

Boss It

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Control your time, your income
and your life

Carl Reader



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WHO THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO...

Everyone who's ever written a book knows that it is like a marathon. It's painful, involves several sleepless nights, and there's little fun along the way.

But for some reason, we do it again, and again.

There's something special about seeing your words in print. Knowing that your knowledge can help thousands, if not millions, of people.

I have one group in mind that I really want to dedicate this book to: the next generation. My kids, their classmates, and everyone else in their year group. Those who are in the year above, the year below, and in different schools. Across the world.

Every one of us has gone through an academic system that prioritizes an Industrial Age mindset. Get a safe job, a good 'nine to five' job, a career. Perhaps even a job for life.

That system is broken, and academia hasn't caught up with it. We all crave more control but are being set up for a life of employment. Helping someone else reach their goals, under their control.

My eldest son Jordan is nearly 21 at the time of writing and didn't realize that self-employment was an option for him until recently, after years of being asked to study for exams that were irrelevant to his goals and skillsets. My youngest, Junior, is 3, and I sincerely hope that he grows up in a society that accepts self-employment and business ownership as a perfectly normal way of life.

As for Lauren, Daisy, and Charlie, who are all within the current system, all I can hope is that they see the example that Jordan has set for them by doing his own thing.

So this book is dedicated to the next generation – my kids, their friends, and their peers.

I hope that the generation that reads this book puts the lessons into action, so that we as a society can lead by example, and show our kids that there is another way. Let's make sure that we all Boss It.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carl Reader is a regular small business commentator, having appeared in most of the UK national newspapers, TV channels and radio stations. He has sat on all sides of the table – as a founder, an advisor, an entrepreneur, and an investor; and retains his position of Joint Chairman at d&t. He currently serves as an ambassador to IPSE, the trade body for the self-employed in the UK and US, and as the Chair of the Practitioners Panel of the ACCA. Previously, he has served as board director of the British Franchise Association, amongst other not-for-profit and charitable efforts. Carl speaks globally to small business audiences, helping them understand that business isn't difficult. It's hard work, but it isn't difficult.

To find out more, visit www.carlreader.com

PREFACE

At the time of writing this book, the world is going through some significant shifts. A different ‘personality led’ approach to politics is prevailing globally. Coronavirus is currently spreading throughout the world, with many countries on lockdown and a likely recession around the corner (see ‘The World has turned on its head...’, page xxx). Climate change has become a climate emergency. Closer to home, the UK has just left the European Union. And in my back garden, I can see the impacts of Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis – the worst weather in the area this century.

Despite all of this stuff, I prefer to focus on what I can control.

That might sound flippant, but it is the reality of making a difference. I can’t change a worldwide pandemic, but I can change my own actions and protect myself. I can’t reverse an emergency, but I can be mindful of the actions I can take to help.

For me, control is a big thing. In fact, it’s an essential thing.

Every time I’ve struggled in life, it’s because of a lack of control. The realization that I need control over what I do and how I do it has been life changing. And nothing has given me more control over my day-to-day life than being my own boss.

In this book, I share the lessons that I’ve learned along the way – what I’ve learned from doing it myself and helping thousands of others.

I sincerely hope that it helps you control your time, your income, and your life.

THE WORLD HAS TURNED ON ITS HEAD...

I'm writing this in July 2020, just a few months after submitting the final manuscript to my publishers. Since writing the book, the world has turned on its head. What was referred to as a potential challenge became a very real challenge. Entire countries went into lockdown, economies plummeted, and we have all been shaped by a very real and threatening public health pandemic.

As we get back into normality, this book has never been more relevant

If you are an existing business owner, you can use the lessons within this book to help restart, rebuild and flourish (I'll come on to that in more detail in a moment).

If you have been or are currently going through the process of being furloughed, or your role being made redundant, this book can help you understand the world of business and take charge of your situation.

And if you are thinking of being your own boss, well – this book was made for you anyway!

A note about the content within the book

One of the things that you will pick up on when reading the book is that it was written in a pre-COVID world. You will see reference to things like face-to-face networking and offices! Whilst these might seem like a distant past when you first pick this book up, rest assured that they will return in some way in the near future.

Life will be different, and the way that we assess the risks of infection will change forever, but I am still a firm believer that ***business is no longer B2B or B2C, but H2H – Human to Human.*** We are social beings, and whilst it might sound like a cliché, people work with people – and conversations over coffee simply cannot be replaced by keyboards and social media updates.

How to use this book if you are an existing business owner

The position that we are in is unprecedented.

Businesses, large and small, are having to pivot. I've seen some remarkable stories first hand of how businesses have adapted over the lockdown period. Kids tuition businesses have started providing lessons online through e-learning platforms such as Thinkific and Kajabi. Clothing manufacturers have produced protective clothing for health systems. Local farm shops, butchers, and bakers have started delivering food to those isolating. I even attended an online cocktail masterclass rather than visiting a bar!

Whilst these initiatives might have been necessary and sufficient to get through lockdown, the reality is that many businesses will need to build a new plan for the foreseeable future. They have taken on debt, government stimulus packages are ending, and businesses globally have had to change so that they can prosper in a socially distanced world.

There are three steps to this process:

RESTART – **REBUILD** – **FLOURISH**

Restart – after any crisis like this, businesses need to hit the reset button. This is where the key learnings within the first half of this book will help take you back to the early days of business. You will learn about my 'Dream – Plan – Do – Review' process, and whilst you may not have consciously applied this process before, I would

hope that this book can help you intentionally revisit your dream and your plan, so that you can design a business that works for you.

Rebuild – the latter part of this book is focused on scaling a business. Over the next few years, the economy will be rebuilding itself and this is entirely dependent on new and existing businesses growing simultaneously. The challenges that will face us are significant, as banks will look to strengthen their own balance sheets and will naturally become more risk averse. You will learn about the four pillars of scaling, and this can help kick off your thinking about your funding platform, your growth model, how your team is structured, and how you lead the business through a new age.

Flourish – this bit is down to you! Allow me to help you restart and rebuild – and when your business flourishes, I sincerely hope that you enjoy the ups, having suffered the downs of the entrepreneurial rollercoaster.

A final note for all readers

You will have seen that the subtitle of this book is ‘Control your time, your income, and your life’. I believe that now, more than ever before, we as individuals want to be in control of what we do and how we do it.

Whether we are employed or self-employed, we’ve had a taste of freedom from the nine to five. Many of us have adopted flexible working patterns around homeschooling, have cut the commute, and have found a new love for athleisure rather than formal office wear.

We’ve also all had to use our initiative and internal motivation. We haven’t had a boss looking over our shoulder, but we’ve cracked on and worked harder than ever. For those who have been furloughed, I’ve heard of inspirational stories around volunteering, mentorship and contributing to society. We’ve all taken control in some way over lockdown.

Now, looking forward, we have the opportunity to take control and BOSS IT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would love to say this book is all my work; however, there are far too many people to mention that have come some way towards helping this book come to life.

I'd like to thank the following, in no particular order. Helen Kogan and Chris Cudmore, of Kogan Page, for taking a punt on me and trusting my experience and platform to bring this book to life. Rebecca Bush, for being a wonderfully supportive editor, going over and above my expectations and helping to shape my crazy ideas into something that is readable. My executive board at d&t, Dave Galvin and Claire Law, who help keep my business working without me, and my co-chairman Ben Herbert, for helping me through the journey from director to leader. My mastermind group – you all know who you are – for challenging me, my aspirations, and my beliefs. My coach Dave Holland, who always helps me see things through a different lens, not by giving me the answers but by giving me the questions.

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And I've saved the best to last – my wonderful wife Sarah. Her tolerance, love, understanding, and support has helped me get to the position so that I can write this book, has helped me get on with writing this book, and helps me every day to fulfil my mission of helping others. Thank you, Wifey x