

Case Study: Mentoring a Young Entrepreneur in Jordan

Executive Summary

The aim of the mentoring experience undertaken by Samer Al Jabari was to achieve the successful creation and development of a reputable IT Software Development Company. To turn a sound business idea into reality, he decided to seek outside support through the use of a mentor. Mentoring had extremely positive impact on Samer's business growth which is now a leading IT software development provider in the MENA, but it also empowered him giving him the necessary confidence to undertake new challenges.

Challenges

Samer , a 25 years old graduate in Electronic Engineering with a business idea, decides to set up an IT Solutions Company specialised in software development. His "mentor to be" was initially his friend and a successful businessman, Laith Al Qasem (President of the Young Entrepreneur's Association (YEA) and CEO of Jordan Technology Group a Jordanian Venture Capital). While Samer was establishing and developing his business, he realised that Laith's previous experience of creating successful businesses was a huge potential to tap into. He also needed support, guidance and encouragement to take his business forward. Laith offered to become his mentor and to assist him through this process. Samer's key challenges were:

- Implementing his business idea and transforming it into an commercially viable business
- Learning process and procedures of setting up a business and setting up strong foundations for future growth
- Getting funding
- Formulating and implementing strategies to grow a successful business
- Getting independent guidance on strategic and practical issues without undermining his leadership in the company
- Seeking expert objective advice which could not be obtained through its own network of friends, family and colleagues. A mentor will tell you what you need to hear and not what you want to hear.

Approach

During the early stages of the mentoring relationship, the two sides agreed upon a set of objectives and the areas that the mentoring would cover. As their processes developed, a Non Disclosure Agreement was signed further cementing the relationship.

It was agreed by the two of them that the relationship would be purely based on exchange of experience and know-how and not on potential business interests.

Although the relationship was one on one, the YEA was an ideal incubator to develop the relationship.

It was agreed that the mentoring would focus on two critical levels:

- Strategic: the mentor's business acumen and expertise helped formulate strategies and plans of action for the mentee's business venture. The mentor's knowledge of the industry was an invaluable asset for the mentee.
- Practical: the mentee benefited from the mentor professional network. This allowed him to have access to the "right people" to assist him in hiring consultants, targeting investors for funding and developing his client base.

The mentor/mentee met on a monthly basis during the first year for around two hours. In addition to this, they would have regular phone conversations to discuss specific issues. Later on meetings were held as issues arose due to the fact that both parties became increasingly busy with their businesses.

Benefits, Value Delivered

The mentee describes the experience as a fulfilling journey without which he would not have been able to successfully grow his company. The outcomes for the mentor and the mentee were very positive both from a professional and personal level as shown below:

- On a personal level, the mentee was able to channel his “entrepreneur energy” into a structured business process. During this mentoring programme, he not only developed a friendship with his mentor, but he also achieved his objectives of personal development thus acquiring a substantial degree of maturity. He also felt empowered through the acquisition knowledge on a whole range of topics. This process positively shaped his personality as well as his approach to challenges and issues.
- On a business level, the mentoring process allowed him to create a sustainable business which grew into an important and reputational enterprise. His mentor supported him in establishing strong foundations for his company, which developed into a sophisticated model offering advanced services in the IT industry in the MENA region.

Subsequently the mentee became a mentor to several mentees. He even urged for young entrepreneurs to have more than one mentor (if time allows) thus maximising chances of success. Today he is still seeking mentoring for himself: a testament to the various benefits of such a process.