

### Etina Mlambo

### **Audacity Business Solutions**



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#### YOU AND YOUR VENTURE

#### What words would describe you as a person?

Focused, Diligent, Tenacious, and Audacious

#### Describe how you would pitch your venture

As a Coaching and Training Business, we help small business owners and individuals uncover, discover and develop their strategic thinking, business acumen and leadership skills in achieving business /personal results on an ongoing basis. We do this by helping them gain self-awareness, clarify goals, achieve their development objectives and unlock their potential. This is done through our one on one coaching, group coaching and through our mastermind study groups. In fact, one of our clients went through our coaching sessions and got promoted twice in one year at his workplace.

### At what stage is your venture?

**Growth and Expansion Stages** 

### What is your service or product?

Coaching (Individual and Group Coaching), Training, Speaking and Mastermind Groups

### What is the structure of your venture?

Incorporated

#### What type of venture do you have?

We are a services business

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

It reaches all three markets

#### **IDENTITY**

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

Audacious - My life has been about being bold to pursue what I want. Having grown up with a lot of disadvantages, I learnt to be bold in order to see my dreams come true.

#### What does success mean to you?

Helping so many people realise their dreams and watch them live fulfilled lives

#### What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Just having the freedom to take an idea that seems ridiculous and see it come to fruition

#### **MOTIVATION / MINDSET**

#### What mindset(s) helps make you successful?

Learning to let go of things I have no control over. Knowing that failure and at times disappointment is part and parcel of the journey - being mindful of my self-talk especially when going through a tough time

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

When I started it was mainly because I needed another stream of income, and I also didn't love my day job. Later as I began to notice its impact on other people, how it was changing their lives and mine, it became a passion.

# 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?

I read a lot and I listen to motivational speakers and I also stay plugged in to entrepreneurial groups. These have helped me come back to my senses when I start doubting myself.

#### What is your favourite quote?

Your business is not your business! Your business is the thinking you bring into your business!

#### VISION

#### What is your vision for your venture?

To one day open Audacity Leadership Academy, offering leadership training for all age groups and all nations.

#### **SELF-EFFICACY AND SKILLS**

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

Personal growth and hard work

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

- The ability to keep moving forward in the face of hardship determination
- Creativity and the ability to think outside the box
- Adaptability

#### What was your biggest mistake in an entrepreneurial context?

Spending hours in the business and investing thousands of dollars in it without investing in myself. I wasn't growing as a person, and as a result those ventures failed. Also, not having systems in my business.

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

Getting to a place where I knew I had something to offer to other people. I managed to overcome it by believing that I was actually making a difference in other people's lives. I never used to believe their feedback, thinking they were just being nice. This was until I began to see the changes which were happening in them and their businesses.

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

Walking away from a well-paying job without a guarantee that what I was going to start will work.

### In your view what factors help individuals make the transition to selfemployment?

Knowing what it will cost you/ what it will entail- no guaranteed salary at the end of the month, having a strong support network

#### **STRATEGY**

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

- Having a big WHY
- Investing in Self
- Learning to be comfortable being uncomfortable

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

- Social Media referrals
- Word of mouth

#### What are your thoughts on the value of partnerships?

I honestly believe one is too small a number for greatness. We need the support of other people and organisations. They bring skills and insights we might be lacking. For partnerships to work though, we need partners who believe what we believe but think different thoughts.

#### Where did your venture funding/capital come from?

Apart from the grant we received to construct the website, we have been funding the venture ourselves from the severance packages acquired when we left day jobs.

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

I had to market my business more on social media. The other strategy was by offering free services which attracted a lot of clients and then encourage students to refer their friends and family to us, which they were happy to do.

### What habits helped make you successful?

Reading everyday and doing at least one income generating activity everyday

### What are your top two tools that you use in your venture

(i.e. online tools)

Social media and conference calling for online meetings

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

Yes. I will do this by enrolling more participants and introducing a diverse spectrum of leadership training courses.

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

Reading, networking, listening to other people's testimonials are my top 3 nourishment activities.

#### **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"

I completely agree with the statement. Every business we got, came through our networks, with people referring others to us, or people I have been doing life with on social media.

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

I am still part of the organisation I was certified through. I still attend classes here and there and I actively participate on their Alumni groups. I attend live events. I attend toastmaster events, and any other networking events in our town.

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

Yes I do. They helped me face my fears. Knowing I will have to provide feedback to them when we meet forces me to do those things I would otherwise not done.

#### **IMPACT OF THE WIRE PROGRAM**

#### Why did you decide to participate in the WiRE Program?

Initially it was just to get out of my comfort zone, and networking with other entrepreneurs. After realising its value, the second time around was more for accountability. I had a project I had put off for a long time and I knew that being part of the program, I was going to get support and be held accountable.

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

Wire Hub Program, Webinar Series, Workshop Series

#### What knowledge/skills have you acquired?

Developing systems in the business

Biggest take away - thinking big and global, overcoming the imposter syndrome, value of social capital, networking, marketing, time management, planning and communication skills

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

They have helped in making me more organised and focused on the important things in running the business.

### What has been the impact of the WiRE Program? (on both you personally and your venture)

#### Massive

- Went from being self employed to being a business owner
- Now have systems in the business
- Have automated most of the activities we do in the business
- Have managed to set up a website for the business through the help of other women in the Program
- Started to think Global In my last mastermind group, I had participants from UK, Netherlands, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia and Canada

#### What benefits have you derived by participating in the program?

Enlarged my networks - I still bounce ideas with some of the women I met in the program - grown as a business owner through the lessons learnt

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?

I was in business already when I joined the WIRE Program

If you had a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, have you grown your venture or scaled it up as a result of the WiRE Program? If yes, please explain your answer (both in terms of the dollar value of the total enterprise as well as the scale-up value, or/and increase in sales or growth in customer numbers) (whichever applies)

I would say our venture has grown in terms of customer numbers, mainly because now that we have a website we are reaching way more people than what we used to in the past.

If you did have a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, what has been the impact of the WiRE Program on the sustainability of business/venture?

Like I said before, I had no functioning systems in my business, and after the teaching on systems, I started putting systems in place in my venture. I had a lot of activities that I was doing manually, and I don't think I was going to last a long time doing that. I was always busy with non-income producing activities, but now most of those activities have been automated, leaving time for what really matters.

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

Very much appropriate - I learnt how to see myself as a business owner, the mindset I need to succeed in business, the importance of networking with other entrepreneurs and how to think outside the box. These are skills that are crucial to the success of any business venture.

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

I learnt about systems and I went ahead and applied those systems in my business. I was also challenged to think big and globally and I am now doing that.

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

While I don't ch<mark>at with mo</mark>st women in the program, I still have a few ladies that I collaborate with, bounce ideas with and that have helped me so much when I was setting up my systems.

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

It was huge. Every week we met, was a chance to just get to share the ups and downs I was going through. Our small breakout group was such a huge support, such that I was actually looking forward to the Hub sessions.

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?

So much - I now have connections with women from all over Queensland and I am still getting new connections each week.

To what extent has the WiRE Program enhanced your ability to link with other entrepreneurs and agencies outside the WiRE community that could benefit your entrepreneurial journey?

To a great extent - I used to network before, but after the teaching on social capital I started being intentional about networking and I also started following and learning from some of the guest speakers from the Program.

If your venture has not been online previously, has your venture gone online as a result of the WiRE Program?

Yes, we now have a website and social media presence.

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

I have encouraged women in my network to consider being part of the Program. I have also assisted a few ladies in starting an income generating venture, though on a small scale.

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

That my venture will grow in proportion to my personal growth - if I am not growing, then my business is not growing. My limited thinking will be a lid/ceiling on my business.

#### Where to find you online

https://audacitybusinesssolutions.com

### Please share some final thoughts about the WiRE Program

At the start of the year 2018 I made a decision to plug myself into communities where I was going to be stretched and continuously challenged to be a better person and business owner. That's what WIRE did for me. It challenged and stretched me. I had no systems in my business when I started. I now have systems in the business. I met women who assisted me in developing systems for my business. They also challenged me to see value in what I was doing and offering. I now have a functioning website and I am now finalising new courses that will be up on my website soon. I would recommend this Program to any woman who feels isolated and clueless in business. A special thanks to the sponsors and to Retha and her team.

- Etina Mlambo -