

Danielle Doyle

Wild Spark



“The (WiRE) Program made me believe in myself and take action. The (Zoom) meetings kept me accountable and made me realise that I could turn my idea into a business. And I did! ”

YOU AND YOUR VENTURE

What words would describe you as a person?

Fun, happy, outgoing, extroverted people person

Describe how you would pitch your venture

My passion is people. Wild Spark is a rural women's network - connecting rural, regional and remote women in business - helping them be the best they can be no matter where they live.

At what stage is your venture?

Very new – under 6 months

What is your service or product?

Rural women's network – helping women who have a small business or would like to start an online venture – connecting them with likeminded women.

What is the structure of your venture?

Company – with Edwina Pilch

Does your venture reach local/national/international markets/audiences?

National



IDENTITY

In one word, characterise your life as an entrepreneur (why this particular word)?

Fun – because if we stop having fun then we are in the wrong business

What does success mean to you?

Building a highly engaged community

What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Connecting with my business partner and helping women be the best they can be

MOTIVATION / MINDSET

What mindset(s) helps make you successful?

Positive / can-do attitude – just keep on going, no matter how small the step is

What ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture or to make significant changes in an existing business?

I love attending conferences and love personal development. I have attended quite a few blogging conferences on the Gold Coast. I met so many women who are my friends today and help me with anything online that I don't know how to do. I formed such a great network. But it is just so expensive to go from the middle of nowhere to a conference like this – it costs thousands of dollars just in airfares and accommodation alone. I also love Business Chicks www.businesschicks.com.au - but this is also just not accessible for women in rural, regional and remote Australia. So I wanted to bring this sort of event to these ladies, where they can just drive to town (which may well be an 8 hour drive) but then they are there.

How do you conquer those moments of doubt that so often stifle or trip or stop so many entrepreneurs with great ideas... what pushes you through?

Just keep on going. Done is better than perfect and something is better than nothing. I know everyone has these doubts and fears and I just need to keep moving forward. Getting myself a business partner who shared 100% of my passion also drives me and motivates me. We bounce off each other. I couldn't do it without Ed and I think that is why I have just "thought" about this idea for around 3 years. I needed her to push me to actually do it.

What is your favourite quote?

"Don't wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel - stride down there and light the bloody thing yourself" Oh I love so many quotes and could list a gazillion.



VISION

What is your vision for your venture?

An online hub connecting rural, regional and remote women in business (or who want to start a business) - A one stop shop offering webinar workshops and series, online guest speakers. Eventually I want to have a whole library of video's and online tools available which we can then offer a yearly membership to access. I would also like to run a Wild Spark Podcast with Ed, and lastly real life events. We want to build these events organically, not force them on people. If we know there is an area that is really screaming for what we are offering then we will be there. We have started with our first event in Mt Isa which was a massive success and will now become a yearly event. In October we will be taking Wild Spark to Brookfield in Brisbane (Bridging the Gap – City meets Country) and also Dubbo down in Central West NSW. Hopefully these will also become yearly events.

SELF-EFFICACY AND SKILLS

To what do you attribute your success in progressing your entrepreneurial journey?

Talking to as many people as I can and asking who ever will listen to give me advice. The WiRE 12 week program that I was part of at the end of 2018 really gave me the push I needed to make this thing happen. It was towards the end of that program that I asked Ed to come on board as my partner and we haven't looked back. You need to surround yourself with positive people who get what you are doing. But mostly you need to believe in what you are doing and have a real passion for it. I truly believe in the old saying "Build it and they will come". People aren't going to really understand fully what it is you are doing but if you just keep keeping on and make it happen the only way you can prove it is to show them. Just do it.

What would you say are the top three skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

Generosity, honesty, and a real passion – "Give like you have plenty" – it is karma – you get back what you put out

What was your biggest mistake in an entrepreneurial context?

Not taking the business as seriously as it should have been taken in the beginning – not believing it could really be a business

What was the biggest barrier you faced in your entrepreneurial journey and how did you overcome it?

I never thought that I had the right to turn my idea into a business – what right did I have to charge people for something I love. But I have realised that is what a fabulous job is – doing something you love that doesn't feel like work. I mean we are happy to pay for junk food, or go to the movies or a live show so why on earth couldn't I charge people to LEARN and feel inspired??!!

What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur?

So far I don't really feel like I have had to make any sacrifices. Probably being away from my family while holding events – that is a little hard especially when we live so far from anywhere – it means I am away for longer than normal for a 1 day event.

In your view what factors help individuals make the transition to self-employment?

Drive – you need to put in a lot of work and time. But the time will pass anyway so you may as well just start somewhere.

STRATEGY

What would you say are the top three key elements for starting your business?

Passion, belief, and drive

What has been your most successful form(s) of marketing?

I don't think we do marketing all that well. Saying yes to any media coverage that comes your way is a must – just say yes. The radio interviews or even tv news interviews might scare the crap out of you but you need to say yes – just do it and you will eventually get better at it – this gives your business fantastic coverage. Our main marketing is through Facebook and the Miss Chardy community.

What are your thoughts on the value of partnerships?

I have partnered with Ed and I haven't looked back. It has shown me that I definitely needed to do this with someone who shares my passion. We bounce off each other, it is wonderful. We also bring different skills to the table. Ed is a really great business woman and has had her own businesses in the past. I love graphics and have also built my own website through my blog – Miss Chardy – this has taught me lots of valuable skills about websites and social media and also connected me with lots of people who can help us. I am not sure what I was thinking – thinking I could do this alone. I need other people. I am an extrovert and my batteries are recharged after spending time with like-minded people, so to think that I could do this alone was ridiculous. I love having Ed to share this with. It really puts a spring in my step.



Where did your venture funding/capital come from?

We have actually been very lucky that we haven't really had to put any of our own money in at this stage. We were certainly prepared to inject money out of our own pocket but we haven't had to. The event we held in Mt Isa has given us the funds we need to cover that and also go forward without having to dip into our own money.

What creative strategies did you use to execute on minimal cash flow?

Lucky I had Ed to slap me and make me realise that we can't do ALL OF THE THINGS. She has taught me to cut back where ever we can. It has been amazing. Like a switch has finally been turned on for me and I have realised that to make it we need to be really savvy with the money we do have.

What habits helped make you successful?

Just keep showing up – get in front of peoples faces. Like with my blog – no one really understood what the hell I was doing when I started Miss Chardy, but I just kept going. I just kept showing up and day by day my community grew from 1 Facebook fan to now over 6,000. Baby steps, just keep showing up.

What are your top two tools that you use in your venture (i.e. online tools)

NBN Satellite internet – I would not be able to do anything if we didn't have NBN and Pic Monkey for graphics – promo's, social media marketing, editing photo's etc.

Do you want to grow your business? How will you do this?

Yes but we are happy for it to grow very slowly and organically. We will do this bit by bit, event by event, build our website, grow our community and help as many ladies as we can. We believe it is important to give more than you take – we want to be very generous. Yes we are a business but it isn't all about the money, it is about our community and how much we can help ladies in rural areas feel great about themselves. We want to add value to peoples lives. One step at a time – Website, Webinars, Podcast, Events – more events... and so on

How do you stay motivated when things get busy with family and other things?

It is hard, being an extrovert living in an introverts world in the middle of nowhere sometimes my batteries feel very flat if I haven't left the station in a while – like right now – I feel very flat because I haven't been anywhere or seen anyone for over a month and it isn't good for me. I can finally recognise the signs. I know I need to get away and recharge my batteries with some like-minded friends. I feel very motivated when I have a set goal to achieve, so I know we need to sit down, lock in some dates for our Wild Spark events, and get to work.



NETWORKS

To what extent do you agree with the following statement and why?

“The connections and networks that exist between people and enabled cooperation is one of the most important things in entrepreneurship”

YES YES YES!!!! I fully agree with this. These networks are just so crucial. Not only do they allow you to form friendships but those friendships mean you have people to turn to when you need help. I have lots of these people that I have met through blogging conferences, I know I can message them and ask any question and they will sort me out or point me in the right direction.

What kinds of networks do you access to help your entrepreneurial journey?

Friends who have started businesses, blogging friends, WiRE network, You Tube, Facebook, webinars

Do you have a mentor? If so, how have they helped you? If not, was that a conscious choice?

I think I probably have many unofficial mentors, they are people I trust and I know will help me anytime I need to ask a question.

IMPACT OF THE WiRE PROGRAM

Why did you decide to participate in the WiRE Program?

I needed a good kick up the bum to just make my event in Mt Isa happen. I initially just signed up to make that event in Mt Isa a reality. I just thought it would be a one off thing – something that I had wanted to hold for around 4 years. All I had done was bang on and on and on about it, so the WiRE Program really made me stop and think properly about it and make it happen.

In what aspects of the WiRE Program have you participated in so far?

I completed the 12 Week Spring Hub Program and it was amazing.

What knowledge/skills have you acquired?

It made me realise that businesses come in all shapes and forms and all the women who were participating – and their ventures – made me realise that maybe I could make this thing an actual business. It made me believe in myself and my concept and then act on it and make things happen. Doing things properly, not just winging it - although I do still wing it a fair bit.

How useful were these skills in developing your venture and/or your future career?

Very useful, they are the reason I am where I am now, with a registered company and our first event under our belt.

What has been the impact of the WiRE Program?

(on both you personally and your venture)

Oh where do I start.... The WiRE Program is the reason I have started my own business in partnership with my friend Ed. It is the reason I finally made my dream of holding an event in Mt Isa a reality but made me think much bigger than just a one-off event. Wild Spark is a rural women's network... we are definitely in the early stages and still need to have our website built but we are getting there step by step. We have realised that this is definitely something women in rural regional and remote areas want and need and we can't wait to expand. It is all very exciting. We have set up our books properly from the start too. We have Rabobank on board as our banking partner and have engaged the services of Cloud Bookkeeping NT to do our bookwork. We want to get it right from the start and have everything neat and tidy and done properly.

What benefits have you derived by participating in the program?

I met many wonderful ladies who were all so supportive. I loved the weekly routine of signing on for the Zoom meeting – it keeps you accountable and really charges my batteries – seeing other women and hearing from them – that sort of thing is amazing for someone like me living in the middle of nowhere – it breaks down the barrier.

To what extent has the WiRE Program impacted upon you starting a venture? Have you started a venture as a direct result of your participation in the WiRE Program? If it has impacted on you starting a venture, have you registered an ABN?

Yes, I sure have started a venture as a result of the WiRE Spring Hub 12 week Program – Wild Spark! It is a thing, we have registered as a company, I have a business partner, we have our accountant sorted and have bought our domain name etc, we have our bookkeeper who keeps our finances in order and we are on track. We have an ABN and ACN. I made my first event a reality and turned my dream into a business.

If you have started a venture, what do you think are the chances of business/ventures survival?

I believe if we just keep going along, bit by bit and build our community Wild Spark will thrive. By taking our events to different locations we will then expand our audience and get bigger and bigger as time goes on. We will build our website, grow our online content and just keep on keeping on.

How appropriate are the skills to you which are delivered by the WiRE Program?

So important, it kept me motivated, on track and accountable.

To what extent have you applied the skills/knowledge learnt through the WiRE Program?

The WiRE Program played such a major part in me starting this business. It is the reason I finally did it. I definitely have applied the skills and knowledge I have learnt.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to develop strong ties between yourself and other women entrepreneurs? Why?

I have always loved mixing with entrepreneurs and hearing their story and feeling motivated by them. I also love introducing friends who have started businesses to other entrepreneurs who can help them.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped with the facilitation of emotional support for your entrepreneurial journey? Why?

The 12 week program was so great for me – logging in each week and feeling supported by all of those fabulous women

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to get to know and network with women from different backgrounds, for example different socioeconomic status, age, generation etc?

I think I have always loved doing this.

If relevant, have you influenced someone else through your WiRE experience to start or grow a venture? “Passing it on” .

Yes, definitely – There were women at our Wild Spark Mt Isa event who left that day and just jumped in and started their own venture.

Name the biggest overall lesson you have learnt in your entrepreneurial journey so far that could be passed on to other women

Believe in yourself. If you are passionate about something and willing to work really hard then just do it. Time doesn't stand still. The days, months and years will pass by anyway, so if you just start today then in 1 year's time imagine how far along you will be. Be kind and generous – give more than you take and you will reap the rewards. People are always willing to help so all you have to do is ask. If there is someone you admire who is doing something you love then tell them and ask them some questions. I bet they will be more than happy to answer them and help you!

Where to find you online

Wild Spark on Facebook and Wild Spark Rural on Instagram

www.misschardy.com

Miss Chardy on Facebook

Please share some final thoughts about the WiRE Program

The WiRE Program gave me the kick up the backside I needed to stop talking about my idea and make it a reality. It made me believe in myself and take action. Participating in the 12 week Spring Hub Program in 2018 meant that I was able to interact with like-minded women every week via Zoom meetings online. It was amazing and really motivated me. Those meetings kept me accountable and made me realise that I could turn my idea into a business. And I did! I am so grateful.

- Danielle Doyle -