

Busyness is the enemy of business

More paces, more miles on Peloton, more energy expended, more time in meetings, more hours on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram. We all do it and it is wrong. It only takes a minute of thought to see that being busy cannot make a material improvement to productivity and mostly harms it. It is important not to confuse busyness with productivity. Productivity is the key to any business because it involves achieving more output for less input, giving strength to the balance sheet which in turn gives resilience to face the unexpected.

One of the most successful people that I ever knew was never stressed. He exuded calm and was the last person imaginable to wear a fitness tracker. Actually, he spent a lot of his working day staring out of the window, but he knew his people, he knew his business, and he knew his market. He spent his time thinking about the future and how to cope with it and thinking about the business and how to improve it. He was also never surprised by events. His mistakes were normally a result of responding too early rather than too late to market changes.

The moral of the story is that it is better to be less busy and more thoughtful; spend the time building a more resilient business. This will give more time to beat the fitness tracker.

We know that the odds are that there will be another global crisis in our lifetimes: most of us don't have the power to know what it will be or when it will be, that's why we need to get resilient now. The end of the world may not be nigh – but if we're not careful, the end of our businesses may be!