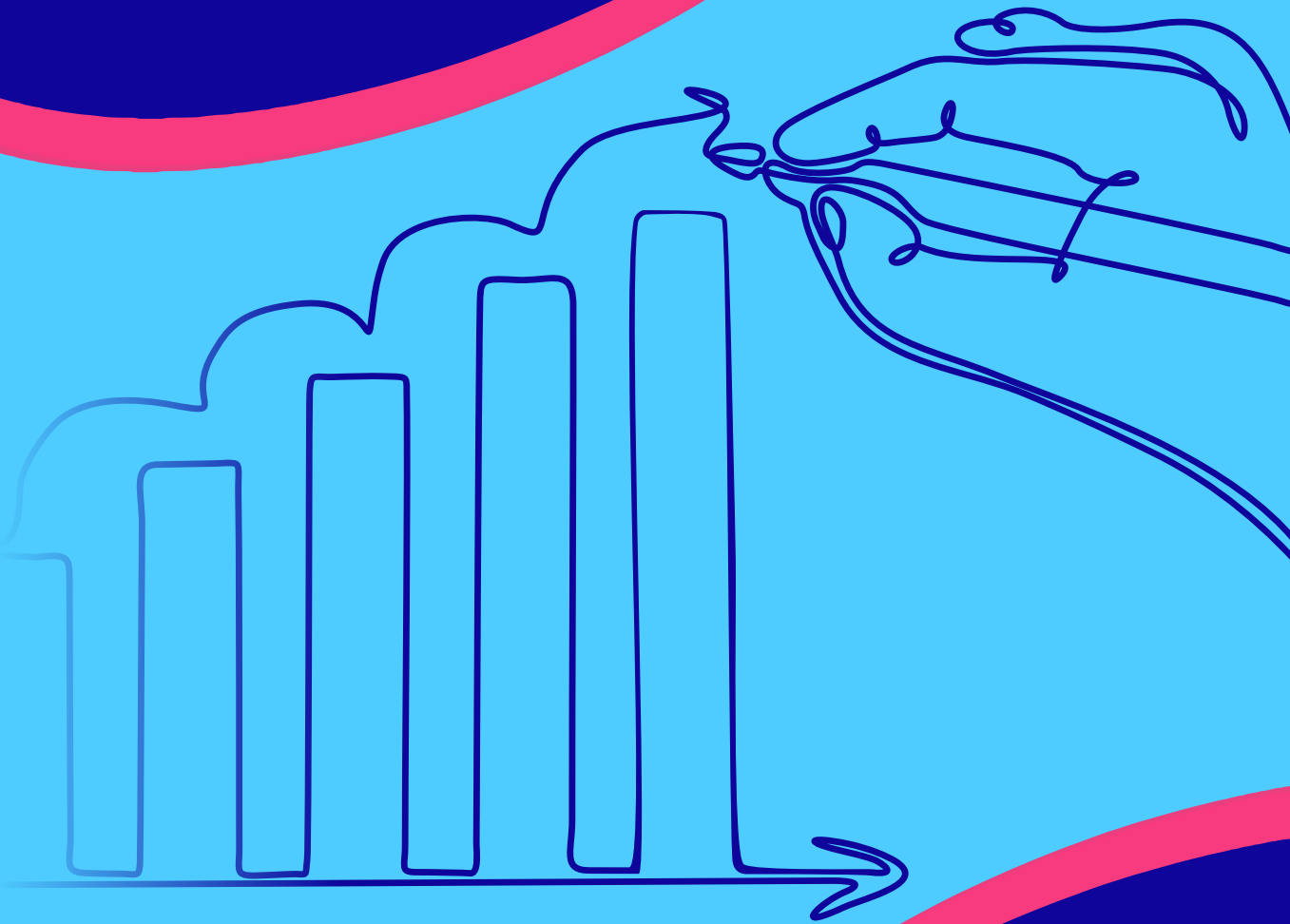


# The Science of **Scaling**:

3 Brain-Based Strategies Designed to  
Unlock **Rapid Results, Lasting Change**  
and **Faster, Smoother Growth**



# When **growth** feels like an uphill struggle:

## The real reason you're not able to scale smarter

Leading a business can feel like a **constant battle** – wearing so many hats, balancing so many tasks, and trying to please so many people.

So when it's time to up-scale your efforts as a company, it's no surprise that it can feel like a painful process.

I'll let you in on a **secret** – your business doesn't have a growth problem, it has a **cortisol problem**.

**Why?** Because to our brains, growth means change, change means a potential threat – and in that case, fight or flight always wins.

Constant stress responses paired with heightened cortisol levels lead to all kinds of behaviour we don't want in the workplace, from short-sighted leadership to taking on red-flag clients.

Maybe your team resists every new initiative, leaving you **feeling like you're dragging them uphill**. Maybe your senior management team is **constantly firefighting**, getting stuck in **reactive decision-making**. Or maybe you've **hit a plateau** with "the numbers" and can't figure out why pushing harder just **doesn't move the needle**.

**The result?** A business that feels reactive, scattered, even chaotic – and incapable of achieving sustainable growth.

But here's the **good news** – you're reading this guide, and over the next few pages you'll learn about the **three key ways cortisol shows up in a business**, the **symptoms you'd expect to see**, and **how to overcome them with three brain-based strategies**, so you can **hit those ambitious targets** and **unlock your scaling potential**.

Let's dive in!

*Does your business have a cortisol problem?*

# A brain-based lens for **growth**:

## Understanding the **Mind, Body,** and **Soul** of your business

When I work with businesses who are experiencing “growing pains”, I describe the core three components of their organisation as the “mind, body, and soul” ...

**THE MIND:** Represents the **mindset** of the founder or the collective thinking of the senior leadership team. Do you have clarity on what growth means to you? Do you have a change-ready mindset that's equipped to deal with roadblocks and setbacks? Do you regularly carve out time to think differently and problem solve? Or are you often plagued by decision-fatigue and shiny object syndrome?

**THE BODY:** This represents your **people** – from the directors to the “do-ers”, these are the ones who go out and create that vision, they bring your ideas into reality, deliver services to clients, and effect change on a day-to-day basis. Is your team empowered, proactive and adaptive, or are they disengaged, resistant, and reactive?

**THE SOUL:** Represents your **mission**, your **vision**, your **driving force** as a brand and the clear strategy that will get you there. This is what sets you apart from competitors, and what lifts you up during difficult times. Does your business have a clear purpose and roadmap for growth, or are you chasing opportunities without direction?

Looking at your business through this lens allows us to do three things: **pinpoint where resistance is creeping in**, **lean into it to find out why it's happening**, and **understand the action we need to take** to get you back on track.

Let's dive into these three areas now, and take those three steps together...



# Mind: Do you have a growth mindset?

## Any behaviour starts in the mind

– a thought creates a feeling, which creates an action – so if the “mind” that drives your business forward is trapped in fear-based thinking, that feeling radiates throughout the business, and manifests in lots of different behaviours.

Here are a few key symptoms of a **cortisol-driven company mindset**:

### CONTROL-FREAK LEADERS

Managers who are trapped in fight or flight mode have difficulty letting go and trusting others to do a good job, getting stuck into the weeds of tasks that should be delegated elsewhere. Resistance like this is a sure-fire path to burnout, not growth

### SHORT-TERM THINKING

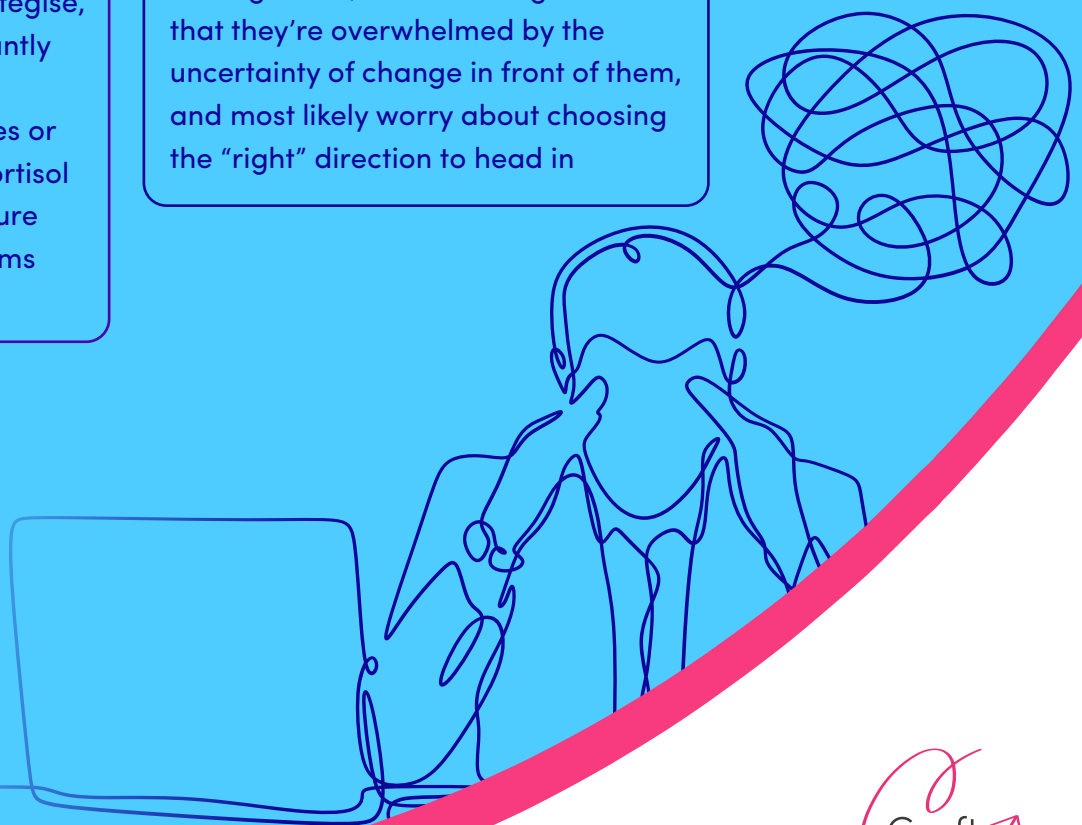
Cortisol is designed to deal with short-term threats, stress isn't supposed to drag on, so staying in that frame of mind can mean leaders lose sight of the big picture easily and struggle to stay on track with long-term goals

### CONSTANT FIRE-FIGHTING

The leadership team are supposed to carve out time to problem-solve and strategise, but when they're constantly being pulled back into project work, client crises or otherwise, this spikes cortisol constantly and makes sure all of the above symptoms become a daily cycle

### LACK OF CLARITY

If decision fatigue, analysis paralysis or shiny object syndrome are prevalent with your senior management, it's a clear sign that they're overwhelmed by the uncertainty of change in front of them, and most likely worry about choosing the “right” direction to head in



# Body: Do you have a change-ready team?

By the “**body**” of a business, we mean its **people** – the teams that will go forth and execute your ideas and ambitions!

**But here’s the problem;** when cortisol levels are high across the business, teams fall into survival mode, doubling down on processes and actions that no longer serve the big picture.

**Here are a few critical signs that you’ve got a cortisol problem in your company’s body:**

## RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IS THE NORM

It’s common for teams who are scared of the change happening around them to resist new processes, systems, platforms or initiatives. No matter how you sell it to them, they just won’t do as you ask, because cortisol is the one in control

## POOR INTERNAL COMMS

Collaboration breakdowns are common with cortisol, because leaders and team members may well default to self-preservation tactics to ensure their own “safety” within the group, rather than working for the collective good

## “HERO” BOTTLENECKS

Stressed out managers will often default to fixing problems and swooping in to save the day, rather than empowering their team to fix their own issues. Why? First, because it’s easier to take over and do it faster yourself and we’ll always choose the easy option when under stress, and second because it gives them a little hit of dopamine when they do, even if long-term it makes them a bottleneck

## LOW MOTIVATION

If you’re experiencing a lack of engagement or a drop in morale, an imbalance of cortisol and the “love hormone” oxytocin could be the culprit. Why? Because oxytocin is released from doing things we love, including fulfilling projects and celebrating wins. A lack of oxytocin can create heightened cortisol levels, meaning your team ends up in a stress response by default



# Soul: Do you have a clear vision of scaling success?

The “soul” of your business is its **purpose** and **direction** – the “why” that drives everything.

When the soul is out of alignment, your business operates in a reactive, scattered way, and everything around it follows suit, right down to the tactics you use to grow. Instead of pursuing intentional growth, you end up moving fast and breaking a lot of things.

Here are a few key indicators that your company’s “soul” is stressed out:

## A DROP IN CONVERSION RATE

Because you’re trapped in short-sighted thinking, you’ve started chasing every opportunity that comes towards you, even the ones that were never suited to you and might even have been a red-flag prospect. The result? Later down the line your conversion rates drop, but it was never your proposals that dipped, it was your standards!

## YOU’RE TAKING CLIENTS THAT DON’T FEEL RIGHT

You’re not 100% certain on the types of buyers you’d love to work with, so you cast the net wide and try to please everyone. As a result, you end up with some clients you like, some you dread, and stakeholders who test your boundaries

## CONFUSION OVER NEXT STEPS

Even if you work out what your vision is, do you know how you’ll get there? How you’ll track progress? What sales tactics to use? How to market it? These are big decisions, which in a high-cortisol state can cause a lot of confusion, overwhelm and frustration, if you’re able to tackle them at all

## YOU HAVE A BUSINESS YOU DON’T ENJOY

This is a tough symptom to face, but you’re not alone if you feel this way. The constant stress, pain and anxiety that all this causes can often leave business owners straying away from why they set it up in the first place, meaning the company is no longer authentic to why it exists, causing conflict with the leadership team on the best direction to head in



# The science of scaling: **Why do we resist change?**

We've been through all the symptoms, now it's time for the **diagnosis** and **cortisol cure** – why is this happening? If you've ever felt your team resist change – even when it's clearly for the best – there's a **scientific reason** for it.

**Our brains prioritise avoiding pain over seeking reward.**

**Think of it like this:** imagine a primitive human eyeing a tree full of ripe apples, but there's a predator sleeping beneath it.

**Who survives?**

The one who says,

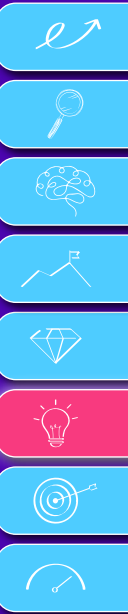
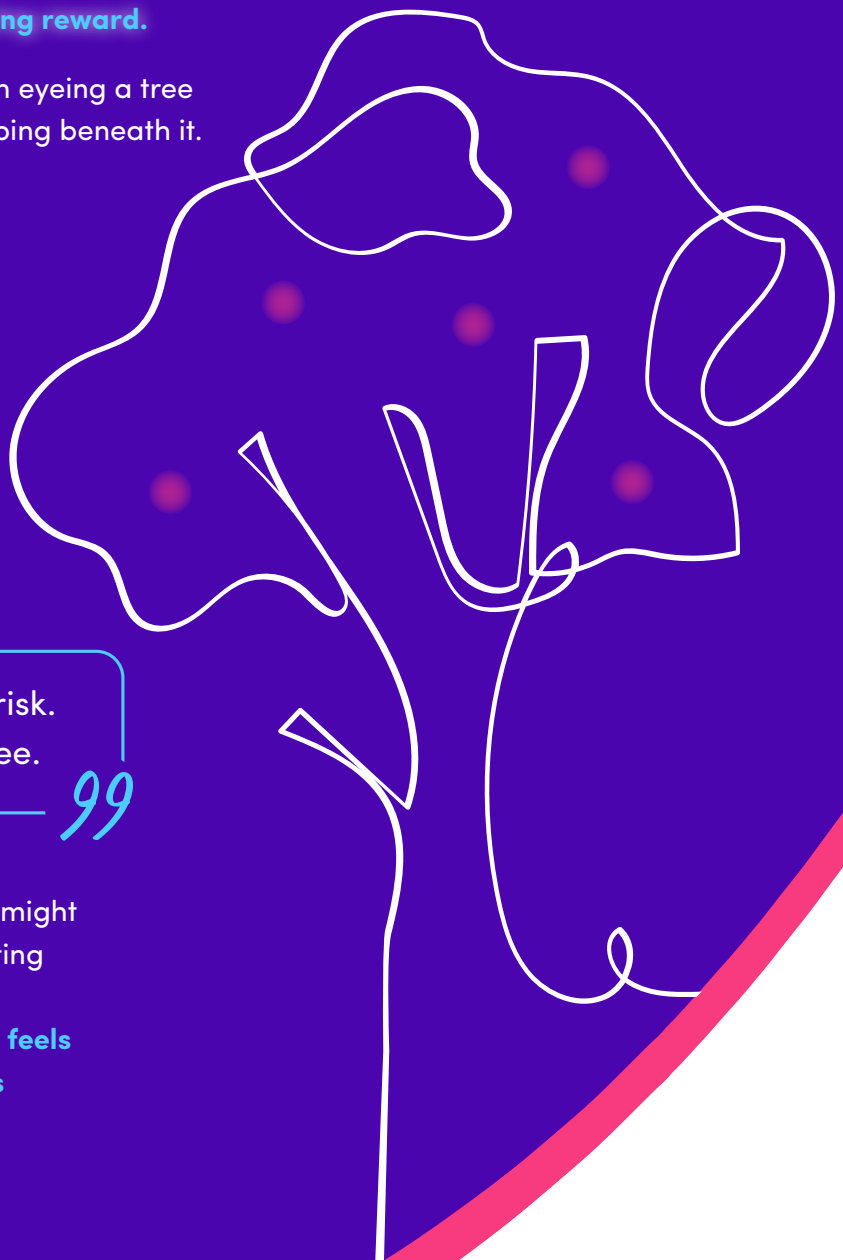
“It'll probably be fine, I really want that apple”

or the one who says,

“It's not worth the risk. I'll find another tree.”

Fast forward to today, and while our “apples” might be revenue milestones, big client wins, or exciting projects, our brains still overemphasise risk.

**That's why change, no matter how beneficial, feels like a threat, triggering cortisol-fuelled stress responses that make us retreat to safety.**



# The problem:

## Big rewards are rare

When the chance to celebrate success doesn't come around very often, keeping your team motivated can be a challenge.

Plus, achieving those infrequent wins can feel like a slog to them.

New behaviours require...

ENERGY

RISK

DISCOMFORT

No single reward is big enough to override our instinct to stick with the familiar.

That's why scaling isn't just about tactics and knowing what to do, it's about removing why you then won't take the action and tapping into the responses that naturally occur in us so they work in our favour..

It's about hormone hacking.

To truly create a **growth-ready business**, we need to **amplify the pain** of staying the same while introducing more **frequent, meaningful rewards**. This restores the balance between **cortisol** (caused by stress) and **oxytocin** (the "love" hormone, which we can tap into for motivation).

This is the science of scaling – harnessing hormones to build a business that's wired for growth.

So, here's your plan of action for the mind, body and soul of your business...





# Taking Action: Asking the difficult questions

The beauty of this model is that the **mind, body** and **soul** of a business are all intertwined, so when you tackle one area, you'll see effects in the others.

Just like in coaching, you coach the person, not the job role, so we need to take a **holistic approach** to **business growth**.

The three strategies coming up all play into one another, have high-performance at the heart of them, and start where most positive change does – with the **difficult questions that need answering**.

**If you want rapid results and change that lasts, take these three steps as your action plan from today...**



STEP 1

# Set your course

Where there is uncertainty causing havoc, we can treat it with **clarity**.

To bring leadership back on course for long-term thinking, consider what **success looks like over the next 5 years**.

Forget what other businesses are doing...

What does your growth trajectory look like?

What's your role in that business?

How will your leadership team differ from today?

Carving out this time to think clearly and strategise is so important if you want to **spot the gaps that exists**, because only then will you have something to compare it to, and suddenly all those stressful unknowns become annoying facts – **which we can tackle!**



## STEP 2

# Plan your roadmap

Now you have a clear destination, we need to inject more certainty into the actions you take to get there.

We want to move you away from reactive tactics, and **back-engineer your success**.

Consider the actions you've been taking as a team to date, the shorter-term plans you've implemented – it might have gotten you this far, **but will it take you forward?**

**Consider the vision you outlined in Step One – what's standing in your way of achieving that, and how can you break it down into meaningful wins?**

There are several places to look under the hood when you want to **spot gaps** in your **growth plan**, here are a few to get you started:

- |                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| ✓ Leadership        | ✓ Operations |
| ✓ Sales & Marketing | ✓ Delivery   |
| ✓ Client Success    | ✓ Finance    |

Be **honest** about these areas, **challenge** whether they're functioning with **growth in mind**, where you could bring in more **chances for your team to win**, or whether they're **missing critical knowledge** in order to **scale effectively**.

## STEP 3

# Implement **change adoption toolkits**

This is all about giving your team the tools to cope with change and see threats as opportunities.

**Where are the cortisol issues on the team?**

Look where those symptoms from earlier exist in your organisation – and then dive deeper by asking the team.

**Ask them what the problems are and where they struggle with overwhelm.**

It could be mental resilience training they need, or work on their confidence when dealing with senior people. With your leadership team, you may need to re-set their role expectations and what they're responsible for, to help them let go of control. They may need a boost in coaching skills to empower their teams properly.

**Assume nothing, let them tell you what they need.**



# Rewiring Your Brain for Growth:

## Lean Into the Discomfort

While step three aims to support your team in better managing stress and cortisol, steps one and two get clear on the big reward before breaking it down into actionable chunks that provide more frequent, meaningful wins, which taps into oxytocin.

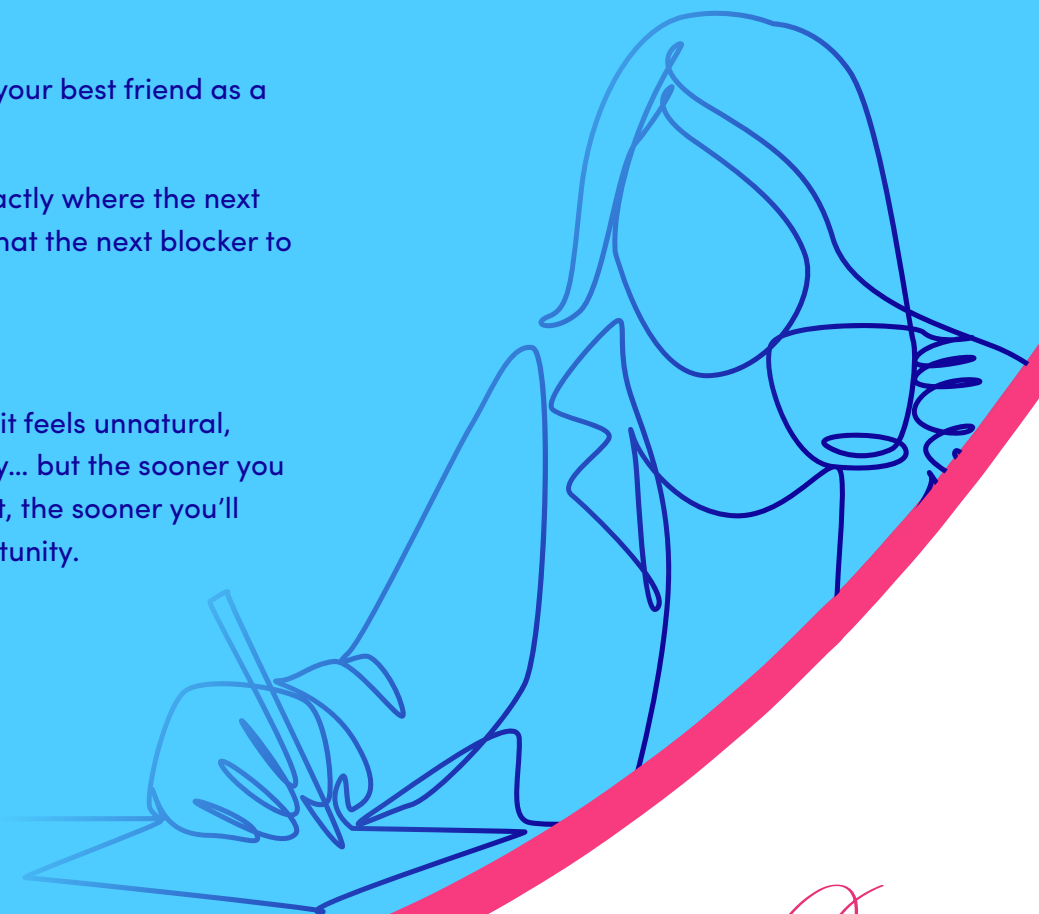
### Why do we do this?

So we can flip stress to become your best friend as a business leader.

Every pain point is telling you exactly where the next problem with scaling lies, and what the next blocker to your success really is.

### How do we use it?

Lean into it – it's uncomfortable, it feels unnatural, because we're wired to run away... but the sooner you go towards the threat and face it, the sooner you'll discover your next growth opportunity.



# Ready to back-engineer success?

Growth isn't just about having the right strategy or tactics planned out – it's about creating the right conditions for success across the **mind**, **body** and **soul** of your business.

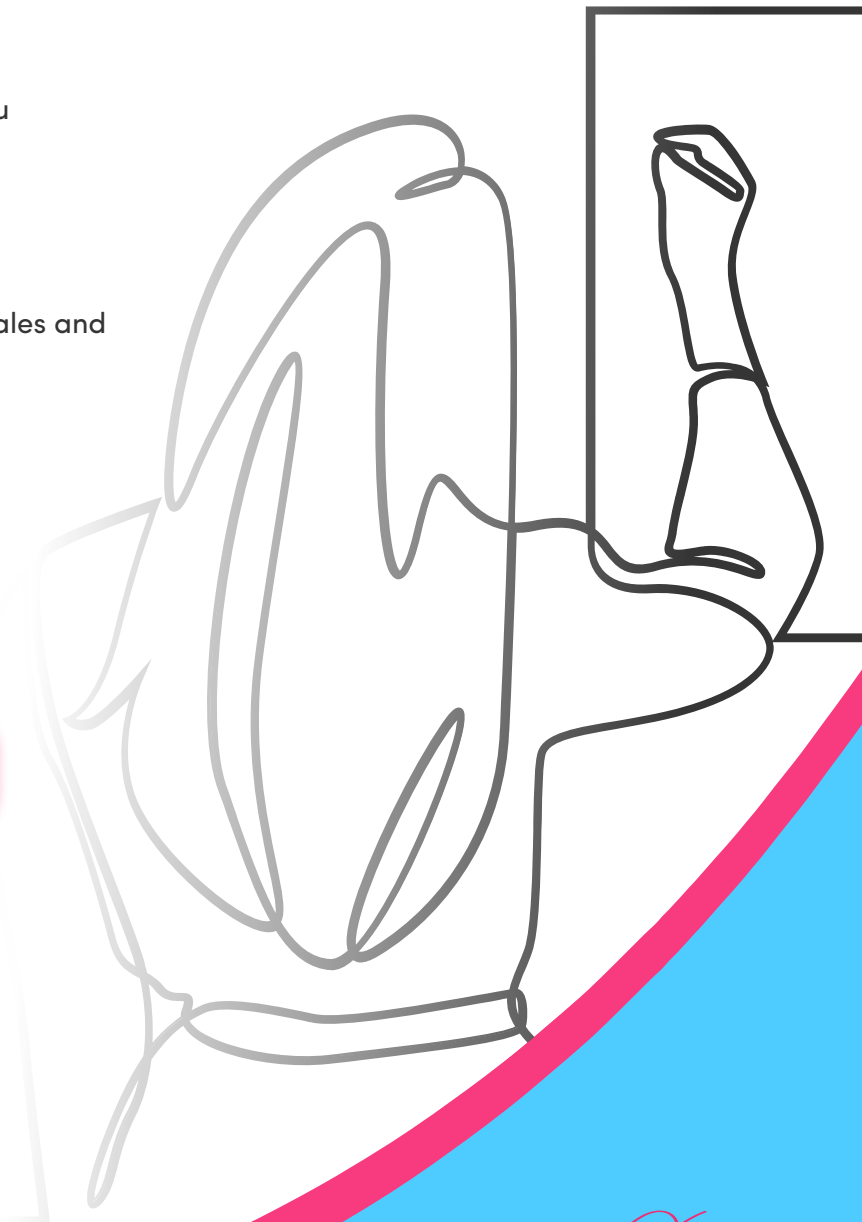
**But here's the thing:** no two businesses are the same, and often, answering all those tough questions above can lead to another gap or a new blocker you didn't know existed.

That's why I offer tailored solutions to help you scale smarter by design – not by default.

Whether it's 1:1 coaching to reframe your leadership mindset, team training to foster resilience and build confidence, or strategic sales and marketing consultancy to create a clear roadmap for commercial success, I can help you unlock new potential in your business and your people.

**Scaling doesn't have to feel overwhelming – let's demystify it together.**

**Book your free discovery call here**







## Caroline Canty

**Caroline Canty is the Founder and Director of Craft Coaching**, and a business and performance coach who **helps ambitious tech and digital companies to scale up without burning out**. A specialist in **growth and commercial strategies**, she's passionate about **supporting senior leaders** in getting the **most out of their teams and resources**. From **change adoption to growth mindset building**, she guides teams in **developing high-performance ways of working**, whilst fostering a **supportive "coaching culture"** within the businesses she works with.

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