

this is how
yoodoo
it.

Great advice from some
of the UK's top thinkers on
entrepreneurship



65 columns from the Financial Times
and Daily Telegraph,
featuring Stephen Fry, Allan Leighton,
Brent Hoberman, Kelvin Mackenzie,
Peter Jones, Sir Robin Saxby,
Sir Keith Mills, Sir Philip Trousdell
and many more.

Mike Southon

this is how **yoodoo** it

This is an extract from 'This is How Yoodoo It' by Mike Southon,
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Introduction

Welcome to this is how yoodoo It, a collection of my columns for the *Financial Times* and *Daily Telegraph*

It has been a huge pleasure to write them, as most of them involved meeting fascinating people and learning about the secrets of their success. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know them all, and it is my privilege to pass their knowledge and experience on to readers of this book.

I said ‘secrets’ (plural) above, as there is rarely just one. However, to make my columns fit the demands of a newspaper audience, I needed to zero in on one aspect of each individual’s message. My portraits are thus thumbnail ones rather than intricate Gainsboroughs or Lawrences. But sharper, I hope, as a result.

The book is called this is how yoodoo it, as a nod to our new site, Yoodoo.biz, which has been specifically designed for people thinking of starting a business. You can find more details at the end of the book.

This book is published by Ecademy Press and all proceeds of this book will go to The Prince’s Trust, an organisation which embodies the principles and practices featured in this book.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone featured in this book. I would also like to thank some very special people who have made it possible.

Chris West has worked with me on all my books since *The Beermat Entrepreneur*. His name is not on the cover of this one, but he has done his usual excellent editing job on it, turning a set of columns that span several years into a something bigger: a book, a cohesive entity with its own flow and structure.

Jim White mentored me as I made the transition from book author to columnist. Jim is a consummate newspaper professional, and I couldn’t have got from there to here without his guidance.

Jonathan Moules has been my editor and mentor at the *Financial Times*, one of the best business brands in the world. I trust him implicitly, giving him free rein to tweak my copy. This includes titles: for example, the column on Stephen Fry and Twitter was originally titled Follow You, Follow Me after the Genesis song. Jonathan changed it to A Wit and to Woo. Pure genius!

I would also like to thank Richard Tyler, who was my editor at the *Daily Telegraph* (another top professional who helped me develop my style) and Nick Saalfeld, who recorded and originally edited the conversations with my subjects for podcast. Without him, I would not have a newspaper column. Finally, many thanks go to Declan Hill and Mike Burge for their meticulous proof-reading.

Business success is all about team building – the people above are all great team players and it's been great (and continues to be great) working with them.

Finally, this book is dedicated to my wife Virginia and son James, for their patience while I tapped away in my office on Sunday mornings, writing these columns.

Mike Southon

Hampstead, October 2010

Part Six:

Mentors and Mentoring

‘Get a mentor’ was one of the main messages of The Beermat Entrepreneur.

I’m delighted to see that the message has really taken off, and mentoring is now a key part of business support.

Here are some pieces on the subject; one about getting the best from receiving mentoring, another about how to give it, and a third about business coaching, which is subtly different to mentoring.

Coaches are not supposed to give advice: the ethos of coaching assumes the client (or ‘coachee’, a word that always makes me think of tickling babies) has all the knowledge inside them, and the coach’s job is to help them access this. A mentor, on the other hand, is free to advise, and is indeed expected to.

I conclude the section with a piece on my own mentoring experience at the Entrepreneur Business School in Bali.

Grown-Up Behaviour

Financial Times, 30th August 2008

The biggest challenge that any of us can face is not in the workplace, but at home: parenthood.

Suddenly, there is a noisy little bundle of joy who demands our total commitment and unconditional love, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The challenge of starting a business is a close second, with eager anticipation followed by many sleepless nights and much metaphorical nappy changing. But just as a sensible new parent gets help from experienced family members and other experts, a wise entrepreneur seeks the advice of their mentors and even engages a business coach.

Nowadays, there is no stigma in hiring a business coach; the top sports people are coached every day as they are always looking for that extra edge in their very competitive environment, so why shouldn't business people be?

Even the simplest coaching can produce immediate results. Typical first tasks for an entrepreneur include setting realistic objectives and then putting them in some kind of order of priority – separating the wood from the trees. But the underlying reasons for a lack of perspective or poor performance may involve deeper issues which need to be examined further, which is where the coach's skill really comes to the fore.

Stephen Schneider has considerable experience in human resources, working at board level in several public companies and with Henley Management College, before starting CPS Ltd in 1996. His company provides coaching and mentoring for senior executives who suddenly find themselves out of their depth.

The challenges people face in a new role appear to be about new tasks, but Stephen explains that fundamentally the problems are about the person themselves and how well they are psychologically equipped to deal with their new responsibilities.

A common problem is dealing with a strong authority figure. This is aggravated if the new taker of responsibility has had issues with their own parents, who may have died when they were young or have been largely absent when they were growing up.

Stephen also talks of ‘envy pre-emption’, when a client finds themselves under-achieving through feelings of guilt at out-shining their parents. They may be the first in their family to go to university, or feel uncomfortable that they have higher earnings and better opportunities than their parents.

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This can lead to a lack of willingness to perform to their maximum potential if they find themselves confronted by a strong character in the boardroom, despite excellent credentials for getting there in the first place.

Another problem can be an authoritarian style. Despite the liberal tone of much HR material, this can work well in some management roles. It does not work well when someone joins a board, which is an essentially collaborative entity.

A good board member has to show expertise in advocacy, which Stephen defines as being the ability to hear all the evidence, come to sensible conclusions and then provide clear recommendations.

The techniques that Stephen and his colleagues use to address the challenges of joining a boardroom are just as important for a small business. All entrepreneurs should consider asking for professional help, especially when the company itself crosses that line between a ‘start-up’ (a ‘sapling’, in our Beermat terminology) and a fully-fledged company.

In The Beermat Entrepreneur, I said this happens when the firm consists of around 20 or so people: Stephen is much more specific – the magic number is 32.

Entrepreneurs are usually complex and driven people, and this is often due to their having had issues with their parents. So it is ironic that when these entrepreneurs become successful they suddenly find themselves in loco parentis, acting as a mother or father figure to their members of staff, who can be more demanding than real children at times.

If this irony becomes too painful, coaching can make a real difference. The message is clear: you should never be too proud to ask for help. ■

Stephen Schneider

Since founding CPS in 1996, Stephen Schneider has built a reputation as a mentor and coach to boardroom directors and senior executives of some of the country's leading organisations.

Drawing on his extensive business career, his experience of psychoanalysis and his work with the Tavistock Institute and Henley Management College, Stephen has created an organisation that offers clients access to some of the UK's most experienced practitioners from the worlds of business and psychology.

Stephen's corporate background includes senior executive roles in ENSERCH Corporation of Dallas and Higgs & Hill where he was a member of the plc board. Today, as a member of Henley's Associate Faculty, he continues to facilitate groups regularly on their highly acclaimed experiential programme, Developing Leaders, and contributes regular articles and interviews on leadership and boardroom development to professional journals, the national press and radio.

www.cps-ltd.co.uk



About The Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust is a youth charity that helps change young lives.

We address this by giving practical and financial support to the young people who need it most. We work with 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. We help develop key skills, confidence and motivation, enabling young people to move into work, education or training.

We have helped more than 600,000 young people since 1976 and support 100 more each working day. More than three in four young people we helped last year moved into work, education or training.

We need to raise around £40 million pounds a year to continue our work.



Prince's Trust

About Ecademy Press

Ecademy Press is an independent publisher founded in 2005. The company specialises in high quality business books and personal development books that truly help people grow and develop. Our philosophy is based on ‘winning by sharing’, and with our model everybody wins: the author, the publisher and, most importantly, the reader. To date, we have published over 100 books.

The company only prints books as needed, commonly called ‘print-on-demand’. We have printed as few as one or two books at a time, and we have on occasion printed runs of thousands of books, but only to fulfil orders. This is in keeping with our concern for the environment and our commitment to eliminate the traditional publishing practice of remaindering books. We also publish many formats of ebook.

We are constantly looking for ways to partner with talented authors to bring great books into the market and raise the profile of our authors. Many of our authors receive excellent media coverage and feature in the top ten books of their category on Amazon. We also see our books being stocked in more and more bookstores and online retailers around the world.

If you would like to know more about publishing with Ecademy Press, please feel free to browse our website:

www.ecademy-press.com.



We hope you have enjoyed this book and look forward to engaging with you again in the near future.

About the Author



Mike Southon was educated at Papplewick School, Ascot, and Wellington College in Crowthorne.

He only lasted one year at Imperial College, preferring to drink beer and chase women rather than go to lectures.

He then had a variety of jobs, including helping British Leyland assemble trucks and buses and making sugar into detergent, before just about completing a degree in Chemical Engineering and Management Economics at the University of Bradford.

It was there, in 1984, that he met Mike Banahan and Andy Rutter, who, along with Peter and David Griffiths were founders of The Instruction Set. He joined them as Director of Sales and Marketing, and the five of them built the company to one that employed 150 people and was sold to Hoskyns Group in 1989.

Mike then set off in a different direction, pursuing a full-time, and very successful, performing career in colleges and theatres as 70s disco legend Mike Fab-Gere. Then he went back into the business world, working on 17 start-ups, some of which later went public, others of which went broke. “The latter were as informative as the former,” he comments.

All these experiences went into creating *The Beermat Entrepreneur*, which was published in 2002, and later *The Boardroom Entrepreneur and Sales on a Beermat*, all co-authored with Chris West.

Mike is now one of the world’s top business speakers and conference moderators, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association. He appears all over the world, from events in schools to major international conferences.

When not speaking live, he provides free mentoring to entrepreneurs.

He also writes a column, *My Business*, in the *Financial Times* every weekend.

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