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A proof of where strong will & desire can take you

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SkillsXcellerate



HOW AND WHEN MITJA STARTED HIS BUSINESS

Who would have thought enrolling in optics secondary school and being the head of the optical department of a medical center could lead to running a successful business that on top of that has nothing to do with glasses? It may seem unlikely for an outside observer, but for Mitja, the desire to make something for and of himself was always there. He did not care all that much about the particular area of the business, he just wanted to give it a shot and try making it as an entrepreneur.

At 25, after some years of working as the head of the optical department, Mitja decided that the time was right to give his entrepreneurial dream a try. Working as an optician one would think that something to do with optics would be his choice of business. But no, Mitja decided to go in a completely new direction, in an area of business he did not know all that well. A company that he established started with the production of promotional items for companies.

Starting his business he had almost no entrepreneurial knowledge (apart from some insight he gained from the wholesale department in the optical center), no technical knowledge about the processing of mass or about how machines work, but what he lacked in the technical aspect he made up with motivation; he was fuelled with the desire to make it. And it paid off.

HOW MITJA DEVELOPED HIS BUSINESS

At the beginning of his business path, for a long 6 years Mitja was working two jobs; at the medical center and simultaneously running his business that already had two employees. In 2011 he finally realized this was stopping the development of his business and was taking a toll at his personal life, so he decided to quit his job and go all in with his business.

This decision turned out to be crucial. Having all this time for running his company meant he became more efficient in all areas – and it showed. Soon after this decision, the company started to experience tangible growth.

In the meantime, the company switched from producing promotional products to household appliances and later, to what is now their main activity, to the manufacturing of plastic products for the food industry.

As a young entrepreneur, Mitja was sometimes a bit naïve, impulsive, and prone to stress. But during all of these years in business, he gained a lot of knowledge and also grew as a person; he knows now not to trust people unconditionally, to always have everything important written down in the form of a contract, not to jump straight into something but to wait and think about it, to sleep on important decisions, and what is also very important, he found a way to reduce stress through physical activity to preserve his health.

WHAT ARE MITJA'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Mitja's plans for his company are to continue with quality work and to continue being an established player in the food industry. On the more practical side, developing new products is on the to-do list for the future.

He and his team members are always open to learning new things, to developing professionally in different areas of running a business. When there is a chance, they participate in seminars on management and selling, for instance how to manage employees better if we name just one.

Being a successful entrepreneur Mitja does not hold back when it comes to giving back to the community. Sponsorships and donations are some of the activities his company is often involved in. Concerning the green aspect of his company, they use solar panels that they have had installed on the roof of their building, and they also produce biodegradable materials for products in the food industry.



WHAT ARE MITJA'S SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WILLING TO START THEIR BUSINESS

How does one become a CEO of a well-established, fast-growing company that thrives? Determination, focus, hard work, and taking some well-measured risks from time to time would be Mitja's answer. For those who are looking for more practical advice on how to make it, Mitja's answer would be to invest the profit that a company makes in the company's development and not for personal use. He knows what he is talking about; instead of buying a new car with his first profit, he sold his own car which together with the profit money was enough to buy some new machines that enabled the company to grow and develop further. To sum up, staying grounded, planning ahead and not be deceived by the first profit would be one of Mitja's pieces of advice for young entrepreneurs.

Overall, Mitja is very happy he made that bold decision all of those years ago and he achieved what he wanted; he made a successful business from scratch. Sticking with your idea is also one of his advice for young entrepreneurs, not to give up when challenges arise and believing in your story are all pieces of advice that fall into the same category. Mitja went into business without much knowledge and fortunately succeeded but this is not something he would advise others. Quite the opposite, to educate oneself as much as one can about different aspects of entrepreneurship before starting a business would be his tip.

Looking back on his path, if having a chance to change something it would be quitting his regular job much sooner and going into business full time.



Image source: all pictures used in this story are from Mitja's personal archive.

We wish good luck to **Mitja!**

If you are interested in learning more about Mitja's business or to get in touch with him, you can contact him by

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