



**CORAGGIO**  
FEARLESS OBJECTIVE ADVICE

# MEMBER MENTORING SHARED FROM GREAT BUSINESS MINDS

Thought Leadership Article



One of the oldest ages for business success is *Simplify to Amplify* which is a point Coffee King and entrepreneur **Phillip Di Bella** explains as the ultimate test when making a margarita pizza for all great pizza makers. Why? It is difficult to get the simple things right, concept on point, the correct execution and emotional engagement.

Phillip Di Bella is a person with integrity. He has had a remarkable business (and life) journey, turning a household brand Di Bella Coffee into a \$60 million deal and more recently launching *The Coffee Commune* facilitating an ideal space to coach and mentor other business owners, focusing on helping other entrepreneurs succeed in an ever changing business world. He is dedicated to helping others be successful by giving back to colleagues and paying it forward by supporting numerous not for profits, specifically family and domestic violence. He raised charity funds in the 2022 *Dancing CEOs*, kicking up his heels on the dance floor with his daughter for a good cause, supported by family and friends.

## Life is measured in moments. Be the change you want to see!

At a recent *Coraggio Business Insights* gathering attended by credible business and industry leaders, Phillip Di Bella shares his pathway to success,

*“Build it from the outside in. What is it you want from your suppliers? Understand your audience and where you are playing. Analyse the numbers, execute strategically and always remember, talent retention is key. In essence ensuring you have the right resources to be resourceful.”*



Phillip explains he has always considered the worst case scenario, which he refers to as scenario and time management mapping and asks *How do I get comfortable with it? I ask myself, where am I am where do I need to be?*

### Phillip's insightful professional snapshots & personal tips and business key takeaways incorporated –

- Work from the outside in. Think about the fundamentals and get the 1% right. This will make your customers sticky!
- Anticipate the problem and solve the problem one day at a time
- What makes you different and relevant? If you close the doors today where will your customer go tomorrow?
- What is your why? Your purpose in terms of personal, professional and family eg take a holistic approach. Everyone has a story and a journey – own yours
- Conduct a professional and personal S.W.O.T. analysis – remember to review!
- Life is measured in moments. Be better tomorrow than you are today
- Hang around people smarter than you, afterall, luck is timing and opportunity
- Build confidence, develop resilience and ensure you are consistent
- Be part of the change you want to see!
- Productivity – consider what am I going to do more of and less of

- In times of good, plan for the bad. In times of bad, plan for the good
- Your “No’s” define you – get clear on your vision and what you stand for
- Manage your lifestyle wealth triangle – health, time and money
- Reflection and gratefulness is imperative. It’s not just you charging forward it’s an army moving forward – stop to appreciate both the good and the bad
- Generate a fun list (aka bucket list) afterall, pen and paper doesn’t lie.

## Be relevant! If you close your doors today, where would your customers go tomorrow?

**Coraggio CEO, Richard Skarzynski cites,**

*“An essential strategy to ensure business success is to strengthen connections amongst your colleagues and leverage intelligence from mentors, like Phillip Di Bella. Coraggio Members generate psychological bonds amongst each other to gain perspective, increase productivity and elevate personal achievement.”*



**Coraggio is one of the largest Advisory Board organisations across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast providing solid ground for their valued Members. Coraggio Chairs are forward thinking industry leaders and they share their insights addressing a plethora of challenges.**



**Vanessa Garrard** is a Coraggio Chair and “serial entrepreneur” boasting an illustrious career, since 1997 founding 17 companies globally, raising \$200 million in capital within 2 years and selling more than \$1 billion through her consumer retail sales portfolio distributed in more than 5,000 retail stores within more than 30 product categories.



Vanessa has received numerous prestigious accolades including The Australian Financial Review 100 Women of Influence Award and EY Australian Entrepreneur of the Year for successfully establishing, scaling and growing companies across Australia, United States, New Zealand, UK, Europe, China and Hong Kong, whilst effectively managing and leading teams across 8 countries.

One of Vanessa’s most endearing qualities is her drive to accelerate people’s potential and for her efforts she was bestowed the Top 30 Australian Female Entrepreneurs Listing for 5 consecutive years.

#### **Vanessa recommends all business owners should –**

- Always look for **opportunities** even during tough times
- I’d encourage everyone to pull your business model apart from time to time on a whiteboard and **determine what’s working well**, what’s less effective and ask yourself is there another business model that could be more profitable? What else could you do to increase profitability and drive growth?  
And are the activities that you are doing in your business worthwhile? What can you stop doing and what should you start doing or do more of?
- Hire for a **skill set** in lieu of finding a business partner, lower cost to pay an employee than to give away equity, especially as your business value grows
- Realise you are absolutely **replaceable**. If you don’t come to this realisation, the odds of selling your business are limited
- Focus on **profit**, not only the revenue (revenue is just ego talking)
- A good leader is **clear on strategy**, shares it with the team and then trusts them to get on with it
- Always **plan** forward
- Focus on what you are good at and **surround yourself with excellent people** who are good at the rest.

#### **Vanessa provides raw, honest insights & tips for business owners highlighting**

- Raising capital – there’s plenty of money out there, be prepared with a compelling pitch and get out there and find the funding
- Remember there are many forms of funding available so look into ALL options before giving away equity
- Don’t be afraid of debt, banks & other financial institutions are providing debt at really low interest rates and then put that money to work to drive growth for your business
- Cash is king, always keep an eye on your cashflow position so you can take up opportunities as they come and ride through tough times as they arise

- Strategy and mitigating risk – strategy without an element of risk will not differentiate
- Cultivating culture – trust your people, trust them to manage their time, trust their instincts
- Making sacrifices when required – not everything is smooth sailing, know when to step up and make the difficult decisions and know when to cut your losses or try a different tack
- When taking up a new opportunity ask yourself, What’s the worst that could happen? Look at all the risks then decide what to do next
- Your ethics and DNA shouldn’t change – stay true to your values and ethics
- If you’re feeling too comfortable, perhaps there’s room for growth?

As a business owner sometimes we feel adrift and our first instinct is to look into the distance to find the nearest shore – however that shore, that solid ground, is within us. The anchor we are seeking is a meaningful connection with others.

Facilitated by the longest serving Coraggio Chair, Sydney-based **Donovan Wearne**, along with Coraggio Chairs from around the country sharing insights regarding the current challenges and opportunities facing business owners. Donovan launches with,



*“The Consumer Confidence Index in Australia is at historical lows, and business confidence is lagging, with the prospect of the economy going into recession and negatively impacting various industry sectors. This suggests the GDP will go into a negative gear. Despite this, most Coraggio businesses remain cautiously optimistic. I believe this speaks to the confidence members gain from drawing on a wealth of advice and knowledge from diverse industry expertise and experiences.”*

Other participating Chairs from Melbourne included, [Serge Romano](#), [Ewan Laughlin](#), [Campbell MacKintosh](#) and Sydney, [David Borg](#), [Steve White](#) and [Michelle Laforest](#) and Brisbane Coraggio Chairs, [Brad Sands](#) and [Michelle Lagana](#).



## Coraggio Chairs Key Takeaways for Business Owners

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- **Business owners are cautiously optimistic due to the challenges** in the coming years including **resourcing** and the dynamic shift in demands on the workforce, **adjusting to new perspectives**, increasing **business expenses** including rising interest rates and **emerging technologies** eg innovation, operational efficiencies, dashboards and digital strategisation. Regardless of the negative sentiment as the Central Banks withdraw, the general consensus is that Australia will hold their ground.
- Digitisation will improve **timely decision making and streamlining processes** aiming to becoming more efficient, productive and build consumer confidence towards increasing purchasing patterns in a volatile environment.
- Inflation is driven by demand. B2B in Australia remains solid, however global markets specifically the US, *if they sneeze we catch the cold*, reflected by the Central Bank's demonstrates **the world's wealth correlates with business assets, resulting in a smaller, lower value in SME businesses**.
- This creates **opportunity for those more established businesses** in good shape as opposed to those less organised – as the old adage cites *Never waste a good crisis*. Think strategically past a “recession”, managing teams and developing a value-based strategy.



## Best of the old and embrace the new

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- Acquiring **functioning, motivated staff** - recruiting, attracting and retaining staff, particularly at an executive level. The Government is ramping up immigration with an additional 45 000 migrants which will increase resourcing supplies, however flood the market in the next 6-12 months directly **impacting the growth and rise of housing** particularly in Western Sydney.
- Grappling with an uncertain world incorporating post-COVID marketing strategies to address the “new norm” such as adjusting to face-to-face meetings and **supply chain issues** eg China bilateral trade, crippling freight costs and lack of components. The “just-in-time” inventory management has gone out the window.
- Additional international growth business challenges is the **ambiguity, disruption** amongst industry sectors, including value alignment from a macro perspective, geopolitical factors eg China / policy settings, as well as supply and demand.

### Chair of Coraggio in Melbourne and business leader Campbell MacKintosh cites,

*“The geo-political tension with China coupled with recent supply disruptions is a major concern for importers and exporters. Australian business leaders need to look to spread risk by building a more diverse supply and export chain. For example, India is an emerging world powerhouse. The recently ratified fair trade agreement between Australia and India presents a great opportunity for increased trade and business relationships. Consideration of alternative markets like India is a smart move in my view.”*



- **Metrics Matter** - what are the predictors of your future costs and future sales, such as incoming enquiries and early indicators? Impacts in a high-cost environment such as energy costs are forecast to increase by 30% in 2023, fertiliser and fuel are escalating, rising interest rates and foreign exchange risk, so dual currency management is imperative. A lack of understanding in terms of cash flow and dependencies can lead to the demise of a business.
- Service-based businesses should **focus on client engagement and new customer acquisitions**. Consider a client “touch point system” to generate recurring revenue, increasing retention rates, revised pricing strategies and reward recognition and incentives for repeat business and referrals. Never before has face-to-face customer communications been more critical, so they can see the “whites of your eyes” and build trust.

## Reviewing and calibrating your business

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- **Evaluations** – assess the key levers your business can address to maintain earnings, margins at cost and capitalise on project expansion. Consider **scenario planning** by adopting a steady state vs a downturn scenario. Consider the macro and global factors including the unknowns such as war, floods, Foreign Exchange risk to ensure you have sufficient cash, especially if your business is leveraged.
- **International security** such as cyber security attacks and modernisation eg in the cloud ensuring businesses have secure modern platforms. Cyber threats are a massive hazard and with an increase in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, cyber attacks are easier to carry out. Effective corporate cyber security is an issue many businesses are facing and lacking a comprehensive strategy protecting customers' information is a risk. Protection has never been more critical.
- **Genuine and authentic** is the new black. Staying relevant has never been more imperative. Inflation, compliance and governance – a multitude of things business owners are juggling.
- Fatigue amongst organisations and people *on a personal level*. **Resilience requires to dig deep** following the soft trauma response since COVID in terms of consolidation, stability and “life” directional desires.

**Brad Sands is a Strategic Advisor to CEO's and Boards of high-growth Private Companies seeking clear direction and transformations, which sums up the sentiment and key issues,**

*“Staffing shortages, particularly in the IT space, largely due to the high demand for cyber security resourcing and the 6-12 month supply chain delivery delays from Europe and the US causing further disruptions.*”



*Valuations of businesses will decline as interest rates rise. There are many businesses for sale because owners are exhausted after surviving COVID.*

*Constantly reviewing and calibrating your business is critical in a highly competitive market with competing pricing.”*



## What every business owner needs to know to navigate their business and be an effective leader

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Focus is probably the most important skill for an entrepreneur to master	
EXAMPLE FOCUS AREAS	
Staff Productivity	Maximise staff productivity
Process Improvement	Improve Process through digitisation
Improve Customer Experience	Measurement / Counter Measures
New Customer Acquisition	ROI / Effectiveness
Quality Management	Quality of output
Pricing Strategy	Price Elasticity / Pricing / Product Mix
Business Intelligence	Improve Decision Making
Market Expansion	Geographic / Market

**Michelle Lagana Chairs Coraggio Advisory Boards in both Brisbane and the Gold Coast and a Strategic Advisor & Communications Specialist and shares,**

*“Industry is highlighting embracing modern day leaders who focus on well-being, safety and unity, however whether you are a 21st century leader or not, it is imperative to remember that effective leaders don’t always have all the answers, however they ask the important questions to works toward ensuing results.”*



In conclusion, Coraggio is Italian for Courage which requires the willingness to lean into uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure as prerequisites for courageous leadership qualities.

## What is Coraggio?

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Navigating the business world includes facing uncharted territory, including determining effective ways to manage company structure and future proof a profitable and sustainable business. Making the right decisions deserves more than an occasional conversation with a mate. Aggregate the experience and shared knowledge of collective awareness from fellow executives to stay ahead of the curve. It doesn't have to be lonely at the top.

Operating a company typically presents complex issues, sometimes on a daily basis. Imagine if you could leverage the experience from an extensive group of industry peers to improve your decision making and social proof as well as future proof a sustainable business, whilst being held accountable?

Also imagine if you gained the peace of mind to seamlessly access these answers and navigate business challenges, simply by connecting with entrepreneurs and gaining knowledge from business leaders? This is the strength of peer to peer leadership mentoring and impactful, meaningful relations.

Coraggio offers a mutual exchange of expertise, ideas and a support system enabling you to capitalise on a give-and-take dynamic amongst advisors who have walked the path before, mitigating risk to your business.

Leading business owners and entrepreneurs join Coraggio to become part of a highly effective business community facilitating leadership, guaranteeing accountability and sharing innovative ideas within a cohesive and confidential national network.

This mutual exchange of Member's expertise tangibly results in sustainable revenue streams, increased cash reserves and productive outcomes to future proof your business.

Coraggio Chairs are industry leaders, Members are forward-thinking advisors and all Advisory Boards are dedicated to the ongoing success of their fellow Member's businesses, offering *Fearless Objective Advice* – that's the Coraggio Spirit!

**Afterall, in the words of Henry Ford**

“If everyone is moving forward together,  
then success takes care of itself”.





# CORAGGIO

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Being a business owner typically presents complex issues and may include facing uncharted territory. However, it doesn't have to be lonely at the top. Discover how Coraggio's proven methods can assist you build a better business and become a more effective leader.

## JOIN BUSINESS LEADERS TO GAIN A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Contact [info@coraggio.com.au](mailto:info@coraggio.com.au) or call **1300 899 006** to touch base with our Advisory Board Team.

Visit [coraggio.com.au](http://coraggio.com.au) for an in-depth understanding of our Member's success stories applying the Coraggio competitive edge.

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