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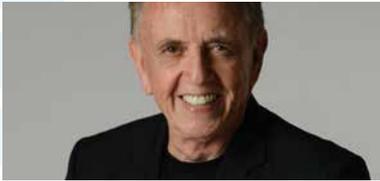
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GROactive

Accelerated Excellence in Business Growth

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This issue's
feature
Shaz speaks to
Paul Dunn



3 TRIVIAL FACTS

1 According to a recent Yahoo! poll 15 percent of Americans believe Barack Obama is Muslim, but he is in fact Christian. He was also a good basketball player in his time!

2 The first television advert in Britain was for Gibbs SR toothpaste in 1955. The advert was apparently very boring, so much so that a journalist, writing for The Times next day, said he'd already forgotten the brand name! Sound familiar?

3 A survey by Co-op Insurance in the UK has concluded that car drivers with the star sign Aries are the most likely to have an accident and those who have a star sign of Sagittarius are the least likely. Arians account for 9% of all accidents car accidents – but this is only slightly higher than the statistical average. So it's probably not worthwhile asking someone their star sign before getting into the car with them!

What Can You Do As The Economy Shows Signs Of Improvement?



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After all the polls and last-minute speeches from political leaders, the Scots have finally taken the decision on whether or not to 'go it alone', breaking away from a union of over 300 years. As you'll now know, the decision was in favour of remaining part of the United Kingdom, although by only a relatively small majority. In the aftermath, the architect of this proposal, Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, has resigned.

Putting on one side for a moment the understandable nationalistic aspirations of the Scottish people, what does it mean to be part of a larger organisation, a position which of course the UK is in, as part of the EEA? This is a particularly significant question at the moment, when we are experiencing the first signs of resurgence in the economy. Is bigger automatically better?

For me, the question is not so much one of size as of shared endeavour and opportunity. Let's face it, when there is a downturn in the economy, the issue becomes one of survival. We've all been running a tight ship in recent years, looking at ways in which we can cut our expenditure, but at the same time striving to maintain the level of service offered to

our customers. Sadly, those businesses that failed to do this have probably disappeared.

So what can you do now, as the economy recovers? Well, first of all, don't take your eye off the ball! No matter how buoyant the market becomes, the lessons learned in the lean times still apply. But at the same time, you need to be alive to opportunities – our guest interviewee makes that point very clearly. I join with him in urging you to define the purpose of your business. It should be so much more now than simply to survive the recession intact.

And how does this link in to my first comments about being part of a larger whole? Simply this; by creating a synergy between business enterprises, whether the relationship is formalised or not, the field of opportunity tends to widen exponentially. By all pulling together (hopefully in the same direction) we can multiply the effect of any one business or organisation. We're entering a period where we can do so much more than just get by, when economics, technology, politics and the business community as a whole can work together to create a better and more prosperous society for all of us.

I for one welcome the outcome of the Scottish referendum and look forward to the UK forging ahead.


Shaz Nawaz



“Set your sights on being remarkable by inspiring”

Paul is a 3-times speaker at TEDx (a programme designed to help communities, organisations and individuals to spark conversation and connection through local TED-like experiences). He's also a Senior Fellow in one of the World's Leading Think Tanks and holds a Lifetime Service Award to the Accounting Profession in the UK. Honoured as a Social Innovation Fellow in his new home of Singapore, this is something he shares with film-star and philanthropist Jet Li and Walmart Chairman, Rob Walton.

Paul recently featured in Forbes Magazine alongside Sir Richard Branson in a global piece on 'disrupters' in business. His book, *The Firm of the Future*, is regarded as a breakthrough book for professional knowledge firms.

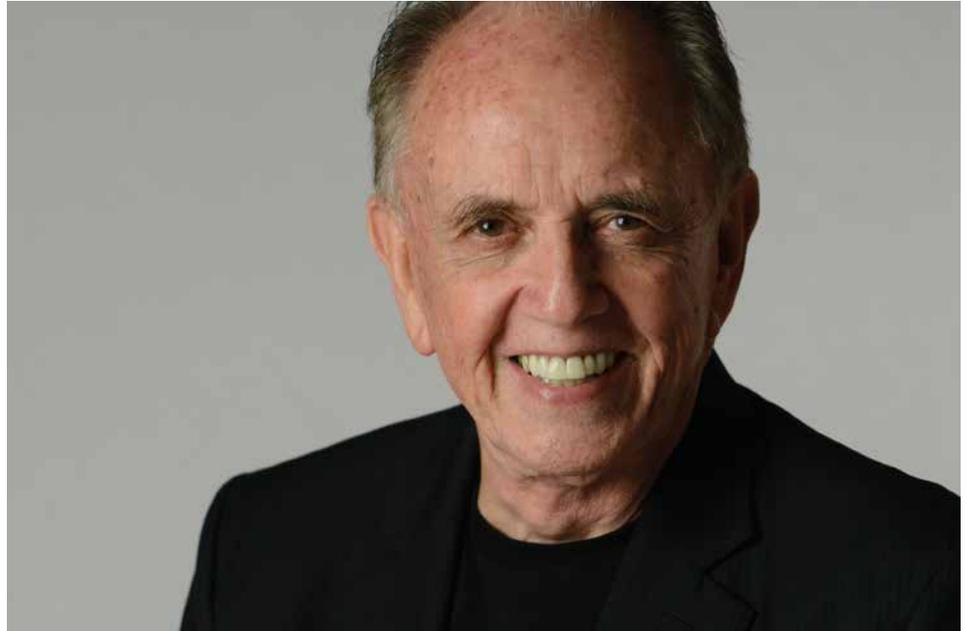
So what did Paul share with Shaz about his successful life...

What are some of the key ideas of success you've learned and how could my readers use these?

It's vital to understand why you do what you do and to do this you need clarity and differentiation. Make sure that, whatever you're doing, you're adding value, and always be on the lookout for opportunities to connect with individuals, organisations, ideas and concepts.

Have you experienced any failures along the way, and what did you learn from them?

I see these as opportunities and not failures! Don't be afraid of making mistakes – make lots of them and find the gifts in your mistakes.



Paul Dunn

What do you see as the opportunities for the future in business?

There's never been a better time to be an SME. The world's changing and more opportunities are available. Technology has made life easier and opened up the marketplace. There's an abundance of opportunity.

What is the one thing in business, if you had to get rid of everything else, that you'd keep, and why would it be this one thing?

I'd choose two – one being my team and the other being the customers I serve.

Of all the books you have ever read, which ones stand out as the ones you would recommend, and why?

The E-Myth by Michael Gerber because it describes what a real business should be doing.

Purple Cow by Seth Godin – it's about being remarkable.

Things a little bird told me by Biz Stone (founder of Twitter).

Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg.

If there was one skill you would teach to everyone else, what would it be, and why?

The skill of connection to a team, to customers, to anyone. Set your sights on being remarkable by inspiring.

What do you see as the main

attributes which make people more successful, regardless of their definition of success?

A passionate belief to give and share all they know.

You must deal with lot of different organisations and companies. What in your opinion are the biggest or most common mistakes they make, and how would you suggest they do things differently?

They forget their purpose, and they put profit before they put purpose. Purpose helps you make profit because profit is a result of sales less cost.

Read the research at Conscious Capitalism www.consciouscapitalism.org and the book by the same title by John Mackay.

What do you see as the next great technological breakthrough?

Greater speed and greater specialism.

What one question should I have asked you, which I didn't ask?

'What's the quote on my desk?'

I'm trying to be the person my dog thinks I am – Stephen Covey.

What are your three top tips for business owners?

Purpose, differentiation and be remarkable with gratitude.

For more information go to www.B1G1.com and see the video.

Zero-hours contracts

These are contracts which do not oblige the employer to offer any minimum level of work – the employees work on an ‘as needed’ basis. Clearly attractive to businesses, they remove the need to ensure that an employee working a regular number of hours is economically viable to the business and also allow flexibility where the volume of available work varies.

There are however a number of points you need to recognise. First and foremost, someone with a zero-hours contract will usually have ‘worker’ employment status and as such will acquire the ‘core’ employment rights and benefits. Depending upon how the working relationship develops, the worker may acquire ‘employee’ status, with additional rights.

The zero-hours contract must be borne out in practice. If what is stated to be a zero-hours contract in fact results in regular employment, you may find it difficult to substantiate it as zero-hours. It is possible to structure a zero-hours contract so that it only exists when the worker actually has work, and in this case a full calendar week (Sunday to Saturday) without work will constitute a break in employment.

And finally – don’t forget that anti-discrimination legislation applies!

Contact us on 01733 555667 if you would like further advice.

Please note that the advice is intended to be generalised and may not apply to your specific circumstances. aa Chartered Accountants therefore accept no liability for any loss incurred as a result of any action taken or omission made in reliance on the above unless specific prior advice has been sought and given by aa Chartered Accountants.



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TIP TOP HOT TIP

for business growth

Manage the Business Manager



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Many of you will be owner-managers, or managers at a high level. No doubt you’ve all had training and experience in managing your teams – but who manages you?

Self-management is an essential skill if your business is going to grow to its maximum potential. The first step is to ask yourself – do you know what the ideal manager looks like? You may already have spent a lot of time in working out your ideal customer profile – now it’s time to turn those diagnostic skills on yourself. What skills should the manager have? What about personality, personal attributes and experience? You probably use these terms all the time when you’re carrying out recruitment or staff appraisals, so try to see yourself from the outside.

Next – once you know what the ideal manager looks like – do a gap analysis on your role. Can you really perform all the tasks that go with your managerial position? Are there parts that could be performed more effectively by someone else? If you still come up with gaps in necessary skills – how will you acquire these?

Don’t, ever, see a gap in your expertise as a weakness. Knowledge is power and that applies to self-knowledge just as much as any other sort of knowledge.

Have you thought of coaching or mentoring? Think about it – are there any successful sportspeople who don’t have a coach? Any successful performers who don’t have a teacher or mentor? Why should business management be any different? A coach will train you in specific areas, tell you where you may be going wrong, and keep you ‘up to the mark’. A mentor’s role is to act as a sounding board and help you to help yourself to develop.

World-Changing Thought for Business

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, better known as Le Corbusier, (6 October 1887 – 27 August 1965), was a Swiss-French architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called ‘modern architecture’. In 1920, he adopted his pseudonym of Le Corbusier as a reflection of his belief that anyone could re-invent himself.

In a five-decade career, one of his chief interests was urban planning. He piloted efficient ways to house large numbers of people in response to the urban housing crisis, believing that his new, modern architectural forms would provide an organisational solution. This included large blocks of cell-like individual apartments stacked one on top of one another, all including a living room, bedrooms, and kitchen, as well as a garden terrace. Not content with that he soon moved into studies for entire cities.

He developed a five-point plan for modern architecture – moving the structure off the ground, using non-supporting walls as facades, an open floor plan, unencumbered views, and a green area as a roof garden. Only a few years earlier, his concepts could not have been realised, but what made them possible was a new material – reinforced concrete. Maybe to our 21st century eyes tall blocks of dwelling and the somewhat brutalist appearance of concrete are things to be avoided, but in their day the designs were revolutionary and practical.

So what does this teach us?

First, that every new discovery provides an opportunity – as reinforced concrete drove Le Corbusier’s revolutionary design concepts.

That even revolutionary ideas do not last forever (Le Corbusier is now somewhat ‘old hat’) but they can have dramatic lasting effect that changes the future.

That anyone can re-invent himself (but not just by changing your name!)

Spotlight on... Jan Richardson

Jan Richardson of Total Clothing gives us her latest news.

Following the opening of our brand new showroom on Oundle Rd (opposite the Cross Keys pub) in June, we have had an amazing two months! We are a very seasonal business supplying uniforms and at this time of year, school uniforms in particular. We managed to achieve a 45% increase in turnover over the last two months.

To help achieve this, we took on 12 summer students ranging in age from 16 to 21 and they have been great. We were very sorry to see the last two go back to uni at the end of September. However our new apprentice has started with us full time. She came on work experience with us last year aged 15 and we snapped her up! In addition we have just recruited a new showroom member of staff and a new sales support person for the office. All recruited via the power of social networking. Thank you Facebook!



"We have been working with Shaz on our One Page Plan for over two years now. It has been great - increasing turnover, profitability and ensuring we measure other important figures (including working out a method for initially hard-to-measure features) and helping to focus myself and the staff. We run two plans - one for production figures and one for more general numbers and sales. Different people within the business are responsible for managing the different drivers and it works. Staff buy into it and we all work towards the targets. We discuss the progress and development of it regularly with Shaz, being continually challenged along the way by him.

In addition, I see him as a sounding board for strategy decisions, and talking over issues and decisions which I find challenging is always helpful. He doesn't give the answers but he challenges me to think of them in different ways which is extremely useful."

Spotlight on... Harry Jenkins

Harry Jenkins, Trainee Accountant, on why he chose an apprenticeship over university.

I was 17, just released from Peterborough United Football Club and had finished school with six A's and four B's at GCSE. The choice was go on to 6th Form and A-Levels with the end goal of University or a placement in an Accounting apprenticeship.

Now I didn't take this decision lightly. I knew I wanted to be an accountant, so should I start my career now, or gain A-Levels and a degree first? After weighing up the pros and cons, the apprenticeship option outweighed the University by quite a big margin. University is quite clearly the "stereotypical" way to a good future but I feel it's not one that is necessary for many, given the high level of fees and the sheer amount of time the degree takes with no real job experience. With the apprenticeship scheme I will be fully qualified in AAT by the age of 20 with three years on-the-job experience behind me, which will open doors to many



opportunities and really will give a strong spine to my CV. Yet if I had opted do a degree I would be 21, with no experience of working in a firm and having to see what life in an accountancy firm is really like, with a hefty overdraft.

Not only has the apprenticeship scheme helped me with my education in accounting but also my knowledge of business and the ability to talk to clients and prospects has grown tenfold. I learn something new every day and I feel as if I am constantly growing, into what I'd like to feel is a successful career in accounting. I started off with the very basic tasks like data entry and I'm now producing year end accounts and finalising accounts, as an ongoing progression of learning. And my training has helped me socially in how I conduct myself and my business etiquette.

Regardless of the choice I made, my motto is always that if you want something you have to go out and get it, whether that's an apprenticeship or going to University.

If you have tips on business growth which you'd like to share, or any comments for us, or points you would like to share with our readership please send them to the Editor on hilary@aa-accountants.co.uk for inclusion in our next edition.

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With Thanks

Thanks are due to Abdul Aziz of Adam's Cash and Carry Ltd, who has recommended two clients to us recently. Here's a photo of him receiving a Kindle from Shaz!



EVENTS & News

We've just held another Accelerated Profits Forum - this time on a more technical topic which affects everyone - the new Auto-Enrolment procedure for workplace pensions. We had a great turnout to hear our guest speaker from AVN, and a most interesting open forum discussion.

Our next event is a seminar to be held on Tuesday 25th November on the topic of Goal-Setting. To secure your place, please contact Nikki or Harry on **01733 555667** or by email on nikki@aa-accountants.co.uk

We have regular bookings to run events for clients and prospective clients, for example on the Business One Page Plan. If you are interested in hosting an event on a business topic, please contact Shaz Nawaz on **01733 555667** or on shaz@aa-accountants.co.uk

Inspirational quote:
Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right

Henry Ford



committed to

GROWING your PROFITS