

Putting people first.

Michelle McCartan has put her people skills to work in an exciting new business venture which helps others achieve their personal and professional dreams.

Michelle spent 10 years in corporate HR Management, Leadership Consulting and Coaching as a Client Director for a global Leadership Consultancy and a HR Manager for Deloitte and Ford.



She wanted to set up her own personal and career coaching business “to live a fulfilling and vibrant future by enabling others to live theirs”. Her company, Vibrant Futures, offers career and personal coaching to anyone looking to make changes in their life. Its motto: Don’t let life just happen to you. Take control of it and create a future that excites and fulfils you. .

Michelle’s academic and professional HR background provides her with unique skills and a range of experiences to draw from to help clients achieve success.

“I sell my coaching skills to assist people who are committed to creating successful and vibrant futures,” she says. “This includes working with them to define their aspirations, designing a plan for their achievement and walking with them to successfully implement the plan and create the change they desire. This provides enhanced clarity, momentum and ultimately results and can take the form of face to face or telephone coaching packages. “

Michelle had the coaching skills and drive to succeed, but had not run a business. Before starting, she attended a Small Business Victoria set-up course and discovered the Small Business Mentoring Service.

The SBMS is a non-government, non-profit organisation of volunteer expert mentors who give their time and experience to help small business. It is supported by Small Business Victoria, which refers clients to it.

Michelle was matched with SBMS mentor Madalen Ross. Madalen has run two businesses, Image Identity and Your Executive Secretarial services. She has extensive experience in small business and office administration.

Madalen and Michelle had an in-person session under the Business Acceleration Program 1, and continued contact via email.

Madalen helped with start-up advice to ensure Michelle was putting the right strategies and processes in place to develop a sustainable and profitable business. Among other things she helped with:

- Reviewing Michelle's business plan and providing comments.
- Marketing and creative advice eg logos, websites, promotional material, budgets, financial target advice.
- Checking whether all necessary areas were covered to start up a business.
- Sales forecast and Daily Cost of Doing Business templates.

“As a start-up business moving from a corporate environment, we discussed the pros and cons of starting a business; organisational, financial, sales and marketing, product, promotion, price, processes and people,” Madalen says.

After seeing Madalen, Michelle completed her business plan, became more focussed, improved her marketing and business development, and developed a brand identity. She has more confidence to move forward and her website, www.vibrantfutures.com.au, is up and running.

“I really think the greatest benefit is in her focus and boost in confidence to move forward with less stress,” Madalen says. “She really wanted to run her own business and was up for the challenge. She has an excellent background in HR and coaching. Being a sounding board to review her business and marketing plan helped her make the right decisions”.

Thanks to Madalen, Michelle spent more time making the business a success before launching it. She improved her marketing and business development skills and as a result has more focus and confidence, which has led to less stress and greater results.

“Realising the potential of a positive brand image, Michelle has taken the time and care in developing her corporate image and marketing materials,” Madalen says.

Initial sales have been higher than expected, and Michelle has been able to invest more in marketing collateral and tools than she might have otherwise.

Michelle has no employees, but has access to contract staff and hopes to diversify her services. “Due to the nature of coaching it can be done on the phone so my clients can be based anywhere in the world,” she says.

Michelle is thrilled with Madalen's help.

“Although I have the technical coaching skills, I do not have experience at running a business,” she says. “As such I have had a steep learning curve to set up my business. For me the area that has required most learning has been around marketing and business development. The SBMS provided me with access to these skills in the form of two different mentors. “

Without Madalen the initial road would have been much tougher.

“The SBMS mentoring sessions provided me with a wide range of ideas to consider and select from when developing my business development and marketing plan,” Michelle says. “This meant that I received knowledge from someone who had ‘been there and done that’ which increased my confidence levels to take the right steps for my business.

“Without the service I would have felt less confident about the actions I was taking and ... would have been less successful in what I was doing. I would also have taken less risks because of the lower confidence levels and would not have had the belief that I could achieve the success that I have achieved so far and hope to surpass in the future. “

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