**Byron O’Reilly S2 Ep 15 Transcript**

**Matt** [00:00:00] So welcome, Byron, to Power Up Your Business podcast, mate, great to have you on board.

**Byron** [00:00:04] Thanks, Matt. Thanks for having me mate.

**Matt** [00:00:06] Well, I'm definitely keen to hear your story. And it's been a short story in relative terms from a business owner perspective, owning your own operation. Again kicking off [00:00:16]premier gas and plumbing [0.8s] in Adelaide in the early 2019.

[00:00:21] Yes, in 2019.

**Matt** [00:00:24] And prior to that, you've been obviously working as a tradesman and I think, you had a couple of other little sort of businesses. But in terms of the current operation, fully fledged operating, you are now a better part of two and a half years.

**Byron** [00:00:37] Yes that's right, I was in another business before, so yeah, just branched out, got out on my own and yeah started the beginning 2019 and it's been a journey ever since.

**Matt** [00:00:46] And again for our listeners out there and the bulk of our listeners, who are business owners and they understand the highs and lows of operating a business, how was the first, say, three months, six months, 12 months on your journey when you fully immersed yourself in to operating your business, how did that look like?

**Byron** [00:01:03] Yes, it was full on from the start. I started with myself and two other guys, two employees straightaway. So we sort of had a bit of work and we jumped straight in and it was just head down and go for it, which, yes, sort of took its toll after a little while, it sort of got on top of me. It was good. We had plenty of work but didn't really have any processes in place. And so I quickly found that out.

**Matt** [00:01:28] [00:01:28]And caught in [0.0s] that initial [00:01:29]trap where [0.1s] you try to say yes to everyone. You try every customer, you think is, hey, look, I'm going to do work for these sort of clients, you've got to say yes to them. You've got a feeling of saying yes and thinking that if you please them, then it's going to help you. But how did you find it when you tried saying yes to everyone, how did that look like in terms of your lifestyle? And hours working?

**Byron** [00:01:47] Yeah, spot on like at the beginning, you just say yes, you take everything on board and yes. Then, you know, you sort of work out that you can't be, you know, in three different places at once and do everything. So, yes, family life struggled and social life struggled, definitely in the first year, you sort of think, oh, you know, I'll put in and do the hard yards now and it gets better. But if you don't sort of plan and set up the right way, you do come [00:02:12]unstuck. [0.0s]

**Matt** [00:02:13] I like that in terms of how you frame that. I'll just work hard now for the first six months and 12 months, then everything will be fine but it never is right unless you make that the change. Coming back, how was pressure because at the same time, you had the first born, first child?

**Byron** [00:02:30] Yes, I had a one-year-old obviously my wife was taking care of that and she was going back to work too. So it was hard like, you know, wearing a lot of different hats, trying to be, you know, a good dad and a husband and a business owner and employ a couple of staff and make sure that they're, you know, okay and looked after as well. So plus, you are trying to get work on the tools and trying to be the bookkeeper, the admin, the everything.

**Matt** [00:02:56] Candlestick maker doing everything.

**Matt** [00:02:59] They're all those things, like when you start, there are unforseen that you need to get a handle on those. You just generally think I'm good on the tools. I'll start my business and that can be any trade, it is the same. I'm good on the tools. I've got a good customer base. I know, technically I'm good, I'm will just start a business. But some of those other underlying business systems, processes and tasks and responsibilities and compliance that you're unaware of, that sucks up all your time.

**Byron** [00:03:28] 100 percent yeah and you only find out the hard way or most people sort of do till they jump in and start doing it.

**Matt** [00:03:32] Now for you, one of the key things, which is unique in your story, which I'll give you credit for, is that you've tapped us on the shoulder and you approached myself and Cube Performance to give you some assistance in business from an early stage. And a lot of people in our community that they'll see us five years before they jump on board or some ten years before they make a change. But you jumped on board pretty early. When you first saw us, was it in 2019 you attended one of our training sessions, was it 2019 or 2018?

**Byron** [00:04:05] Yeah, 2019, I think it would have been just after the new financial year, I started, I went to a training session, recognised pretty quickly that this is pretty good and I want to, you know, you can help me. What you were saying was the tradie mindset syndrome is what you're talking about heavily. And I took the book and read your book from that. And, yeah, definitely felt what you were saying was happening to me. So, I definitely want to get on board and see where I could go.

**Matt** [00:04:33] So that resonated like in terms of that, the same story and especially around that tradie mindset where it's saying yes to everyone being busy all the time. And really, you were getting into that stage where the business was starting to run your life essentially, you become enslaved to the business. But again, as I said, I really credit to you from an early stage to say, you know what, I need help because I can't keep going because you could have easily been sitting here now three years in the same position with a lot more grey hairs.

**Byron** [00:05:03] Oh, definitely, yes, I reckon if we didn't go down this path together, yeah, I don't know where I would have been. Work was definitely consuming me. And, you know, like our first meeting, our first conversation that we had was in the garage of my house, like that's where I was working from at the time and yes that was full on.

**Matt** [00:05:22] Because I want to jump to where you are now and the great progression you've made. So one of the key things, first big step you made from getting out of that tradie mindset to really start to build that business that serves you, which is where you're on now and on a fast track to really building a sustainable business that can deliver that lifestyle of choice, was jumping on our programme [00:05:43]about late 2019 [1.1s] around there. One of the key things that we obviously required early was process, as you alluded to, making sure that how can we get the business that can run without you. And for the listeners out there, what we try and say for all business owners, how can you actually sack yourself from all these tasks? You basically want to make yourself redundant from all these tasks where you know, in the early days, [00:06:08]Byron correct, [0.8s] you had to be across invoicing, answering the phone, every call, all the scheduling, all the accounts, all the payables agree?

**Byron** [00:06:17] Yeah, I was doing all of that. So it was very difficult. I think you want to reinvent yourself each time. I think that's what you sort of want to look to do and that's what you taught, you guys have taught me to do.

**Matt** [00:06:28] And it's good, I like the way that you frame that, the idea that reinvention, because you do as a business owner, you've got to reinvent yourself and you've got to and this is where a lot of business owners struggle with. They struggle to actually stand back and let other people in.. Because I'm a control freak. I've got to do it all. I don't trust anyone. And I'm the only one that knows all this. So blah, blah, blah, you heard it all before. But again, it's great that you realised early on that you can't keep doing what you're doing and again, making yourself redundant and allowing other people to come on board. And that's really led us to where we are now and a great position where you've got great admin support. And that's where I want to really frame for everyone, our listeners, is that you need that good lieutenant or that good admin support to help drive the office. Now, this is probably as close to about 12 months ago now where we really identified that we needed that admin support that admin manager, essentially it was about 12 months ago, agree?

**Byron** [00:07:25] Yeah, it was just about this time last year when we started really talking about it and sort of putting some feelers out, starting to network and look for someone.

**Matt** [00:07:34] And talk about some of the key process we did there. Now, it's not about and we always talk about hire slow, fire fast. So it's not about I need someone. So you just get someone, who appears, fits the bill and you get them into the chair and start to work away. What you did, which is really good, again, that hire slow mentality. We're making sure we get the right, function role, very clear in terms of the responsibilities, the tasks, the KPIs and also the type of person that we needed in that chair. What was it, how'd you go going through that process when you're really trying to define that role and making sure you've identified all the clear tasks so that when the person starts, there are clear expectations?

**Byron** [00:08:15] That's right, that's where we started, so, you know, you and I had a chat and we sort of set out the function role and what we needed someone to sit in that chair to do as an admin staff. And once we sort of defined what we needed, then, you know, we then set out a checklist as well for onboarding and what we're going to do once we found someone to start. And then we started talking to some potential candidates. And so to see how they fit and, yes that's sort of the way we worked. I mean, we started this time last year and Audrey didn't start till the end of January, early February. So we did put in the time and make sure that we, you know, she was suitable. We were going to work for her. She was going to work for us here.

**Matt** [00:08:59] I think that's a good point for everyone to take on board. It was essentially a six month process before we had someone in the chair, again coming back that hire slow mentality and again, just sort of double back in terms to really clarify and [00:09:11]this is for people [0.3s] to make notes on this. Number one, before you hire, you need very clear function role or some people might call it a job description where it very clearly identifies all the associated roles and responsibilities for that new hire, because on the back of that too, Byron, with all those roles and responsibilities, you had to make sure that there was an associated process, you know, job management systems and all the processes that was set up so that when the new person come on board, Audrey, in this case, that she could grab the keys straight away and run with those processes. And how did you have to go through again, going through all these processes to ensure that all the IP and all the knowledge that you had could effectively be passed on and mentored with the new hire?

**Byron** [00:09:56] Yes, definitely, so that's one of the great things about setting up the function role is that you can break that down into how it looks when someone was coming on board, when Audrey was coming on board. And you can break it down into the small steps that's needed to set up like, you know, [00:10:10]Servicemate [0.0s] and Xero and invoicing, all the different tasks that were going to be expected. You can really then break it down into what's needed and then set up a process, which is what we did. We broke everything down and made it easy. And, you know, at the same time, obviously she was the first admin staff that I'd put on. So it's sort of you know, there's a lot of information there that had to be conveyed, you know, from my head onto paper or onto a document so that it can be followed so that was a lengthy process in itself. But once it was done, it was great, it was smooth.

**Matt** [00:10:45] We are speaking with [00:10:46]Byron O'Reilly from Premier Gas and Plumbing. [2.5s] If you'd like to learn how you can earn more with a lot less stress, please pick up a free copy of my book, Power Up Your Tradie Business, only pay for shipping, go to www.powerupyourbusiness.com.au/book Today you and enter the code podcast all lowercase. Well, the key thing that we're talking about now is that you built an asset. You've got all this mumbo jumbo that was in your head. It's now out on paper. And the cool thing is because you're dictating the process is that and Audrey is a great fit, which is great. But if Audrey does leave or whatever happens in the future and Audrey's obviously, the great thing about Audrey is that she's building on those processes as well, which is great, you give her the autonomy to really tighten those processes up, is that if Audrey leaves, she's not going to leave with all the IP. And that's what often happens is you hire [00:11:42]maybe even a good leading hand. [1.0s] You hire a good bookkeeper, admin person, but you haven't defined the roles and responsibilities, they just come in there and make them as they go. And often when they leave, they'll take all the IP with them in the process with them because it hasn't been very clearly mapped out or implemented into the business. The great thing about it now is that forever and a day, we've got the base of that, those processes. So it's really that asset we're really building a core asset. On that, too, how important was it then with that function role, using that function role and clearly, which also spoke about the KPIs in there, how important was that when you were starting to recruit and interviewing potential candidates? You know, having that as a guide to very clearly state the expectations, how important was that to use that as a reference?

**Byron** [00:12:31] It was great because, you know, you sort of then have some questions to ask in your interview stage. You know, you can ask that, you know, how does this fit for you? Do you know how to use this? Or, you know, it'll weed out candidates that aren't going to be a good fit for your business. You know, obviously, you're looking for what you need, which will be different to what another company might need. So if you have those clear defined function role, it really makes it a lot easier, quicker to weed out the ones that aren't going to be suitable. And then the ones, you know, the ones that are definitely makes it a lot easier. And also moving forward, like once you have that, like you said, it's an asset, so you can use it again and again, how much you need too.

**Matt** [00:13:13] Yes, I like the way it's about weeding out and [00:13:15]what we turn that deselection [1.6s] process too often people in the recruitment process, you think, it's about us selecting the employees, selecting a team member? But what we want to do is, yes, we want to make because we're so clear in our expectations, we want to know that we've got, it's going to be a challenging role, there are KPIs to be met. You're going to be accountable. We essentially want potential candidates to [00:13:36]deselect [0.0s] themselves, put their hand up from the get go so it's too hard. And you just say thank you, [00:13:40]thanks a lot. We are now. [0.8s] Move on,

**Byron** [00:13:43] Spot on, yes, because you can lose a lot of time with that, so if someone can identify and say, I'm not really going to fit in this business in this role, then it's easier for you at the end of the day.

**Matt** [00:13:54] And we don't take it personally. Don't take it personally. They don't want to work for us. Think of it like, well done. We've done our job and we get a number of people in our community, clients that get a little bit taken aback when people don't accept the offer of a role. And I say, look, that's a great thing. It means that you've done your job well and you've made it really clear and they've deselected themselves. And we want to know that from the get go before they start rather than six weeks in, six months in. And that's a key thing again, where tradie mindset, it's sort of, it's all about hiring, whereas business performance mindset, it's about deselecting because we're playing a long game. And hence this is why it took six months before we got someone in the chair. Now, how is it with going through let's just talk about Audrey now so Audrey, it's great, since February, just over six months in a row now, and absolutely firing and really driving a lot of value and a lot of support for yourself, in that interview process, how much confidence did you give, Audrey, because you were so professional and so clear, what was Audrey's interpretation of you as a leader in the business because you were so the expectations were very up front?

**Byron** [00:15:03] Yes, we did reflect on this, Audrey and I, together. And I think that was one of the things that she said made her feel comfortable and coming on board as well. She had been at another, her previous employment, I think, for like 15 years. So she'd been there for a very long time. And she was very well regarded in that previous employment. But coming across, you know, to a business that had only been around just for two years to have this function role and sort of an onboarding checklist and everything, all the T's crossed and the I's dotted really made her feel comfortable about making that step as well into leaving a business that she'd been involved with for 15 years. So it really made, you know, [00:15:43]ask to [0.3s] come across professional and sort of give her confidence that when she comes, she's not just going to be thrown in a role that just been created and sort of work it out, you know, which is well, you know, I've definitely seen some people do like, I'll put admin staff on it and you just sort it out but that wasn't going to happen here.

**Matt** [00:16:02] And you're spot on where for Audrey, it's a big step. It's a potential big risk. Going from a well-established business, like you say to a business that has been running just on three years or even less than three years at the time. And this is like, what am I going to be getting myself into now, for my personal experience in the corporate world, you know, working with big organisations, small organisations, the size of the business has got no guarantees about the quality of the systems and processes. I've worked for big corporates in the systems and processes have been a basket case. And this is where I want everyone from a listener perspective is let's just make it great in terms of your recruiting process, build up what I call your employer branding that when people sort of look at your business and your brand, it's not about the size, it's about the quality of your intent, your intent in the processes, the expectations and how you go about dealing with every communication dialogue because from that first impression that you've had with Audrey, you know, which is being a professional, and then we had to make sure that it was the same all the way through. And then I want to double back now, now we've, again, for everyone, we've put the letter of offer out there. Audrey has accepted. Now the big thing that then and credit to Byron too, Byron worked really hard on that induction checklist. So what I'm talking to everyone out there, listening is that what happens on that first day when Audrey comes in on that first day? A lot of people when a new hire comes in and especially an admin person, they come in and they'll get thrown in the chair. There is my Xero login. There is your [00:17:37]ServiceMate or Simpro [0.0s] or whatever it is and sort of go start scheduling. The phone's going to call. See you later. And that's pretty much what happens 95% of the time and it just rolls in and generally becomes a disaster. And most times the [00:17:52]employees are happy. The new team members are happy. [1.7s] The business owners are not happy. No one's happy in the sense that. [00:17:59]No, [0.0s] as many expectations, because there was not clarity around what am I supposed to do and what are the objectives of the business now. With this checklist, identifying, you know, making sure you go through the employment agreement, making sure you go through all the company handbook, sign it, review it, sign it, explain it, go through the set ups of all the systems and processes, meet the team members. And this is all in a very clear checklist. So from the first day when Audrey starts, she's got a very clear or here is week one. This is what week one's going to entail. How important was that for you, mate, in terms of getting that set up and in your own mind planning that week and then week two as well so just that we hit the ground running?

**Byron** [00:18:43] Yes that was great, putting that effort in early to develop that checklist was probably the best thing that I did or you and I did. We did it together and it really sort of I could see written down on paper how the first week would look, you know, Audrey could see how it would look, what we were going to do. And it really forces you to put in the time and make sure that she's up to speed. She's comfortable. I'm comfortable. Obviously, we're going to be working together as a team. So that was definitely one of the most important things was to set up that checklist and have it right from the start. Just so you know, everything's, there's no grey areas, I suppose that was the biggest thing, you know, having her come in and what is she going to do on the first day or the second day or the third day? Like, how does it look? There was no grey areas there. Everything was black and white, it just made it a lot easier.

**Matt** [00:19:36] And the key thing here is we want to make sure that, you know, Audrey was supported. We wanted to make sure that she felt comfortablee from the get go and that she made the right choice. And she was really to commit to the, you know, really commit to the organisation and our goals. And I think what that does too is and this is where we talk about the highest low. And would you agree, because we have that clear checklist and it was a long checklist of things that needed to be done, is that would you agree that forced you to get your shit together and make sure all these things were done? [00:20:10]So, oh, how good to get that Akhalgori [1.4s] that your email address is, your logins just all these little things that often a desk, your computer, all these little things that often get forgotten about.

**Byron** [00:20:23] All the small things definitely, yes, all the small things that you can just miss even such a thing like, you know, one of the things I had on there was get a prepaid Visa card for a certain amount. So when Audrey come she can sort of you know, there were always a few things that, you know, she needed to get like, you know, for example, a keyboard that she liked, you know, just those little things that really make her feel comfortable. I wouldn't have thought about that, you know, beforehand, you know, just really sort of have everything ready to go because she was coming into a business where I was, you know, obviously needed an admin staff. We were flat out heaps of work, phone was ringing left, right and centre. You know, that could be pretty scary in that first week if you throw someone straight in the deep end. And I think, oh, what am I doing here? Why am I here? So really having that checklist kept the peace, kept everything calm, kept all the processes aligned, really gave her support and me confidence in what we were doing.

**Matt** [00:21:18] I think that's key, keeping it calm. It wasn't like, the last thing you want to do is have someone come into like a fireball and it's just like chaos. And so we've done it. You've done that really well. How would you now talk about has it transpired since that early February, you know, through to July, we're now coming into October. And so it's nearly six months down the track, how would you say the output and your collaboration and just your peace of mind generally now, because you've done the hard yards again, we invest all that time to get it right, what are sort of the rewards that you're looking at now?

**Byron** [00:21:58] Yes, it's been great. It's definitely been successful. Without a doubt. Things are running smoother. You know, we've been able to delagate a lot of jobs. Audrey's taking a lot of load off and I can concentrate on other things in that business, you know, not being the scheduler, not sending all the invoices and not chasing payments. Just even the guys are finding it so much more smoother with their jobs getting booked. If there need to be changed, she's dealing with it. She's doing all that sort of stuff. It's not on, you know, being reactive, so to speak, definitely being proactive now. We're jumping on the front foot and it's definitely made a world of difference. It's giving me confidence back in my life back as well, so to speak.

**Matt** [00:22:41] So that's been the big thing we've been working on, and that's where we are with everyone out there. The whole thing about running a business is to actually generate a lifestyle of choice. And it was pretty evident that your lifestyle was not balanced, right? It was not sustainable.

**Byron** [00:22:54] It wasn't of choice that's for sure.

**Matt** [00:22:56] It wasn't a choice. So we really had to really factor, in some key success habits, which is around, you know, trying to stop early on, trying to check out at four o'clock, trying to make sure in the morning you go do your training or your exercise. And the great thing about is having Audrey there as a support mechanism and also as a sounding board to help you make that happen. Potentially, again, you'd always be called in, after hours or yeah, you'd never had that opportunity before, whereas now you can start factoring those success habits and that balance into your life.

**Byron** [00:23:30] Yes, definitely, like I can schedule myself out for a block if I need to put some time in somewhere and do something or go for a meeting or meet up with potential customers and clients. We can do that now. I don't have to worry about my phone going off in my pocket, you know, every five minutes. It's been great. Audrey has really taken to it like a [00:23:47]duck to water. [0.0s] And she's definitely changed the business here. And that comes back to her and, credit to her for what she's done, but also comes back to the prep work in the beginning as well.

**Matt** [00:23:58] Because I want to just to clarify there, and I know a lot of people out there like and I see a lot of businesses they've got admin people, they've got a lot of admin people, but they're still reactive. They're still all over the place. They're still, you know, it's like they got no admin support there because of the lack of clarity in systems and process and again that lack of pre work that was done, again, there was no hiring slow. It's just like I'm busy, get someone in. And what I say to everyone, take your time even if you've got to wait six months before you get the right person and the right systems and processes in place, because otherwise you will still be that reactive and still be working hard. Whereas as opposed to where you're at right now, you've got that support. And again, you know that I'm pretty straightforward when I say knock off at four o'clock. You do not need to be working. Free up the weekends. Get family time on the weekends. Everyone, out there, like it's a bit like trying to extract, have to extract you out of there because you just, it's amazing how you can just get hardwired into these habits and you go, why am I doing this?

**Byron** [00:25:00] It's so easy. You don't understand until you're in there and someone pulls you up and says, you know, you shouldn't be doing that, you should be doing this or you know, Sunday should be with your family. You know, you need to go and do bath time and get home and do bath time with the kids, you know, till someone actually tells you a make you and then you realise once you've had a taste of it, you realise, okay, wow, you know, this is what I've been doing for the last two years. Just puting my head down and, you know, just sort of more to it than that. So you've got to make your business work for you.

**Matt** [00:25:26] That's right and definitely one of [00:25:27]my [0.0s] that business serve you as a business owner. But again, credit to you in an early stage of your business listening and making those hard changes at the time and you know, we had some quite firm discussions or assertive discussions that I like to say. So non negotiable, you're doing this right, get out of here. You're not helping anyone. I've got to work till nine o'clock at night, no you don't. It's a credit to you making these changes. And again, coming back now to because you mentioned before about the confidence that you've got and, you know, some of the stats that we've got in terms of rating yourself and because you've now got that support. Confidence in the future is now nearly 8 out of 10. It's a big improvement from where it was. And the big thing to which I want to sort of touch on, because you've got that support, you're able to then really work on the team. So one of the things you rated highly now is team ownership. So that's really, you know, 8 out of 10 as well. And, you know, you talk about you're able to now get the team to really buy into the company culture. And how important is it to, again, having that support in the office? Say with Audrey, who's been around a long time, been involved and seen a lot of business cultures, having her as an assistant as well to support you and back you up to reaffirm in our terminology the "way we do it here" to the team. How important is that being in terms of building that team ownership?

**Byron** [00:26:46] Yes, it's been great. So like obviously having her on board and like I said before, taking care of a lot of the admin. It mean,s I've been able to concentrate more on, you know, we refine the "way we do it here." We really got that up to scratch and then we rolled that out. You know, Audrey and I did that together. And then we rolled it out to the team and they had their input. And then sort of, yes, we all put it together and we sort of had a group discussion and we pushed it out. And now we all do it. We all live and breathe it. We all get involved. We do our fortnightly meetings and we all refer back to it. It's been great being able to really focus on that side of the business now, you know, focus on individual team training, onboarding, new tradesmen when they've come on onboard as well like I've been able to put a lot more focus into that and really push that apprentices like, when we've picked apprentices to start as well, you know, being able to pick good candidates because it's been coming back to those processes and function roles that we've developed, which we started when we put Audrey on.

**Matt** [00:27:44] And that comes back to leveraging the assets. So it doesn't matter, you can keep using that for every new employee or new team member coming on board.

**Byron** [00:27:52] Yes so it really freaked me out to put more time working on my business, which then in turn reflected back in rewards from the team. They're really buying in and really giving back. And we've just seen, yes, a lot of growth and it's created a really good atmosphere. You know, the guys really get along and with Audrey as well.

**Matt** [00:28:11] So and again, where you were not long ago in that tradie mindset on the hamster wheel, just spinning, spinning, spinning, you would never have any time to be able to put back into the team, invest in the team and do this properly, right?

**Byron** [00:28:21] No way.

**Matt** [00:28:24] And it's great to see you reaping the rewards right now and that's a key thing. It's not like, look, I need someone to just throw someone in and you expect them to work. What you're doing is you're really making sure that you're providing a supportive environment. And this is what I want everyone to really understand, is that you got an obligation. Anyone that comes and works with you, they're obviously believing in you. And they want to be supported. They want to be mentored, and ultimately they want to be able to grow as an individual. Now, back in the day, especially when I was an apprentice back in the 80s and, you know, I was a bit like, you should be lucky, you've got a job. You should be lucky you got a job, Jonesey, don't say a word. Just get in there and dig a hole,right. Whereas now, though, it's a totally different generation, which is great, and we've got an obligation as business owners to make sure that we are providing a supportive, nurturing environment. Now, I know that there are sort of words that are not normally applied to tradie businesses. It's just like, what do you mean, Jonesy, supportive and nurturing. You just get in there and dig. No dude right. And it's a credit to you that you understand the importance of supporting and nurturing and building that caring and understanding and knowing your employees because they will believe and they will take ownership to help drive your business going forward. And more importantly, when you're not there, they will take ownership of the organisation now.

**Byron** [00:29:42] That's right, yes, and they've started to do that as well. You know, they've really started getting involved and, you know, making decisions that I don't need to know or necessarily have to make. And they're just making it. And it's yes, they're positive decisions. And, you know, I'm not getting phone calls from them all the time now as well. You know, it's feeding back through Audrey and she's making the decisions based on the processes that we have in place. And it's definitely working a lot smoother.

**Matt** [00:30:09] And on that, too, because Audrey is focusing on scheduling 100% of the time. She's doing a lot better than you ever done before.

**Byron** [00:30:15] Definitely better than me.

**Matt** [00:30:17] And the great thing is, you know, it's not happening here or no it's happening here. And yes and she's and then again, the great thing with Audrey is that she's really building relationships with the team members, you know, getting to know the team members, understanding how they operate, which is really great, which obviously makes it easier for her to schedule and also ask requests of the team. So all in all, it's a great result in terms of building that team, that team ownership and accountability. The other aspect, too, of now having that more time to sort of sit back and work on the businesses is the client relationships. We talk a lot about our A-class clients, and I think over time we've done a good job of weeding through some of the real estate maintenance clients that you work for and really profiling, I suppose, those A-class clients. Just talk through that now that again, getting a better understanding of what the business needs going forward, especially around profitability, especially around the cost of working with unprofessional clients, the cost of working with clients, who they'll tell you to go somewhere and it's not ready or they won't pay or they just, they don't communicate. How's that now, the confidence with you now actually saying no to clients, whereas before you felt you had to say yes to clients, but now saying no to clients. And how has that affected both the business and also your life and mental capacity?

**Byron** [00:31:34] I found that being able to focus on that and actually see now what clients were causing me the most problems and just saying, look, thank you, we, you know, we can't really help you anymore, has definitely worked out in a positive way for us. So we're not constantly wasting time chasing money or getting incomplete jobs or, you know, just getting our time wasted here and there. We're really sort of having the confidence to say, no, you don't fit with our business. Thank you, but no thanks. I think, yes, actually, we're doing better than we have before. So a lot of those people that you say no to that waste your time, you find that your staff actually get frustrated with those jobs as well. And that's one thing that I never saw before. You know, and having Audrey, you know, provides some feedback, they're really frustrating or they're not organised or whatever. They actually, they get annoyed with it, too, because they feel they can't do their job properly. So actually being able to see that and realise that has definitely created a more positive environment as well.

**Matt** [00:32:32] So, yes, like I say, normally when you're busy just chasing your tail, you haven't got time to notice that. And your team probably think too, your team members go, I won't say anything to [00:32:40]Byron, [0.0s] I'll just keep turning out to this job, even though they're a pain every time I go there. You know, it's that sort of thing but I don't want to upset the apple cart, because I think, oh, it's a job and ultimately they're in that mindset as well. They're not understanding that we actually can say no to these jobs.

**Byron** [00:32:57] You know, they turn around and say, oh, he's too busy. I don't want to bother him right now. But now they have, you know, they know they can call whenever they need to. And if they listen to their grievances and any issues that they have and, you know, we all talk about it as a group. And if it doesn't work then it doesn't work.

**Matt** [00:33:12] And I think and it's great, like you mentioned it too, it's great to have that support there from Audrey, [00:33:15]and that experience [0.0s] from Audrey, when she can say, look, these guys are really, this client is really unprofessional. It's really making it hard for the team. So it's great that, again, like for the team members that Audrey is a bit of a sounding board as well. And then she can impart information as well to you.

**Byron** [00:33:32] Yes, well, one of the big things that she actually does is she follows up heavily on the outstandings. And that was one of the things, you know, coming back to being in that tradie mindset is probably one of the first things that you forget about is actually following those things up because it's difficult, it takes time. So, you know, before she started, my outstanding invoices were huge. And that was one of the things that she really got on top of for me. And then sort of we would have our meetings and she would keep letting me know like these people are over, these people are over and these ones are really over. Let's sort it out.

**Matt** [00:34:06] Just jump on them.

**Byron** [00:34:08] Yes, so that was one of the actually really big impacts that she had was cash flow as well. So being able to sort of have someone watch that, you know, because you can't do everything, have someone watch out for the business has definitely been great as well.

**Matt** [00:34:21] So, yes, I think that's one of the things that really tightened up big time, which, as you alluded to struggle getting all the invoices out then struggling to get the payables out, chasing the aged debtors, which then obviously resulted in a lack of cash in the bank. And when you're in that tradie mindset and all you're doing is focused on work, so going from one job to the other to the next, the next, the next, they're the little things that fall down and what we've got to be graded as a business too and as a brand as well, we've got to be on some, like bang, we invoice right away. We follow up payment straightaway if they're overdue. And that also sends a message to our clients and everyone out there that these guys are onto it. It doesn't matter about the size. It's like these guys are on it. They won't let anything slip, any business today, we can't let anything slip. Things are too tight and we need to nail it. And that's the great thing that you've really built into the business now, is that [00:35:11]Rigor [0.0s] and we talked about it when we talked about some of the success habits, part of our methodology, we are big on the success habits, which is making sure that, to any of our listeners, you're going to be making sure that you spend some quality time sitting down with your admin people or your management team on a weekly basis to go through all the key areas. But what are some of the success habits that you meet with Audrey on a weekly basis or fortnightly basis, what are the key things that you go through?

**Byron** [00:35:37] Yes, so probably at least once a week, we will have a bit of a chat. She'll go through some questions that she has. You know, she's still learning how to write up the invoices. Obviously, we do maintenance work. So, you know, they're not the same job every time. So, you know, she's learning and picking that up great. And then we go through outstandings, and every two weeks you send out what's owed, what needs to be paid. And then, yes, that's sort of a great success habit that we have that we always do. So it's definitely made a change in the business here. You know, we're not, I'm not stressed worrying about I've got huge outstandings, which as a tradie when you start, you know, just working on the tools all the time, you start thinking, oh, it's just the next job, just you can do the next job, do the next job but if you're not getting paid for that job, there's no point doing the next job. You know what I mean.

**Matt** [00:36:25] Correct and also too, if you're not getting paid, you know, [00:36:27]your not putting it in [0.1s] Xero or you're accounting software. You don't know if you actually make it, forget about getting paid, you don't know if you're making money for the money, how much did it actually cost me to do the job. It's a knock on effect all the way through.

**Byron** [00:36:39] And then also our client started realising when Audrey jumped on board and started following this up, oh, you know, these guys are professional and then moving forward, getting new clients. You know, this is just the way we do it and this is how we do it, this is what we expect so we give this level of service and we expect that back. So it really sets a precedent for the type of people that you want to work for and and how they need to treat you, if you do the same back.

**Matt** [00:37:06] Well, I think that was one thing that, again, that was a struggle for you for a period of time, especially before Audrey was getting out there, as a success habit, getting out there and meeting your key clients and reaffirming, reintroducing the brand and really talking about the way we do it here. And I think what we always talk about, which is what you're doing well and what you alluded to then, is that one [00:37:28]hundred percent, [0.0s] we are the experts at solving your customers problem. This is the value we deliver. But in return, we expect this. The key thing that a lot of business owners don't do again is that they don't set expectations with their clients. And what you're doing now is very clear expectations. This is the way we do it here. We're going to deliver value to you, but this is what we expect in return, non negotiable, how is that having that clarity for you? How confident can you be in some of those client discussions now, where you can be very much on the front foot with articulating your expectations?

**Byron** [00:38:03] Yes, it's really good. Like, I can sit there and be confident with some of my clients. And say, no, I'm not doing that. We get that all the time, they hit you up [00:38:11]with [0.0s] the owner doesn't have much money can they, go on a payment plan, pay it out of their [00:38:15]rent [0.0s] funds? You know, sometimes we'll do it. But if it's a large amount, we'll say, no, I'm sorry, we can't do that. It is not how we work. Our guys get paid. [00:38:25]our materials [0.0s] get paid. We put an invoice in, I'm sorry, but that needs to be paid. And that's one thing about choosing your A class clients, you know, the ones that you're doing work for, the ones that say, we respect that, you've got a business to run.

**Matt** [00:38:38] And that's a big word, right, they respect you. And we want to do business with people who respect us. And understand that, yes, you got mouths to feed. You got bills to pay just like their business as well. So again, that's where now you've really consolidated your A class clients and also the type of work you do as well and really starting to focus on the core now.

**Byron** [00:38:59] Definitely. Yeah, we would. I remember at the start we were just, you know, doing everything, doing commercial real estate, maintenance, you know, bit of new homes, domestic renos, stormwater, all sorts of things. And yeah, it just it you can't be everywhere all the time and do everything. So now we're just really focussing on, on one area of work and just being the experts.

**Matt** [00:39:21] And now like again, the outcome of that. And just from a numbers perspective, just to get an understanding, a great thing in a short period of time, around that two and a half, three years. The revenue now is increased especially year on year by forty per cent. So even though you're starting to say no, even though you're starting to reduce the number of clients, even the work type, the revenue has gone up 40 percent and it's now pushed through the seven figure barrier. So it's a it's a million dollar business, which is fantastic. Again, the turnover is related to A class clients, so it's not about anyone. It's about making sure that we're agreeing and saying yes to the A class clients. So, seven figure organisation, which is great. Now, the key thing that we always talk about is our operating profit. And the number one thing, as you know, it's our go to it's all about revenue is irrelevant. It's all about the profitability. And the key thing with how you operate and this is testament to the process that you put in place, testament to the support that you put in place. We've grown the operating profit by one hundred and sixty five per cent, which is massive. So revenue has gone up 40 percent, which is great. But our operating profit has gone up one hundred and sixty five per cent. So our operating profit margin, bottom line is, is sky rocketed all because you're now slowing down or because you're actually working less, working more on the business, your attention to detail is far greater. You're spending more time on the team, which is more productive. You're spending more time with the clients. So we're getting better quality clients and you spend more time on the processes. So the likes of Audrey can just get in there and work. They don't need to call you good team members. They don't want to be micromanaged, they don't want to have to call. Byron. You don't want the call and they don't want to friggin call you agree.

**Byron** [00:41:08] Yeah, spot on.

**Matt** [00:41:10] So it's about again well done on really slowing down and investing and taking the time in terms of building that sustainable business. And again I'll say it again, credit to you from young in your early journey as a business owner to really get into this early on. But it's testament with the results of where you are now and the platform that you've built, you're really ready to scale up going forward and really build that business that can serve your lifestyle. Given that you've got baby number two not far away.

**Byron** [00:41:43] Yeah, it's out now.

**Matt** [00:41:46] Was that a secret was it?

**Byron** [00:41:48] No, pretty poorly kept secret, but yeah.

**Matt** [00:41:52] Pretty poorly kept secret everyone. Sorry about that. Spoiler alert!

[00:41:57] But look, once you have one child anyway, your life has pretty much changed for the better anyway. Look, I really appreciate you being on the podcast today. And really for everyone listening out there, really big takeaways to build that business around, hiring slow, you know, making sure we define the role and clear expectations. And ultimately, as a business owner, you don't have to work all the time. Yeah, it's all about what we talk about. Less is more where less hours, but put more quality into each hour. How's that mentality now for you ultimately.

**Byron** [00:42:35] Yeah. Spot on. Definitely more focussed. And I've got set days and hours that that I have to work now when I need to work. And you know, if you're doing.. I start at 6:30 am. I want to be finished by 4:00pm. That's it. You know, they're the hours I've got. You need to get it done. Just no messing around. Just get in there, you know, do what we need to do and then we all get to go home. Definitely cutting back on weekends has been a huge saver for my obviously mental state and my personal life. You know, you just, you know, like you said to me heaps of times, sharpen the saw. So that's a big thing. So really doing that, as has definitely shown in my business, sort of where it's at now and moving forward, how it's going to grow. Those success habits putting in place has definitely given me the tools to do that.

**Matt** [00:43:25] Well, it's obviously you look at the results, right. And so the facts on the scoreboard, by slowing down less is more. Again, making sure your time blocking as we talk about those key time blocks, the results are there and that's credit to you mate be disciplined. Just as the last takeaway you pretty much as mentioned then. But for anyone coming through as a business owner, what would be the one takeaway that you'd recommend anyone to do on their journey, especially those that are just sort of starting out?

**Byron** [00:43:54] You need a coach 100 percent. Yeah, you definitely need a coach or a sounding board to guide you. Just from my journey, like, I've progressed so much faster and quicker to a point where I didn't think that I would be starting my business, you know, two and a half years ago. So just to know that you don't have to do it on your own. And there's other people that have been in the same position that you're in right now. There's no point reinventing the wheel. Just get some help and then you'll go a long way for you.

**Matt** [00:44:21] You definitely need that mentor or support group as a business owner. It can be lonely and you can really guess and as we say, success leaves you don't have to go it alone. There's a proven path there. But again, you still got to be committed to implement it. And the great thing about from your perspective, you listened and you implemented it to a tee and the results are there for everyone to see, which is great.

**Byron** [00:44:46] Definitely. You've got to be ready to do it. Don't just do it for the sake of it. That's why I say, you know, to my friends in business as well, you have to be willing to actually do it or don't even start. But it's great having help it's great having someone to guide you.

**Matt** [00:44:58] It's good. And it's been a great journey so far. It's been great to be part of it from our perspective. And looking forward to the next chapter mate.

**Byron** [00:45:06] Yeah. can't wait

**Matt** [00:45:06] Alright Byron, good stuff mate. Thanks for jumping on board today.

**Byron** [00:45:10] No worries, thanks Matt. Thanks for having me.