

From Crew to Captain

By David Mellor Publication date: 1st July 2010

Making the transition from working for a big institution to working for yourself

Bill Gates did it. So did Simon Cowell.

Steve Jobs did it when he was 21.

Richard Branson did it when he was still at school.

But while all four of these famous – and fabulously rich – entrepreneurs started their own businesses, they didn't all do it the same way. While you've got to admire the precocious talent that saw Bill Gates and Richard Branson being their own bosses from day one, in some ways what Simon Cowell and Steve Jobs did is even more remarkable – because they gave up the security of steady employment to launch themselves into the uncharted waters of working for themselves.

Tricks of the Trade

Running our own business – 'going from crew to captain' to continue the nautical metaphor – is something so many of us secretly hanker to do, if only we had the courage, and the know-how. It's something David Mellor did almost 10 years ago, with great success. And in his new book, ***From Crew to Captain*** (rrp £12, Filament Publishing – publication date **1st July 2010**), he lets us in on some of the trade secrets of going it alone.

Steve Jobs was working for video game manufacturer Atari when he co-founded Apple in the mid 1970s. For 25 years David Mellor worked as a commercial and investment banker with HSBC and Deutsche Bank. In 2001 he cut the corporate apron strings and started his own consultancy practice. Since then he's never stopped working, never looked back - and he is now one of the UK's leading mentors of would-be entrepreneurs.



The Prosperous 20%

Starting your own business isn't all that hard. Making a lasting success of it is an altogether bigger challenge. As David soberingly reminds us in the introduction to his book, 50% of small businesses, of whatever type, do not last the first year, and 80% don't last five years.

"I want to put the odds in your favour," he says, "And if you decide to follow suit, that your business venture brings you everything you wish, and that you prosper rather than merely survive".

So how does David do that? What has he got – what have Branson, Jobs, Cowell *et al* got – that makes him, and them, part of the prosperous 20%? David sets out his stall early on: "There are a great number of books on the topic of starting your own business," he explains. "Many of them focus on taking your idea to market. That is absolutely fine. But what if you don't have an idea, or you have an idea but you are not sure that running your own business is the right option for you? I want to make sure these aspects are given a fair hearing."

David's book is divided into three parts – **Reflecting, Planning** and **Doing**. And while he gives plenty of practical, no nonsense advice about how to actually set up and run your own business, it is on these first two stages of reflecting and planning that he is particularly wise and instructive.

The Right Stuff

In **REFLECTING** David poses the question, "What does it take to make this transition – and is it for you?" In many ways this is the real crux of the book. Because it's one thing to dream about being your own boss, but turning the dream into reality takes a lot of guts, determination and hard work.

Have you got what it takes to be an entrepreneur? Will you be able to give up the three things people miss most about corporate life – community, administrative and financial support, and the benefits of a regular job and income – to strike out on your own? Will you have the discipline to turn off the TV, ignore the kids... and knuckle down to working at home – even when your favourite show or sporting coverage (in David's case it was golf!) comes on?

David helps you to really think about and then answer these all-important questions. But encouragingly he says: "If you have the right attitude and mindset to make the adjustment, and you also have a business idea that makes sense, then normally it's a case not of whether you're going to be successful but how long it is going to take." David's own wish-list of the right stuff, the personal qualities you need to emulate Messrs Jobs, Branson and their ilk, includes integrity, passion, vision, belief and determination.

Best Laid Plans

Part two of *From Crew to Captain* is **PLANNING** – what you need to think about and do when preparing to launch your business, and the fact that it's the longest section of the book shows the importance David puts on this vital phase. It's one of the hoariest clichés in the small businessman's lexicon, but if you fail to plan you really are planning to fail. But pay proper attention here - and there shouldn't be any danger that your business will sink for lack of foresight.

David fills you in on the characteristics of a successful business. He talks about the skills you'll need, about how to understand your market and potential clients, how to create strategic, business and financial plans. And crucially, he dissects the reasons why so many small businesses fail. "Not," he says, "Because I want to depress you just at the point of launching, it's mainly to tell you where the traps are - so you can avoid them."

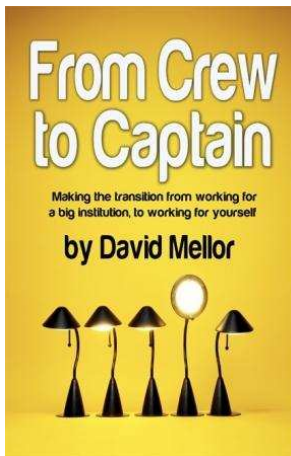
Words of Encouragement

Part three of David's book is **DOING**, where he examines the attributes that will be important in the early days post launch. Later on he gives some of his "top tips" – everything from dealing with lawyers ("push for a fixed fee"); to naming your business (best not to call it Apple unless you want to take on Steve Jobs in the courtroom...); data protection; tax returns and expenses; recruiting; IT; insurance; managing risk; and a whole host of other things every budding Branson needs to know about.

Interspersed with all the practical advice are what David terms "sources of encouragement". These are inspirational stories about successful sportsmen,

businessmen and public figures like Nelson Mandela to help you keep the faith through the inevitable tough times.

Written in a clear and readable style, ***From Crew to Captain*** is a comprehensive self-help handbook for small business success. Before you're even halfway through it you'll know whether you're the sort of person who really can make a go of starting their own business. By the time you've finished it, you may well be on the road to becoming the next Steve Jobs, Richard Branson or Bill Gates.



Visit www.davidmellormentoring.com for more information or to order your copy of ***From Crew to Captain***.

The book is also available through main booksellers everywhere and Amazon.

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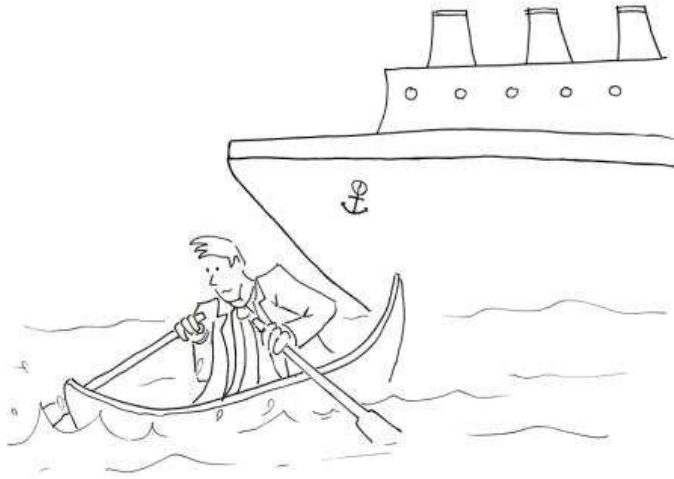
About the Author

Before establishing his own consultancy practice in 2001, **David Mellor** had a 25-year career in banking with HSBC and Deutsche Bank. Spells in HSBC's branch network and in Deutsche Bank's Venture Capital division gave him exposure to the small business market. Since 2001 he has built on this experience and specialised in mentoring aspiring business owners, helping hundreds of people along the road to becoming the captain of their own 'ship' – and, on occasion, persuading them not to launch the ship in the first place!

Says David, "What I try to do is help people work out for themselves whether or not they really have what it takes to make the adjustment from working for somebody else to working for themselves. Having the corporate safety net removed from under you can be a daunting experience. But if you've got the right attitude and mindset – not to mention passion, self-belief and an appetite for good, honest graft – there's no reason why you shouldn't make a success of it."

"Hopefully by reading my book people will be able to make this crucial decision for themselves. And once they do, they will find plenty of practical advice and guidance to help them launch with confidence and achieve success – whatever that means for them."

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU!



For a review copy or pdf of David Mellor's new book, *From Crew to Captain* (rrp £12, Filament Publishing – publication date 1st July 2010), for HR versions of the illustrations in this press release, or to interview David by phone, email Q&A or face-to-face, please contact:

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INDIVIDUAL INPUT AND INTERVIEWS

David is also available to provide or contribute to any **features** you may be considering on the subject of setting up in business for yourself. He would also be prepared to put together a **regular slot** in your publication, station or for your website, or provide expert advice on any associated matter.

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