

CORNERSTONE

YOUR STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PARTNER

CONTROL. PROFIT. GROWTH.

Who doesn't want more profit, more control and to grow their business?

Surprisingly, 80% of small business owners don't! They live by their bank account and their success or failure is arguably down to luck rather than judgement. And they're happy with that.

The other 20% are the ones who do. Those are the ones who would take value from a Strategic Financial Partner.

If you feel you are in this minority, you're most likely in the right place.

The next question is, are we the right partner for you?

W H O W E W O R K W I T H

Our clients comes from all walks of life, but tend to find us when they're experiencing one or more of these scenarios:

- They're trying to get information out of their current finance team / person but are met with excuses or push backs;
- They don't trust the information and advice they are being given;
- They've hit a rough patch and need help getting through it;
- They're at the stage where they require some strategic financial help, but don't yet need someone full time.

Due to the nature of how we work and the level of support we provide our clients, we can't help everyone and won't pretend we can.

We will never be a business that has hundreds of clients at one time, we won't outsource the work and we only recruit the best in house staff (buy cheap buy twice, as the saying goes). What that means is that our fabulous clients really do become part of our family. We get to know them on a personal basis, speak to and see them regularly and provide the best, one to one support and advice they could possibly have.

Therefore, in order for us to become the Cornerstone to your business, we have to fit with you and KNOW that we can provide you with massive value, otherwise how do we justify what we charge?!

The majority of our clients are 6 and 7 figure business owners who tend to have similar personality traits:

- Action takers;
- High expectations for themselves and those around them;
- Value quality and want the best;
- Straight to the point and appreciate straight talking;
- Open minded;
- Quick to respond and treat our requests for information as a priority;
- Understand the value of proper business information.

Would you want to work with a faceless Strategic Financial Partner who has hundreds of clients who they never speak to and don't know their business inside out? Probably not.

"In business, there are good times and bad. The Cornerstone team have successfully navigated us through both and become an indispensable extension of our team.

We took on Cornerstone during a period of strong growth. I was looking for high level support and in depth analysis that I didn't have time to address. Once signed, they started with some rigorous house-keeping, ensuring all data was correct and producing detailed management accounts. We then went on to analyse turnover targets, true costs of sale and where we might reduce overheads. Annie saved us a fortune on bank fees.

Coronavirus hit in March 2020. The travel industry was blindsided. Cornerstone responded quickly, clarifying the cash position of the business and how long we'd be able to continue without sales. They set about helping identify where we could make cuts. Our overheads were reduced by 80% within a week, effectively doubling the length of time we could survive without any sales.

Along the way, Annie has assisted with questions relating to HR, bonus structures and other general support. Cornerstone are attentive, flexible and highly effective. I wouldn't hesitate in recommending them."

HH, PSA

V I R T U A L M A N A G E M E N T A C C O U N T A N T

In a corporate business, you have a finance team.

The Finance Team will consist of one or multiple 'bookkeepers', who take care of the data entry and transactional side of the business, making sure everything goes in the correct boxes so that the rest of the organisation can use the data to make the right decisions at the right time.

Then there will be a Management Accountant/ Finance Manager, who will oversee the bookkeepers, interpret and analyse that data to provide insights, and make sure the people who need it get the information at the right time.

Then you will have a Finance Director who will provide the strategic leadership to the finance team and the rest of the business.

Unfortunately, that's often no how it happens in the 'not corporate' world.

Partly because businesses often don't have the resources or the need to recruit all of those people full time, and partly because finding high quality examples of these people outside of corporate is difficult... really difficult...

VIRTUAL MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT CONTINUED...

How many times do you get pestered by government organisations because things have been submitted late or at the very last minute?

How about the number of times you've asked your Bookkeeper or Accountant for information on how the business is performing, yet been met with excuses and / or incorrect information?

There really is no excuse for it. You deserve better.

Our "Sleep At Night", outsourced finance team service takes care of the bits under FD level (see our Outsourced FD service for more information on this). We take the whole finance function and run it, as it would be run in a big business, where submissions are not late, you get the information you need and the finance team is an invaluable Cornerstone to the success and smooth running of the business, not just another unnecessary expense.

With Cornerstone, you will get what you need, when you need it, and everything else just happens by magic, so you can sleep soundly at night knowing it's all done.

- ✓ Monthly bookkeeping with data in the correct boxes so you can see where you are each month;
- ✓ A set of management accounts each month, in the format of your choosing;
- ✓ Quarterly virtual (online) business review meetings, where we talk you through the numbers, what they're telling you and what you can do to improve your profitability and financial health;
- ✓ Consulting Calls with our highly skilled team, who will talk you through how to read your management accounts to enable you to make the right decisions at the right time;
- ✓ Managed Year-End process, ensuring your Accountant gets what they need to save you the most tax possible, or if you are missing an Accountant, we'll manage that too with one of our very skilled and fabulous partners (we recognise there are dedicated tax accountants who are better at it), but we know what to look for and we know some people who are amazing at it.

“I met with Cornerstone early 2020 and didn’t think they would be of much value to me as the monthly cost would have been quite a bit more than I was paying at the time, but when Covid hit and I couldn’t get any info from the team I had, I decided to take the plunge and give them a shot.

I should have moved over to these guys years ago.

They are incredibly efficient, forward thinking, preventative rather than reactive and just generally really lovely.

I recommend them to literally anybody and everybody and would never go back to anywhere else now.”

CRAIG COTTON, CSC ELECTRICAL

V I R T U A L F I N A N C E D I R E C T O R

Let’s be honest now, being a business owner is lonely. If you’re here you’re also most likely great at what you do, but not so great when it comes to the finance-y bit.

It’s not enough to just have a “good” Bookkeeper or Accountant if you want to give your business the rocket fuel it needs to help you achieve your goals.

You need the commercial, high level and strategic support that comes from a Virtual Finance Director... and a bloody good one at that...

One like us.

As well as overseeing the finance function as a whole, we’ve worked in actual businesses (not Accountancy practices, because let’s face it they are NOT the same!) our entire careers. We know the day to day challenges and the commercial horrendous-ness that goes on. We’re not naive to believe that everything is just sales in, costs out, and you increase one and decrease the other to become successful.

It’s not that simple. It never is.

So we won’t give you that kind of level of advice or support. We are not a one size fits all, we get to know your business as much as, if not more than, you as the business owner so that we only provide the best advice for the future of you and your business.

And no, you don’t need to get rid of your Accountant or Bookkeeper if you don’t want to, we work with them towards one common goal... get your business to where you want it to be.

- ✓ Full day strategy and action plan meeting;
- ✓ Process reviews and improvements;
- ✓ Budgets, forecasts & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) setting and monitoring;
- ✓ Cost saving strategies;
- ✓ Cashflow forecasting;
- ✓ Monthly virtual business review meeting where we talk you through the numbers, what they're telling you and what you can do to improve your profitability and financial health;

“Like all start-ups and small businesses, I had been doing my own bookkeeping... it was really quite useful in the early days as it kept me in close touch with the all-important finances of the business.

However, as the business grew so did the financial administration, to the point where it became a burden. The time spent on this distracted me from coming up with new products that would develop the business and add to its value (the stuff I most enjoyed).

At this point, a chance meeting brought me into contact the Annie of Cornerstone. We started using them to do our books (particularly running the payroll and pension scheme) in October 2019. Since then Annie has helped us move to a new accounting package (including porting over 16 years' of historic data)... pleased I wasn't doing that myself!

I can thoroughly recommend Annie and her team if you want to get back to doing your day-job and having more fun at work, I'm now able to delegate the financial administration knowing that it will be done to my exacting standard (Annie will confirm I'm a fussy customer!).”

PAUL BRAMLEY, METROSOL

V I R T U A L F I N A N C E T E A M

A great business owner needs a great Finance Director helping them understand and use the data in their company, and a great Finance Director needs a great team behind them getting the data right in the first place.

We know that neither of those roles are easy to fill, and certainly if you haven't got the resources or need for two or more members of staff.

You can get a bookkeeper, but you then still don't have someone with the nouse to help you solve problems as they arise, or someone to bounce ideas off who has probably already seen or done it before, or can give you a different high level perspective. Business is lonely... really lonely, and until you've run and grown your own, you can't understand. You shouldn't be going through it alone. The support network is really important. However, it's not enough to just have a "yes" man behind you who won't tell you if you're potentially going to do something silly – you need a strong head and someone who will look out for your best interests.

You can get a Finance Director, but then you still need an experienced and skilled bookkeeper making sure the data is correct and in the correct boxes. A Finance Director can't do their job without an on-the-ball Bookkeeper, and if they say they can, they are probably not very good.

With our full service, you get both areas covered, by extremely experienced, knowledgeable and skilled people, for around the price of a junior member of staff.

Over the course of our careers, and during our time as a business, we've worked with six, seven and eight figure business owners, helping them get their processes running the way they should be, provided them with vital information which has enabled them to change direction when needed and uncovered hundreds of thousands of pounds in revenue and profit (one client increased their bank balance by £300k in 8 months as a result of the information we were able to provide. Another one, who would have otherwise been destroyed by the Coronavirus, will survive on no income for 2 years because we were able to act and make decisions quickly when they needed it).

V I R T U A L F I N A N C E T E A M

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T H E G R O W T H M E T H O D

Without a solid system, results can be inconsistent.

We don't like inconsistency when it comes to getting results. That's why we've developed our very own system called the GROWTH method, which ensures results... every time.

The development of our system has come from years of experience in lots of different businesses of varying sizes and industries, dealing with the day to day challenges that occur, and in most cases, having to find a solution to them.

Our GROWTH method underpins everything we do, and is our surefire way of providing our clients with massive value, and improving their lives in terms of their business and them personally.

THE GROWTH METHOD

Step 1 - Goals

They say you should start with the end in mind. Different goals come with a different set of challenges and decisions that need to be made. For example, if your exit plan is to sell, you would structure and do things differently to if you just wanted to make a load of money and go on holiday to the Maldives every year.

We can't provide our signature value to you until we know what you want to achieve and when.

Step 3 - Operations

The systems, processes and controls in your business are often the difference between happy staff and a happy you. Are you running efficiently and effectively through different areas of the organisation? Can you get the correct data and information you need, when you need it, where you need it? If you wanted to sell the business and step out of it tomorrow, or take a month off and travel the world, could you? If not, chances are there are some changes that need to be made.

Step 5 - Time

Virtually all business owners go into business for more freedom in one way or another... they want more holidays, more time with their families, more money to spend on things, more time to play golf etc etc. They don't want to be working all the time for the rest of their lives.

However, actually taking the plunge can be pretty eye opening! Suddenly the security of employment has gone and you need to get the cash coming in. So you just work all the time. Then you grow, take on staff and more work, and without steps 2 and 3 nailed, you just work even more. We've all been there. It's not good and all that happens is you get pulled from pillar to post, at work and at home, and you just end up exhausted.

We don't want that for you. We can help you stop it.

Step 2 - Revenue & Expenses

Once we know where you're going, we need to know where you are now and what the gap looks like. Questions that need to be answered include: Are you making money? Which products or services are profitable? Who are your best customers and suppliers? Where are the cash leaks in the business that need to be plugged? What are your biggest risks?

Step 4 - Wealth

The wealth of your business will directly effect the wealth of you. Many business owners think that to make more money they just need to sell more. However, if you're not making money as it is, all that happens are the numbers get bigger and, ergo, the problem gets bigger.

Our goal is to make you more money, and we're very good at it... simple as that.

Step 6 - Happiness

All of the previous steps are wrapped up to make your life better. A happy you means happy relationships, happy staff, happy customers and happy families.

Unfortunately it is lonely at the top, and there is often no one to talk to, or bounce ideas off, who will give you an honest opinion. We often end up helping our clients with lots of issues that aren't always strictly financial or in some cases even business related, because generally we've seen it and probably had to fix it in a previous life, or even if they just need an ear at the end of the phone.

This is a partnership, and we take the "partner" bit very seriously, to the point where we end up being the Cornerstone that our clients rely on above all else.

THE TEAM



ANNIE THOMPSON
CEO

Annie worked her way up from the bottom of the pile up to Finance Director level, running large teams of people in organisations such as Ipsos, DHL, Bizerba, and a Formula 3 race team.

She has turned around a number of finance teams, as well as been instrumental in the growth or increased profitability of multiple businesses.

She has a keen interest and a natural talent in the strategy side of things and is normally able to quickly get to the root of a problem.



JULIE CORDEROY
Management Accountant

Julie comes from the world of large corporations, with experience in the implementation and training of new systems, improving efficiency and developing various analytical models.

Julie is a stickler for detail, and has a vast amount of knowledge and experience in various accounting functions and across different sectors, including the oil, partyware, technology and home appliance industries.



NICK DHILLON
Accountant

Nick is relatively new to the Accounting industry having spent the last decade running his own businesses.

Nick has a keen eye for details and is a strategist by nature, as well as being an 'ideas man' within the business.

Nick is perhaps one of the sharpest tools in the box.

ARE YOU READY
TO TAKE YOUR
BUSINESS TO THE
NEXT LEVEL?

GET IN TOUCH
TODAY!



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