

# Why mentors are a necessity, not a luxury

**T**HE Collins English Dictionary defines mentor as a "wise, trusted advisor, a guide".

Nearly everybody has someone they turn to in times of need for that little fillip to help them through life's journey. So too, in business can a mentor provide some well-founded advice to overcome an obstacle, solve a problem or encourage a move to the next level.

Unfortunately many small business operators are unaware of the benefits of engaging a mentor to help them achieve maximum business potential.

Being proactive is the key, be it for a beginning business, developing business or an established business that may be encountering problems or just someone who isn't too sure how to take the next step.

Make the decision to act early rather than late as it is easier to maintain than fix. Once engaged, a business mentor is able to develop, with assistance and cooperation from the business operator, tailored solutions and programs.

First step is a business health check.

Areas of concern, issues or problems are identified and prioritised for rectification or improvement. As the business operator you are given practical advice that works for your business, you will increase your knowledge and skill base and feel more confident by the encouragement and professional support.

Business mentors' suggestions and ideas are bias-free, non-emotional and impartially made with complete integrity based on their broad industry experience. This experience is too valuable not to be accessed. Mentors bring clarity to business issues and provide more efficient ways to achieve goals and objectives. They provide op-



## BUSINESS TIPS

with Rod Richards

tions and strategies to plan and implement improved business practice.

Two case studies illustrate this point.

One involves improving marketing resources. This business already operated a six-figure marketing budget. Research covering the previous three years showed 30% to be ineffective. This money was redirected to more effective successful marketing strategies.

Not a bad result for a few hours with a business mentor.

In the second case study, the business wanted a more in-depth understanding of the financials. A range of spreadsheets covering direct and indirect costs, break-even calculations and profit tables was examined. Better financial decisions were then made based on this examination with immediate and effective benefits.

Sometimes business operators think it a sign of weakness or failure to access a mentor. Two examples from quite diverse fields demonstrate this is not so.

Businesses do face many challenges and a business mentor can be a vital part on the road to success. Shop around, choose one for you. There are a number of State and Federal programs available to help business operators working in conjunction with business mentors advance their business development.

[www.richardsconsulting.com.au](http://www.richardsconsulting.com.au)



**BAG LADIES:** Michelle Crocker, Viv Dumoulin and Toni McCulloch do their bit at the Accounting North-sponsored Clean Up Australia Day event at Cotton Tree. PHOTOS: CADE MOONEY/189797



**Kylie Angelides, Kerri Bertram, Vivianne Barry and Zoe Redman are not to be outdone.**



**Laura Parsons and Carey Warhurst get involved.**



**Caroline Wilkins and Lel Christie help out.**



**Matt Dryden and Lisa Caporn take a little break.**

## Accountants weigh in with own clean up act

**A**CCOUNTANTS or criminals? Some of the public who witnessed 25 Accounting North staffers picking up rubbish in Cotton Tree, Alex and Petrie Creek at Didillibah couldn't tell.

A few people apparently thought they were performing a judge-ordered community service duty.

But they were in fact taking part in a Clean Up Australia Day event, a voluntary community service rather than an enforced one!

The most common garbage collected among the 15 large bags were cigarette butts, straws, plastic bottle tops, fishing line, beer bottles and, what would go on to earn its finder the prize for best find, a shopping trolley.

Plastic bags are again culprits, and it's little wonder as Australians use 3.92 billion of the things each year.

We are also the world's second highest producers of waste, with each person responsible for 690 kilograms of waste to landfill annually.

That's enough to cover Victoria.

## BUSINESS DIARY

### SUCCESS SECRETS:

LEARN the secrets to building a successful local business from the ground up from manager of The Natural Foodstore Andrew Crebert at a networking event hosted by Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland (CCIQ) tonight.

Attendees will also learn how to receive thousands of dollars in government funding to help business growth.

The Your Business Success training program will also be explained.

To register for this free event, visit [www.cciq.com.au](http://www.cciq.com.au) or call 1300 138 470. Registered attendees will receive a free copy of the book 'Small Business: Practical guidelines for success that you can apply today'.

### WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION:

PROFESSIONAL Women In Construction is a new initiative for women in the building and construction industry, from small owner builder companies to large developers and suppliers. The group's first event is on today at the offices of Greenhalgh Pickard Solicitors, 9 Nicklin Way Minyaya, 10am - 11am.

The aim is to build a business network to offer information, support and mentoring from experienced industry professionals.

The series of FREE workshops are designed to provide women with the necessary 'tools', resources and advice to make their businesses run more efficiently and productively. Contact 5444 1022.

### IMPLEMENT A WEBSITE:

THIS workshop is for people interested in creating a website for their business. It will identify potential pitfalls and includes information about what questions to ask your web designer, costs to expect and a general understanding of what aspects of a website will meet your business needs.

It is being held at the Sunshine Coast Centre, Level 2, 12 Innovation Parkway, Kawana on March 24, 6pm - 9pm.

The cost is \$44. To register phone 5437 1300 or email [sunshine.coast@dtrdi.qld.gov.au](mailto:sunshine.coast@dtrdi.qld.gov.au)

### BUILD A STRONG TEAM:

THIS interactive two-hour workshop

will teach you strategies to build competent, effective and sustainable teams within your business.

A positive work environment and dynamic team culture can provide significant bottom line improvements to any business regardless of size.

The workshop is presented by business coaches Mark and Jeanette Jones of TRAC Consulting.

Key subjects to be covered include: building a culture that works, happiness is a serious business, the top five reasons employees leave their jobs, recruiting smarter and reward and recognition.

It is being held at the Caloundra Events Centre, on March 30, 5.30pm - 7.30pm.

The cost is \$33 per person. RSVP

by this Thursday by phoning 5437 9566 or emailing [reception@mobb-sandcompany.com](mailto:reception@mobb-sandcompany.com)

### MANAGING YOUR CASH:

THIS workshop is designed to assist you with understanding the financial issues influencing your business. It incorporates activities that will help you to achieve the proper balance between a healthy cash position and maximum profits.

Please bring a calculator.

The workshop is on at the Sunshine Coast Centre, Level 2, 12 Innovation Parkway Kawana on March 31, 6pm - 9pm. The cost is \$44.

Register by phoning 5437 1300 or emailing [sunshine.coast@dtrdi.qld.gov.au](mailto:sunshine.coast@dtrdi.qld.gov.au)