

CONTENTS

Introduction xxi

1. STARTING FROM SCRATCH	1
• Ignore everyone else, what do <i>you</i> want to do?	2
• Reasons for starting a business	3
• I hated my boss	4
• Couldn't stand the politics	4
• Frustration with current job	5
• Got fired or made redundant	5
• I am, or I became, unemployable	6
• Convinced there must be a better way	7
• Wanted to be my own boss or have more control	7
• The chance to use my brain for my own benefit	8
• Run my life as I want	8
• Life changes everything	9
• Wanted to take a risk	9
• Always wanted to	10
• Wanted the challenge	11
• Wanted to create my own dream job	11
• Spotted an opportunity	11
• Had a safety net	12
• Wanted to make a lot of money	12
• A combination of fear and ambition	12
• What are you really passionate about in life?	13
• How going to work could be like going to play	13
• What exactly is the idea?	14
• What will your business be?	14
• Why do they need you?	16

• Will that make money?	17
• Poor plan, brilliantly executed	18
• Some things to consider	18
• What's in a name?	19
• Guts, heart or head?	21
• In the mood for change?	22
• Chapter 1 checklist	23
2. PECKED TO DEATH BY DUCKS	25
• Why the rough shape will do	26
• Envelopes, fag packets and postcards	27
• Why almost is more than enough	28
• Progress not perfection	28
• Beware spreadsheets	29
• The one-page business plan	30
• Step 1: How much do I want to earn each year?	31
• Step 2: A realistic expenditure per customer/ visit/transaction/project	32
• Step 3: A realistic number of customers/visits/ transactions/projects	33
• Step 4: How much money will this frequency generate?	34
• Step 5: Deduct all costs	34
• Step 6: If it doesn't work, change something	36
• Boiler installation example	37
• How much money do I really want?	39
• What's the proposition?	41
• Describe it to your mum	43
• Beware the context	44
• Big or bold?	45
• Small is good	46
• So is it a goer then?	47
• Chapter 2 checklist	48

3. LIFESTYLE OR BUILD-TO-SELL?	49
• Predicting the end before you start	50
• What type of business would you like?	51
• What do you wish to do with the business eventually?	52
• Five crucial build-to-sell questions	53
• If you want to sell, who will buy?	54
• What exactly will they be buying?	55
• What price do you want?	56
• How will you justify the price?	56
• Will you be able to work for someone else during the earn-out period?	58
• Five crucial lifestyle questions	58
• What type of lifestyle?	59
• Is that realistic or too fanciful?	61
• How much time off do I want?	62
• Who else is involved?	62
• What happens if I get ill?	63
• Half-dead insurance	64
• The one-page personal plan	64
• Entrepreneurs: myth or reality?	66
• Congratulations Mrs Duncan, it's an entrepreneur	67
• Work out how	68
• Decision time	68
• Chapter 3 checklist	69
4. LEAP OF FAITH	71
• Enough talking, let's get on with it	72
• If you are still planning, you are still not earning	73
• Phobology: what are you scared of?	74
• The hardest things about starting	75
• Confidence crises	76
• Lack of support and what to do about it	79
• Sticking to your principles	81

• Cash problems	83
• Action not activity	86
• Test-driving is better than not driving at all	88
• Don't do things the same way every time	88
• Risking it all	89
• Get the help you need	89
• Screw it, let's do it	89
• Just @*!`ing do it!	90
• Chapter 4 checklist	90
5. HUMILITY, HONESTY AND HUMOUR	93
• Getting the character fit right	94
• Go humble more often	95
• Always be honest	96
• Put some humour into it	98
• Only do business with people you like	99
• Only do something if you know why you are doing it	100
• Remember your personal plan	101
• The difference between service and servility	101
• Getting your attitude right	103
• How to conduct yourself	104
• Wherever you go, lighten up the room	106
• Wide berths and giving birth	106
• Small house, big heart	106
• The four Hs	107
• Chapter 5 checklist	107
6. HARD WORK AND CLEVER WORK	109
• What is hard work?	110
• There's work and there's clever work	111
• When not to work hard, or at all	113
• When laziness does work	114
• Understanding the link between effort and results	116

• Why lazy people achieve nothing	117
• The best things in life	117
• Some simple early rules	119
• Getting the money right	120
• Chapter 6 checklist	123
7. GAINING SPEED AND LOSING ALTITUDE	125
• Gaining speed and losing altitude	126
• Speed: good or bad?	126
• Busier doesn't always mean better	127
• Digging a deeper hole	127
• If it's not working, admit it	128
• Working out when to quit	129
• Change direction and move on	130
• Predicting pitfalls before they happen	131
• Tripwires and predictions	131
• Identify your hates, then ditch them	133
• Facing up to failure	133
• Spotting fool's gold	134
• Beware self-deception	135
• Don't kid yourself	135
• Don't mislead others	136
• You will be rumbled	137
• Chapter 7 checklist	138
8. DAILY REINVENTION	139
• Change your offer every day, week, month or year	140
• One in a row	141
• Rewarding yourself appropriately	142
• Don't get stuck in a rut	143
• Dealing with setbacks: BOHICA	145
• Biggest mistakes and worst disasters	145
• Partners, personalities and personal issues	146
• Money, more customers and moving customers	147

- Technology, timing and trust 149
- Due to tomorrow's weather... 151
- A few moments now... 151
- Are we there yet? 152
- Chapter 8 checklist 152

9. MARKETING MATTERS 155

- Why bother to communicate? 156
- The value of communication 156
- How much should you spend? 158
- Say hello to everyone who could help 158
- Don't be afraid to ask for mini favours 159
- The only ten things you need to know about marketing 159
- Pre-marketing 160
- Some start-up marketing ideas 161
- Some things to reflect on after a few months of marketing 163
- Relaxed selling lines 163
- Escape lines 164
- Go again 165
- Chapter 9 checklist 165

10. PASS IT ON 167

- What they all say 168
- Self-motivation 168
- Money 169
- Action 169
- Relationships 170
- Toughness 170
- Chinese whispers 171
- The invisible support network 171
- You choose this life 171

APPENDICES	173
I Book summaries	175
II Survey responses	199
III Bibliography	263
INDEX	265

