

## Designing a great business

AN exceptional eye for design helped Narelle Craven develop a unique and innovative business. Thanks partly to the Small Business Mentoring Service, Logozoo is making a real name for itself on Victoria's surf coast.

Narelle established Logozoo in June 2006 after completing a graphic design/multimedia degree and working for Roxy/Quiksilver for 18 months. She also completed the NIES (small business management) course in 2006.

Passionate about all things design, the business allowed Narelle to work flexible hours and the ability to produce a style and quality of artwork she is proud of. Logozoo designs websites, logo and branding packages, print advertising, business cards and brochures. It also prints brochures, business cards, stationary, banners, signage, packaging and promotional items. "I also design and produce ranges of boutique greeting cards," Narelle says.

"I enjoy working with other small businesses to reach their design and branding goals. I am able to sell my art as commercial products, and make money out of something I love doing. I'm never bored, and I'm excited to go to work each day. I learn something new every day."



Narelle works alone but has a book keeper. Clients are mostly small to medium businesses, but she also freelances with other designers where needed and sells some of her amazing artwork on her website. "I use an independent photographer, web developer, sign writer, printer and a copywriter to complete jobs," she says.

Logozoo's graphic design work tends to be local, but its greeting cards sell worldwide. Clients love the fact that they speak directly to the designer and that its logos are unique, "just like all the animals in a zoo are unique". "Logozoo creates unique and different logos that stand out and reach their target audience," Narelle says. "We also print and deliver your brochures and business cards. This means less hassle and less stress for our clients."

While her skills and product were of high quality and in demand, Narelle felt she could better move forward with some expert advice on the business side. “Everybody should have a mentor,” she says. “They can view your business from a different angle, often pointing out things that go unnoticed, or not even considered. Most of us are so busy working on our everyday business that we forget to stop and assess what is actually going on.”

Narelle found out about the SBMS at a Surfcoast Shire forum, after which the shire sponsored 10 businesses to be part of the SBMS program. She was matched with mentor Martin Shirley. Martin has more than 40 years’ experience in the transport, logistics and freight forwarding industries and is skilled in sales, marketing and general management. His company, Martin Shirley & Associates, was purchased by corporate giant Patrick Corporation.

The SBMS is a non-government, non-profit organisation of volunteer expert mentors who give their time and experience to help small business. It is supported by Small Business Victoria, which refers clients to it. Narelle had four sessions over six months under the Business Acceleration Program BAP4. Mentoring is continuing as needed.

Martin helped Narelle produce a business and marketing plan, and provided advice in a range of areas including:

- Producing long term agreements with clients for regular income.
- Business to business management.
- Networking to obtain more clients.
- Cost effective marketing.
- Time management and the delegation of tasks which took Narelle away from her main purpose, such as BASS statements and accounting.

Martin also helped Narelle identify her Point of Difference and encouraged her to follow up all her contacts to ensure her business became better known to potential clients.

Since seeing Martin, Logozoo’s profitability has increased and Narelle has improved her understanding of short, medium and long term goals. Her business acumen and knowledge of cost-effective marketing have heightened, and she is better equipped to make Logozoo marketable. Narelle realises she needs continuous income streams and that she needs to get into the marketplace, network and promote her business.

Martin says producing a business plan enabled Narelle to better understand her business and what had to be done to make it profitable. “Narelle is now much more focused on her business and what she wishes to achieve,” he says. “She is now focussed on developing and building the business for the medium term to make it viable and a profitable business.”



Narelle says she is now much more organised, has employed a bookkeeper at Martin’s suggestion, and has defined hours she sticks to each day, boosting her productivity. “Because I’m more organised my stress levels have reduced,” she says.

Logozoo's new brochures have also been successful in making people aware of the business.

Narelle is extremely grateful to Martin for his help, which made her stop and think about what she needed to do. "Martin helped me put systems and paperwork in place that were much needed," she says. "My artwork is (also) now protected by a legal contract."

Profits are up by 30 per cent, sales by 25 per cent and new customers and enquiries by 15 per cent. Narelle has also expanded her greeting card range and is also building a new home office.

Narelle says seeing Martin forced her to take stock and improve her processes. "Many of the tasks completed were ones I knew I had to do, but never got around to," she says "I think SBMS forced me to work on my business as well as 'in' my business. It was the 'little push' I needed to get things done. If it wasn't for SBMS I would probably still have a list about a mile long!"

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