EXECUTIVE
BUSINESS

Professional Services PROFESSIONAL®

What do we mean by Executive?

Understanding Business is a key part of the jigsaw, which is often ignored. In the current climate there is a blurring of the edges between business and technology. Some discussions revolve around what drives the decisions customers will make. Is it the business driving technology or is technology enabling the business.

There are a number of key components, which need to be understood and addressed which have an impact on the decisions a customer will make and on their direction as a business. For example, in addition to the important economic climate what are the social trends for that business? What are the effects of government and regulatory developments or what Innovations or technology trends will propel the business.

Being Business Savvy is key, you don't know what you don't know, so arming Professionals with the skills to gain an understanding into these areas and understanding their implications and influence on a solution is a real differentiator

Why does being an Executive matter in Professional Services?

Understanding the business landscape and the financials is often the missing link for professional services. If you want to be Business Issues focused you need to understand the Industry and the associated macro economics for that sector. It is impossible to be credible and understand what issues are driving the thinking in that Industry unless you are steeped in . For example you wouldn't go to a travel agent who didn't know anything about travel and tourism.

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FOUNDATION

I. Industry sector skills

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Having an introductory level of skill to the specific Industry Sector, with an understanding of the specific industry, the key changes and potential issues and the movers and shakers, and enough about what's going on the have a credible conversation on the subject.

Why does this skill matter?

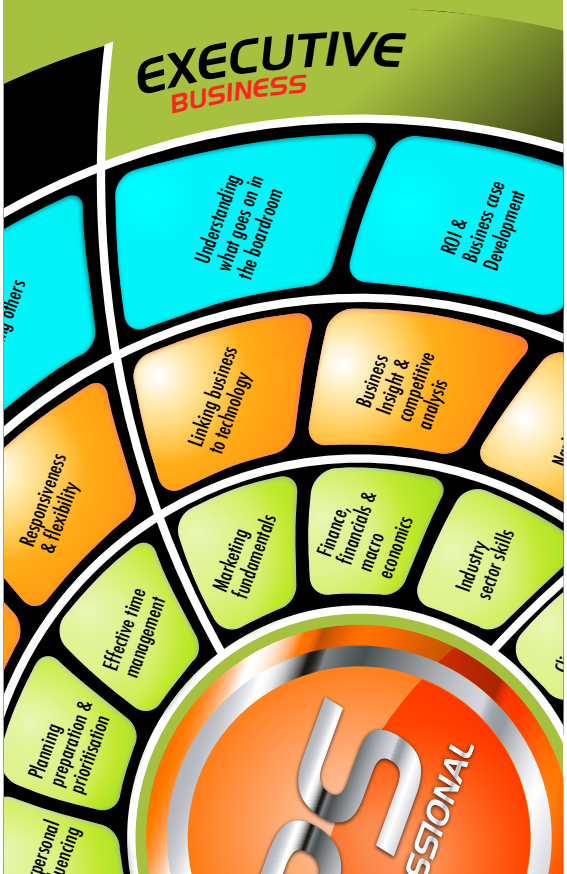
In order to focus on customers business issues, you need to really understand the industry sector they are in, so its important to have a fairly deep level of knowledge so you can converse with the customer enough to have a sensible conversation, and for them to believe you understand the specific terminology for that Industry and the associated issues.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I would get myself steeped in the subject. Being hungry for knowledge and mixing in the relevant events or forums so I could really understand at a working level what's going on. Attending events, reading and writing articles, research on the Internet, joining associations.

What are the foundations of being an Executive?

The key to building strong foundations in this area is the development of an in depth Industry Sector knowledge. The staring point is really getting underneath how that sector ticks including the business drivers, macro economics and key changes and implications in the Industry.



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FOUNDATION

2. Finance, financials & macro economics

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Knowledge of what's going on in the economy and the implications on that industry. The basics of financial management, and how to read an financial report and a financial statement, and the general health of a business.

Why does this skill matter?

Understanding the financials enables you to have different conversations with the customer and will provide you with an insight into potential issues that you can address with the solutions you have access too. It will also improve your credibility with the customer as you will be able to understand key elements of the bigger picture.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

You can read and understand an annual report and decipher key business indicators in the short and medium term and there impact on the business. You have an eye for detail and up your game on being more analytical

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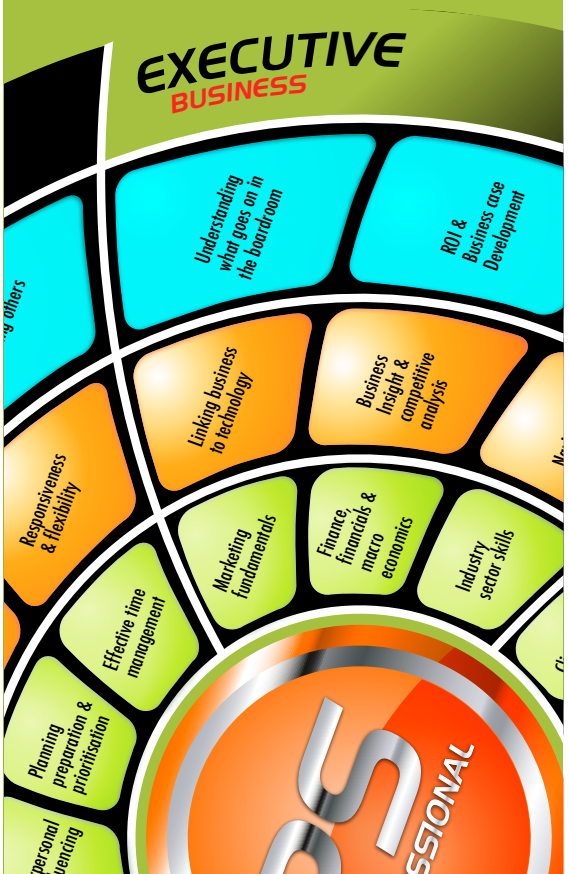

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FOUNDATION

3. Marketing fundamentals

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What is marketing, what are the key elements and what are the key fundamentals to any business strategy. How do you put together a marketing strategy and plan using all types of media

Why does this skill matter?

This is an interesting area as it matters both internally and externally. Internally you need the ability to create value propositions and compelling events to drive your portfolio and externally to help the customer be successful with what they are trying to achieve either within their own organisation or with their customers.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

You are a practical thinker but are always looking at the implications of what you know and how it come across. You are keen to develop presentation and marketing techniques utilising different media and strive for creativity and the wow factor.

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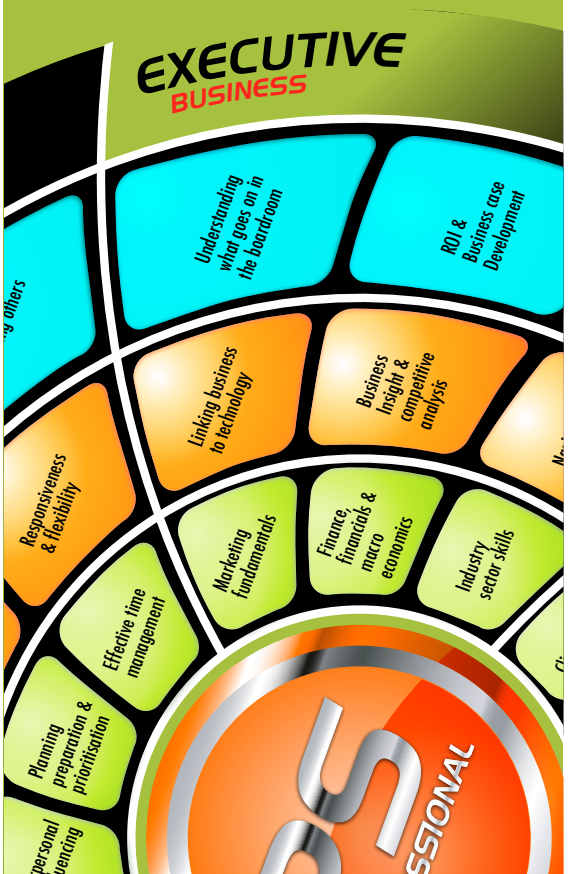

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PROFESSIONAL

I. Navigate the regulatory landscape

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Having a strong understanding in a specific Industry of the existing regulatory standards and emerging regulations, specifically how they manifest and their potential impact on the solutions in future business practices in that Industry.

Why does this skill matter?

If you are going to talk to customers about business issues, you need to know the industry really well. You are also looking for triggers that will require different thinking and approaches and this provides the platform for you to really build your credibility.

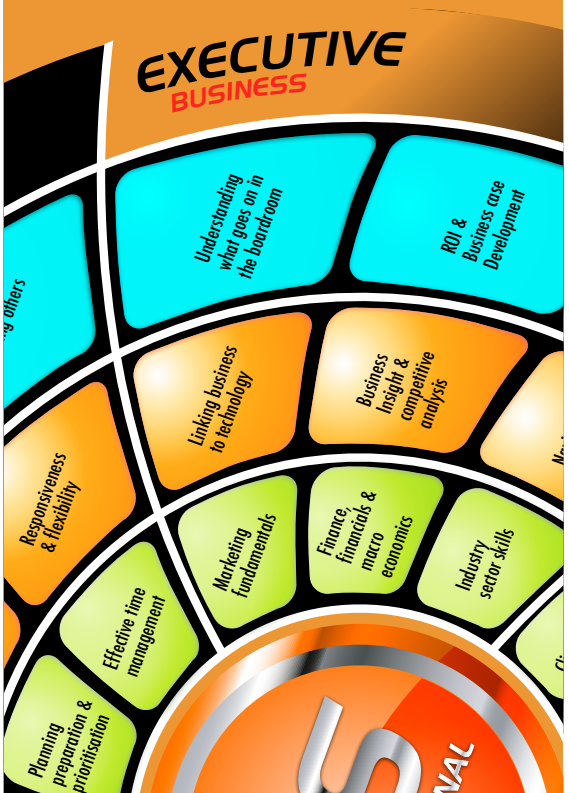
What am I doing if I'm good at this?

Getting immersed in the subject. Attending events, reading and writing articles and speaking on the subject. Keeping it real by using your knowledge as a spring board with different customers to provide you with further insight and experience.

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

What does a Professional Executive know how to do?

Building on strong foundations the professional is able to start using the Industry expertise and link the business to technology. They are also able to expend their field of vision in both depth and width by understand more deeply the competitive landscape and more widely into other industry sectors. Key to the professional skill set as you get into more depth in a sector is the complexity of regulation specific to that industry.



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PROFESSIONAL

2. Business insight & competitive analysis

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Having a detailed view of the competitive landscape, and a deep business insight and the implications of changes in the relevant business environments and associated technologies on the current and future business trends.

Why does this skill matter?

This will help you join the dots, being aware of what others are doing together with your experience of the market will act as a springboard to finding cist effective solutions. This is one area that really build credibility for a consultant where you become a trusted expert.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

You have a wide portfolio of references, having done this multiple times for multiple organisations, you start to build up knowledge which is based on real experience. You can provide comparison and correlation of each in relation to the business direction.

What does a Professional Executive know how to do?

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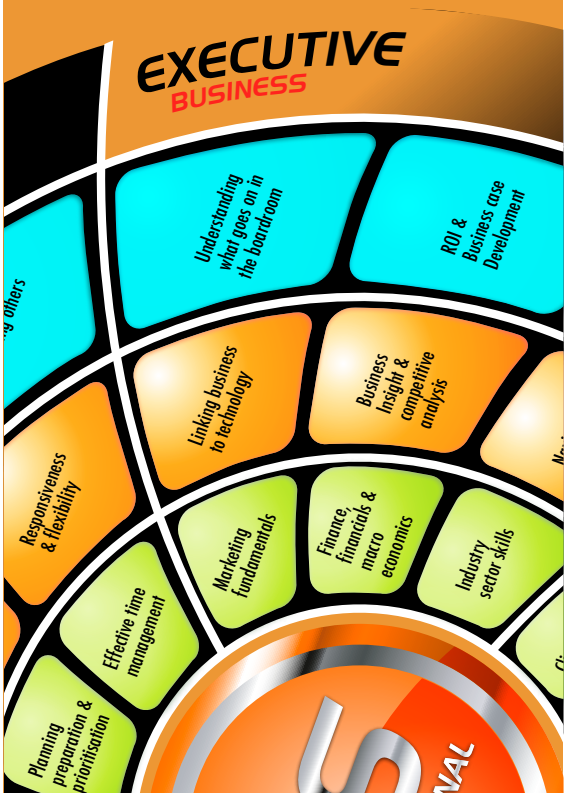

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3. Linking business to technology

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There is a blurring of the edges between business and technology. This area focuses on bilateral dependencies of both business and technology, and being able to articulate what the impact is on the organisation and its effect on technology solutions to business problems.

Why does this skill matter?

Most people miss the point for this key skill, to be able to translate a business problem into a technical solution. Seeing the wood for the trees is key as normally customers are not able to explain what they want. This is an important first step.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

You possess strong knowledge of both business and technology and are able to articulate the flow of one to the other. You would be able to explain the strategic importance of the solution and the impact on the business.

What does a Professional Executive know how to do?

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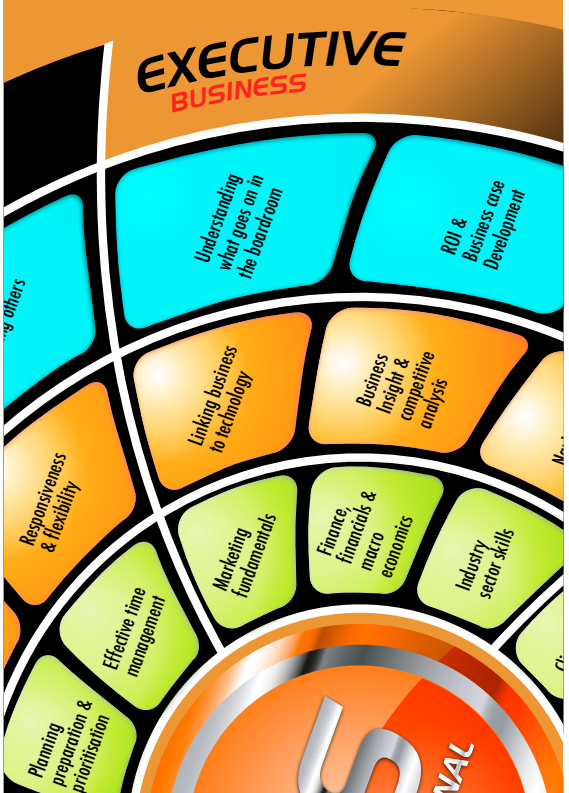

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MASTERY

I. Strategic awareness & insight

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How to develop a practical strategy, and the ability to understand what the gaps are against the existing strategy. In addition a deep understanding of how to benchmark that strategy against leaders in the Industry , by understanding changes and shift in the market and what leaders in this field are focussed on.

Why does this skill matter?

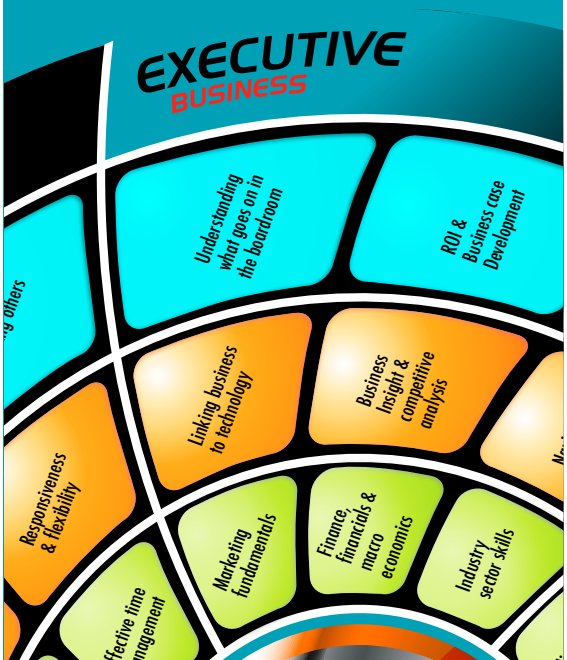
This area is mainly misunderstood as blue-sky thinking. This is the practical side of having a strategy that is grounded, practical and has clarity. Most organisations suffer because they don't take the time to do this, or if they do they make it too complicated and far away from the real world.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I have a clear method for understanding how to build a practical strategy and benchmark in the market. I know how to identify gaps and am able to get buy in from people to come to a common agreement on strategic direction and the implications of the decisions that are made.

What does mastery in terms of an Executive look like?

Understanding the Industry is important but not the only part of the business jigsaw, understanding what makes business tick and how decisions are made is key in order to become an expert. Here there is a strong focus on building a strong business case but linking that to the competition for budget and how decisions are made in the boardroom. The second area really understanding the way the strategy is developed in a level of depth, and its implications on the business.



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MASTERY

2. ROI & business case development

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Experience on how to create and develop a Return on Investment paper that is fit for a Financial Director and that could be used at board level. Also the ability to build a professional business case with a full financial breakdown and solid arguments. Translating the result into a report that the board will expect and understand.

Why does this skill matter?

This is a subject that enables you to really change the conversations you are having and opens up options for the people you are talking to. It also moves the stage. You are in the heart of what are the business drivers, how will decisions be made and what's the business case and the pay back or buying a solution. This skill is very challenging to obtain but invaluable.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I look at things from a business point of view, in the eyes of the financial and commercial players. What difference would it make to the business, what's the pay back, and is the business case strong enough.

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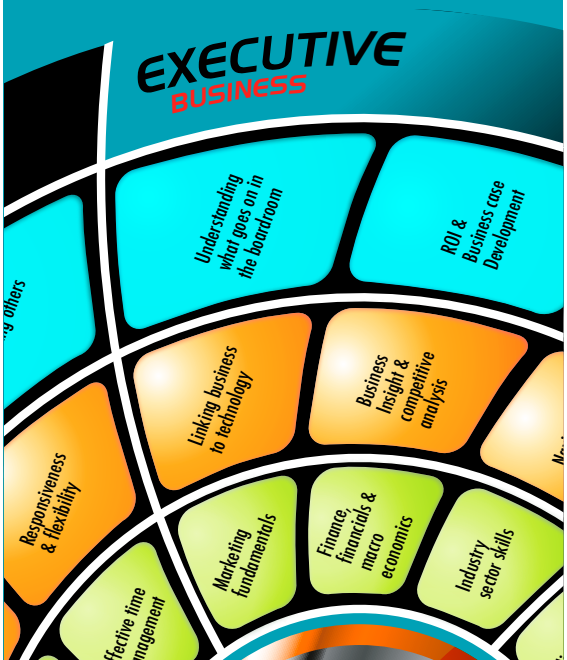

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MASTERY

3. Understanding what goes on in the boardroom

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There is competition for budget in the boardroom. This area focuses on understanding how decisions that are made in the boardroom, and how to help a sponsor be successful to obtain budget for their initiative or project, and raising the priority internally

Why does this skill matter?

If you want to stand out and really differentiate, this is the place to do it. Most people tackle C-Level discussions the wrong way around. Understanding what the C-Level needs to do to be successful internally and helping them will increase your chances of success.

What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I have a real life view of what goes on in the boardroom, looking through the eyes of the sponsor, what challenges they need to overcome, and what they need to be successful to get sign-off. Focussing on real business benefits and priorities.

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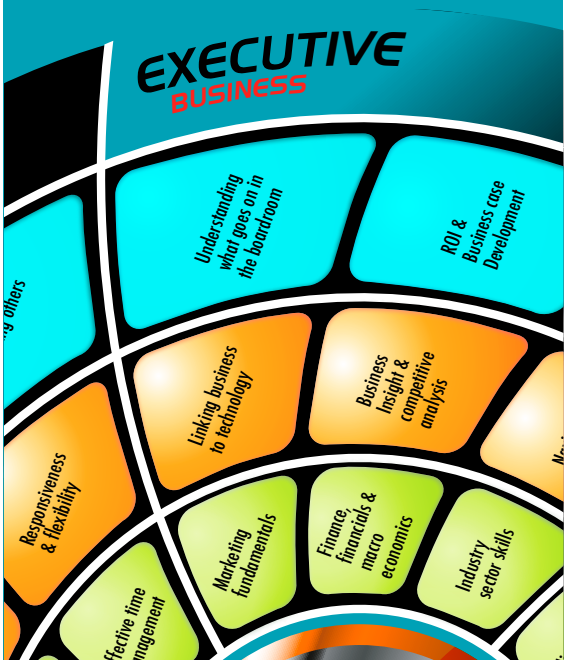

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