

BUSY AS HELL. BUT IS THE BUSINESS ACTUALLY WORKING?

Aaron Kemp on the hidden problems that keep tradies busy, stressed and unsure where the money is really going.

"It's not about landing jobs that have a big bill. It's about finding the work that's still good after you take everything into consideration."

REAL TRADIE PROBLEMS. PRACTICAL FIXES.



Five problems. One underlying issue: the business is running the tradie.

The original *Tradie Talk* feature follows Aaron Kemp as he works through real operating problems with tradies Adam and Jayson Conceicao.

The situations are different, but they all point back to control: control of time, control of who gets quoted, control of cash, control of margin and control of who you take advice from.

Aaron's approach is deliberately practical. Set a boundary. Build a qualification process. Know the minimum cash number. Understand the result of the forecast. Choose a mentor who will get hands-on.

"More than anything, tradies need to be able to recognise when they are struggling and reach out to someone who can help."

AARON KEMP

01 BOUNDARIES Work cannot be the only thing in your life.	02 QUALIFY FIRST Stop quoting jobs that were never right for you.
03 CASH BUFFER Know the number that keeps the business safe.	04 RIGHT MENTOR Cookie-cutter coaching is not enough.
05 MARGIN Big invoices do not automatically mean good jobs.	

01

THE PROBLEM

"Helping us set boundaries meant work wasn't the only thing in our lives."

THE SOLUTION

Aaron's advice was to set a clear clock-off time. Once that boundary is reached, there is no more work talk.

His comparison is simple: in a normal workplace, colleagues do not keep ringing each other and working right up until sleep. A trade business should not demand that either.

DID IT WORK?

"And that's important!" Adam says.

EDITOR'S TAKEAWAY

A boundary is an operating system for the owner. If there is no end to the workday, the business has no natural limit.

02

THE PROBLEM

"I am wasting time quoting every job and never actually on the tools."

THE SOLUTION

"This is a trap a lot of tradies fall into," Aaron says.

The fix is a qualification process before the quote: a questionnaire after the initial contact, or better still, a form on the website. It filters out jobs that are not a fit while giving prospects a chance to see examples of the work.

DID IT WORK?

"What we set up really streamlined the process and meant I wasn't wasting time chasing quotes that weren't right for me," Adam says.

EDITOR'S TAKEAWAY

Quoting is expensive when the lead was never qualified. Filter before you invest the owner's time.

03

THE PROBLEM

"What happens if work slows down for a while?"

THE SOLUTION

Aaron worked with Jayson Conceicao, owner and electrician with Xceed Electrical in Sydney, around a move that could create a period without income.

His advice applies to seasonal lows too: figure out what the business needs in the bank account at all times, even if everything goes wrong.

Once that minimum is known, build a strategic plan around marketing, networking or other activity to keep the business above it.

DID IT WORK?

"Once that line was there, it took a huge load off my mind!" Jayson says.

EDITOR'S TAKEAWAY

A cash buffer turns uncertainty into a threshold. The owner knows when action is needed before the situation becomes a crisis.

04

THE PROBLEM

"I'd tried business coaching plans, but it was a cookie-cutter that didn't work for me."

THE SOLUTION

Aaron says the right person has to understand the individual business, where it is at and what it needs, then build the program around that.

He also argues for practical support: "If you can't do it, I'll get in there and do it for you." The owner does not necessarily need to fill out the cash-flow forecast; they need to know the result and how to keep it moving in the right direction.

DID IT WORK?

"It absolutely worked for us," Jayson says. "You need someone hands-on and doing it with you because it's all a new skill you have to learn."

EDITOR'S TAKEAWAY

Advice is only useful when it can cross the gap into implementation.

A big bank balance can hide a weak business.

THE PROBLEM

"Work was coming in, but the cash flow didn't seem to be there."

Aaron says tradies can be highly money-driven while still avoiding the figures that explain why the business is bleeding cash.

The trap is watching the big number in the bank balance without accounting properly for what has to happen underneath it: wages, goods and overheads before gross profit, then the margin needed to leave a healthy net result.

THE TARGET IN THE ARTICLE

50%	GROSS PROFIT The level Aaron says allows room for a sustainable net result.
20%	NET PROFIT The outcome Aaron links to that gross-profit position.

"It made us realise it's not about landing jobs that have a big bill, it's about finding the work that is still good after you take everything into consideration."

ADAM

THE EDITORIAL POINT Revenue is not the same as margin. Margin is not the same as cash. The business owner needs visibility across all three.

Qualify your business mentor exactly the same way you qualify your clients.

That is Aaron's closing advice in the original feature. The point is not simply to find a coach. It is to find the person who can understand the business, work with the owner and help make sure the business survives.

01

DO THEY UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS?

The program should start with where the business is actually at, not a generic template.

02

WILL THEY GET HANDS-ON?

The support should extend beyond advice when implementation is the real bottleneck.

03

CAN THEY MAKE THE NUMBERS CLEAR?

The owner needs to understand the result, the risk and the next move.

04

CAN YOU WORK TOGETHER?

Aaron's advice is to ask the questions that establish whether the fit works both ways.

"Ask them the questions to see whether you can work with them and whether they can work with you to make sure you survive."



Re-edited and redesigned from the supplied one-page Tradie Talk feature. All factual claims, quotations and named examples in this booklet are grounded in that source.