



Time to take the next step and start your own business?

Working as a tradie in the construction industry provides you with a wide range of opportunities, experience and jobs. Whether it's doing a bathroom renovation or helping to build the Metro Tunnel, Victoria is certainly the place to be when it comes to construction! You are also able to add to these opportunities by demanding a great wage, time off and lots of additional perks like having the skills, knowledge and networks to do your own home renovation at a distinct advantage to most people. To be a young tradie is to live a great out doors life, be physically active and be surrounded by like-minded guys and girls!

That said, there will come a time where being on the tools is going to take its toll, as your body starts to moan and creak with age. This may be the trigger to start your own business. Thereby, having more control over the projects you run, the people you work with, the actual job you do as well as more income and freedom.

The reality is going from being a tradie, to running your own business and then becoming a licensed builder with your own company is a massive transition!

These are the five areas to consider when looking to make this move:

1. Ensure you have the technical skills

Learning whilst being paid by a company is a great foundation! Knowing the tips and traps involved in all aspects of construction whilst having a supervisor mentor you whilst you rectify defects and build houses or apartments can be very rewarding.

Before you decide to go out on your own, be an expert in your trade; maybe even take a supervisory role for a period of time to identify the different skills required to get results via other people. Only once you have the technical experience and expertise should you consider moving forward with starting your own business and getting your builder's license. Organisations like the Master Builders can assist you with this.



2. Have a plan

Spend a day designing your business – just like a project needs a program and plan, so too does your business. The plan will be a living document, evolving, changing and adapting to the real environment but it will also keep you focussed on the important things – like the financials!

There are many organisations which can help you with your plan but make sure you use a reputable and experienced one which specialises in the building industry. Don't forget to include your Unique Sales Proposition (the reason business' or consumers will choose you), finance projections, skill requirements and a section on staff. Most important of all is the financial component – having a cash flow forecast is critical to the survival of your business, whereas the profit is as important to its long-term viability!

3. Marketing

Having a plan which identifies the types of jobs and clients you are equipped to handle and ones which pay the margins you require is very important. Saying that your marketing strategy relies on 'word of mouth' and referrals is unacceptable; it's a random, uncontrolled and unsustainable way to run a business. You need to have a marketing strategy which generates enquiries when you want them and of the type which are valuable to you.

This also involves having an online presence and a brand which is representative and meaningful to your clients. Once again, seek expert advice to assist you with this area of your business.

4. Know what you do well and focus on it!

Stating that you do bathroom and kitchen renovations, new builds, dual occs and developments is not an acceptable proposition. You need to know what you are good at, what you are able to comfortably provide without putting excess financial strain on your business and make the profit required.

This will also give you a good reputation and leave you with satisfied and happy clients; helping you to build a huge book of testimonials for your website.



5. Be a people person

Become focussed on your team; irrelevant if they are subbies or on wages. Focus on recruiting people who add value to your business, have the right outlook to customer service and are focussed on delivering quality product. Your team will make you a lot of money or send you broke; knowing how to motivate them and keep them focussed on outcomes and deliverables will drive your business forward! Having a good team will allow you to spend time 'on' your business rather than just 'in' your business. The processes, procedures you should have in place will help guide them to do their job and your company's focus on the culture and values will drive them to do a 'great' job.

6. Know your obligations

Know your obligations to your staff to keep them safe, your obligations to your clients, know your obligations to the industry, to the bank, to the insurance company, know your obligations to the ATO and most of all know your obligations to yourself, your family and to the success of your business. Have a plan in place to be surrounded by experts who can help you achieve these obligations.

7. Get support

If this all sounds a bit daunting, know that help is out there for you; join an industry focussed organisation like Master Builders and engage the guidance and expertise of a Business Coaching firm like Acclaimed Results or the multitude of other reputable, construction-focussed coaching companies. Don't be put off if this sounds too daunting - you just need to put in the time to build your business rather than just building people's homes and get help managing your business!

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