a little tricky. You see, if it was really this easy, why do so few businesses ever get there?

One of two possible answers exist. #1, the owner doesn't know they needed to do it or how to do it. Or, #2 they know but are resistant to let go and make the changes necessary to complete the transition.

Which group do you fall into?

If you are really a #1 then you just need a checklist and you're on your way - right? Well, I know most people think it is this easy, but it's not. Even if you're in category #1 then I'd ask you why didn't you go out and find the answer earlier. Because you were comfortable! Hey, you're bringing home a profit.

You have all the stuff, so why would you rock the boat?

Because the boat is sinking and you just can't see it!

Most people won't make the change until the pain is so great that they have to do it. Sometimes they never get there and everyone around them suffers as a result. Don't be this guy.

The only way to get there is CHANGE!!! But, unless you have a compelling reason to change you won't do it.



So, you need to find your compelling reason! You need to [find the passion](#) that drove you in the beginning. It helped you do things you never thought you could do. It created the personal success you currently experience. Use it again to have the *independence and financial freedom* you really want!

This is the first step in the process. Finding your reason why. It will become your driving force to become part of that elite group that achieve real independence and financial freedom.

You set a goal to achieve your current level of success. But, did you reset your definition of success once you achieved it? If not, this is why you've become comfortable, and you go stuck in "nowhere land."

I'm sure you set goals year after year. But, to what end? Just to get to the end of this year? Or, do your goals serve a greater purpose? ***You need a new vision of success and you need it now!***

The key to success isn't just about having business goals and objectives. It's about making sure your business and personal goals are connected and aligned. This is what makes our approach different - aligning both your personal and professional goals. It is at the core of our [Personal & Business Goal Assessment](#) tool. Let's look at the power of aligning your goals to really drive your success!

What Does Success Look Like?

What really constitutes success? Well, that depends on what YOU want. You see success is a personal thing! When you decided that you wanted to own a business, you decided to use a business ownership as the strategy to get what you wanted. The *business itself was not what constitutes success to you*. It was just a vehicle to get you there!

That's a pretty esoteric statement, but it's true. Success is what you define it as. Not what some expert or business guru says it is!

That includes me! That's why I have always begun my coaching and consulting engagements with clients by understanding how they define success for themselves. By doing this, they have a higher probability of achieving their business goals and objectives. And selfishly, I have a higher probability of successful [coaching them](#) to where they need to go to achieve success. Sound like a win-win to you?

This is harder than it sounds. Why you may ask? Because most people have never stopped to think about what success really looks like to them!

I'm not talking about achieving \$3 million in annual sales or achieving a 25% net profit. These are business goals. They are *not success*. They may be indicators along the way, but they are not the "end result."



No, getting your definition of success is about understanding WHY you want \$3 million in annual sales or to achieve a 25% net profit. You personally associate something emotional to achieving these goals. But, achieving these goals alone is only one way of experiencing the emotions. There are many other ways to get there. When you understand the emotion(s) that you are trying to experience, your whole perspective changes and changes in a big way!

This is where your passion comes from. It's about understanding the subconscious desire that drive past every obstacle that get in your way. It's what gives you the energy to work 12- 16 hours a day 7 days a week to get what you want.

This is the first step in the [SPARC Business Growth Framework](#). It is based on creating the foundation so that all the right goals get set that give you the desired outcome as fast as possible. Find your passion and you find the inspiration you need to get past every obstacle that gets between you and achieving your dream!

6 Steps That Lead to Business Growth and Self-Sustainability

Ok, I put the last section before this one for a reason. The first step is the most important and frequently the one that gets skipped because it is emotionally based and difficult for people to wrap their head around. Frequently people just skip over the hard work and say, “let’s start building a business plan.”

This is exactly why the most business owners get stuck in “*nowhere land*” between *survival* and *success*. They don’t know exactly why they’re building their business. So, guess what? They probably have the wrong goal, objectives and tasks in their plan as a result!

Even if you understand your emotional connection and have a vision, you’re still not ready to start building your business plan. Let’s take a look at the full process now and see what additional information you will need to collect before you can put together a high impact business plan that feeds your personal passion and achieve business success!

The process is pretty simple:



1. Find your passion – your vision.
2. Determine your stage of the growth model.
3. Assess currently available resources to apply to your strategy.
4. Establish your business’ strategy based on your definition of success, stage of growth, and available resources.
5. Create action plans to communicate what’s needed to achieve your vision, goal and objectives.
6. Monitor progress and predictively execute your action plans.

Note, because you are in business, to achieve your vision you’ve already selected a specific set of strategies for achieving success. That means you’ve made a conscious decision to become a disciple of business, learning everything that you can every step of the way.

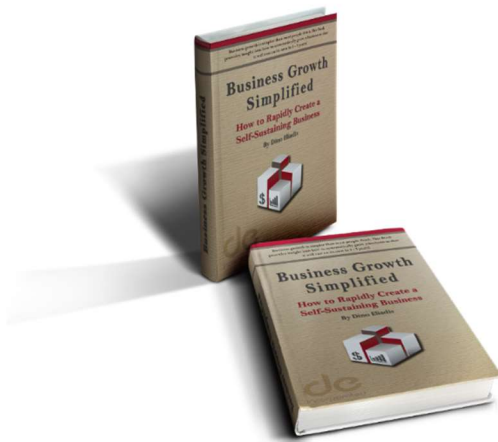
If you think you already know everything that you need to know, then this might be why you are stuck. There is that one thing or more that you haven't done to get you over the hump. Do what you need to do and get where you need to be!

I run into the "know it all's" often, the business owner that wants to argue with you about everything. Nothing is ever their fault it's always someone else's. The thing is if they own the business they are in charge. So, fire whoever's in the way and get on with it! These people rarely if ever get out of their own way and stay stuck in nowhere land forever!



If you are willing to learn and ready to change, then begin working this process. Get started by purchasing the [Business Acceleration Assessment](#). This product will take you through the first 3 steps of the SPARC Business Growth process and give you a Business Roadmap outlining your next steps to move yourself and your business to the goal of self-sustainability.

What Do You Focus on "No Man's Land?"



If you're like most business owners, you're ready to get busy! But, before you go off half-cocked, make sure you understand exactly where you are and where you are going. This is critical to how fast you achieve your defined vision of success!

I recommend purchasing a copy of the book [Business Growth Simplified: How to Rapidly Create a Self-Sustaining Business](#). In it you will learn all the nuances of each stage of business growth and how to navigate your way through each stage.

Additionally, you can take the self-assessment to determine exactly where you are currently. Then follow the chapters specific to your stage of growth

If you are having difficulty focusing or figuring out how to systematically achieve profitability, it might be a good time for a [business coach](#). A coach will provide you with the focus and accountability that you need to learn what is necessary and to help you make the personal changes needed to get you through this stage faster.

Putting Together Your Action Plan

NOW you can put your plan together! But, this in itself can be a huge task. Be careful. Many of the business planning tools, training, videos, templates, etc. are too over blown for your purpose. Most business plans are focused on getting money. They are financially focused and do very little to help you run your business and achieve the goals that are needed to help you achieve business self-sustainability.

DE, Inc.'s approach is very different. Our plans are usually no more than a couple of pages with a simple one-page budget. For those of you that don't do business plans could you do that?



Planning is one of the skills you must master on your way to entrepreneurship. If you are unwilling to put the time in now, you won't get where you want to go.

If you are looking for some guidance on your business planning process, I would direct you to the post on our blog titled [Business Planning Simplified](#). If you need more help, then our Online business training course [High Impact Business Planning](#) will provide you very detailed instructions and all the templates and examples that you will need to create your own high impact business plan. You can add a [business coach](#) if you feel that you need someone to audit your work and assess if you are on the right path.

Conclusion:

So, there you have it. What it will take to transition from a business owner to an entrepreneur so you achieve the independence and financial freedom you dreamed of when you started your business. It's what's missing for most business owners that are stuck in *nowhere land*!

Some will never be able to get there because it takes some real soul searching and they are unwilling to look in the mirror. I see way more business owners that fall into this category than I care to admit. It takes hard work to get across the chasm that stands between you and what you really want. But you know you can do it. You've done it before to get where you are right now! You are among that small percentage that was willing to step out and take destiny in you own hands!

Let me give you one more thing to ponder. If you built your business this way – for self-sustainability. It nearly runs itself, so do you really need to sell it!? That is the beauty of this strategy. Even if you cannot find a buyer, it doesn't matter. The business no longer needs you to create a profit. So, why not just

keep it and let it be an on-going annuity for your family? It gives you another option that many small business owners don't have available to them.



It just takes a decision on your part. A decision to make the change in yourself that's needed to breakout of the pack!

Remember you've already experienced some level of success. But, based on how you've built your business, you've had **personal success**. Now it's time to take the steps necessary to create sustainability in your business by achieving the *self-sustainability stage* of the growth model and give yourself a level of *independence and financial freedom* that very few ever experience.

So, push past your fear and apply the process. Do it right and be a part of an extremely small percentage of business owners that have complete personal freedom!

How to Get Started?

Get a Little Help

Start using the SPARC Business Growth process with a little help of a business coach by purchasing our [Business Acceleration Assessment](#)

Do It Yourself

If you're more of a Do It "Yourselfer" purchase our book [Business Growth Simplified: How to Rapidly Create a Self-Sustaining Business](#).



Not sure where to start?

[Contact us](#) at 727-435-8735 or info@businessgrowthsimpified.com and we'll help you determine which solution best fits your needs.