



I feel so ~~excited~~ right now

~~stressed~~

~~confident~~

~~lonely~~

motivated

love <> Money

~~emotional~~

The ~~secret~~ life of the business owner

Business owners would do anything for their company. The real question is: at what cost? How can business owners balance success with a healthy and happy life, and stay motivated?

Work-life balance?

All about the money?

Impact on family?



In this, the second instalment of our three-part series For Love Or Money, we explore the impact of being a business owner on the individual and whether business owners are making unparalleled sacrifices, ultimately damaging their health, wellbeing, personal relationships and even the will to carry on.

Through opinion research and a psychological study, we investigate these critical issues and discuss the need for a strong support network.

We interviewed 500 UK business owners in companies with between £1 million and £50 million turnover, between 10 and 249 employees and that are at least two years old, across all UK regions and major industries.

We also conducted psychological research based on the principle of implicit testing among 100 different business owners, who met the same turnover, employee number and age criteria. The results are presented as a score where 1-44 denotes disagreement and 56-100 denotes agreement.

Is your work-life balance tipped too heavily towards work? Has your motivation been known to falter? Does it ever get lonely at the top? Visit www.hwca.com/for-love-or-money to discover how to get your mojo back and keep the fire burning.

It's all about you



Running a business requires a special kind of motivation. You have your own reasons for doing it, and only you can keep the love going.

Our research reveals that business owners are heavily invested in their company, and not just financially. There is a lot of the business in the owner, and a lot of the owner in the business. Business owners feel strongly that “my business is a part of who I am” and say it means everything to them. This is great for business.

But there is a downside to this. As we know, business owners work incredibly hard, put in all the hours and are driven to make the ultimate sacrifices—threatening their own health and happiness. This in turn can have a detrimental impact on their motivation to keep running the business every day.

Furthermore, motivation is not a constant, and what motivates you can change as your business grows and you evolve as an individual. What drives you forward in your 20s might not be the same or enough in your 40s and 50s. Unfortunately, many business owners are too busy to realise that this is happening and fail to adapt accordingly.

When motivation slumps, clawing it back is no mean feat, and that’s even harder to do without an effective support network around you to help you tackle your biggest challenges head on, learn from experience and persevere with confidence. And yet, many business owners say they don’t know where to turn for help.

Thankfully, there is at least one safety net that helps business owners to re-focus: family. But it will take more than this to address the frequency with which UK business owners are finding themselves on the motivational precipice.

It is vital that business owners understand why they lose motivation in the first place, and learn how to take responsibility for keeping the love going, and not letting it fade.

**Michael Davidson,
Haines Watts**

Are you pushed to breaking point?

Despite business owners feeling that their company is a part of who they are, the majority (58%) admit to losing the motivation to run their business.

In fact, more than a third (35%) of UK business owners lose the motivation to run their business at least once a year, and business owners strongly agree (71/100) with the statement “I sometimes wish I was doing something else”.

The result? Running a business is having a seriously detrimental impact on physical and mental health. More than a quarter (27%) of UK business owners admit that this is the case.

Mental health is the biggest victim of running a business (70/100), with physical health following closely behind (60/100). Business owners also strongly agree that their job is “emotionally exhausting” (73/100), rising to a worrying 81/100 for men.



45% of business owners say running a business affects their sleep

What’s pushing so many business owners to breaking point, so regularly? Lack of time away from the business could be a significant factor. One in ten (8%) took no holiday at all last year, with a shocking 52% taking less than 10 days in total. Business owners also strongly agree (64/100) that they work “too much”.

52% of business owners took less than 10 days holiday in 2015, just 48% took more than 10 days

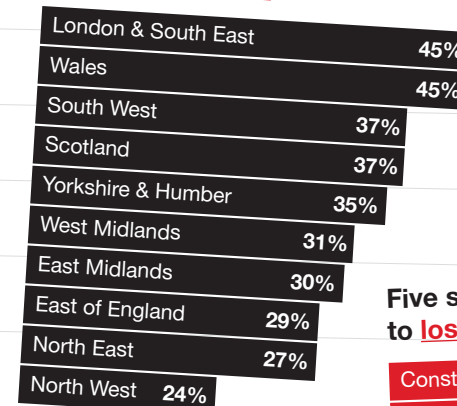
No time to reflect?

“Running a business has the potential to be one of the most personally rewarding paths in life. Following a passion, serving a need, fixing a problem and providing careers for dozens of others is a great and noble pursuit. Of course, that makes it all the more devastating when business leaders become overwhelmed by their commitments.

“Taking the time to step back, reflect and cast a more strategic eye over the business is vital to retaining control and commitment, as opposed to getting pulled down into the day-to-day operations and decisions. If that doesn’t feel possible, it’s time to take a serious look at the management structure of your company and ask yourself if the right people are in place to enable you to focus on what matters to you.”

Michael Davidson, Haines Watts

Regions of the UK most likely to lose motivation



Five sectors most likely to lose motivation





Money: Friend and foe?

Business owners have an incredibly complicated relationship with money. While it is integral to generating motivation, it can also be the biggest source of stress.

In implicit testing, business owners strongly agree (64/100) that money is their “biggest motivator” – higher than they care to admit explicitly. The score was even higher for those aged 50+ (85/100), who may have one eye on retirement.

Running a business is “all about the money”



Business owners turning over £1-2 million agree very strongly that money is their biggest motivation (86/100), while those with larger businesses (£5-50 million turnover) strongly disagree (29/100). This suggests that motivations change in line with the challenges business owners face during the life cycle of their company.

Women are more money oriented than men, agreeing far more strongly that running a business is “all about the money” (94/100) than male business owners (58/100).

And yet, money-related issues are also pushing business owners to the brink. ‘Financial worries’ are their biggest source of stress (53%).

Pressure can create focus, not just stress

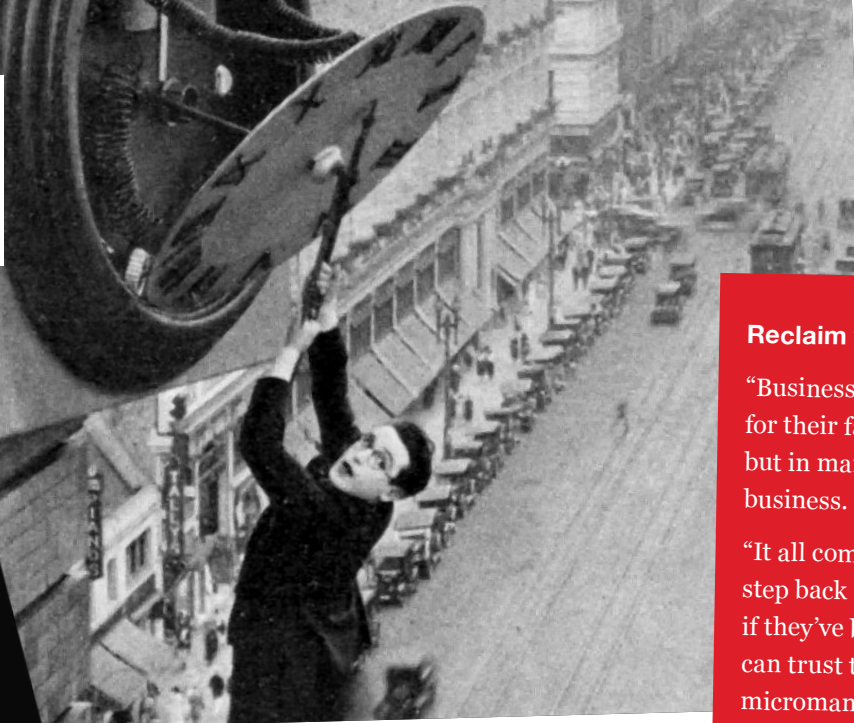
“It seems paradoxical to suggest that the most successful business owners are the least motivated by money, but when we don’t have to worry about money so much, it can’t motivate us to the same extent.

“If the pressure of debt and financial strife is giving founders the edge they need to drive their company forward, then becoming cash-rich can sometimes be a disadvantage. Fighting stagnation is important to keeping yourself motivated. So you’ve built a profitable business? Great, but what drives you to take on the next challenge?”

David Fort, Haines Watts

The five biggest sources of stress for business owners:





Hitting you where it hurts.

The most damning impact of running a business is on the business owner's personal life: mental wellbeing, physical health and personal relationships.

Reclaim your life

“Business owners work so hard to support and provide for their families and to enrich their personal lives, but in many cases personal time is sacrificed for the business. It doesn't have to be this way.

“It all comes down to the business owner's willingness to step back – something that is much easier to contemplate if they've built a skilled and responsible team that they can trust to take care of things without needing to be micromanaged.”

Michael Davidson, Haines Watts

While many companies work hard to promote a healthy work-life balance, just 4% of business owners describe their work-life balance as tipped towards life. Meanwhile, a mammoth 59% are firmly convinced that it tips the other way.



But the damage is not just an abstract feeling that work plays too dominant a role in their lives. More than a third (38%) of business owners admit that their relationship with their partner has suffered as a result of running a business. Almost as many (30%) feel that their relationship with their children has been damaged.

Impact on personal life

Sleep	45%
Social life	42%
Relationship with partner	38%
Physical health	32%
Relationship with children	30%

This is exacerbated by what we call the “loneliness of command”. Business owners admit that their family (73/100) and friends (75/100) don't understand what it's like to run a company, and women in particular admit it can get very lonely (85/100), and that they just don't know where to turn for help (85/100).

Regions of the UK where the work-life balance is most tipped towards work

1 South West	70%
2 London & South East	64%
3 Wales	61%
4 Scotland	61%
5 Yorkshire & Humber	60%
6 East Midlands	60%



Rekindling the love.

Money might be a key driver of motivation, but when that love is lost and it comes to rekindling your spark, the power of family trumps all.

More than half (52%) of UK business owners say their family is the thing that re-motivates them when they lose the motivation to continue running their business.

However, getting that drive back is a complicated business, and can't be distilled into just one factor. Corporate "families" are also important, with two fifths (40%) of business owners citing their responsibility to their employees as a key re-motivator.



36% of business owners say support from their team inspires them to carry on



35% of business owners say "the next challenge" is a key re-motivator

It also boils down to rekindling the passion that they felt at the start, which steered them into that particular industry or role. Two fifths (39%) of business owners say remembering why they started the business helps to recover their enthusiasm.

The loneliness of command

"Many business owners feel lonely because they don't know where to turn for help. Family is a key re-motivator for business owners, but it's also crucial to build a wider network of advisers and peers who understand what you're going through.

"Being able to discuss concerns and share advice with experts and like-minded individuals can be a real life-saver for business owners, especially when overshadowed by complex challenges and in danger of losing the will to go on."

Karen McLellan, Haines Watts

Top five re-motivators

Family	52%
Drive	49%
Responsibility to employees	40%
Taking a break	40%
Remembering why they started the business in the first place	39%

Conclu- sion

Being a business owner means being the heart and soul of the company and the one continually driving it forward. Unlike employees, business owners can't simply walk away and get a new job.



A strong sense of responsibility to their family and staff keeps business owners going day in, day out. However, stress, long hours and loss of motivation are also an inevitable part of the experience.

In these times of economic and political change, business owners must ask themselves: can you face economic uncertainty and market volatility with the steady calm of someone who believes in their business and their unshakable commitment to it? Or is that stretching the truth? Perhaps the success of your company is actually making it boring to run, with no fires to fight or holes to climb out of.

Whatever your perspective, can you honestly say that you are completely driven, have a balanced life and are utterly content? If not, that's probably because getting the recipe right for all of these things is treacherously difficult.

Running a business is about more than just money. It's about family, responsibility and personal drive. But at the same time, your family aren't likely to have the practical solutions to the strategic and microeconomic challenges that you face.

For this, you need a reliable network of trusted, experienced and highly skilled peers.

Motivation is a perennial challenge. The only way to continually interrupt the vicious cycle of regularly losing motivation is to focus on the things that motivate you as an individual. That might be your family, the next business challenge, your responsibility to your staff or remembering why you started the business. It's vitally important to keep things fresh, exciting and challenging and not get out of your depth without having the right support in place.

Have you been affected by anything you've read? If so, contact us.

About Haines Watts

Haines Watts is a Top 15 firm of chartered accountants with over 80 years of experience in advising business owners. It offers a broad range of accountancy and business advisory services with more than 60 offices across the UK and more than 35,000 business owner clients.

www.hwca.com

Commercial

We believe in translating our technical knowledge into sound commercial advice, so you understand the information and the impact it will have on you and your business.



Supportive

Because we support over 35,000 business owners around the UK, as a business owner you can rely on our experience to support your ideas and help you achieve your goals.



Challenging

We act as a sounding board and challenge your plans. It's our way of ensuring that you consider all the options and make the best decisions.



Practical

Our partners run their own businesses as well, meaning we live in the real world—we'll give you sensible, professional and practical advice.



Approachable

You'll have access to your Haines Watts partner whatever your issue, big or small, saving you time and ensuring top quality advice.



www.hwca.com/for-love-or-money/

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