**Brenton Neville Transcript – Episode 16**

**Matt** [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to this episode of Power Up Your Business podcast, I'm your host, Matthew Jones, owner of Cube Performance, where we assist coach and mentor tradie business owners to learn more, work less and ultimately create a great lifestyle for themselves and their family through building a high performing business. In this episode, we speak with Brenton Neville from Brenton Neville Plumbing, based in Cairns, up in Queensland. Now this is a great story for any business owner, who really wants to build a business that can thrive without them, as opposed to being enslaved to the business having to be there 24/7. In this episode, you'll hear Brenton share his story where three, four, five years ago, he couldn't step away from the business. He couldn't go away on family holidays more than a day, and there was limited cash flow and high stress to where he is now through investing a lot of time, energy and money, building a culture, building a team, the training and everything that goes around, empowering individuals and giving them the care and the compassion and the trust to make decisions. He is now able to go away and just come back from a four-week holiday where, importantly, he didn't receive any calls from the team. His clients are happy and more importantly, he's got cash in the bank. So while he's away, his team performed at a high level and delivered profit while he was away, which is a key for any business. So in this episode, a lot of great takeaways everyone really hear how Brenton has moved his business from relying on him to really now building it and relying on the team and the individuals within that team. And ultimately, this has resulted in Brenton's financial performance going through the roof, where through the course of this journey, he's increased his revenue by 197%, he has increased his cash in bank to a 122,000 over the past 12 months, which is key. It's not about just getting through the work, it's about delivering it efficiently. So we keep the money in the bank and some key stats, key rankings where your stress level is now down to 3 out of 10 where it was 9 out of 10, not long ago. His confidence of the future is 10 out of 10 now because he's got the control on the team. His family life is now 8 out of 10. It was 3, he was struggling before it was all about work. And financial position, now 8 out of 10 was 4 out of 10. So gold in this podcast, everyone heaps of great takeaways, really hope you enjoy it. Cheers.

**Matt** [00:03:00] Brenton, thanks for coming on board this podcast, really glad to share some time, especially this time just pre-Christmas, mate, thank you.

**Brenton** [00:03:07] Thanks, Jonesy, pleasure to be here right now.

**Matt** [00:03:10] You've been part of our community and coaching community for a number of years now. It's been great to have you on board and obviously see your growth over a relatively short space of time maybe two or three years. Your business, just keep a bit of a background, Brenton Neville Plumbing based up near Cairns. What year did you start your organisation again?

**Brenton** [00:03:30] 2012, I sort of started on my own as a sole trader. I started with my own self just always trying to find money in amongst paying those bills and things like that, difficult tradie job. And then 2015, formed a company, started employing one apprentice, put him through and since we now moved on, we're a team of three now. We've grown quite a bit in the last three years,

**Matt** [00:03:54] Just rolling back like in those early days, I know listeners can appreciate, you know, the war stories we have of starting the business and getting really busy with the business and obviously saying yes to everything right in terms of jobs that we take on. But one of the key things and one of the key problems business owners have and why they struggle to scale, why they are struggling just get away on holidays is because they think everything revolves around them and they find it hard to step away. They find it hard to give ownership to their team. In those early days how much were you micromanaging the Apprentice in those early days? And how much were you probably expecting maybe too much on the apprentice, where you weren't really giving them or providing the investment to actually training in the early days?

**Brenton** [00:04:38] Yes, I was in the early days, we were always on site, you had to be on site with those apprentices to keep an eye on them and then also trying to duck off and do quotes and meet other clients and things like that and leave them to trust that they can do the right thing sort of probably bit me in the back side a few times in the early days until i could find a tradie that sort of really help me step back a bit from being on the tools and always trying to be there and manage them on a daily basis and all day, every day, and then come home at night time and do my behind the scenes things. It took a few years to build that up but yes, now we're sort of sitting in a good spot. I've got the time to sort of sit back and do things during work hours rather than being on site and micromanaging constantly.

**Matt** [00:05:28] I'm definitely keen to tap into that and sort of share how you made that transition to where you are now. But then going back to that initial period, how high was or how frustrated at different times were you, I suppose, with your team or with the individual apprentice where you're probably expecting too much from them? At different times would you say, you'd expect them to probably step up too much and then questioning why I've actually got the apprentice on board?

**Brenton** [00:05:53] Yes, back in the day, with that apprentice in particular, obviously, I was still learning too to sort of train them. I was expecting them to know what I know, which is sort of forget that you were them once and your bosses are probably tearing your hair out, or there hair out about you. So obviously, those early days were tough, expecting that person to know a lot more than what they did,

**Matt** [00:06:16] And especially without actually giving them the time and the support and the mentoring and the big thing, which we talk about, the coaching for that individual, you know, we just expect them just to hit the ground running. And this is with all business owners, we've got to stop sometimes and reflect and go, hang on, like you alluded to, mate, we're all apprentices at one stage. We all had our first on the job, where we didn't know what a Stillson, what's the difference between left hand and right hand snips. We're all there and often they're there too, as a business owner, we get so caught up in our day-to-day and caught up into our being reactive and just getting things done. We stop and don't have enough time to really reflect and actually, have, be empathetic. This is a big word, be empathetic and caring and compassionate to our team and understanding how do they learn best. And one of the things that you've done really well, mate and since, you know, coming on board with us and making that transition is that you really stepped out of that comfort zone. And as we talk about you, I really ripped the Band-Aid off. Get uncomfortable, start standing back as it were allowing the apprentices to make mistakes, but then shadow them and help them through that journey. Would you agree like that now that you're investing, they're starting to invest that time, as you mentioned before, you answer to that as you invest time with your apprentices, it actually makes your job easier.

**Brenton** [00:07:35] Yes, 100% Jonesy, I guess I've changed my mindset and I'm really enjoying actually being a coach rather than being the boss on site. Quite often, I'll say well I'm the apprentice now, what do you want me to do? Let's get those apprentices thinking, oh shit, I'm going to think about other things other than what can I get someone else to do while I'm doing this? So I just get them to change the way they think about the job also, I feel that big advantage in the way that they think about the job.

**Matt** [00:08:07] I want to talk through exactly how we got to this stage and just to fast track with everyone, Brenton has just come back from essentially a four-week holiday with Tanya and the family and just basically no calls. You're out of range but essentially had no calls for that for weeks.

**Brenton** [00:08:26] Yes, no reception.

**Matt** [00:08:28] Record quarter so during that quarter. So you are away for a third of that in a record quarter in terms of sales, your clients were stoked, the team delivered, agree?

**Brenton** [00:08:39] Yes, definitely. My wife sort of said, seeing me so relaxed every time we did have a bit of a reception, she like, do you want call? I said no if i have not heard form them they'll be right, So I think my leading him took upon himself to make sure they didn't have to contact me. Obviously, all about up skilling them before I left.

**Matt** [00:08:58] That's right and then giving them that clear guidelines of what was expected and then also communicating really well with the clients too so they knew that you were away. But the key thing with your clients and your builders is that they had confidence in your team of what you've been doing and training them and obviously what they've been delivering over a long period of time. On that and this is where ideally for every business owner and everyone that's listening, right, we want to have a business that ultimately serves us as the owner. Brenton, you've done really well there, and that's a classic example of how to build a business that serves us. Well what does a business look like that serves us well, I can go away for four weeks, don't answer a call. I have a record period of sales and delivery. Customers are happy. And by the way, when I look at my balance sheet or my profitability, I have cash in the bank and I'm profitable that's what we're talking about, building a business that serves you as opposed to when you started right, you're enslaved to that business and again, credits to you like massive about the change you made in a relatively short period of time. And Brenton within our community, at Power Up, which is around the way we do it here, a war which is really about that team engagement. Now I want to talk about so that listeners can understand is that it just doesn't happen. So to get to that stage where Brenton, it doesn't happen, there's a lot of one percenters, there's a lot of dedication. You're working through our success habits to make sure we get here. And so going through the process, I want to talk about a couple of things, I want to talk about, number one, forming that the Way We Do It Here, which is essentially the culture that's key. Number two, you know, getting the function roles right, especially for the leading hand and the key person so before we hire someone. And then obviously number three, the key success habits, which is the regular team meetings and associated training. So to build this team right, to build this team and to build that team that can own it and just drive it and essentially think like you really starts with as you appreciate the way we do it here, which we are really passionate about within our community. How important has creating that the Way We Do It Here for Brenton Neville Plumbing, which essentially everyone, it's really framing your vision of where you want to be, where you want to go, framing the promise to the customer and framing your desired values and behaviours that your team just must deliver and uphold. Talk me through the process of developing that Way We Do It Here and how important that is as a way forward that everyone owns and really dictates behaviour.

**Brenton** [00:11:17] Yes, obviously early in the piece, doing that document done it defines the way the direction that we're going and the employees will sort of follow that along as well. We run through it quite regularly just as a refresher, but generally all the employees sort of know what's expected that, in turn, makes their day-to-day jobs a lot easier. They know it's expected, so I don't have to check up on things. And then clients that we work for also know why we do things and that's how we operate.

**Matt** [00:11:52] On that and I love that you mention that and this is the key thing there because you're framing it so articulately that expectation is clear. It's just rock solid. There are no grey areas, and this is where I want everyone to understand, out there are a lot of business owners who say, oh, my team now? Yeah, but that's how we operate. My team knows what to expect and my team know what to do. We're all on the same page. I'm just going to tell you right now, unless you've got it clearly framed in terms of articulate it and document it, unless you've actually had buy-in from the team and had them to sign off on it and they don't know what's expected. There are going to be grey areas and there are going to be instances of friction there. And the great thing that you've done with that Way We Do It Here, you are really framing it and you've really empowered your team. And this is where I want everyone to understand what Brenton has done really well is that he's really empowered his team to get on there, have a go and make mistakes, no worries, okay. We learn from that and we go again. But essentially, even if those apprentices that you've really developed and I'm going to talk about that in a second, we talk about function roles and recruitment, but you know, they're really operating at a higher level than a first year or second year apprentice, agree?

**Brenton** [00:13:02] Oh yes, definitely Jonesy, my philosophy is try and have them a year above from what they are i've leant them to other plumbers, to help them out and at times, and they just can't believe the quality coming from a first or second year. And yes, he sort of aspires to have apprentices like that too.

**Matt** [00:13:21] Did you say, well, you actually got to invest time to sit down with him and train him.

**Brenton** [00:13:26] Yes, definitely, I had a bit of conversation with him afterwards, like, oh, he's unbelievable, where did you get him from? I said that could be any young bloke who you can put the time in to prepare him for the job.

**Matt** [00:13:35] I think and the key that you've done is your mindset shift. And we often talk about within our coaching client community about two sets of mindsets. We've got the trading mindset, we're in the tradie mindset team. It's about the job, it's about getting things done, tradie mindset, they think apprentices like I just a apprentice come on and just try and kick him along. Don't really appreciate them enough. Don't expect them to really add value until they're an apprentice. So I'm just going to tell you right now, if you don't show them the love as a first year, they're never going to show any value as a fourth year. And this is where you've done well that transition over your journey with us over the last number of years is that you've gone from that tradie mindset to really adopting the business performance or that entrepreneurial mindset where, you know, if you want to get some value out of the individual, if they're not performing, it's really up to us and we need to invest the time. And you've really done well to change your habits on how you operate, to invest the time in that team and to really build a really high functioning team and that's what we want. We want those sort of feedbacks where your apprentice goes to work for someone else and they're blown away. And they just think, where di you get him from, what do you say, I just went down to Aldi and picked him off the shelf. Where do you think I got it from? It just doesn't happen. And everyone knows now, I think we talk about and you hear about it in the press, the war on talent. Everyone needs to get their head around this, that it's expensive and costly to try and get a tradesman of high quality that will buy into your values and the way you do it. We're going to breed from within and the way to breed from within in high quality, you got to take the time, you got to invest the time, you got to be patient. So you really did a good job of that, embodying the Way We Do It Here, you've got that key, your team buy-in into it. Now tick that box, next box is around the clarity around the function roles. Now let's just talk about one of the key strategies that we were working through was obviously getting that leading hand role. We knew that you needed a good quality leading hand to take the pressure off you. And for a lot of tradie business owners, that leading hand role is crucial and it is hard to fill. Talk to the process about, you know, as we went through about really defining the function role so define the objective of the role, the responsibilities and the KPIs, how important was that to get again clear expectations in the role to help you recruit the right person?

**Brenton** [00:15:56] Yes, so Jonesy, what's going on the document for recruiting just the ad, did a bit of research and things like that from other plumbers that are advertising, and they sort of had the quick sharp ads, we had a quite lengthy ad so we could really find someone that really suited our business. And so the mentality of like hire slow, fire fast. We want to take our time and find the right candidate for the position.

**Matt** [00:16:26] I remember the time we had a number of discussion and you were saying, look, taking time, just taking time and said, what do we say at the time? I said, well, we're looking for a high quality candidate. We don't want anyone, so it will take time and again that methodology or that thinking hire slow. We don't want to rush this sort of roles. And most people, they struggle from the get go because number one, they haven't got a function role and clear expectations for anyone when they actually recruit people. And then they just can't understand why people are doing what's supposed to be done because there's no clear expectation. But again, you've done really well, definitely on the job ads and articulating the role. And how important was it then on those early in the induction period so we've got that leading hand, we've got the key candidate ready to go. How important was it then to make sure that you shadowed them and coached them through in those early that week, one week, two week, three?

**Brenton** [00:17:20] Oh yes, first few weeks obviously spent a lot of time developing our induction material as well that we ran them through for the first sort of day and then obviously introduced him to a lot of our clients and sort seeing what his skills were and where exactly we could use him to obviously better himself and better our company. So obviously, it's taken probably six months to get us to the spot where we need him to be. And he also feels comfortable now to knowing the way that we do things.

**Matt** [00:17:51] We are speaking with Brenton Neville from Brenton Neville Plumbing. Now, if you'd like to find out how you can build that high-performing team just like Brenton, where, you can go away for four weeks and still have the business thrive while you're not there, please request a strategy session with myself to have a free one-on-one conversation, and I'm happy to discuss how we can help or how you can implement certain processes to change the dynamics within your team. Go to our website Cube Performance www.cubeperformance.com.au and click on request a strategy session. I look forward to chatting to you. In those first couple of weeks, how important was coming back to the Way We Do It Here, which is really reinforcing the values, which is really reinforcing our promise to the customer, how important was it was just to share the learnings and connect back just to give him clarity about how he needs to operate on what level we need to operate?

**Brenton** [00:18:51] Oh, definitely always referred back to those the Way We Do It documents, if things weren't quiet up to scratch, like come one lets have a look at this, this is why we do this, and this is the way we do it. So, yes, we spent a lot of time, even the first 12 months with Brett has taken us to get into where we want him to be.

**Matt** [00:19:11] He is in that position now and again, he's in that position for you to be able to go away and for him not to call you for four weeks because of those hard yards. And that's where I want everyone to understand. Things don't materialise. You need to invest if you want to reap the rewards long-term. And especially around our team, it's really hard to get good team members. You got to make the most of the team members that are on board about training and developing them and it's coming back to, as you say, the coaching them. For you and this is where I want to sort of tap into that, like your background is a hockey player, mate, you got a good level in terms of where you were and winning competitions and you think about it like when you're playing hockey as a team environment, you got clear understandings of your role based on your position. You've got the support there, you know, from the coach. It's amazing, though, with those skills and we all do it. And you know, when you started your business, when you were bringing on team members, you didn't even think about clarity around the structure and the roles at that stage because you weren't in that right mindset, even though you had the personal experience from being in a high performing team. But when you start to create your team members, all those sort of basic skills were forgotten. Whereas now and this is all part of the mindset we're now, you're in that business performance mindset, all those skills that you brought up on as a key team player and been involved with good coaches in your time in the sports space, you're now starting to tap into all that and you're applying that now to your team, defining the roles, defining the players and the roles and being that key coach, which is now giving them that ability to collectively work and perform at a higher level. Would you agree with that it is about it's amazing how you're in that tradie mindset, you forget all these key skills about being a team player, being a coach, empathetic and compassion. Whereas now it's like you're tapping back into all these skills and principles that you've learnt over a long period of time.

**Brenton** [00:20:55] Yes, like you say, it's just that shift in mindset from that tradie thinking the apprentice is just there. He is a cheap labourer hold the end of the piece of pipe, to actually coach and take over what I do that's one of the biggest mindset changes about the jobs is the way that I treat my staff, and the more that I coach them, the easier my job becomes.

**Matt** [00:21:20] I love it that's what gives us, as you know, that's passion, I love that in terms of coaching, inspiring those individuals and as a coach. And this is when you got that coaching mindset because as a coach, yes, you really care for your team, you're compassionate about your team. Ultimately, you want them to be better individuals. So on the journey with your organisation, Brenton, which you're doing, they're becoming better people and the principles that you're providing them and building within them and that they're adopting, it's creating them to be more confident outside of work.

**Brenton** [00:21:52] Yes, I think so, we have weekly team meetings and now on a Monday morning, team Breakfast get started on the week. And so once a month of trying to catch up with each one of them individually ask about life, outside work, their goals, career goals, life goals, they all play touch footie, I think on a Wednesday night, all from different teams. So Thursday morning is always consistent of who played who and who won. So just touching on those things outside of work not always just tell them, go do this, you got to do that and this is how we do this. This touches on those things outside work makes them feel like included and appreciated.

**Matt** [00:22:32] And that's what you've done really, mate, and I think would it be the probably the last 18 months, I think it would be like getting those regular team meetings, those weekly team meetings and what we referred to everyone out there listening, we call them part of our key success habits. It's essentially, it's a rock that's got to be in the calendar, it doesn't get moved. And again, you've got that opportunity to ask the questions, care and then for the team in those meetings, it's about that shared learnings agree in an environment that they're not under the pump or they're not getting pointed at. It's quite like talk us through like a regular the structure of your weekly meeting.

**Brenton** [00:23:07] Yes, obviously we talk about the week coming up, the week we had last week always asking what the win was for the week before and what the one percent improvement on next week was going to look like. So I obviously know that those questions come up every week and they're sort of prepared now. I know that back before when we first started the meetings it would be five-hour long on Monday, and now it's see you on Monday. They know 6:30 on Monday we go to breakfast. Like you said, those rocks locking them in, they don't move. There's no question that's just a habit now that on a Monday morning that's where we are and that's the time we're there.

**Matt** [00:23:49] And where did you do that?

**Brenton** [00:23:51] It's one of the local cafes in town.

**Matt** [00:23:54] Good coffee, bacon eggroll.

**Brenton** [00:23:55] Yes, definitely, obviously, the owner of that business appreciates our business. And then you get other people drive past other tradies to drive past and see all the utes out front on a Monday morning. So, yes, I get asked quite a bit probably on Monday. So it was a bit of a laughing joke, I guess amongst them at the start. But I think it's a massive win for our team. They appreciate it and gets the week off to a good start.

**Matt** [00:24:27] Oh, look, I think it's great and I love one that you're doing really well and successful businesses have rhythm, like it's that consistency. You're team not only you as a leader need the rhythm, but a coach needs a rhythm, but your team need rhythm. They know that in each week, it's just a regular. And when you know that every Monday morning is a great way to set up and start the week and frame the week and come into it relaxed rather than trying to hit the ground running right, you plan and you are discussing what's going to happen. Everyone's appreciative of being an open, transparent conversation about what's happening. They're not like treated like a mushroom, everyone's the same. And this is what you do this really well. When we talk about often about treating people the same, it doesn't matter whether you're the leading hand, the owner or the apprentice, everyone is the same. Everyone's voice has the same value, and that's great, I love that, as opposed to, you know, not even giving the apprentice the time of day to speak. But I think and I love the way that you frame it, what were your wins from last week, which is great. Look, rather than too many people focus on the negatives, get them to think about what did you do well, you know, could be the little things. It could even be like, I'm getting out of bed earlier, I'm going to bed earlier at night. I'm eating my lunch better, I'm taking lunch to work. Or, you know, I'm refueling, I'm wearing a hat. All little things like that, which has, as a coach, you know, is going to improve their performance even just not so much, just around what they're doing specifically on the tools.

**Brenton** [00:25:50] So even recently, Jonesy, one of the apprentices, fourth year, sort of been trying to get in, get the work done 10 minutes bit earlier, get organised, but it was until he was having a few beers with a couple of the builders one weekend. And they're like, oh, I hate being late for work I'll probably be 10 or 15 minutes early, get the tools set up and get thinking about the job. And since then, massive improvement. He is being far more prepared, he has taken it upon himself to get there 10 minutes early and just have a tinker around and clean this up or we're going to do a bit of maintenance on some tools or whatever, just not being rushed. The work is unbelievable.

**Matt** [00:26:32] And because you're setting that framework there and now he's switched on, he's hearing it from other people as well. It's like, yes, okay, well, I better actually adopt this. And that comes back to, you know what we're big on which part of the reason why your team is really performing at a high level, consistent high level without you having to be there and push them asking for. Okay, great. good wins last week. Where are our one percent improvements this week? What are those little things that we can improve on from our learnings? And I think that's what I want everyone to take away as business owners. Often you try and look for big wins or big things here, but if everyone can do our little one percenters differently, like you mentioned, just turn up to work a little bit earlier. Just make sure we plan and clean up after we go. Just little things like that make a massive difference, especially when we're talking about working as a collective unit. How important has that one percent methodology and thinking been into your coaching and then into the training of the apprentices and also the leading hand?

**Brenton** [00:27:29] That goes for our whole team, everyone's always depends on how you can save one percent of that material. I mean, like, you can do that one percent bonus that's coming from the apprentices to me and to the leading hand and so on those team meetings, it's sort of a collective team one percent, what can we do as a team, one percent better, whether that's getting those materials back to race for credit to individuals, and then a one percent gain for the week or whatever, which is coming to work ten minutes early, consistently.

**Matt** [00:28:04] How are they go with getting you feel one percenters and sort of making sure, holding you accountable for the one percenters, what do they say to you?

**Brenton** [00:28:11] I'm always like, yes, there's always improvements there. So yes, we just to get the those plans sorted the quicker or things like that, yes, having a bit better idea of what we're doing next week so just that prior planning,

**Matt** [00:28:24] I think that's a key thing now is because you've instilled in the team and it's great that they're holding you to account. And this is the thing with everyone, do you want to build that high-performing team. You can't just expect your team to lift you. You've all got to lift and like you mentioned then it makes you perform at a higher level, like as we talk about one of the key success habits we've got, is playing the week before it starts, right, like Friday afternoon. Get your shit together with calling clients. Make sure jobs are ready. Calling suppliers make sure it's in stock ready to go, calling any subbies or whatever needs to happen. Calling out every client so it's ready to roll as well not just the builders, but even the contractors and other aspects like that. So that you know that you hit the ground running because your team expects to turn up ready to go, agree?

**Brenton** [00:29:06] Definitely Jonesy, like those being prepared for the week ahead, how to organise materials, those deliveries already booked in, the materials would be there when the boys are there, so they're not centre in for half an hour, waiting materials and unload and that just sets them off on the back foot so just having that preparedness, far better productivity in the team.

**Matt** [00:29:29] Yes and again, I think this is where you've done well, which a lot of people businesses fail to understand is that high-performing individuals want to work with structured, professional organised owners. They want to get there and get in, get it done, have their 15 minutes smoke, their 30 minute lunch and get out of there by 3:30. They don't want to get pulled from pillar to post. They don't want to be micromanaged. They don't want to turn up to a job and then say, oh no, it's not ready and go do another job. These are all of things that really peeve good performers off. And not only does it affect your P&L and your cash flow, it affects your attention and training and your ultimate culture of the organisation.

**Brenton** [00:30:08] Yes, culture is massive, if the team is feeling good, their productivity is up, obviously adds more to your bottom line.

**Matt** [00:30:16] On that the key things that we've been talking about, we've got the weekly team meetings and then you've got the one-on-ones on a monthly basis, talk us through some of the days that you implement what we call shadowing, where you shadow an apprentice or so standing back and just watching them or just being there labour is a word like you mentioned. How do you structure some of these individual training over the course of a week or a month?

**Brenton** [00:30:39] Yes, so I recently one of my apprentices struggled a little bit with Rough ins he had a few issues on a couple of jobs, so I sort of took it upon myself the next couple that we did. So I went along and also we brought a list of the order that we need to do things. He sort of started to think, oh, okay, so I've done this, this, this and this. So we had that chat first thing when we got there that's the order. I said, well, maybe you need to move these around to be a bit more efficient. You need to do that before you can do that. And then I said, what do you want me to do? So it's like, well, you can do this and I'll do that. We got so much achieved that day, and he actually thanked me the next day, he was like, oh that was so good, I understand a lot better now. I was being so efficient.

**Matt** [00:31:29] Yes, great, so he was directing you and because he was directing you and you were able to say think about this or think about that, he's learning just went through the roof. And so he basically said, now he understands why he was so inefficient before.

**Brenton** [00:31:44] Yes, definitely, yes just little things that just make the big difference. Yes, that's way faster, there's one that I was I was like a mirror image bathroom essentially and i did one side and he did the other side and he felt like he was gfoing flat out, and thad probably done a third of what I've done in the same amount of time. So yes, just little things like that sort of blows his mind, I think and then just giving him some tips and tricks. And the next one, yes, he is not far behind me.

**Matt** [00:32:14] And this is the way you approached it rather than thinking like the big stick or just saying, go faster or come on because you took the time essentially a day out of your week, right? You essentially took a day out of your week to train him and coach him and show him compassion and empathy, understanding. So what we're talking about empathy, understand that your honour. You haven't done too many rough edges. You're not going to be as fast as me. It's not going to happen. And so credit to you, mate, most businesses will not take a day out to try and shut out an apprentice and build their skill level. The more important the confidence is, the way that you've done that, they build their confidence, you knock down their confidence, you actually build up their confidence in the way that they actually essentially they uncover the problems of why they were inefficient. They uncovered them themselves by the way, you sort of guided all your questioning.

**Brenton** [00:33:04] I don't particularly like using the word speed at work. It all comes back to efficiency. The more efficient you are, the faster you are. So I generally don't use alright come one we need to. dothis faster, it's we need to do this more efficiently that's generally the terms that I use.

**Matt** [00:33:20] Efficiently, yes that's great. Speed, done it quick but then you have to go back and do it again. So with the, you know, the apprentices and yes, sometimes they're easier to mould because they're newer and a lot of people do struggle with molding a tradesman or molding a leading hand, you know, a senior person, because of their history and they have created skills are hardwired some bad habits previously. Now with Brenton, number one, you did a great job of identifying what we spoke about before with the Way We Do It Here and get the right person with the right attitude and the aptitude to train and learn. How do you have to really work through with Brett? And again because some of the work types that he hadn't done much of previously as well. So how was your shadowing and training with Brett just to make sure he was up to the standard and understood the expectations that we needed to deliver?

**Brenton** [00:34:08] Yes, we started sort of shadowing Brett initially a little bit, just like you said that there are a few work types that he hadn't done, and he wasn't quite sure of the process to get those jobs done. I was sort sort of shuttling puts on he's a fast learner. He's sort of got that mentality too, I like a challenge and I want to learn how to do things better and be more efficient. So in a day, he was, I guess, like an adult apprentice and obviously a lot more skilled. So I think the learning opened the teaching him obviously he came from a football background, so obviously likes being coached as well so that he can improve. So yes, it did make things easy in that sense.

**Matt** [00:34:51] And it's great but again the understanding and the empathy that you showed there and this is what every business owner needs to understand is that as an example, doing maintenance for residential is a lot different to doing commercial construction or doing roofing is a lot different, doing drainage with a lot of the trades, obviously from a plumbing aspect, but all trades, it's the same. There are so many different subsets of niche work, and it's ridiculous, and it's totally unfair to expect an individual, even as the leading hand or project manager, come in and be across all the subtleties of each of these skills. And this is where, again, people kind of understand why their teams are underperforming and people they're having sickies, okay, or they are turning up late, it's because they're not showing any empathy. No one's shown any care for me as an individual, you're telling me to do this. I've never done this before in my life. I told you when I started, I've done limited to this and here you are still throwing me out there and expecting me perform at a level, I don't even know what I'm doing. This is the key thing where I talk about it, and this is everyone, you know, if you want to build a competitive advantage in your organisation long-term because again the war on talent is tough. It's hard to get good quality people. If you want to retain and train a team aspect, you've got to bring in that empathy. You got to bring in that coaching, which you're doing in spades. You're really building that team, Brenton, which is awesome. One of the big things now, like on the back of everything that we're doing now, the foundational stuff that you're doing now. So again, I just want to double back so for everyone to listen to. So number one, you go to develop your culture, you have to have a very clear culture and the vision, the promise, we call it, the Way We Do It Here, which is our belief. So you need to have that as a get go because that creates a framework of clear expectations. Number two, you need to have function role for every different role, whether it be tradesmen, apprentice, leading hand, supervisors, clear function role. What's the objective? What are the responsibilities? And what are the KPIs? Again so when someone starts, you got clear expectations. Number three, success habits, weekly team meeting really key. Success habit number four, regular factoring in time when you're going to be doing the shadowing and the training, whether it be a weekly thing, fortnightly, monthly, whatever it is, it's going to be a success habit. So these things don't just happen. We need to build a high performing team. We've nailed all that right. And then based on all that, over a long period of time, implementing that and creating that rhythm, you'll be able to go away for three or four weeks. What I love now, I want to sort of jump into what we're talking about here and the now. Essentially, you've had a lot of epiphanies as it were a lot of good learnings. A couple of things you've mentioned to me, like number one, is that, you know what? I've got to have more trust in my team, more trust in their ability. And I know you were saying that that's a big thing that you really realise that they have really risen to another level. Another thing you were talking about as well is that you realise that actually the team want to perform more. They actually want more responsibility around that. And then the third thing around that, too, is that you now are holding yourself back. So even now that you're back on deck, you're still not jumping back into it to try to micromanage it. You're still leaving them to roll with that right to make sure that you're not getting pulled in. So again, you're still showing that you're really showing that trust in them and giving them that responsibility so they can keep on rolling from what they were doing when you are not there. Trust, how big a thing was that epiphany that the trust factor that you need to have trust in your team? How important was that?

**Brenton** [00:38:17] With me not being there, they had no one to sort of ask, the forgiveness and confidence to get things done right, I guess in the back of their mind, is that the way we do it here and things like that so yes, definitely trusting team is massive. But yes, I guess it took me about four weeks off to sort of let go and really trust them that they are doing the right thing.

**Matt** [00:38:40] And then that realisation too that they are keen of step up and take more responsibility because you again, you've given the conference on the journey, then they're ready to step up. Would you agree with that?

**Brenton** [00:38:49] Oh yes, just take more responsibility, I've found that they've really stepped up doing that. So, you know, I mean, just little things where they were not sure before. And oh, ring me or ring the leading hand or how we do this. So they've sort of taken responsibility and go, right, I've got this way because this so yes, it's really good.

**Matt** [00:39:11] And I love that fact now too right now that again, you've held yourself back from jumping in there again, that trust that was going through, what some of that change or what do they say to you now that you've been back there, they're still not looking at you to try and pull you back in, they're happy for you to take that step back because they understand and appreciate your role in the planning and preparation and making sure that you're working with a client and you're building that relationships with A-class clients. They're happy for you again, not to be seeing you all the time on the job site.

**Brenton** [00:39:42] Oh, definitely. I mean, Brett has taken over a bit of the ordering and things like that of materials and sort of keeping a head on jobs. So keeping those materials ready for when they are needed, which is good. And obviously, the apprentices do but just can lead them to do jobs now, they've taken it upon themselves to get those jobs done efficiently and to an A standard.

**Matt** [00:40:06] Across the board like we're at now in that transition again, just so thrown back to where we were not that long ago before we met each other and started working together to where you are now, it's been quite a transformation. And what's exciting now is that learning and that foundation definitely is going to springboard us into the new year. How are you now feeling about really building a business that serves you, building that sustainable business that can really, we talk about operate on the management. So essentially you don't have to be there 24/7 how much more confident are you in that now?

**Brenton** [00:40:41] Obviously now that I've got those that leading hand to help me out of the site, I can be in the office honing those processes, improving them and adding other processes to make the business run smoothly behind the scenes not on the site, which I have struggled time wise to get that to happen, like probably 12 months ago. There was no chance I would spend the day in the office a week or two days in the office a week. So now it's giving me that chance to do that.

**Matt** [00:41:11] But there's always that bit of friction, right? With Tanya running the book. So Tanya, Brenton's wife, you know, running the books, handling the accounts, there was always that classic scenario where Tanya wants information you can't give it to her. You're too busy. And there's that mismatch of information and timeliness, and there's just no cohesion in the office. Whereas now you know your value is having that helicopter view, making sure you're directing traffic and seeking all the data and the information together so we can effectively plan as opposed to being in the trenches trying to sidestep a ball really important. And again, and just to clarify, like some of the results, obviously, the revenue increase, you're 187% revenue increase over the last financial year, which is massive, right? So getting that team really operating based on those massive increases in the operating profit, increase in cash in bank of $ 122,000, which is massive in the bank, which everyone can appreciate that, but some other qualitative measures as well. The stress level was up at a 9 before sort of coming on board before this process up to 9. Busy, busy, busy, got no time, can't train people, may just get things done, saying yes to everyone to now being a 3, which is massive where you can't compose with building assets. We're building a team that can drive things. Confidence in the future is now 10 out of 10, family life as well. This is a big one that we always focus on, which was before 3. You know, your quality of life it was not that great before, you won't go away for four weeks, that's for sure. Now, it's an 8 and then financial position, it was a 4, limited cash in the bank, and now it's pushing up to a strong number 8. And again, like some of the information from your feedback and Tanya's feedback, it's unbelievable how, you know, going through this process, how it can transform your overall life. All these little one percenters that you're doing in the business and taking time to invest in is having a massive transformation in your personal life, right?

**Brenton** [00:43:06] Definitely, Jonesy, as you sort of see those other companies around, the owner sort of not be seen, so now you sort of understand where he is and what he's doing. He is developing those processes so that he doesn't have to be the face of the company. So, yes, we're sort of heading in that direction, which we're excited about.

**Matt** [00:43:27] Definitely well and truly on that path and look as a credit to you and a credit to your team members, mate, I know that, you know, like we're saying, before we jumped on the podcast, you had a good shindig with the team this week. Take them away and put them up at a hotel, good get together. And I think I know that you do a really good job in your community, how you build this community. You got quite a good relationship with other A-Class clients and contractors. So you're really doing a great job of building that community of like-minded individuals and don't discount the way that you're operating, the way that you're changing as a leader, other people are seeing that as well. Like, you mentioned, people driving past and seeing your vans there on a Monday morning. What are you guys always having breakfast every Monday morning, really? Every Monday morning? 100%, wow, I want to work for you, cook. These are things everyone, like you want to build that employer brand and be attractive to other people. You could do things a bit differently. And more importantly, what you're doing is you're investing around the time, the money and the energy right into your team and that's clearly resulted, you said, in the financials, in your personal life. But then as you as a leader, it has just given you a great confidence, which is a very pleasing mate, really pleasing.

**Brenton** [00:44:35] Yes, it's good to pass down your knowledge on to your employees so they can be you, working for your company

**Matt** [00:44:44] 100% and that's what we talk about, right, with what we're learning and what you're learning in our coaching environment and our processes is so important to impart that onto your team, which you do in spades again, just taps into your personal background, mate, at that high level hockey in that theme of it, you know, you can't do anything by yourself. Mate, really well done, Brenton, thanks for sharing your story champion, really great takeaways for plenty people out there, and from my perspective, I look forward to next year and beyond, mate, how the journey and the team builds from here.

**Brenton** [00:45:13] Thanks, Jonesy, I really appreciate all the work too.

**Matt** [00:45:39] [00:45:39]