

## *CASE STUDY: Angelo Tirhas*

*“If you wish to have influence with your employees and customers, commit and be intentional in your learning and growth.”*

### **TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY**

My company started by accident almost 3 years ago. I was freelancing for a team building company for about 6 years and noticed that our clients were coming back year after year with exactly the same issues. They were doing new activities but still trying to solve the same problems. I asked them why they had not taken care of their issues since we were very intentional about giving them the tools and training to do so. The general feedback was that they had enjoyed the day but when they returned back to work, if there had been any changes, they were only temporary. That was when I realised there was a lack of leadership skills within the organisation. What was missing was someone to take what they had learned and to implement it, to work with their team and to take them to the next level. I spoke with the company owner and suggested we start offering a leadership program. He seemed quite happy and told me to look into it. I paid my way to the US to be certified as a John Maxwell trainer, speaker and coach. But when I returned, the company owner said he did not want to run leadership courses. If I wanted to pursue this avenue, then I should start my own company. So I did. It has been a long and challenging road and we are only now starting to see the fruits of those years of hard work.

We provide training solutions for companies wanting to change or improve their company culture, add value to their staff, grow their business and increase profit and productivity. Our focus is centred around the philosophy of: “If you take care of your staff, they will take care of your business.” The question now arises, “How?” John Maxwell says, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” This is so true.

The leadership of any organisation will determine the culture, mindset, standards and values of the organisation. We help leaders recognise the role of leadership and then provide them with the tools and trainings needed to develop their desired culture. We provide both personal and professional development of their staff as well as help in



hiring practices and selecting the right team. We only work with companies and leaders who sincerely wish to create lasting and significant change and improvement to their company. As with anything, this is a process. If someone is unwilling to engage and commit to that process, expecting a “magic pill” to solve their problems and become leaders in a disruptive marketplace, then they are wasting both their time and money, and we wish neither for them.

### **SHARE WITH US SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED**

When I first started my business, I had two major challenges. The first was my own personal development. The second was starting from scratch in an industry where I was unknown and where reputation is everything. I started with the premise that I would be partnering with

the team building company and could therefore leverage on their expertise and market reputation. However, once I was registered, the other company, for fear of losing their clients to my business, did not wish to partner or share their database to promote this new and unrelated service. I therefore needed to become proficient and qualified or certified in many more disciplines. It was a very time consuming and expensive effort. In total, I have invested over \$120,000 in my own professional development over the last 2 years, not to mention the obvious costs associated with starting any business. I did many free jobs and volunteer jobs just to create my portfolio and get my name known. At the time, it was very difficult financially to work so hard without getting paid, but the experience I gathered was invaluable. Everything in my business changed when I joined a speaker association and found a mentor who is seasoned and very successful professional in my field.

### ***WERE THERE ANY COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT HELPED YOU ACHIEVE YOUR SUCCESS?***

Aside from the priceless help of my mentor, I also offered my services to many training providers. I was not, however, allowed to use my company name or connect directly with clients. This helped with cashflow, but not with the visibility of my company or growing my business network. Whether we like it or not, this takes time and hard work. One needs to pay their dues and do what most are unwilling to do in order to just break into the industry.

### ***LEARNING TIPS FOR SMEs***

- Be honest with yourself with regard to what you want to accomplish. Often times, people try to disguise their reason for being in business with something either socially commendable or with some obligation or duty that they have. If it's to make loads of money or if it's for the thrill of creating something out of nothing—be honest with yourself. (You don't need to tell anyone else.) That will be your driving force when things get tough, and they will get tough. Trying to get through tough times motivated by a false premise is a recipe for disaster.

- Don't sweat the little things... they are ALL little things! Loss of a "huge client" or a job you've worked so hard to get often gets one disheartened or even depressed. There are more clients, there are more jobs, and no one is that important that your business will fail if you don't get them. Persistence and resilience will always get you closer to your goal than anything else.
- Strive for excellence. The difference between a gold medal winner and silver in the Olympics is often just a few split seconds. Yet no one remembers the silver medal winner. So if you're good at what you do, always strive to be better. It often just means little changes or more focus on the little things that take you from good, or even great, to excellent. People always remember, respect, and want to work with "excellent."

### ***SHARE YOUR FAVOURITE QUOTE WITH US***

"If you take care of your employees, they'll take care of your business." – Richard Branson.

This is the philosophy and the core of all we teach and train. Everything rises and falls on leadership. We have all seen what good leaders have accomplished by the influence they have with people, and also the damage bad leaders have done. Leadership is a skill and can be learned. But like all skills, it involves engaging and being committed to a process. It's intentional and deliberate. If you wish to have influence with your employees and customers, commit and be intentional in your learning and growth.

