

Episode 71: Guest bios

Episode name: Democratising... Ownership? Implementing Employee Share Option Plans

Guest(s): Craig West

CRAIG WEST

Founder and Executive Chairman, Succession Plus

Craig West is a strategic accountant with over 20 years of experience advising business owners. His background as a CPA in public practice has provided invaluable experience in the key issues of concern to business owners.

Following 6 years of study to gain two master's degrees, Craig focused on Capital Gains Tax (CGT) for business sales advising on strategic management of taxation issues. This experience formed a strong view that most business owners (and often their advisers) were unprepared and unaware of the steps required to prepare for an exit.

Craig now acts as a strategic business and financial mentor for mid-market business owners and has written four critically acclaimed books educating business owners on employee

incentives, succession planning, asset protection and exit strategies. Craig has conducted numerous seminars and keynote presentations throughout Australia & internationally, including adviser education programs for the CAANZ, Family Business Australia, IOOF, Macquarie bank and CPA Australia, and is a sought-after presenter.



In March 2014, Craig was appointed Executive Chairman of the SME Association of Australia, Australia's largest small business organisation representing over 300,000 business owners.

In October 2014, he was awarded the Exit Planner of the Year at the Exit Planning Institute Annual Conference in Texas, USA, due to his innovative development of an exit planning process to help business owners maximise business value and achieve a successful exit.

Craig's proprietary structure - a Peak Performance Trust - has won the Australia-wide award for the Employee Share Ownership Plan of the year twice in four years.

In November 2018, Craig launched SME Experts in partnership with Mark Bouris' Mentored on Podcast One and quickly grew the monthly podcast audience to over 26,500 downloads; in October 2019, he released a new podcast focused on medium-sized businesses - Mid-Market Matters.

In July 2021, Craig joined the NSW Committee for STEP (Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners) – focusing on advising families across generations.

Craig has also launched a SaaS platform, Capitaliz (which captures the 21-step process), to assist other advisers internationally deliver advisory services at scale.

In November 2021, Craig was appointed Executive Chairman of NSW Leaders, a business mentoring group for leading NSW businesses.

In July 2022, Craig West received the award of Doctor of Business Administration for his research thesis titled “Examination of the key factors driving business exit options in Australian Small and Medium Enterprises.” Craig is passionate about encouraging business owners to think strategically, maximise the value of their business and achieve a successful exit.

DAVID TURNER

Host



David Turner has a gift for teasing out people’s stories, so it’s no wonder he is Hearsay’s host. With a double Bachelor of Arts and Laws from Macquarie University, he is also an MBA candidate at UNSW’s Australian Graduate School of Management.

When he isn’t interviewing people on Hearsay, David is a lawyer at Assured Legal Solutions, a boutique financial services law firm located in Sydney’s CBD. Prior to joining Assured, he was called to the NSW Bar, and is a former President of NSW Young Lawyers and a former Councillor of the Law Society of NSW.

David spends the little downtime that he has left reading historical fiction and tinkering on home improvement projects.

You can access David’s bio on the Assured Legal Solutions website [here](#).