



**THE
ENGINE™**
POWERING BUSINESS RESULTS

Our coaching programmes are registered with the Regional Business Partners Programme. Inquire re co-funded business support for your business with our building management capability & coaching programmes.

**CLICK TO
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VIDEO**

**The Business Didn't Have a Sales Problem.
It Had a Leadership Problem.**

When sales slow down, most business owners assume they need more leads, more marketing, or more customers. But what if the real issue isn't sales at all?

Contact us to find out more.

**Email: businessadvice@theengine.biz - Subject Business Coaching
You may be eligible for co-funded support.**

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Standing Up. Speaking Up. Delivering Change.

This month I had the privilege of standing on the steps of Parliament, not as a politician, but as an ordinary New Zealander determined to create extraordinary change.

Over the past 18 months my advocacy for equitable access to life-saving cancer medicines has taken me from hospital wards to television studios, radio interviews, meetings with Ministers, Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum, and ultimately before the Health Select Committee where I presented my oral submission.

Walking into Parliament wasn't about me.

It was about every family forced to mortgage their future to access treatment.

It was about every patient who doesn't have a voice.

It was about challenging a system that can, and should, do better.

I met with MPs from across Parliament, sharing not only my own experience but presenting evidence, international comparisons and practical solutions. My message was simple: good policy should never leave good people behind.



My submission to the Health Select Committee represented more than 1,200 hours of research, advocacy, stakeholder engagement and relentless determination. It was one moment in a much bigger journey, but one that reinforced something I've always believed:

Meaningful change happens when preparation meets courage.

Along the way, national media has helped bring this issue into the public conversation. I was humbled to feature on RNZ and to sit down with Leah Panapa on Platform to discuss not only my own journey but the broader challenge facing thousands of New Zealand families.

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The Engine Business News

Leading Holistic Business Advisors & Specialists
Business Insights Quarter 3 - 07/26



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So why do I begin a business newsletter talking about Parliament?

Because this is exactly how I work with every client.

Whether I'm helping a business recover from financial distress, build a governance framework, negotiate with government agencies, resolve conflict between shareholders, or develop a strategy for growth, the principles never change.

I listen.

I ask the hard questions.

I analyse the evidence.

I challenge assumptions.

I build relationships.

And I don't walk away when the path becomes difficult.

Business owners don't need another consultant or business advisor who simply writes reports or prescriptions.

They need someone who will stand beside them, navigate complexity, advocate for their interests and help create outcomes that others thought were out of reach.

At The Engine, we don't simply solve today's problems.

We help build organisations that are stronger, more resilient and better prepared for tomorrow.

Because whether you're standing in Parliament or sitting across the boardroom table, leadership is ultimately about the same thing:

Having the courage to step forward when it matters most.

👉 Learn more [here](#).

Businesses may also be eligible for co-funded advisory support of up to \$5,000 to work with us.

At The Engine, we don't deal in assumptions.

We deal in clarity, structure, and execution.

Because when your business starts slipping, the time to act is not later. It is now.



Due Diligence:

The job you don't win may be the best one you ever lost

Every week another story appears in the media about a failed development, unpaid contractors, or businesses left carrying debt they never expected.

Recently, the latest headlines surrounding property developer Aaron Coupe in the [New Zealand Herald](#) have once again highlighted the devastating ripple effect one person's conduct can have on homeowners, investors and the many tradespeople who trusted him.



For me, however, this story isn't new.

Several years ago, a trade business became a client of The Engine.

During our first meeting they mentioned a property developer who owed them a significant amount of money and had recently approached them again through an online platform connecting homeowners and tradespeople.

Something didn't feel right.

Within a relatively short period of time (less than 30 minutes), after carrying out some basic due diligence, I had to deliver some difficult advice.

"Don't touch this job."

The developer wasn't simply someone experiencing a temporary cash flow issue. There was a pattern.

A history.

A trail of warning signs that were publicly available to anyone prepared to spend the time looking.

That conversation reinforced something I have believed throughout my entire career.

Winning work is important. Winning the right work is critical.

Too many businesses perform extensive due diligence on a new employee yet almost none on a new client.

The reality is your clients can create just as much financial risk as your staff.

Before You Quote, Ask Yourself...

Before I accept work from a developer, investor or commercial client, take the time to investigate.

Ask questions such as:

- Who owns the company?
- Who are the directors and shareholders?
- How long has the entity been operating?
- Are there multiple companies with similar names?
- Is there a history of liquidations or insolvencies?
- Are there unresolved court proceedings?
- Is the company paying other suppliers on time?
- Are there previous projects you can visit?
- Can you speak with previous contractors?
- Is funding confirmed?
- Who is actually signing the contract?

These questions don't guarantee success.

But they dramatically reduce your risk.

Due Diligence Isn't Distrust

Some business owners worry that asking too many questions might offend a prospective client.

My view is exactly the opposite.

Professional businesses expect professional questions.

If someone becomes defensive when you ask for information that protects your business, that in itself tells you something.

The best developers, builders and commercial clients welcome transparency because they understand trust is earned.

Prevention is always cheaper than recovery or in this case a \$110k loss

At The Engine, we spend a significant amount of time helping businesses recover money, resolve disputes and untangle commercial relationships that should never have started.

Many of those situations could have been avoided with a few hours of investigation before the first quote was accepted.

Due diligence isn't about saying "no" to opportunity. It's about saying "yes" to the right opportunity.

Because sometimes the most profitable job you'll ever have...
...is the one you never accepted.



The Buck Stops With the Director

One of the biggest misconceptions I encounter in business is this:

"I engaged a professional, so surely they're responsible."

Unfortunately, that's rarely how the law sees it.

Whether you engage an accountant, lawyer, immigration adviser, health and safety consultant, HR specialist or business adviser, you are buying expertise.

You are not transferring your legal responsibilities.

As a Director, your duties remain exactly that...

Your duties.

The Companies Act, employment legislation, health and safety obligations, immigration requirements and many other regulatory frameworks all place accountability squarely on the shoulders of those governing the business.

Good advisers help you meet those obligations. They don't remove them.

That is why I often tell clients that one of the most important qualities of a successful Director is curiosity.

Ask questions.
Understand the advice you're receiving.
Challenge assumptions.

Seek a second opinion when something doesn't feel right.

And surround yourself with professionals who are prepared to tell you what you need to hear, not simply what you want to hear.

A Story of Accountability

Over the past few years, The Engine has worked alongside a client whose Accredited Employer status had previously been revoked.

The easy response would have been to blame others. Instead, the Director chose a different path. He accepted responsibility.

Together, we undertook a complete review of the business.
Policies were rewritten.
Systems were strengthened.
Governance improved.
Processes were redesigned.
Training was implemented.
Controls were tested.

Importantly, the Director didn't want to reapply immediately. He wanted confidence that the improvements weren't simply documented but embedded into the day-to-day operation of the business. ***That work took almost a year.***

When the business eventually reapplied, accreditation was granted. For many businesses, that would have been the end of the story.

It wasn't.

Historical matters from the previous accreditation period were revisited 6 months later, despite the business having demonstrated significant improvement and having successfully regained accreditation. We respectfully disagreed with that approach.

Rather than accepting the outcome, we worked alongside the Director to explore every appropriate avenue available.

We engaged an experienced immigration lawyer from Heaney & Partners to provide independent legal advice.

The business appointed a new Licensed Immigration Adviser whose approach aligned with the Director's expectations and governance standards.

The Engine prepared a detailed support letter outlining the substantial improvements the business had made, the governance changes implemented and the Director's genuine commitment to continuous improvement.

The Engine sought advice from a sitting list MP. The company wrote to their local Member of Parliament and the list MP.

Not asking them to interfere in operational decision making.
But asking an important policy question.

If government expects businesses to improve, what message does it send when a business does exactly that, only to find itself judged solely on its past?

At the same time, a fresh accreditation application was submitted, supported by the evidence of the transformed business. Just days later, the Director received the news he had worked so hard to earn. The business was reaccredited for two years.

For this client, accreditation wasn't simply a certificate. It meant certainty.
It meant being able to recruit the skilled workers essential to delivering projects and the ones on the team requiring ongoing support.

It meant confidence in the future of the business.

Most importantly, it recognised a Director who had taken ownership instead of making excuses.

More Than Advice

At The Engine, we don't see ourselves as people who simply provide advice and move on to the next client.

When we work with a business, we become invested in its success.

We know when to lead.

We know when to bring in specialist expertise.

And we know that the best outcomes often come from collaboration rather than ego.

Sometimes that means ***engaging lawyers, industry specialists and sometimes government agencies.***

Our role is to ensure our clients have the right people around the table and that every option has been explored. Because business owners deserve more than advice. They deserve a trusted partner who will ask the difficult questions, challenge the status quo, leave no stone unturned and stand beside them when the stakes are high.

At The Engine, we believe every challenge has a pathway forward. Sometimes you simply need the right people walking it with you.

Step into The Engine Think Tank

Learn with an experienced **Business Advisor** from The Engine and collaborate with other visionary business owners

Why Great Business Owners make time to step out of their business trenches

One of the biggest misconceptions in business is that being busy means you're making progress.

It doesn't.

In fact, many business owners spend their days responding to emails, solving staff issues, quoting work, chasing payments, managing customers and putting out fires. Before they know it, another week has passed, another month has gone, and they've had no time to think about where the business is actually heading.

The reality is that businesses don't usually plateau because the owner lacks capability.

They plateau because the owner has become trapped inside the business.

The business begins to dictate every decision instead of the owner leading with intention and strategy. That's why the most successful business owners deliberately create time to step away from the daily operations. Not to escape the business. **But to improve it.**

At The Engine, our Group Coaching programmes provide exactly that opportunity. Each session creates dedicated space to work on your business rather than simply in it.

Together we explore the issues that really determine long-term success:

- Are you making enough profit, or simply generating turnover?
- Is your pricing strategy still fit for today's market?
- Are your systems supporting growth or creating bottlenecks?
- Is your team clear on expectations and accountability?
- If you stepped away tomorrow, would your business continue to operate?

These aren't conversations most business owners have during a busy Tuesday afternoon.

Yet they're often the conversations that create the biggest breakthroughs.



At The Engine, our coaching philosophy is simple:
Better conversations create better businesses.



One of the greatest strengths of group coaching is **perspective.**

When experienced business owners come together, everyone benefits from the knowledge in the room. Challenges that seem impossible suddenly have practical solutions because someone else has already navigated them.

You don't just learn from the facilitator.

You learn from the collective experience, successes and lessons of every business owner around the table.

That's where real momentum begins.

Business becomes less reactive.
Leadership becomes more intentional.
Growth becomes more sustainable.

Our Think Thank Group Coaching & our Succession & Exit Strategy Group Coaching are registered in the RBPN Programme. You may be eligible for 50% funding for this coaching.

👉 **Let's get you booked in a group. Reach out to us here.**



Every group coaching session at The Engine is designed to create real momentum, not just conversation.

Our programmes are:

1. Structured – with clear business focus and strategic direction
2. Interactive – bringing business owners together for honest discussion and shared learning
3. Learning Focused – practical insights, tools and commercial understanding you can apply immediately
4. Action Plan Driven – ensuring every session leaves you with clear next steps and accountability
5. Supported with Fortnightly Follow Up – maintaining momentum between sessions
6. Backed by Ongoing Coaching Support – because business challenges do not stop when the session ends

If you are ready to stop operating in survival mode and start building a stronger, more scalable and sustainable business, now is the time to step into the room. **Because better conversations build better businesses.**



Business Spotlight

Your story is your Greatest Business Asset

Business owners spend thousands of dollars building websites, developing logos, refining products and creating marketing campaigns.

Yet many never tell the one story that truly sets them apart.

Their own.

People don't buy from businesses because they have the cheapest price.

They buy because they trust the person behind the business. Trust isn't built through clever advertising.

It's built through **authenticity**.

It's built when people understand your values, your journey, your purpose and why you do what you do.

Every business owner has a story.
Some are stories of resilience.
Some of innovation.
Some of sacrifice.
Some of courage.
Some of starting again after failure.

Whatever your story is, it matters.

Because people connect with people long before they connect with products or services.

That's why I was incredibly honoured to be featured in Audacious Magazine



After just three editions, the magazine is already gaining significant momentum. It's lighting up digital billboards, appearing in airport lounges and finding its way onto coffee tables and into boardrooms & coffee tables across New Zealand and the globe. But what impressed me wasn't its growing reach. **It was its philosophy.**



Audacious doesn't simply give people visibility. It gives them the opportunity to be seen.

To tell their story.

To honour their journey.

To celebrate the challenges that shaped them as much as the successes that followed.

In a world where social media often celebrates highlight reels, Audacious celebrates humanity.

It reminds us that behind every successful business is a person who has experienced setbacks, doubt, courage, determination and growth.

Those are the stories people remember.

Those are the stories that build trust.

Those are the stories that create connection.

And ultimately...

Those are the stories that build great businesses.

People Will Forget What You Sell. They Won't Forget Your Story.

One of the greatest lessons I've learnt over the years is that facts inform, but stories inspire.

I've never shared the adversity of my life journey because I wanted sympathy. I've shared it because I wanted people to understand why I advocate so fiercely. I've never spoken publicly about losing businesses, rebuilding, governance challenges or difficult conversations because they make me look successful.

I've shared them because they're real.

Authenticity creates trust. Trust creates relationships. Relationships build businesses. Never be afraid to tell your story. You never know whose life, business or future decision it might influence.

Whether you're ready to strengthen your personal brand, develop your thought leadership, become a more confident public speaker, advocate for a cause that matters, or simply learn how to tell your story with authenticity and impact, Audacious Magazine can help.

Or if you're looking for a publication that doesn't simply showcase your business but honours the journey that brought you here, I encourage you to explore Audacious Magazine. Because visibility may get people to notice you. But your story is what they'll remember.

✉ Email: ali@mavencommunications.net | 027 4776448



There are moments in life and business when you need more than advice.

You need someone who will stand beside you.

Someone who will ask the difficult questions, challenge the status quo, bring people together, influence decision-makers and advocate for outcomes that matter.

That's why I created RISE.

RISE stands for Respect, Integrity, Strength and Empowerment.

They're not just words on a page.

They're the values that have shaped every chapter of my career.

Whether I'm standing before a Parliamentary Select Committee advocating for equitable access to cancer medicines, speaking to hundreds of business owners about leadership, helping a Director navigate a complex commercial issue, or mentoring an entrepreneur through one of the toughest decisions of their career, my purpose remains the same.

To help people find their voice, strengthen their leadership and create meaningful change.

Over the years, I've learnt that advocacy isn't confined to politics.

Business owners advocate every day.

For their staff.

For their customers.

For their communities.

For better legislation.

For funding.

For investment.

For fairness.

Sometimes they simply don't know where to start.



RESPECT | INTEGRITY | STRENGTH | EMPOWER

WHĀIA TE ITI KAHURANGI

KI TE TŪOHU KOE, ME HE MAUNGA TEITEI

PURSUE EXCELLENCE - SHOULD YOU STUMBLE, LET IT BE TO A LOFTY MOUNTAIN

That's where I come in.

I don't simply provide advice.

I help people communicate with confidence, influence the right audiences and navigate conversations that can change the future of their business, organisation or community.

Whether it's preparing for a meeting with a Minister, presenting to a Board, delivering a keynote, facilitating a strategic workshop or representing a business during times of challenge,

I bring experience, commercial thinking and a calm, pragmatic approach that helps people move from uncertainty to action.

Because every great outcome starts with a conversation.

Advocacy. Leadership. Influence.

Today's leaders are expected to do more than run successful organisations. They're expected to inspire. To communicate.

To build trust. To navigate complexity. To unite people behind a common purpose. These aren't skills we're born with.

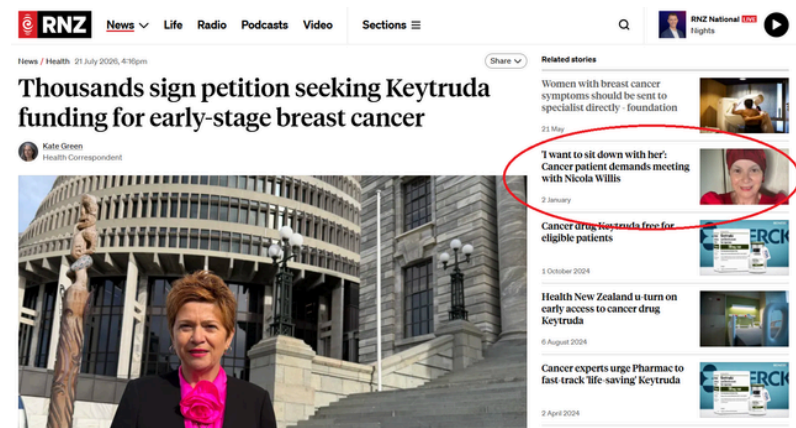
They're skills we develop.

Through RISE, I work with business owners, organisations, industry groups and community leaders who want to strengthen their influence, tell their story more effectively and create lasting impact.

Whether your goal is to grow your business, advocate for an important cause, strengthen your leadership team or inspire an audience, my role is to help you find the clarity, confidence and strategy to make that happen.

Because your voice matters.

And when it's used well, it has the power to change lives.



Click picture above to watch latest story.
Previous story link circled above is [here](#).

New Zealand's Advocacy Consultant
Built through Adversity.
Driven by Advocacy.
Designed for Impact.

Let's have some fireside business chats



Choose your customers as carefully as they choose you

One of the first things I ask a new client is, "Tell me about your top 10 customers." The answers are often revealing. Revenue is important, but so is the quality of the relationship, payment history, communication, contractual certainty and financial stability. Great businesses don't just choose their suppliers carefully. They choose their customers carefully too.

Current relevance:

If you'd like help strengthening your customer onboarding, contract processes or commercial due diligence, let's have a conversation. Sometimes one independent review before you sign a contract can save months, or even years, of costly disputes. At The Engine, we help business owners make informed decisions before risk becomes reality.

Why business owners avoid cash flow forecasting

I often ask business owners one simple question:

"Can you tell me what your bank balance will be in 90 days?"

Most can't.

Not because they're poor business owners. Not because they don't work hard. But because they're so busy running today's business that they never make time to look ahead.

The irony?

Cash doesn't usually disappear overnight. It leaves quietly. One slow-paying customer. One unexpected tax bill. One delayed project. One piece of equipment that needs replacing. Before you know it, you're making decisions from a place of panic instead of strategy.

I've seen profitable businesses fail because they ran out of cash. I've also seen businesses with modest profits thrive because they understood their cash flow and planned accordingly.

A cash flow forecast isn't about predicting the future perfectly. It's about giving yourself enough visibility to act before a problem becomes a crisis. It tells you when you need to collect debtors faster, delay expenditure, secure finance, increase sales activity, or simply have an honest conversation with your accountant or bank.

Hope is not a cash flow strategy.

The business owners who sleep best at night aren't necessarily those making the most money. They're the ones who know what's coming next.

Current Relevance

If you don't currently have a rolling 13-week or 12-month cash flow forecast, let's change that. At The Engine, we help business owners build practical forecasting tools that provide clarity, confidence and better decision-making, so you're leading your business rather than reacting to it.

When was the last time you worked on your Business? ★★★★★

One of my favourite questions to ask a business owner is:

"When was the last time you spent half a day working on your business instead of in it?"

If the answer is, "I can't remember," then that's probably the very reason you need to.

The businesses that continue to grow aren't necessarily run by the smartest people. They're run by leaders who make time to think, challenge their assumptions and remain accountable for the future they're creating.

Current Relevance

Imagine spending one day each month surrounded by other ambitious business owners, guided by an experienced facilitator whose focus is helping you build a stronger, more profitable and more sustainable business. That's exactly what you'll find in The Engine's Think Tank Group Coaching and Succession & Exit Planning Group Coaching. Both programmes are registered with the Regional Business Partner Network (RBPN), meaning eligible businesses may receive 50% funding towards the coaching investment.

If you're ready to stop reacting to your business and start leading it with clarity and confidence, we'd love to welcome you into the room. Better businesses begin with better conversations.



Great Directors don't delegate accountability

One of the strongest Directors I have worked with wasn't the one who knew all the answers.

He was the one who accepted responsibility, invested in improvement and never stopped asking, "What can we do better?"

That's the difference between compliance and leadership.

Compliance is about meeting today's obligations.

Leadership is about building a business that is stronger tomorrow than it is today.

Current Relevance

Whether you're navigating immigration, governance, compliance, growth or operational change, don't wait until an issue becomes a crisis.

At The Engine, we work alongside Directors to strengthen businesses, challenge thinking, bring together the right specialists and ensure no opportunity for success is overlooked. Because when your business succeeds, so do we.



Focus on continuity, not just exit

Jun 30, 2026 | Newsletter

The biggest risk to your business is the one you don't see - "What am I missing?" Why trust without verification can cost your business everything One of the questions I have been asked countless times over the past thirteen years is this: "How could someone with...

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Business Growth & Leadership Support NZ | RISE by The Engine

May 26, 2026 | Newsletter

The Leaders Who Ask Better Questions At The Engine, we work with business owners across New Zealand who want to strengthen leadership, improve strategy, grow sustainably and build businesses that are resilient for the future. One common theme consistently stands out...

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Fuel Pressure is Real. Leadership Matters More.

Apr 21, 2026 | Newsletter

Fuel Pressure is Real. Leadership Matters More. The hidden cost of the Fuel Crisis (and what smart businesses are doing with our help.) Knowledge is Power | Navigating Pressure with Perspective Right now, more than ever, businesses are feeling the flow-on effects of...

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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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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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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

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.

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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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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