



From left: Dale Beaumont, Emma Brown, Anders Sorman-Nilsson.

GENERATION Y – THOSE AGED 15-YEARS-OLD TO 29-YEARS-OLD MAKE UP 20% OR 4.1 MILLION OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION. THEY ARE FAST BECOMING THE ENTREPRENEURS OF TODAY AND AS SUCH NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY OUR AGEING POPULATION. TO ASSIST WITH THIS, *GROWTH BUSINESS* HAS GATHERED THREE SUCH GEN Y ENTREPRENEURS TO FIND OUT IF THERE IS INDEED GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN OUR WORKPLACES AND AS SME OWNERS HOW TO DEAL. READ MORE IN OUR SPECIAL GEN Y REPORT...

GENERATION Y

SUCCESS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CATALIN ANASTASE

The secret to success

AUTHOR DALE BEAUMONT CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE ON A WINNER WITH HIS *SECRETS EXPOSED* SERIES OF BOOKS IMPARTING THE WISDOM OF THOSE EXCEEDING IN THEIR FIELDS. *GROWTH BUSINESS* TURNS THE TABLES AND EXTRACTS HIS WISDOM LEARNT AS ONE OF OUR GEN Y ENTREPRENEURS PROFILED.



Above: Dale Beaumont, author *Secrets Exposed* Series. www.secretsexposed.com.au

GB: Your background? How did you get into your now business?

DB: I've always thrived on healthy competition. This stems from my sporting background. At the age of seven I got into Gymnastics and by the age of nine I was training about 36 hours per week (two hours in the morning before school and four hours after and another six hours on Saturday). It was of course very intense and took up most of my life until the age of 18.

However, through this experience I learnt a lot of very valuable principles like: goal setting; personal discipline; priority management; delayed gratification; attention to detail; and the importance of having a coach – all principles which are very much a part of my business career today.

After finishing my sporting career and high school around the same time, I threw myself straight into attending loads of personal development seminars. After nine months of learning and learning I established my first business called Tomorrow's Youth. Then it was three years into it before I made the decision to create the *Secrets Exposed* series.

GB: Tell us about Tomorrow's Youth.

DB: Tomorrow's Youth International is a wonderful organisation and one, which we are very proud of. To date we have now run our two-and-a-half day Empower U program for over 15,000 teenagers across four different countries. The reason why it has grown so well is because of the passion and dedication of the amazing group of young people that we work with. We very much pride ourselves on being an organisation run for youth and by youth, so there is always a great amount of enthusiasm and a constant source of fresh ideas.

GB: How and why did you start the *Secrets Exposed* series?

DB: I had a lot of difficulty in the beginning. I haven't yet worked out whether it was an act of stupidity or an act of genius but having no real experience or a track record, I decided to produce the first five *Secrets Exposed* books all at the same time! I just figured that for economies of scale it would save a lot of time in the long run and it would mean that I could hit the market hard – releasing multiple titles quickly to make it impossible for a potential competitor to catch me.

I think my crazy gamble worked as the brand has now been very well received by bookstores

and the public, to the point where I have now had interest from people that want to licence my system to produce *Secrets Exposed* books in other countries.

I came up with the idea while working with teenagers. One of the things, which I always say is that there is only two ways to live your life – one is through 'trial and error' and the other, is by 'following a recipe'. I discovered that whatever you want in life chances are that someone out there is already living it. They have already invested the time, effort and money and eventually succeeded. So sure, you can go out and do it all yourself or you can find someone that already has the results you want and ask them to share what they have learnt.

Having shared this advice with thousands of people, I found that a small percentage would act on this advice but the vast majority wouldn't because of a lack of confidence or the skills to contact people in high places. Then it occurred to me: what if I could find, contact and interview hundreds of successful people myself and then put that wisdom into a series of books? Surely that would help a lot of people.

Also following Zig Ziglar's saying, "If you help enough other people get what they want, you will in turn get what you want," I knew my idea would make for a good business too.

GB: How did you deal with that difficult first year of business?

“Remember this saying: Success is not the key to happiness; happiness is the key to success.”

DB: Fortunately for me I was 19-years-old, so I was naive. I didn't really have any fear as I was running on pure adrenaline I think. Having the support of my best friend, as my business partner, was pretty cool and certainly helped. We would always give each other lots of encouragement and a kick up the other persons butt when we needed it. Other than that I was always asking people for help and taking lots of action.

GB: Did you have a mentor/coach to help you through?

DB: I didn't really have a single coach or mentor in the early days of my business. However, I did

have a whole host of people that I could call on when I needed help. That was one of the great things about attending lots of seminars, you get to meet a lot of people – all with their own area of expertise. So if ever I had a particular challenge, I would look through my address book, then pick up the phone and invite the best person out to lunch. I honestly had over 100 meetings in that first year of business and I'd like to think it was the best business degree I could have received.

GB: What is your definition of success?

DB: Of course everyone has their own definition and interpretation of success. For me success is about three words: Balance; Happiness; and Impact.

Firstly, there are many different facets to a person's life. It is a waste of time being a multi-millionaire if you're unhealthy, your marriage is in tatters, you have a poor relationship with your kids and you do nothing for your community. Really, what is the point? I believe that for a person to be truly successful they must take some time to focus on each aspect of their life. It doesn't mean every area needs to be a perfect 10 (nobody's is), however it is important to keep things balanced and in the right perspective.

Secondly, people need to focus on doing things that are going to make them happy. Don't wait because weeks quickly become months and months quickly become years. Maybe it is a dream holiday with the family, taking up a sport or hobby or time with special friends. Remember this saying: "Success is not the key to happiness; happiness is the key to success."

And thirdly, at the end of our lives I believe that we should be able to say: 'I gave more to the world than I took from it'. So for me, making a difference and having an impact on people is an important thing. And I really see the things that I am doing now as just the beginning.

Gen Y rules, ok!

EMMA BROWN IS 28 AND HAS BOUGHT THREE BUSINESSES AND SOLD ONE. SHE IS THE 'CHIEF CHICK' AT THE LARGEST PHILANTHROPIC NETWORKING ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESSWOMEN IN AUSTRALIA, BUSINESS CHICKS.



Above: Emma Brown, Chief Chick, Business Chicks, www.businesschicks.com.au

In the last 18 months, Business Chicks has donated over \$200,000 to Kids Help Line and held events and activities in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney (launching in Perth in May 2008). Emma Brown is a Gen Y success story and shares her insights with *Growth Business*.

GB: How did you get into your now business?

EB: I was asked to attend a networking function called Business Chicks. Curious, I went along to check it out. It was hands down the most amazing networking experience I'd ever had. I was immediately hooked. I was running my recruitment business at the time and excitedly got all my team on board with the Business Chicks concept.

We booked several tables at the next event to entertain our clients, and it was at that event that I learned Business Chicks was for sale. Never one to miss an opportunity, I started my due diligence and a few months later was awarded the right to purchase the business. It was an ambitious undertaking for me – running a thriving recruitment business and 'inheriting' another project that required my full attention – and I didn't understand the significance of purchasing Business Chicks at the time. I just thought I was doing a nice thing for charity. I didn't know that it would become my "full time gig" when I eventually sold out of the recruitment company.

I'm also the proud owner of the Last Thursday Club which is a network for big thinking professionals (entrepreneurs, corporates, SMEs). We meet on the last Thursday of each month and hear from two great speakers as well as facilitate excellent networking connections. This is just NSW-based at the moment – we will take the concept to Melbourne in March 2008 and roll it out annually by 2010.

GB: You deal with Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers in business – do you deal with them differently?

EB: I approach every person I deal with in business differently. It's not just an age thing either. I'm looking for clues with every person I meet. Are they cheeky? I'll throw in a joke. Are they quietly spoken and dressed conservatively? I'll lower my voice, contain my enthusiasm and watch my etiquette. Are they appearing self-conscious and unsure? I'll pass on a compliment to build trust and show

them they're safe.

In my team, I've a cross section of ages. I actually find that my Baby Boomers are more demanding of my time, and work to a level of detail that sometimes feels unnecessary. Don't misinterpret that – I am the most detailed oriented person you'll meet, but I know when and how to cut corners to be really efficient. I often find myself thinking: "do we really need to be doing that this way?" when talking with a Baby Boomer. I'd rather opt for the fastest possible route to a solution. For my entire career (I speak on behalf of Gen Yers here) I've been at a desk with a computer and mobile at hand. We work in fifth gear, and are often frustrated with others when they don't work at the same pace.

"Action is the key to everything, and a true entrepreneur has this in abundance."

My Gen Yers are ambitious, they work quickly, they're smart, and they're self-sufficient with their work. They may need extra attention and TLC at times, but if you're an adept manager this skill will be in your toolkit already. They want mentorship, they want strong leadership, they want their ideas to be heard, but don't we all? My Gen Yers challenge me to lift my game always and they're highly socially conscious.

My Gen Xers sit predictably somewhere in between. They're still in the school of researching from a book (but are highly proficient with Google too) and will work at a speed between Baby Boomers and Gen Y. They also tend to be more comfortable in their own skin – a useful vibe to have in a team of young people who are still finding their way in the world.

GB: Do you think you are too young to do what you do?

EB: I've never thought that. I'm not going to let my age, nor someone's opinion of my age and what I should be doing, affect the ambition of living a full life. You could've asked me the same question at age 18, and my response would have been the same. Next year I'll be the President of the Sydney chapter of the Entrepreneurs Organisation – am I too young?

No way. I'll bring a different style of leadership and different take on the health of our chapter and how to maximise the value we give to our members.

GB: What would be your advice to SMEs?

EB: Pick your business correctly. We've heard it a million times – if you don't love what you're doing, don't do it. Get another business that is going to juice you. It's that simple. Stop what you're doing and start again.

GB: Do you consider yourself an entrepreneur? How is that different to a business owner?

EB: I'm an entrepreneur because I take chances and I see opportunities (but more importantly I act on them). I bought Last Thursday Club in four days because I could see it being synergistic with my core business and I knew I needed to act. Action is the key to everything, and a true entrepreneur has this in abundance. I'm comfortable with risk and to try things that haven't been done before. I've got no ego around failing and trying again.

GB: How do you think SME owners should deal with Gen Y staff?

EB: If you're an SME owner, you should ask your Gen Y staff what they want. You should have frank discussions with them and ask them how you can serve them best. Ask them what frustrates them about working with you. Set short-term goals and tasks and reward them. Let them be themselves – whether that means allowing them to be expressed through the clothes they wear, or the times they work. Trust them and give them freedom. If they love what they're doing for you, they won't abuse this trust. There's no way in the world I'd switch off Facebook on my team. I trust them with my life, and if they want to spend some time on there each day, then go for it!

GB: What is the future for Gen Y?

EB: More of the same I'm sure. They'll want to work with socially responsible companies; environmentally aware businesses; companies that are making a difference and allowing their people a level of freedom and lifestyle.

Thinking generations

ANDERS SORMAN-NILSSON IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE NEW GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THIS COUNTRY. HE BELIEVES: "THE GERBER E-MYTH IS DEFUNKED, BECAUSE I LOVE GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY WITH CLIENTS TO ACHIEVE LONG AND SHORT-TERM RESULTS."

While I love strategy and thinking about my business, the process of being in it really appeals to me, while the prevailing notion of working on the business seems to currently appeal to many business owners." *Growth Business* finds out what makes this Gen Y tick.

GB: Your background?

ASN: I am originally from Sweden and immigrated to Australia with my family when I was sixteen and immediately fell in love with this country. I came out here not speaking much English, but within two years of learning the language I finished school with a UAI of 99.70 and won a 100K scholarship to study Arts/Law at the Australian National University. It was my only chance to stay in Australia when my family moved back to Sweden, so you can say I was fairly driven to do well in school. I am a (reformed) lawyer by profession, and now advise businesses and sporting teams on how they can funky up their thinking and future-proof their performance for the 21st Century.

GB: How did you deal with that difficult first year of business?

ASN: At times it was tough, because not only was I starting my first business, but moving from Canberra to Sydney also meant that I really did not have either a social or a business network here; so that it is something I have enjoyed building simultaneously. I think inspiration, determination and a supportive network have really helped.

GB: Did you have a mentor/coach to help you through?

ASN: Through mentors you learn things to do, and equally what not to do in business so through different mentors at different stages I have learnt what I needed to. Now I have a fantastic and enlightened mentor who has really helped me step up several notches and got me to ask myself 'how high is high?' It is very important to have great people around you who can identify gifts and talents you yourself take for granted or are not aware of, and who help you polish those areas of strength.

GB: Do you think you are too young to do what you do?

ASN: No. Age is a 'defunked' measure of competence in the 21st century. I now get to work with the likes of Macquarie Bank, BRW Fast 100s and Brad Fittler at the Sydney Roosters, all of who value the unique, fresh and funky insights I bring.

GB: What would be your advice to SMEs?

ASN: In order to stand out in the uber-competitive 21st Century you need to think funky or be defunked. There is no excuse for not constantly learning, unlearning, and relearning. The price of not upgrading your thinking software equals being smashed by a global tsunami of ever-increasing change.

GB: How do you think SME owners should deal with Gen Y staff?

ASN: We are an entrepreneurial bunch and innovation is our birthright, so first of all you must allow us to make an impact in these areas of your organisation. Unless you realise that age is a defunked concept in the 21st century, you should stick with Boomers and Veterans, but good luck to you as these guys are on their way out of the workforce. Gen Y are the most demanding generation to enter the workforce and rightly so, as they are the most educated generation in history. Actively involve them in your change programs, respect, incubate and harness each individual's unique talents, and give them a chance to be 'self-actualised' at your company. Also make sure that you recruit and retain the right blend of cool Gen X and Boomer Managers as Gen Ys treasure inspiring leadership.

GB: What is the future for Gen Y?

ASN: They seem like misfits at the moment because the prevailing view of Gen Y in corporate Australia is based on an old-school managerial and values-based paradigm that is dysfunctional in the cutting-edge business climate of the 21st Century. The future is bright because Gen Y is in tune with and the drivers of change globally and locally. Having said that there are also downsides to Gen Y and they are certainly no panacea to all business problems.

For example, many need to learn how to 'manage up', funky up their thinking when it comes to communication, and recognise the inherent wisdom and experience of their workplace elders. I think the day when we see true generational diversity and respect in the Australian workforce is the day when the generational talent pool is truly compounded, and we make quantum leaps in innovation, creativity and productivity. I think Australia needs to start mining its brains rather than its soil to truly be competitive in the age of ideas.



Above: Anders Sorman-Nilsson is a lawyer by profession and a Funky Thinker by passion at coaching and training firm Thinque. He speaks at conferences internationally on the topics of innovation, future-proofing your business, and generational diversity. www.thinque.com.au

Anders' White Paper *Funky Ys: how to Attract, Incubate, and Retain Gen Y Talent* can be ordered via sales@thinque.com.au

Anders' book *Think Funky or be Defunked: future-proofing your business for the 21st Century* is due for release internationally in early 2008.

"The price of not upgrading your thinking software equals being smashed by a global tsunami of ever-increasing change."