

DON'T DRIFT INTO 2026.

LEAD INTO IT.

GROUP OR TAILORED COACHING

*CO FUNDED SUPPORT MAY BE AVAILABLE

BUSINESS WOF FRACTIONAL CEO



Click video above to watch message from Catherine Cooke

AFFORDABLE GROUP COACHING -

'THINK TANK' OR 'SUCCESSION PLANNING'

WHEN DID YOU LAST CHECK UNDER YOUR BUSINESS BONNET WITH A BUSINESS WARRANT OF FITNESS



2025 Year-End Wrap:

Better Thinking, Better Businesses

A Message to Our Business Owner Community

As we close out the year, we want to pause and acknowledge something we don't often make time for in business - reflection.

2025 has been a year of challenge, recalibration, and for many business owners, some very honest conversations. Across our work at The Engine, and particularly through our newsletters, one theme has continued to surface:

Sustainable growth comes from clarity, not chaos.

This year, we've shared insights on leadership, governance thinking, financial discipline, resilience, succession, and what it really means to work on the business instead of being consumed by it. These ideas haven't lived just on the page - they've come alive in the conversations happening inside our Coaching programmes.

Most-Read & Most-Referenced Insights from 2025

If you've missed any of these, they're worth revisiting as you think about the year ahead:

- Knowledge Is Power – why informed business owners make better, faster decisions
- Working ON the Business – shifting from operator to owner
- Governance Thinking for Owner-Led Businesses – discipline, accountability and perspective
- Succession Isn't an Exit Plan — It's a Continuity Plan
- Resilient Businesses Don't Happen by Accident

Each of these themes feeds directly into the work we do inside Think Tank and Succession Planning Group Coaching.

Session (Tuesdays) starting Feb 10th, 2026 1-5pm
Session (Thursdays) starting Feb 12th 2026 9-1pm
Location: Albany, North Shore

Session (Friday) starting March 6th, 2026 9-1pm
Location: Taupo - Christine Rankin

The Engine Business News

Leading Holistic Business Advisors & Specialists
 Business Insights Quarter 4 - 12/25



Click video above to watch

Think Tank Group Coaching

The Right Room Changes Everything

Running a business can be isolating. Even experienced, successful owners often carry decisions alone — until the cost of doing so becomes clear.

Think Tank Group Coaching exists for one reason: To improve the quality of thinking, decision-making and leadership for business owners. This is not motivational coaching. It is structured, disciplined and grounded in real-world business reality.

Inside Think Tank, business owners:

- Pressure-test decisions before they become expensive mistakes
- Gain perspective from peers who genuinely understand the load
- Are held accountable to actions they say matter
- Tackle uncomfortable topics — profit, people, leadership depth and risk
- Build businesses that don't rely solely on them to function

The power isn't just in the facilitator — it's in the calibre of the room.



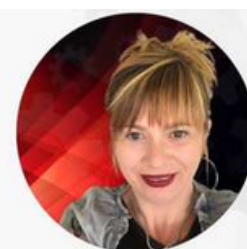
Christine Rankin

Business Advisor - Leadership Expert



Peter Cooke

Business Advisor - CX Expert



Catherine Cooke (nee Sherwood)

Founder and Leading Business Advisor



Succession Planning Group Coaching

Starting Earlier. Thinking Smarter. Reducing Risk.

Succession planning is one of the most delayed — and most critical — conversations in business.

Too often, it's framed as an exit problem. In reality, it's a business continuity discipline.

Inside our Succession Planning Group Coaching, business owners work through questions such as:

- What actually happens if I step back — temporarily or permanently?
- Where does the real value of this business sit?
- Who can lead, and what capability needs to be built now?
- How do I reduce dependency on myself without losing control?

Succession planning done well strengthens a business long before an exit is on the table. It improves systems, leadership, governance and enterprise value. For many owners, this programme becomes the turning point from owning a job to leading an asset.

Succession Planning Starts Earlier Than You Think

Why Group Coaching Is Where It Actually Begins

For many business owners, succession planning feels like a future problem.

Something to deal with “one day”.

When the timing is right.

When there's more headspace.

But the reality is this: succession planning doesn't start at exit — it starts with how the business is being run today.

And increasingly, we're seeing the most effective succession thinking emerge inside group coaching environments, not boardrooms or last-minute advisor meetings.

Succession Is Not Just About Leaving

True succession planning isn't simply about selling or stepping away.

It's about answering deeper questions:

- Can this business operate without me?
- Is leadership capability embedded or concentrated?
- Are systems documented, or carried in my head?
- Is the value of the business transferable — or personal?



These are not theoretical questions. They shape daily decisions around people, structure, governance and growth.

Why Group Coaching Accelerates Succession Thinking

Inside Succession Planning Group Coaching, business owners benefit from something they rarely get elsewhere: perspective from others facing the same realities.

In a facilitated group environment:

- Succession stops feeling overwhelming and starts feeling practical
- Owners learn from peers at different stages of the journey
- Blind spots are exposed early — before they become risks
- Accountability ensures conversations turn into action

Succession planning becomes a process, not an event.

From Owner-Dependent to Business-Led

One of the biggest shifts we see is owners recognising how owner-dependent their business has become — often unintentionally.

Group coaching helps business owners:

- Build leadership layers
- Delegate decision-making with confidence
- Introduce governance thinking at the right level
- Create optionality — whether that's sale, transition, or partial exit

Succession becomes less about “when I leave” and more about “how this business endures”.

Succession Is a Leadership Decision

The strongest succession plans are built years in advance — not because owners are leaving, but because they are leading well. Succession Planning Group Coaching with **The Engine Limited** provides the structure, challenge and support to do that work properly. Because the best time to think about succession is when you still have choices.



Client Wins This Quarter: Advocacy, Accountability and Outcomes

At The Engine, our role is to sit alongside our clients when the pressure is on, not just when things are easy. This last quarter has been a strong reminder of the value of informed advocacy, commercial clarity, and having someone prepared to challenge decisions that don't stack up.

Here are some of the standout wins we've achieved with our clients over the past three months.

1. Turning around a Declined Accredited Employer Renewal

One client came to us after their Accredited Employer renewal had been declined - a decision that, if left unchallenged, would have had significant implications for workforce continuity and business operations.

We worked through the decision methodically, addressing the underlying concerns, clarifying compliance matters, and reframing the application with the correct supporting evidence and narrative.

Through structured engagement and persistence, the decision was successfully reversed.

Outcome:

- ✓ Accreditation reinstated
- ✓ Business continuity protected
- ✓ Reduced risk to workforce and future recruitment

This was a strong example of how understanding process, policy intent, and how to respond — not just react — can materially change an outcome.

2. From a “\$0” Insurance Claim to a \$90,000 Payout

Another client was initially told their insurance claim would result in a \$0 payout. The matter had stalled, and the client had effectively been led to believe there was no path forward.

We stepped in to review the claim position, policy wording, and correspondence trail. Through robust advocacy and careful examination of the insurer's position — including issues of non-disclosure by the insurer — the claim was re-opened and reassessed.

Outcome:

- ✓ Final insurance payout of \$90,000
- ✓ Financial pressure alleviated
- ✓ Clear lessons learned around policy interpretation and insurer conduct

This win reinforced the importance of not accepting an initial “no” at face value when the facts and documentation tell a different story.





3. Recovering \$120,000 Following an unpaid Contractor Dispute

In a particularly complex matter, a client faced a contractor refusing to pay \$120,000, claiming contractual justification.

On review, we identified significant issues within the contractor agreement itself and the manner in which the contractor was exercising their position.

We reminded the opposing party that under New Zealand contract law, agreements are expected to be fair, reasonable, and carried out in good faith. While the Contract and Commercial Law Act 2017 provides the overarching framework for enforceable agreements, New Zealand courts have consistently affirmed that contractual rights must not be exercised in a way that is oppressive or unjust.

The Fair Trading Act 1986 further reinforces these expectations by prohibiting misleading, deceptive, or unfair conduct in trade. In practice, this means both parties are entitled to equitable treatment, transparent communication, and decisions that align with the intent and spirit of the agreement.

Importantly, nothing in this position contradicts or negates the Construction Contracts Act 2002 (CCA). The two frameworks operate alongside one another:

- The CCA provides specific rules around payment claims, payment schedules, adjudication, and dispute resolution within the construction sector.
- General contract law and fair trading principles continue to apply.

Once the issues were clearly articulated and put back on the table, the matter was resolved.

Outcome:

- ✓ The full \$120,000 out-of-scope cost was settled and paid
- ✓ Power imbalance corrected
- ✓ Commercial precedent reset for future dealings

4. Resolving a Commercial Lease Bullying Dispute

We also supported a client who was being pressured by a new commercial property manager to vacate their premises. The property manager alleged a breach of usage, despite failing to recognise that the existing lease issued by the former property owner remained binding.

We stepped in to review the lease terms, challenge the assertions being made, and reset the conversation around contractual reality rather than intimidation.

Outcome:

- ✓ Bullying behaviour stopped
- ✓ Lease rights upheld
- ✓ Client able to continue operating without disruption or forced relocation.

This was a clear reminder that confidence, clarity, and knowledge of contractual rights matter — particularly when power dynamics shift.

5. Facilitating a Culture Workshop That Created Real Change

Not all wins are financial — some are foundational. This quarter we facilitated a culture workshop for a client where underlying tensions had been left unspoken for too long. The session created a safe, structured environment for honest conversation, accountability, and reset expectations across leadership and team members.

Outcome:

- ✓ Difficult but necessary conversations surfaced
- ✓ Alignment re-established
- ✓ A practical pathway forward agreed by all parties

Culture doesn't fix itself. When addressed properly, it becomes a competitive advantage rather than a silent risk.

Why This Matters

Across all of these wins, the common thread was advocacy - knowing when to push back, how to frame an argument, and when to stand firm in the interests of fairness, sustainability, and long-term business health.

At The Engine Limited , we don't just advise from the sidelines. We're in the detail, in the conversations, and when required in the hard moments that determine outcomes.

If the last quarter is anything to go by, the value of having experienced, commercially grounded support at the table has never been clearer. Need to have the right people in your corner then we are your people. Reach out for a confidential chat.

Advocacy - Our Director at The Engine named finalist 'Hero' in the NZ Herald



As reported by the NZ Herald on 6 December 2025.

Everybody needs a hero – and luckily New Zealand is not short of them. The New Zealand Herald is today nominating Our Heroes for 2025 to highlight the achievements of Kiwis across news, sport, business, entertainment and lifestyle.

We're honouring men and women (and sometimes boys and girls) from across the country who have made a positive impact on their community and the lives of others. The spectrum is broad – from police officers to teen inventors, campaigners, athletes, educators, businesspeople... they're part of a group of people who made New Zealand a better place this year.

Catherine Cooke, 54, has paid more than \$100k for unfunded treatment for triple negative breast cancer. Photo / Catherine Cooke

Catherine Cooke

Auckland business adviser and mum of two Catherine Cooke was diagnosed with early-stage triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) in November 2024. It's a rare and aggressive form of the disease that doesn't respond to hormonal therapies.

The recommended treatment is immunotherapy drug Keytruda, given alongside chemotherapy – but as Cooke discovered, Keytruda is not funded for early TNBC in New Zealand. She's had to pay the cost of Keytruda herself, with the help of generous friends and strangers who donated to a [Givealittle](#) page.

While undergoing treatment, Cooke has spent the past year advocating for that treatment to be funded for others, taking a petition signed by 17,096 people to Parliament.

"We are Kiwis that are just trying to live, and yet we're denied a fighting chance," Cooke told the Herald in June this year. "People don't want the burden of debt, and not everyone's going to be lucky enough to be able to fund it. If you funded [this treatment] for early triple negative breast cancer, you would have fewer people getting to the advanced stages."

Cooke presented an in-person submission to the parliamentary petitions select committee last month. Keytruda for early TNBC is now on Pharmac's options for investment list awaiting funding.

"Investing in medicines for early-stage breast cancer is more than just treating breast cancer, it's preventing it from becoming incurable," says Cooke.

"This will give more New Zealanders the chance to survive and live well after breast cancer."

Catherine wrote a post:-

'Hero finalist of 2025' 🇳🇿💗

So humbled to be recognised today as a finalist hero for the wrap of 2025 amongst some amazing individuals by our national paper the [NZ Herald](#). I was placed in the same category as Nigel Latta, Lee Tamahori, Fiona Samuels - all who used real stories to deliver Tūmanako - what a privilege, honour and surprise to be nominated and recognised.

This past year has been incredibly challenging for me & those who love me especially with a left field diagnosis from a routine mammogram last November 2024 of early stage aggressive triple negative breast cancer.

I've faced abuse from a supposedly award winning legal firm that my cancer is karma, after battling a system and ultimately winning against them last October, a fight that lasted six long years, and a system that showed it protected their own despite a professionalism that is meant to uphold the law not break it.

Despite continuously being threatened and harassed by those I stood up against, I recently secured a restraining and harassment order.

But they, along with cancer, have not broken my spirit.

That same spirit fuels my commitment to stand up for all New Zealanders who are unjustly denied the standard global care treatment for early stage triple negative breast cancer.

I can no longer plan for the future the way I used to, as I continue to navigate hurdles and battles.

More on this will unfold in the coming months.

I want to emphasise: it's not over until it's truly over.

✍️ **[Connect with Catherine here on LinkedIn to see her posts on Advocacy](#)**



Year in Review

Click on the **read more** for each newsletter below. All newsletters are here.



Business Updates
Helping You Navigate



**CHANGE STARTS
WITH YOU**

Business advisory and support for
growth-focused business owners

Change Starts with You

Sep 22, 2025 | Newsletter

Change starts with YOU: Why business owners must commit to True Transformation Every business owner we meet has, at some point, said the words "I want things to change." Maybe it's about growing sales, building a stronger team, creating more balance, or adapting to...

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Business Updates
Helping You Navigate



**STRONG FINISH TO
2026. STRONGER
START TO 2027.**

Business advisory and support for
growth-focused business owners

Strong finish to 2026. Stronger start to 2027.

Aug 18, 2025 | Newsletter

Strong finish to 2026. Stronger start to 2027. Navigating the critical months ahead - to not take action will leave your business on the hamster wheel Last month's newsletter sparked plenty of conversations, calls and action around The Engine's Business Warrant of...

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Helping You Navigate



**IS YOUR BUSINESS
REALLY FIT FOR THE
ROAD AHEAD?
WOULD YOU PASS A
BUSINESS WARRANT OF
FITNESS?**

Business advisory and support for
growth-focused business owners

Is your business really fit for the road ahead?

Jul 18, 2025 | Newsletter

Is your business really fit for the road ahead? Would you pass a business warrant of fitness? With many companies falling over and equally many more barely with a pulse, having a business warrant of fitness completed by The Engine Limited could not be more relevant...

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**WHAT'S MY ENDGAME?
THE ONE QUESTION
BUSINESS OWNERS
OFTEN FORGET TO ASK
WHEN STARTING OUT**

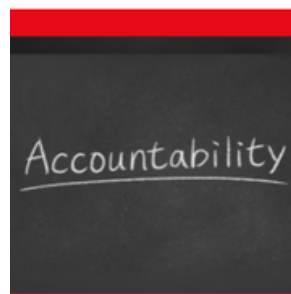
Business advisory and support for
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What's my endgame? The one question business owners often forget to ask when starting out

Jun 18, 2025 | Newsletter

What's my endgame? The one question business owners often forget to ask when starting out When you start a business, it's usually about the idea, the opportunity, or simply the urgency of needing to make a living. You jump in, energised by possibility, fuelled by...

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**STRUCTURE.
CLARITY. A SOLID
PLAN... AND
SOMEONE TO HOLD
YOU TO IT.**

Business advisory and support for
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Structure. Clarity. A Solid Plan... and Someone to hold you to it.

May 14, 2025 | Newsletter

Structure. Clarity. A Solid Plan... and Someone to hold you to it. In business, drifting is dangerous. Without a clear structure, focused direction, and someone to challenge the status quo, even the most promising ventures can lose momentum. As seasoned business...

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Business Updates
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**TURNING MOTION
INTO MOMENTUM**

Business advisory and support for
growth-focused business owners

This Was Meant to Reach You: Turning Motion into Momentum

Jan 16, 2025 | Newsletter

This Was Meant to Reach You: Turning Motion into Momentum The Mountain is You: Plan, Pivot, and Prosper in 2025 Are you busy in the trenches, or are you moving your business forward? There's a difference, and it's one I see too often in businesses stuck in a cycle of...

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***Business advisory, consulting, education
& governance for growth-focused business owners***

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