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Faith, hope and clarity - Business Solutions - Business Survey Series

By Kate Castellari

THE MENTOR

Help is at hand for people wanting to do better in their business, reports Kate Castellari

PEOPLE who focus on what they want, prosper -- those who don't, struggle. This is the dictum that business coaching and mentoring group Achievers uses to illustrate the importance of having a focused business plan for any organisation or individual out to achieve their utmost.

Tony **Gattari**, managing director of Achievers Group and Global Icon, says the greatest single element in running and setting up a business is having a solid foundation plan.

`` It must have set in concrete what are the objectives, purpose and what is the mission and unique selling proposition," he says. `` If the business owner is able to effectively actualise that, then that activity alone is given purpose and clarity."

According to **Gattari** it is not so much the plan itself that is the most important element but the process of making one.

`` It is what you become and the questions we ask in the process. The challenge in finding the answer to the questions is like finding the Holy Grail," he says.

`` The reason we at Achievers are very successful is that we challenge and stretch the way of thinking and business reflection of the owner in the planning process. So the owner grows, and when he grows everything else grows."

Achievers group franchises Icon Business Solutions to provide a highly systematised program which runs over seven months.

It consists of a set of evaluation tools covering all aspects of a business including marketing, sales and operations, employee finance and legal subjects.

The program is set out in booklet form with a combination of questions.

It starts with the One Year Vision, which is specifically how the business owner wants the next 12 months to unfold. It seeks out the most important business, personal and financial objectives, the ones that will help the owner create an exceptional quality of life. The 60-day action plan is run with a bi-monthly check list of the owner's progress, and then creates a new plan that moves him or her forward to the next level. This part of the Achievers plan is designed to give the owner a balance between work and personal life.

In the seven-day plan, each week the owner selects three of their most important objectives. These are used as the stepping-stones to achieving the larger 60-day goals.

The daily snapshot is considered the blueprint for the day which keeps the business proprietor focused and alert. It also ensures they maintain a high level of positive energy.

`` It forces the business owner to find an answer and the business becomes revealed," **Gattari** says.

`` We then go back to them and give an action plan.

`` So right away we compile seven business booklets into a business plan."

However, **Gattari** says it is not the business plan itself but what has happened to the owner.

`` He gets a serious MBA and now has the strength to do this himself," he says.

Vanessa Wilson, owner of Sani Hire, came to Achievers for help in developing a business plan when she took over the 25-year-old portable toilet business from her father.

`` They are an amazing company," **Gattari** says. `` As soon as we got the first booklet back we realised what they could do.

`` You can't get out of prison if you don't know you're in one -- a business should be a commercial enterprise without the owner too."

Wilson says that while the company is still in an ongoing process, it has made her 100 per cent sure she is heading in the right direction.

`` It has been such a huge learning curve for us, and Tony points out areas that need to be improved.

`` I suppose it has enlightened us to all the bits and pieces and specific details of how to measure different aspects of the business. We now know what we don't know -- and that is the key."