James Baker

Three clients in under three weeks

James Baker spent seven years running global businesses at JCB. He learned the system over seven months while he finished his time there, then launched his practice in January. He advises owners and MDs of engineering and manufacturing businesses turning over £4 to £15 million.

7 days
of marketing to his first client

3 clients
in under three weeks

£15,000+
a month, the milestone he passed later



Before	Seven years running global businesses at JCB
Advises	Owners and MDs of engineering and manufacturing businesses, £4 to £15 million

If you're asking

"My network won't buy, and it feels risky to walk away from a salary."

This is James's answer.

01 Before

James spent seven years running global businesses for JCB, taking several of them through strong phases of profitable growth. Before JCB he had run smaller businesses of his own, so he knew both sides: the corporate machine, and the owner who makes every call without anyone to ask.

He had also seen what a good advisor does from the other side of the table. At JCB he worked with a coach, Karen. Before her, he says, he was "fumbling around in the dark" in the businesses he ran. Talking his challenges through with her got him to clarity "way faster" than he'd have managed on his own.

The job was exciting and purposeful. It also took a lot. "Whilst my weekends were with the family, I wasn't always as present," he says. On Sundays he was already thinking about what he'd walk into on Monday morning, and the travel meant long spells away from his wife and children. After COVID, with a seven-year-old and an eleven-year-old at home, he decided he wanted that time back.

He assumed the hard part would be the work, not finding clients. He had taken businesses from break-even to £9 million and had JCB's brand behind him. "Surely I'm going to have people queuing up at my door." When he started posting on LinkedIn, Pam told him to get ready for the wall of silence. "And it bloody is." To find that out, he was walking away from a salary and a very stable career.

"You've made what was quite a risky decision much safer."

James Baker

02 The build

James never doubted he wanted to advise owners. His question was how: how a managing director of a big corporate business goes to running a practice of his own. He calls BCA "that sort of business in a box". "Without that, I'd have probably spent the first six months, 12 months figuring it out and testing things," he says.

The people mattered as much as the framework. When he joined, the Academy was much smaller, and Pam and Zander's "genuine support and commitment" to his success was obvious. "They're genuine people," he says. "You've got to have trust with whoever it is that you enter into this kind of relationship with."

He learned the system while he finished at JCB, then followed it. He picked his core client: owners and MDs of engineering and manufacturing businesses turning over £4 to £15 million, with a management team in place. He launched his LinkedIn campaigns and learned to tell his business backstory in a way those owners recognised.

His first client signed after seven days of marketing, at £1,450 a month. The second came less than a week later: a husband and wife who own an engineering and manufacturing business, found through LinkedIn. The third signed at £1,950 a month. "It's three clients in just less than three weeks," he said at the time. That was around £5,000 a month.

It wasn't a clean sweep. He won three of his first five sales calls, using the same script each time. His third client had been a JCB customer, and his background helped open the door. "Even then it's really hard," he says. The conversation still had to win the work. By the end of his first three months he had five clients.

03 Now

Two months in, his bankings were "pretty much covering my outgoings". "If someone had said to me six months ago," he said then, "I'd have snapped their hand off." He replaced his JCB salary "very quickly", in his words, and later passed £15,000 a month.

He works around 30 hours a week, "with a huge amount of flexibility" in when he puts them in. "The money is as good, if not better now, but the biggest value that I've got is that time back." He has had conversations with his children that he says he'd never have had at JCB.

The first clients stayed. Nearly four years on, he still works with both of the clients he signed in his first weeks. "Two very different journeys," he says, "but really two very enjoyable journeys."

His clients' results are the reason they stay. One client went from a loss to over £500,000 profit in twelve months. Another was near the end of a £200,000 overdraft and was £400,000 in the black six months later. Most owners, he finds, arrive without proper numbers, "running their businesses in the dark with the lights turned off". Getting those numbers straight is usually where the first month's value comes from.

The biggest change in him, he says, is seeing how much difference he can make: "me being present, supportive, asking them challenging questions and bringing in a few simple tools". He reckons he'd be far better equipped to run a business now than when he left JCB.

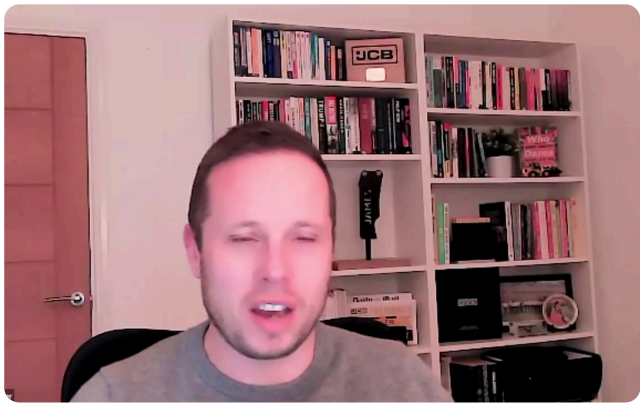
In their own words

As it happened



£5,000 per month in just 3 weeks

Watch · 1 min



Covered my outgoings in just 2 months

Watch · 24 sec



Hit £15,000 per month milestone

Watch · 21 sec



From work overload to family focus

Watch · 25 sec

BusinessCoach Academy

What James would tell you

“In the first couple of sessions, the first month, my clients will get value. You can't run a business if you don't understand your numbers.”

James Baker

See if it’s a fit

A 15-minute call with Pam, our co-founder.

businesscoachacademy.com/bookacall

Read it online, with the videos

James Baker’s full story.

businesscoachacademy.com/case-studies/james-baker

Results vary with experience, market and effort. Figures are in the member’s own words.