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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

Helping an owner keep his finger on the pulse

Ask James



James Caan

Dear James

As a business owner, I am looking for ways to improve my experiences, and ensure I am keeping up with the market and offering my team the best advice. How do you find your own inspiration and stay motivated?
Jeff

I adopt a collaborative approach, speaking to people on the ground who are experts in their field, and taking guidance from them when looking for inspiration or advice.

They are the people doing the job, meeting the clients and being aware of the issues. I keep up to speed with all the businesses in my portfolio through monthly board meetings. At the moment, I am appraising the performance of my key executives and have brought in a consultant.

Think about hiring someone from outside and asking them to analyse the business and structure. They will be able to offer a new perspective and you will probably learn a few things along the way.

When you are near the top of an organisation, you can become isolated. It's easy to be complacent, and I have known chief executives who took their foot off the gas. This can cause serious damage.

Another thing I look to do is learn at least one thing in every meeting I go to. I often have days of back-to-back

meetings so I am learning a lot and taking a lot of information in. However, I try to ensure that I reflect on the information from the day and look at ways in which I can implement the most important bits.

■ *For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to standard.co.uk/askjames. His book *Start Your Business in 7 Days* is out now.*