

THIS MAN TREATS HIS PRACTICE LIKE A HOTEL



There's a scene in *About a Boy* where Hugh Grant is asked at a dinner party "What do you do?" and he doesn't know what to say. The lady he's chatting with is unimpressed and turns away. It used to happen to me – whenever I told someone I was an accountant, their eyes would glaze over. So one day I decided to reinvent myself. I started telling people I was a financial historian. Now they say "Wow, that's amazing!" and I get an extra five minutes of their attention. That mirrors the approach we have at my practice, The Peloton.

I used to run a dental consultancy and I've trained in neuro-linguistic

programming, which bridges the gap between neurological processes and language to bring about personal change. We try to incorporate these approaches in our work. We're not just accountants for dentists and chiropractors. We coach, we consult and we're marketers. We're as much about strategy and business development as finance.

I love that we can look at our client's business and really get involved with marketing and development. We use live data through Xero and get instant feedback. The decisions you can make now are far more accurate than

those based on nine-month-old data. And that will only improve as we continue to innovate.

I see our office as being like a boutique hotel. At a hotel, staff aren't passive. They greet guests with coffee at the ready, saying: "Hello, Tom! How's it going?" That's what we try to do. What's prevalent in the hospitality industry should be prevalent in all businesses, not just accountancy.

It's about having an open mind. We like to challenge it all. Do we need blue carpets? No. Do we need a waiting room? No. Instead, we have a glass office with driftwood flooring, leather sofas, a library, lighting made of fishing crates and Herman Miller seating. Art students exhibit here and we're five minutes from the beach.

Every day, one person in the office cooks lunch for everyone else. If they were at home making lunch, they'd make it for everyone, so that's why we always take it in turns. I believe that, if you give people the very best, they will give the very best of themselves.

The principle is nothing exceptional – we're just doing ordinary things but in a much more approachable way.

Never mind a formal meeting with director Tim from the local dentist practice – let's invite him over for a glass of wine and a sausage sandwich and pop the radio on. It's that razzmatazz you don't get anywhere else.

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Mike Hutchinson, founder of The Peloton in Cornwall, is mixing accountancy with the best bits of hospitality

Bessie, the office dog, just lying there, while everyone else has to work for a living
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