

# Northern Business Advisers

## Business Expertise

Some ways we can help you to improve your business



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## Innovation and Technology

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NBA provides practical help and support to bring innovation and technical change to business to enable you to be at the competitive edge in the way you run your business and the products and services you supply. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Business Innovation.** We believe successful exploitation of new ideas is key to enabling businesses to compete effectively in the increasingly global market. Innovation is available to all regardless of business size and incremental changes can often make a big difference. So we help you:

- Introduce innovative thinking to your products and services to increase value
- Link innovation to everyday business processes to improve efficiency, performance and growth.
- Implement changes in your organisation that have a powerful impact on your business

**Access to Technological Advantage:** Exploiting technology offers businesses the opportunity to gain a competitive edge. It is an essential tool that all parts of an organisation can benefit from. So we will help you:

- Understand the role of latest technology to the products and services you offer
- Access the latest thinking in product design, manufacture and most importantly data and information exchange and the impact these can have on your business.
- Ensure its successful application by careful study of what is relevant and how to apply it.
- Capitalise on introducing new technology to your business processes and engaging your management and staff in the process.

**Business Growth:** Companies cannot grow through cost reduction and re-engineering alone. Innovation and technology are key to future prosperity and a reason why competitors overtake. So we help you:

- Introduce a clearly defined vision and climate of excellence
- Develop your organisation's management style to promote innovation.

**Implementation:** People in your business that will play a critical role in achieving your goals. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## Business Performance

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NBA provides practical help that enables you to identify and introduce performance indicators relevant to your business, so that you make future decisions in a structured and effective manner. Very few businesses actually measure the impact of their decisions and how to bring about change effectively. NBA processes address the following key areas:

**Resource effectiveness:** Whether a business start-up, or a mature entity, quality management information is key to making the right decisions to invest in resources - staff, equipment, IT systems and others. Having made the investment though, it is surprising how few companies effectively monitor the return. So we help you put in place appropriate measurement to monitor:

- Capacity utilisation.
- Line efficiency
- Labour efficiency and utilisation
- Return on Investment (or capital employed)
- Stock turnover

**Commercial measures:** Most businesses would like to grow their sales profitably, but how? The risk and reward of such decisions can vary enormously, but taking some time to measure the effectiveness of the approach can reap great dividends, and provide direction. So we help you identify:

- The return you get from different marketing methods
- The conversion rates achieved in the sales process
- How you benchmark in your sector
- The individual contribution or profitability from different products

**Performance Management:** Linking measures to individual, team and hence business performance by setting targets and objectives is key to delivering benefits for both companies and individuals. So we help you achieve:

- Increased ownership and empowerment of employees.
- A clear link between business plans and daily activities.
- A measurement tool for managing performance of people, and dealing with underperformance.
- Visibility - a well presented workplace illustrates performance and targets to all staff, and this can be a great motivator to all.

**Implementation:** Regular and effective reviews as part of the management framework are crucial to maintaining focus and momentum. With the help and support of NBA's experienced performance consultants, we help you design a management framework to manage your business and your people, built to suit your existing culture and systems. By working with NBA you will access the expertise that has generated significant benefits for its clients.

## Customers- A Key Asset to Maximising Value

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NBA provides practical help to businesses in maximising value from their customer base. We have a powerful process to help business owners and managers understand their customers, how to differentiate between them, build loyalty and how to add value to your business. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Understanding your customers:** We believe that understanding your customers is a key to adding value to your business. It is rare that businesses really know their customers needs and how well their business satisfies them. Some businesses even fail to make the time to speak to their customers in the most appropriate way. So through us you can establish:

- an independent assessment of what your customers think about you as a supplier
- identify the areas to grow your business through your existing customer base

**Customer Segmentation:** Not all customers are the same, few are ideal and some may be very difficult to satisfy. We believe that by understanding the make up of your customer base you can determine strategies to serve them so as to maximise your profitability as well as enhancing your reputation and brand. So we help you:

- Categorise your customer base and establish a means of segmentation
- Identify your 'ideal' customers, their characteristics and how to get more
- Establish customer strategies to build profitability.
- Introduce 'customer lifetime' concepts for your business to create value in the goodwill of your customer base.

**Customer Relationship Management:** This is not about software programmes, although they are useful tools. We believe it is about the human interface of supplier and customer, how to build loyalty from those customers that you value most and how to grow. Customers that want to use your products or services by choice, time and time again, become advocates and a source of new business. So we help you:

- Raise the profile of customer relationship management across your business
- Develop processes and procedures to provide excellent customer service.
- Establish ongoing customer programmes to reinforce your customers' choice in using you and hence strengthening your own brand
- Where necessary train and develop staff in the role of maintaining 'happy' customers

**Implementation:** People in your business will play a critical role in achieving your goals. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## People – Being A Best Practice Employer

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NBA provides practical help in managing the pace and pressures of change which place increasing demands on you to facilitate the essential organisational development and continuous improvement needed for business success.

We understand the challenges and employment issues to be managed, to ensure best people management practices are developed and maintained across the Company.

We believe the application of sound and supportive employment practices, appropriate organisational structures, terms and conditions of employment reflecting the requirements of employment law and the strategic and operational needs of the Company, is an essential part of effective business and change management. It is also part of the continuing management process of maintaining motivation, morale and employee commitment. NBA addresses the following key areas:

**Knowledge Transfer:** Employment and people management practices are your responsibility. NBA will ensure that an effective support infrastructure is in place to guide people management practices and ensure the necessary degree of consistency across the Company. This support will also ensure that you are equipped to deal with the range of employment issues you will face by ensuring that the necessary range of policies and procedures is in place and that you are properly briefed and trained in their application.

### Professional Support:

- Advice on the practical application of Employment Policies and procedures within a strategic Human Resources framework
- Introduction of people management audit processes to ensure consistency across the organisation
- Support in establishing regular employee communication and review

### Employment Advice and Support:

- Recruiting the best people
- Contracts of Employment - agreement of terms & conditions
- Employee consultation and communication
- Dispute Resolution, managing grievances, discipline and dismissal
- Managing redundancy and transfers
- Managing sickness absence
- Equal Opportunities - Discrimination Law
- Individual employee rights
- Organisational, Leadership & Management Development

By working with NBA you'll have access to the professional skills and experience you need to comply with employment law and avoid the high cost of unnecessary litigation.

## Financing your Business – Fitness for Purpose

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NBA provides practical help to find the right financial structure for your businesses. Constantly facing new challenges, a dynamic market place with a multitude of threats and opportunities, the financial structure of your business must be flexible enough to cope with whatever is thrown at it. NBA addresses the following key areas:

**Planning your financial needs:** Failing to plan is planning to fail! All aspects of your business planning will result in some sort of financial requirement. This may be new capital equipment, larger premises, additional personnel or a multitude of other impacts. There will also inevitably be unforeseen circumstances which will test the business and your plan and your financial structure needs to be robust enough to deal with these as they arise. So through us you can establish:

- A clear picture of your current financial structure and identify strengths and weaknesses
- A review of your future financial requirements based upon where and how you are planning to take your business forward
- A breakdown of all of the possible finance products available to you and your business. We will then work with you to put in place the specific mix of options that best suit your current and future needs.

**Cash Flow Management:** The big test that all businesses face is managing the cash flow. So many outside events can have a massive impact on your working capital. If sales are too high or too low, loss of a customer, customers take longer to pay, bad debt, change of bank attitude (especially a new bank manager!), creditor pressure, loss of a key member of staff, theft, fraud, or any number of other unforeseen events can have a massive effect on your cash flow and thus the running of your business. As one client put it, "I spend half of my time chasing debtors and the other half appeasing creditors!" NBA can help by:

- Finding additional headroom in your finances to help you deal with the immediate financial pressure
- If needed, restructuring the finances to cope with your business' future needs
- Most importantly, working with you to find the real causes of the cash flow problems and putting in place measures and strategies to eliminate or minimise future problems!

**Free Finance Review:** We can restructure the business' finances to release more funding and give a more flexible, cost effective result. No Win No Fee - on all proposed refinance solutions! NBA will help you identify the cause of the problem and recommend systems and solutions to eliminate or reduce risk in the future. Contact:-

## Manufacturing

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NBA provides practical help in planning, scheduling and improving the complete manufacturing process for companies in line with internationally accepted best practice. Our Associates bring experience from a wide range of sectors that you can access and really accelerate value generation and growth for your business. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Productivity:** Two companies with identical order cover, manufacturing equipment, staffing levels and skills can experience dramatically different levels of profitability. It is productivity which separates the good from the bad; the profitable and successful from the unprofitable and struggling. NBA has a straightforward, jargon free process to help you:

- Establish the maximum realistic profitable output from your facility
- Achieve that potential and
- Maintain that performance
- To grow the business profitably and with minimum risk

**Planning and Scheduling:** Management-by-the-seat-of-your-pants might provide a constant adrenalin rush and create the atmosphere of a TV hospital soap but it has no place in a manufacturing company. So we help you:

- Plan the loading of sales orders into your facility to achieve on-time delivery and high customer satisfaction
- Schedule the flow of work through your facility to maximise shop floor efficiency and minimise costs
- Manage the flow of work using simple tools to optimise staff and equipment productivity
- Plan and manage your stock and work in progress to improve cash flow.

**Team Working:** Every weekend the sports stadiums of the world demonstrate the power of team working. It is no less powerful or critical in the workplace. NBA will help you:

- Create and implement a team culture in your company
- Improve and expand this team culture
- Exploit the benefits of team working to deliver to your bottom line

So we help you:

- Define the manufacturing potential of your organisation
- Plan and schedule your manufacture to achieve that potential
- Control and optimise your work flow to maintain productivity
- Deliver profit and customer satisfaction through consistent on-time delivery of good product

**Implementation:** Once you have your plans and processes in place turning them into action is vital. Aligning and motivating your people will be critical to your success. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## Marketing and Sales

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NBA provides practical help in positioning business within their chosen market sector and develop strategies for sales growth. Our experienced Associates bring experience from a wide range of sectors that you can access and really accelerate value growth for your business. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Brand Identity:** We believe it is as important for businesses to decide what they want to be as much as what they want to do. There is much truth in the phrase 'perception is reality' but how do you take advantage of this. NBA has a straightforward and fun process to help you:

- Develop the brand and culture for your business
- Exploit your brand as the basis of your marketing drive

**Marketing:** We consider it essential that you establish a broad picture of how the marketplace for your products and/or services operates; who your competition is and how to make your customers aware of you.

So we help you:

- Conduct an appropriate market survey to establish what is happening in your selected market sector
- Establish who the competition is and how you should defend against it
- Identify who your existing and/or potential customers are and how to engage with them
- Establish the formats appropriate to getting known and keeping your name in front of customers
- Create and implement a comprehensive Marketing plan to direct and support your sales effort.

**Sales:** Once you understand the behaviour of your selected marketplace, who your competitors are, how to deal with them and how to continually place your name before your customers you need to engage pro-actively with those customers.

So we help you:

- Create a sales strategy and an associated sales plan of action.
- Put into place the appropriate sales channels for your market/product/service
- Target the optimum and appropriate customers to build and sustain your business
- Regularly forecast and targeted orders to ensure that the correct resources are in place throughout the company to secure those orders and convert them into profitable sales

**Implementation:** Once you have your plans in turning them into action is vital. Aligning and motivating your people will be critical to your success. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## Online Marketing

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NBA provides practical help to businesses in developing the direction and positioning of their business and customer offering and utilising the Internet to communicate this to customers and potential customers. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Marketing:** We consider it essential that you establish a broad picture of how the marketplace for your products and/or services operates; who your competition is and how to make your customers aware of you.

So we help you:

- Gain appropriate market intelligence to establish what is happening in your selected market sector
- Establish who the competition is and what sets you apart from it
- Identify who your existing and/or potential customers are, what their needs and wants are and how you should engage with them
- Establish the most appropriate means and messages to establish awareness, interest, desire and action from your customers
- Create and implement a comprehensive integrated Online Marketing plan to drive and support your sales effort.

**Website Development:** How effective is your website at communicating your unique business message. Can your potential customers find your website? How effectively does your website convert visitors to customers or potential customers? NBA helps you to:

- Develop compelling copy and content on your website that engages with your customers and potential customers and encourages them to 'act'.
- Pinpoint and eradicate bottlenecks and drop-out areas
- Monitor and analyse traffic and visitor 'journeys' through your website to optimise 'conversions'
- Make your website the most effective marketing tool in your possession

### **Internet Advertising, Search Engine and other Online Marketing:**

Exploiting the worlds fastest growing advertising medium, NBA utilise Natural Search, Pay Per Click (PPC), Banner Advertising, Social Media, Online PR, Directories, Email, Affiliate Marketing and other online activities to find the most effective media to communicate and engage with your customers and drive your business forward:

**Implementation:** Once you have your plans, turning them into action is vital, especially in this fast moving world. Aligning, motivating and training your people will be critical to your success. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey or step in to provide practical help with implementation, as and when needed. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## Strategy Development and Business Planning

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NBA provides practical help to businesses in developing the direction and positioning of their business. We follow a straightforward yet powerful process to help business owners and managers get clarity on what they are really trying to achieve and build. To do this the NBA process addresses the following key areas:

**Objective Setting and Goals:** We believe that before working on what needs to be done you have to decide what you want to achieve. So we help you decide:

- what you want for your business
- what you want for yourself and why you are on the journey.

**Strategy Development:** We consider it critical that you establish a clear picture of your business. Some call it mission others vision we like to say 'what you and your business are really about'. So we help you:

- Determine how you are going to set yourself and your business apart from the competition in your chosen market
- Set out what you want your business to be as well as do
- Identify and secure the intellectual property that you may have or need
- Understand the routes to market and how you are going to exploit them
- Prepare your 'game plan'
- Establish the resources you will require to give you the best chance of success
- Prepare and present your strategy to best effect if you are seeking funding.

**Business Planning:** Once you know what it is you are aiming for it is important to set this out in a well defined plan. With a few exceptions, it does not have to be a mighty volume. In fact we believe this should be a working document that you want to use and refer to on a regular basis. So we help you:

- Convert your ideas into a formal plan.
- Establish the key business processes that need to be developed and refined for success
- Establish the performance criteria against which to monitor progress.
- Detail financial forecasts including capital requirements
- Identify resources and in particular the people skills you will need
- Set specific goals and targets for each area of your business

**Implementation:** The skills and competencies required to prepare a strategy and plan are quite different from those required to implement them. Most importantly it is the people in your business that will play a critical role in achieving your goals. So NBA is available to coach and mentor you and your business along the journey. By working with NBA you will have access to the experience and the breadth of skills and resources that you may need to succeed whenever you need them.

## Supply Chain - Improves Profits and Cash

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NBA provides practical help that enables you to access procurement and supply chain practices found in larger businesses to improve profitability and cash flow. NBA processes address the following key areas:

**Customer Service:** We believe that meeting and satisfying your customer's service expectations through proactive management of your supply chain is crucial for success. So we help you:

- Identify the service standards your sector demands to compete
- Assess your current processes and identify the changes to exceed expectations
- Establish your unique customer service approach to create a competitive edge
- Work with your staff to ensure your customer ethic permeates your business

**Working Capital Management:** Most businesses would like to free up working capital tied up by stock in their business, free up valuable space and yet grow their sales by ensuring the right products are available. So we help you:

- Identify optimum stock levels based on historical and projected demand
- Release working capital and generate cash to fund your growth plans
- Introduce whole life product management in support of your marketing and sales initiatives
- Realise improved operational efficiency through tighter supply chain controls across the business including manufacture and order fulfilment
- Optimise space utilisation and set in place processes to control stock and reduce losses and write-offs.

**Procurement:** We consider that businesses do not always maximise the full potential of their supply base in terms of both direct cash/profit benefits and enhanced operational performance and service to their customers. So we help you:

- Extract added value from you supply base.
- Reduce the costs of non-core expenditure to increase profit and cash.
- Introduce supplier performance processes to maintain and improve your business performance.
- Offset product risks including environmental costs to your supply base.

**Implementation:** Regular and effective reviews are crucial to maintaining focus and momentum. With the help and support of NBA's experienced consultants, we help you to manage your business supply chain and your people to strengthen your offer and business. By working with NBA you will access the expertise that has generated significant benefits for its clients.