



WOMEN IN RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE ENTERPRISES

- WiRE SHOWCASE SERIES -

Fleur Anderson

Entrepreneur - The Cahoots Group & The Rural Business Collective



"I personally don't feel there's any way to grow or to continually improve and be better at what you're doing without some form of mentor."

ABOUT

Fleur is a self confessed small town addict. Never living in a town larger than 10,000 people and starting 3 businesses in the last 10 years from the town of 500, Theodore in Central Queensland. Fleur is a cotton farmer, a Director, a Mum, owner of The Cahoots Group; a rural comms agency, a podcaster and founder of the Rural Business Collective. Whilst her experience in business is diverse from fashion retail to digital production the common thread is community. Fleur believes rural and remote Australia is full of hidden talent and untapped potential and it's her mission to help uncover it.

In 2005 Fleur launched her first business (aside from a few entrepreneurial endeavours in school) Rhubarb, a retail boutique shopfront in the main street of Theodore. Constantly innovating to get this business to reach beyond its limited foot traffic by implementing 'pre social media' strategies. She later sold this business in 2010 to concentrate on her communications consulting, Cahoots Communications business which was flourishing on the side. Fleur still works in Cahoots today although their range of experience and expertise has grown. In August 2016 Fleur launched her latest startup the Rural Business Collective which is a community for rural and remote entrepreneurs and business people that are looking to connect with like minds and grow their business from rural Australia.

During this time Fleur also enjoys her roles as an advocate for rural communities and industry as Director on the Board of Cotton Australia, Commissioner of the Qld Gasfields Commission, Member of the Central Highlands Accelerate Agribusiness Advisory Group and a number of other sub committees and community organisations.

MEANING OF SUCCESS

- A lot of lifestyle things come into mind for success to me. The farm comes first to me, for us, my family, and that is for the long term, for our children. The farm is our legacy. So any decisions I have must be aligned with any implications they may have on the farm, so success to me is having a strong farm base and a strong base for our family. If that's all humming along well and I have the freedom to pursue some of these ideas that spark my interest and I'm not just pursuing them for the love of money, but for that personal satisfaction, and creating things that I can engage my family in, that's probably success for me.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR

- Yes, I do see myself as an entrepreneur, or, probably more broadly as a business woman. I guess my definition of 'entrepreneur' is someone that seeks opportunity and acts on that opportunity, and has a flexible and fast-flowing way of approaching business and opportunities.



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MINDSET

- I guess the one thing that gets me through is that the vision and the mission is solid, so it doesn't change, but the vehicle I choose to get there, may change and will change often. So I may get six months into a business and question whether it is still taking me to the end goal, or I've talked with somebody and realised it is not the intended consequence of that so I can change that vehicle and shape as I go but the vision and the mission stays pretty solid.
- The innovation mindset is important.
- The abundance mindset too, where you are not always looking at your competitors.

OVERCOMING DOUBT

- I pull back, regroup, go through the process of (for example) quickly finding another client.
- I counteract the doubts with 'what's the worst thing that can happen?'
- Remember why you are doing what you are doing, and just have a go.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS

- I'm a good planner, which I think comes from that strategy-type mindset that I have.
- My ability to communicate and build rapport with others is also quite strong.
- I think some leadership skills help drive a business.
- I'm quite disciplined.

SUCCESS FORMULA

- I personally don't think there is one. I think it's an alchemy of traits that coincide at a certain point in time and a certain idea that makes this magical thing happen. I don't personally think that there's a step 1,2,3,4, and you created a perfect business, not for long term success.

PARTNERSHIPS

- I think it depends on your business and what you are setting out to achieve. I think you've got to look at your end goal and be clear on why you're taking on a partnership, is it for cash-flow reasons or to help achieve your end goal, but you've got to be careful. I think a partnership can absolutely take you to the next level. I work better in a team, I work better with other people, but that doesn't mean that I need to take on a partner. So, enter with caution, but if you think there is a partner there that aligns values-wise and the end goals are not compromised, then yes, go for it.



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MENTORS

- Critical - every single step of the way along I've had a mentor and a business coach and that may take different forms. Usually my business coach is paid, though a couple of times I've had an unpaid one. Mentoring is quite a broad definition for me. I've been in formal mentoring relationships and ad hoc mentoring relationships. I personally don't feel there's any way to grow or to continually improve and be better at what you're doing without some form of mentor.

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE

- If you've got ideas, that's great, keep the one that keeps following you around and bugging you and put the right people around you early, quarantine the negative people from your life. Invest your time heavily in people who are a positive influence, and go out and go hard. If it doesn't have legs, it's no big deal, roll on to the next thing.

BIGGEST LESSON LEARNT

- I think that ideas don't mean jack if you're not going to do something with them.

ONE AMAZING THING TO CREATE OR IMPLEMENT CHANGE

- There's so many things. I'm really looking forward to seeing where Rural Business Collective can go. I think it's got a huge amount of potential to be an absolute support tool. I'd like to see it grow from being a network to being a tool. At the last snapshot of our first one hundred days we did a cost-analysis and we think we can return people 4:1 on their dollar for their membership, whereas I'd like to see that 10:1. I said you give me \$1 and I'll give you \$10 back, you'll do that every day of the week and that's what I'd like to see Rural Business Collective get to. That's certainly a big focus for me going forward.
- I'd like to see a broadening of how we help facilitate people starting their businesses in removing barriers to business. I'd like to be involved in something that helps remove a massive barrier to business. We started Rural Business Collective on a crowdfunding platform and I'd like to see if there's any Angel funding type of thing we can do here for rural businesses.

CONTACT

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