



Back in 2010 Greg Kerba's career path seemed certain, he was studying Aeronautical Engineering with every intention of moving in that direction as a full time career. So as he approached his HSC year, fate introduced as one of his subjects, Industrial Technology, Timber. Greg's father suggested that why didn't he follow in his own foot steps and build a wood and fiberglass canoe, after all he had a 16 ft Canadian model that they could take inspiration from. Always liking a challenge but with his fathers full support Greg bought the plans for a Hiawatha Styles 14ft wood and glass canoe. After over 350hours spread over 135 days, the canoe was finished and now sits proudly as center piece in Greg's office. Testament to his dedication to hard work, fine eye for perfection and what can be achieved when you put your mind to it.

Bitten by the boating bug, Greg moved from student to apprentice boat builder at McConaghy's, working as a fully qualified boatbuilder/ tradesman, for 6 years on some of Sydney's best known racing yachts. Finishing his apprenticeship in extra quick time, Greg decided that his future dreams and aspirations lay with himself and so with full family support, just over two years ago he set out on his own. So how is he going, and what does he do to fill in his day?

A day in the life of a Business Owner

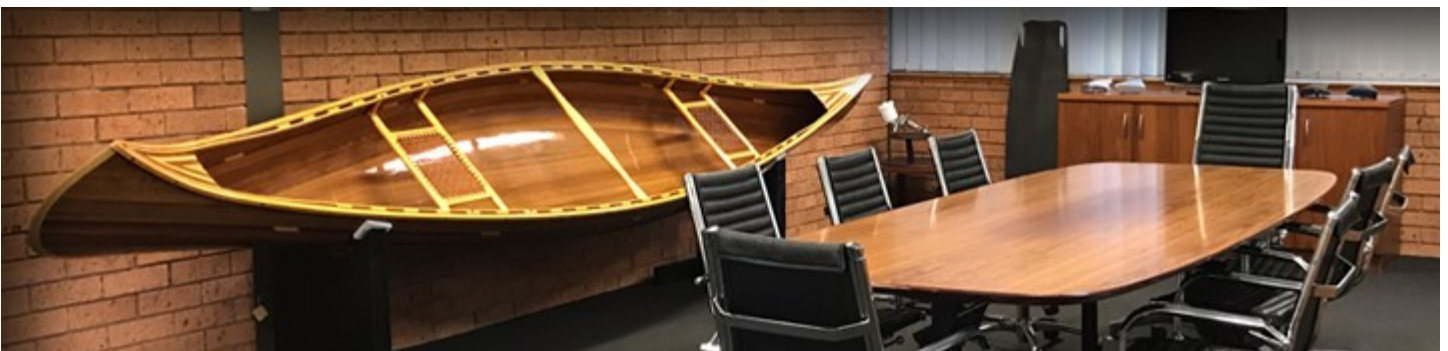
Greg's day gets started early with a rushed breakfast, checking messages on his phone and emails for any important messages that may have come through over night, all while getting ready to arrive at the small machine Fabrication and repair factory by 7:30 am.

When he arrives security, lights, compressor and hot water for coffee are the first priority. Then it's more checking office emails, phone messages, depending on the urgency of new or existing jobs, jobs are allocated to the staff, If no major rush jobs that would require Greg's physical involvement mid morning is the time to review receivables to see which supplier's need to be paid and to check the cash flow statements. The business also has a part time accounting service which insures that all bills are paid on time and allows the business to operate smoothly.

Although the business is only 2 years old he has 4 employees, including one apprentice, already specializes in fiberglass/ carbon fiber work for boating and automotive applications, no opportunity is overlooked, Greg's plans are for the business to expand with a 5 year plan, that includes all design and fabrication work including CNC facilities. Although no formal meetings with staff take place in the relaxed atmosphere, individual job progress is assessed on a frequent basis, ensuring that all jobs are finished to a high standard but also on time, and within the budget.

Staff welfare is also high on Greg's priority list, making sure that not only are his work colleges hydrated with bottles of cold water readily available but any clients that happen to be about, very appreciated during the current Sydney hot spell, lunch on Friday is also included and this is where new ideas and suggestions can be made in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

At this growth stage of his business Greg must also be on the look out for new staff, he has found that a lot of students are looking to expand their knowledge on fiberglass and carbon composites and are more than willing to take on part time work to acquire current knowledge and skills, the biggest problem is to find the right kind of worker, that will fit easily and smoothly into a very energetic hardworking team and be willing to do some of the less glamorous work while they learn, some time during the day Greg goes through the resume's he's received, then arranges interviews firstly to see any potential candidates current knowledge, but after the interview introduce the candidate to the staff on the factory floor, a very good way to assess reactions to both the work place and the staff. He also must find time to arrange appointments with new customers,



accommodate any clients that may just rock in out of the blue, to check up on their precious job or simple to have a chat.

While working on a number of different projects each day, ranging from designer furniture, repairing existing boats and damaged



race cars, The staff also under take the complex task of designing and building commercial fishing boats under contract, a range of aerodynamic carbon light weight panels for vehicles competing in such diverse areas as World Time Attack Challenge, Formula Ford, Sports Cars and has just moved into the flaring's for both road and racing motor bikes, in fact if you have a fiberglass or Carbon composite job that needs doing then you should contact Greg.

So it has been a busy hard day, most of the staff have gone home, Greg can head off home tired but at last he has finished, wrong, as the owner he now must look at scheduling staff for tomorrow, do any maintenance or order replacement parts and make sure there is ample material on hand to finish

existing jobs, sweep out the factory and clean the toilets, it's no wonder he looks tired above. Most nights if there is not an urgent job on he locks up the factory at 9pm and heads off home to do some extra paperwork and study.

While the daily responsibilities of a business owner vary based on the size and scope of their business and the industry, the average small business owner has a number of business functions to do each and every day. Even if they are lucky enough to employ competent staff to handle some of the operational duties, the owner is ultimately responsible for how the business operates. As we have seen this can include everything from opening the doors in the morning to sweeping and cleaning at the end of a long day.



On a daily basis, a small business owner typically reviews scheduling or consults with their staff to ensure jobs are started and finished appropriately. A small business owner may also be involved in reviewing resumes or conducting job interviews if and when additional staffing is needed. Additionally, a small business owner is involved with performance reviews, training, salary negotiations, dispute mediation and employee disciplinary action, when and if necessary. While all of these employment issues are not likely to occur every day, chances are good that the business owner will be involved in one aspect or another of managing their staff on a daily basis.

For the business to grow, a business owner is charged with ensuring that the customer/s are satisfied with their product, service and staff. A small business owner typically spends a portion of their day working with customers directly, troubleshooting complaints and most importantly resolving issues of concern. This Greg may have to accomplish in person throughout the day



or by setting aside a portion of the day to return customer calls and emails.

With the company's expanding reputation interstate and overseas orders are also an important and expanding part of the business, so overseas materials are becoming just as important as local product ordering, in a business like Greg's this is likely to occur on a daily basis.

As already explained Greg uses a part time accountant to handle financial and budgeting matters such as banking transactions, accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll. However if Greg wants to achieve his five year plan he knows that at least a portion of his day he'll need to review financial statements and daily receipts to ensure he has a complete overview of how the money aspect of the business is performing.

The business is always looking at how to market its products, in Greg's case this includes all the normal marketing tools such as, signage, website and social media sites, added to this Greg uses the opportunity to get involved with some of his clients in promotional sponsorship on competing vehicles at State and National level motorsport.

So we have seen how one small business owner fills his long day, does he believe it's all worth it? Of course he does. I'll leave the last word to Greg, "I enjoy a challenge, meeting new people with innovative ideas, but most of all I enjoy the freedom to be myself". Not a bad quote to end on!

Greg Kerba, owns and operates:

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This is the first in a regular series to be published in The Digger, outlining just some of the varied occupations and duties of the people that help to keep Australian Businesses running. If you or your company would like to be included in a future feature story please contact via email, Richard Hayles: rjhayles@hotmail.com.

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