

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WEBINAR

Teaching Business Assessment of General Practice

Misunderstandings between a registrar and a general practice often stem from the registrar misinterpreting business decisions to be deliberately not in the registrar's favour. However, young doctors with no experience in running a business usually do not realise these decisions are more likely to be reasonable and fair, and importantly, necessary for the financial viability of the practice.

A self-assessment of your business is wise practice, and a useful exercise in helping your registrar understand the bigger picture of general practice during their training term and for the future if/when they become a practice owner.

Is there value in explaining the ins and outs of running a business to a young doctor, when their focus is on the learning curve of practising medicine in general practice?

Yes. While your role is to supervise the registrar's clinical practice, there is great benefit to your practice while the registrar is with you – and for their future medical/business practice – by helping them understand the bigger picture of running a business.

You can avoid unfortunate misunderstandings by teaching your registrar about the art of general practice, but also the business of general practice. It can help their term with you be potentially a happier experience, and build business understanding for a time in the future when they may own and operate their own general practice.

What master plan of business practice is relevant to teach my registrar?

You can talk to your registrar about the necessity for a general practice to operate within a framework which delivers clinical excellence and financial viability. A framework – or master plan – gives the business, owners, staff and contractors direction. A framework gives meaningful direction and helps the practice meet targets, and improve those areas which are falling below par.



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What needs to be included in the master plan?

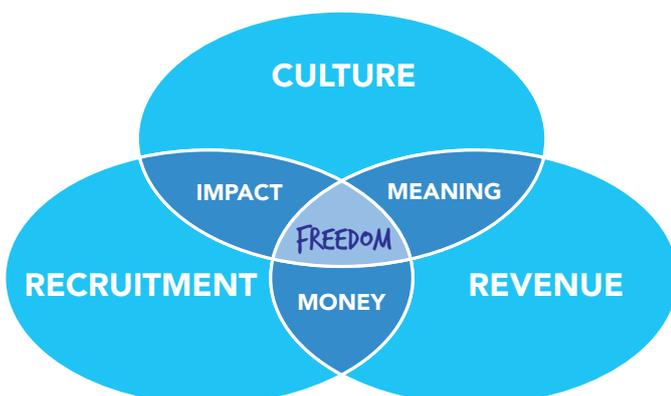
The three core categories are **Culture**, **Recruitment** and **Revenue**. These need to be interlinked for a business to run efficiently, happily and smoothly, and ensure Freedom for the business owner(s) to share the load of operating a viable business without themselves, or team members suffering "burn-out" due to imbalanced workloads and stresses. It also helps establish a sustainable work-life balance for the owner and employees, and provides an attractive business model for your successors.

Show your registrar the diagram below, which is a framework wheel for sound business. Explain that the three circles (culture, recruitment and revenue) intersect: and should create the following benefits:

- Culture + Revenue = Meaning
- Culture + Recruitment = Impact
- Recruitment + Revenue = Money

Explain to your registrar that a successful business model needs to score well in the three circles; that is, scoring well in only two circles will create an overall shortfall in the business success and viability. For example:

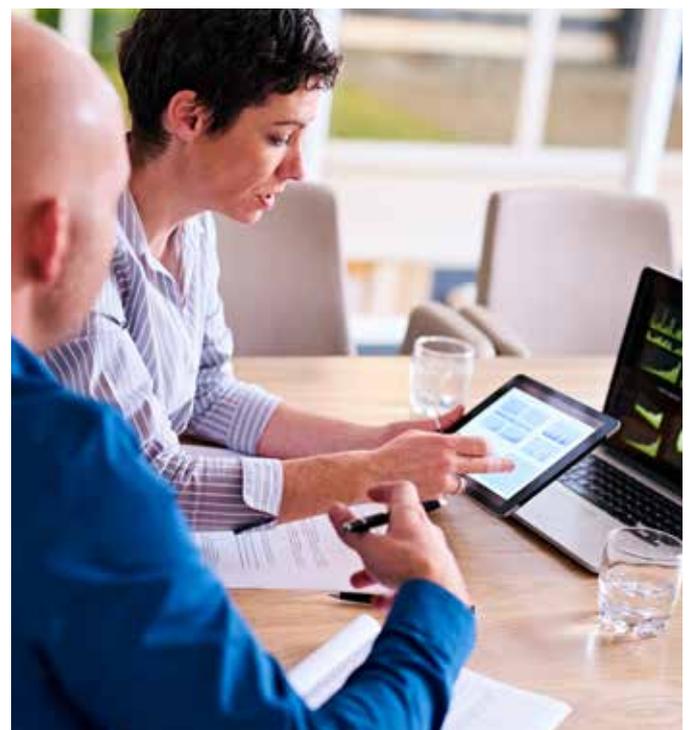
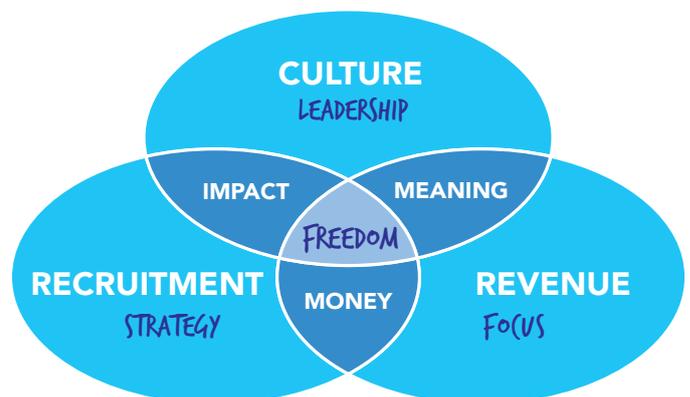
- Culture + Revenue (but no Recruitment) = No business sustainability because the owner/operator is likely to suffer "burn-out"
- Recruitment + Revenue (but no Culture) = No loyalty ("churn and burn" of staff)
- Culture + Recruitment (but no Revenue) = No business profit



What is needed to achieve optimum Culture, Revenue and Recruitment?

Tell your registrar the following:

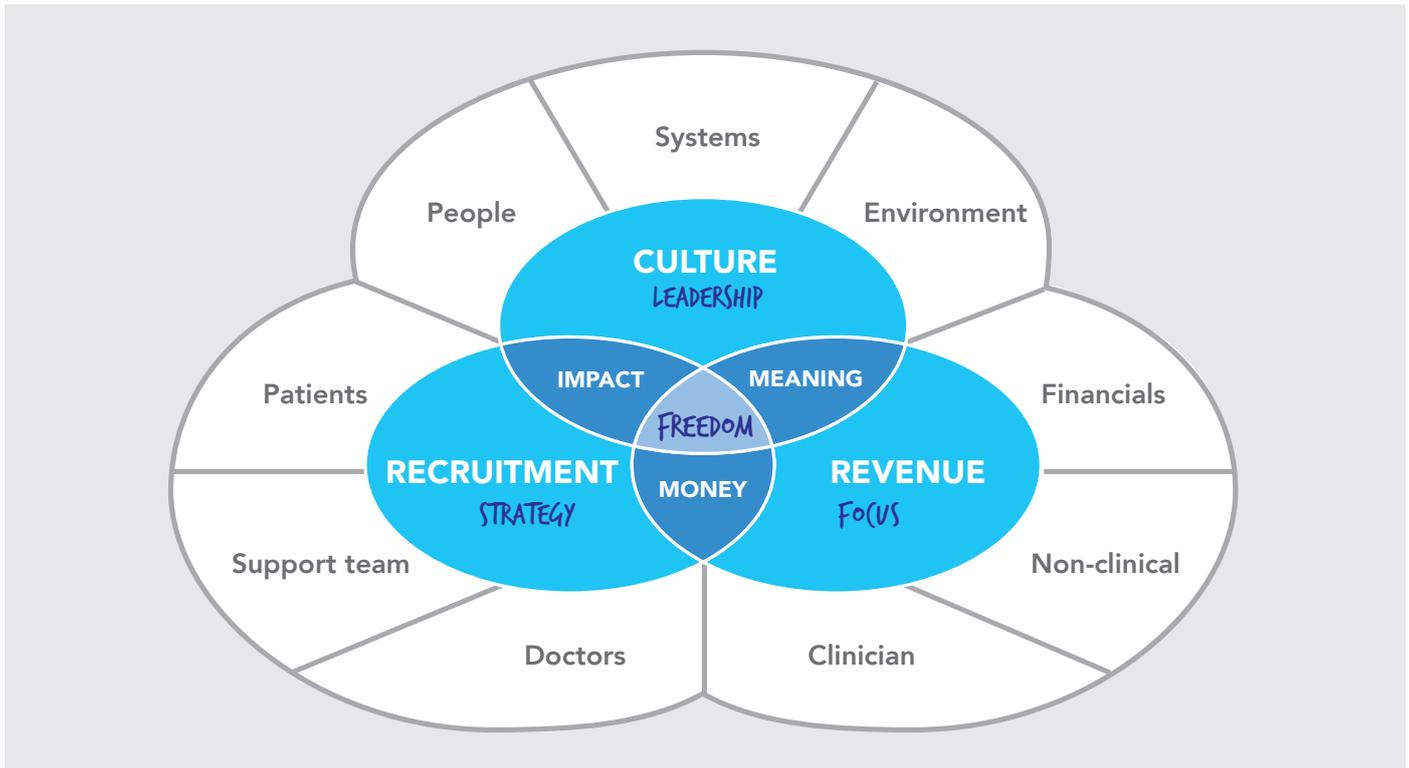
- Leadership is needed for a positive culture.
- Focus is needed for sustainable revenue.
- Strategy is needed for recruitment of "A-grade" staff for your practice.



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The next layer on the wheel illustrates the sub-categories which need leadership, focus and strategy.



How do I teach the registrar what areas of a business are doing well and what areas need improvement?

Explain to your registrar that just like the diversity of their patients, businesses of all sizes need regular health checks and interventions in the areas which are "unhealthy" or can improve. Without a regular self-assessment, and appropriate action where needed, a business will never improve areas of shortfall – which of course, impacts the whole-of-business in the short- and/or long-term.

You and your registrar could practise doing a self-assessment of your general practise, and in turn discuss what interventions may be needed in some areas. (Templates of the self-assessment business wheel and business table are available at end of this document).

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SELF-ASSESSMENT USING THE GENERAL PRACTICE BUSINESS WHEEL

Discuss with your registrar each sub-category in the outer layer of the business wheel and then colour each category using a stoplight colour code. That is:

- **Green = Excellent**
- **Amber = Average**
- **Red = Unsatisfactory**

You may find, you need to colour some sub-categories of your business wheel predominantly one colour, and a small percentage a second colour. You and your registrar could complete separate self-assessments and then compare your

results: you may both be surprised to find what areas you have marked differently and then discuss the reasons for your different perceptions.

The aim of this colouring exercise is to determine which areas of your business need prioritising – intervention is needed to lift the performance to excellent (green).

Therefore, in the example (left) it is obvious the most urgent areas needing attention are Systems (Culture) and Doctors (Recruitment), while the least urgent categories are Patients and Support Team (Recruitment).



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SELF-ASSESSMENT USING A GENERAL PRACTICE BUSINESS TABLE

You and your registrar could score the practice using the following table.

Therefore, in the example (left) it is obvious the most urgent areas needing attention are Systems (Culture) and Doctors (Recruitment), while the least urgent categories are Patients and Support Team (Recruitment).

RECRUITMENT	REVENUE	CULTURE
★ N —	★ N —	★ N —
SUPPORT TEAM	NON-CLINICIAN	SYSTEMS
★ N —	★ N —	★ N —
PATIENTS	CLINICIAN	ENVIRONMENT
★ N —	★ N —	★ N —

★ Excellent performance (maintain this standard) N Neutral (average, but can be improved) — Unsatisfactory (work needed)



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What needs to be considered in each section (of the business wheel/table), to 'score' the performance standard of the business?

Whether using the business wheel and/or business table, discuss with your registrar the following questions when considering your scores.

CULTURE: Leadership is needed to create an outstanding work culture in your practice, which will in turn be highly regarded by the practice team and patients.

- People – Do all people in your practice understand the values and mission/vision statement of your practice; and do they have good alignment of those values in their daily work and interactions with staff, peers and patients, etc?
- Systems – There are many moving parts to standard operating processes in a general practice, so a strategy is needed to ensure a culture of relevant and accessible content to all doctors and practice staff in real time. Is content provided in more than one way; for example, a screenshot program that captures video display and audio output, and process map? Are all staff, including registrars, well trained in these systems so they can access content and information easily and without delay?
- Environment – Is the physical environment of your practice conducive to a healthy work culture and workflow? Have the premises undergone a recent upgrade? Or, is the practice looking tired, in need of a renovation/new equipment, storage etc? (We tend to become adapted to our environments, so a third party – for example, a registrar – can give a fresh perspective).

REVENUE: Focus is needed to ensure a healthy revenue capacity across numerous areas of the business.

- Financials – While your registrar does not need to be privy to the specifics of operating costs to your business, you can discuss the importance of each sub-category in terms of meeting the bigger picture. This will help the registrar understand their presence in your practice is part of a much bigger wheel than their needs alone; the practice needs to provide best practice care under a viable business model. Considerations you can inform your registrar which need scoring are: profits, forecasts, budgeting, risk mitigation, insurances, etc.
- Non-clinician – How is the space in your practice being maximised for revenue? While the primary focus is to deliver general practice services, does your practice have services which build your "audience" and provide different sources of non-clinician income. For example: Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP); subleases, pathology, research, etc.
- Clinician – Is your practice highly focused on delivering on the needs of your patient community? Are the clinicians' individual revenue meeting targets? Is it at the higher end of what people would expect but still acceptable?

RECRUITMENT: Strategies are needed to recruit the right doctors, staff and patients. For example, a strategy to recruit the right people regardless of practice size, location and competing services. With your registrar, ask:

- Doctors – Is the practice recruiting doctors who are highly focused on meeting their patients' and community's needs? Is the practice saying "no" to doctors who do not meet the needs of your practice and community?
- Support team – Is your practice employing skilled employees who are highly focused on meeting the needs of your patients and community? Does your practice have a good composition of skilled people who share the values of your practice? Do other services impact on the pool of talented staff available in your area?
- Patients – Is your practice attracting the "right" patient population for the services you offer? Do you have a high percentage of patients who are consistently challenging and time-consuming to deal with?

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How many areas of improvement should a business focus on between self-assessments?

Explain to your registrar that it is more productive for a business to focus on one or two areas which need interventions – and managing these well – before moving onto subsequent areas needing attention. The reality is, it is not possible to give optimal attention to numerous areas all at once – so it is better to focus on one, or two areas at a time. The aim is to conduct regular self-assessments with a vision to create a business wheel which is predominantly green; but this takes time, and should be an ongoing process: that is, a green wheel, is not a guarantee of excellence in the future.



How does the business model apply to GP supervisors who are non-owners of the business?

Supervisors and registrars fit under each of the categories (Culture, Revenue and Recruitment) which need regular assessment and fine tuning. Supervisors role model leadership in contributing to the positive culture of a training practice; current and future revenue; and the practice's recruitment strategy of a succession of registrars. Supervisors' leadership is vital in ensuring registrars enjoy their learning experience in your practice, refer your practice to their registrar peers, consider returning after fellowship and potentially become a future supervisor or practice partner.

CULTURE

A supervisor provides vital **leadership** in creating a positive **culture** in their training practice. They are important role models and ideas people for the practice team, systems and environment needs.

REVENUE

In terms of revenue, supervisors can help registrars understand a broader picture of the business focus. For example, registrars may mistakenly think they are a hugely profitable addition to your business: but are more likely to be revenue neutral for a general practice. It is important the registrar understands why they should not cost the business more than they return to the business.

Registrars need the assurance that they are valued and important, but a healthy understanding that they are one component of a much bigger wheel in the business' sustainability.

RECRUITMENT

A supervisor's positive teaching and working relationships within the practice play a huge role in the recruitment strategy. Registrars who enjoy their training experience and feel valued will promote your practice as a training practice of choice and possibly enhance business succession by returning post-fellowship.

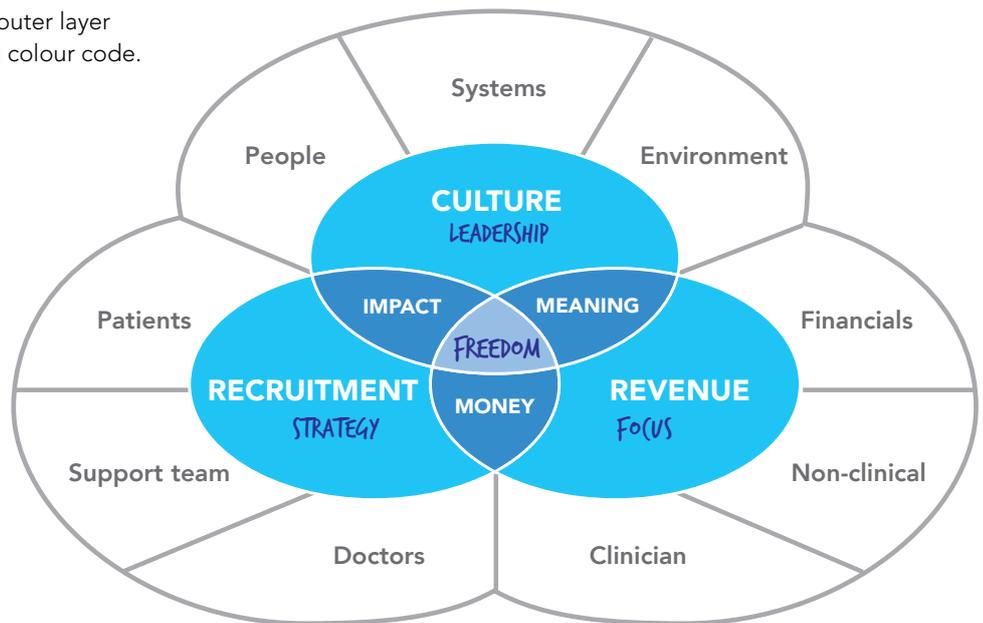
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General practice business wheel – self-assessment template

Score each performance category in the outer layer of the business wheel using the following colour code.

- **Green** = Excellent
- **Amber** = Average
- **Red** = Unsatisfactory



General practice business table – self-assessment template

RECRUITMENT	REVENUE	CULTURE
★ N -	★ N -	★ N -
SUPPORT TEAM	NON-CLINICIAN	SYSTEMS
★ N -	★ N -	★ N -
PATIENTS	CLINICIAN	ENVIRONMENT
★ N -	★ N -	★ N -

★ Excellent performance (maintain this standard) N Neutral (average, but can be improved) - Unsatisfactory (work needed)

Does this resource need to be updated? Contact GPSA: P: 03 5440 9077, E: ceo@gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au, W: gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au
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