

Passion and commitment drive million-dollar web success story

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It's the classic dot com tale. University friends launch an internet-based company armed with little more than a hunch.

That was 1997. Skip to 2010, and Web Drive has gained 18 staff, lost three founding directors, narrowed its focus to web hosting and has grown into a company that turns over \$6 million a year.

Managing director Daniel Williams admits there were some hard lessons learnt early, such as the downside of mixing business with pleasure - which saw the three directors move on.

Despite the downsides, Mr Williams has retained his passion for the business, and Web Drive now has eyes on the Australian market.

Why did you become an entrepreneur?

Ever since I can remember I've wanted to be a "businessman". When we started our business as a part-time hobby we had no idea where it would take us. Over the years I've always enjoyed the creative process of developing products and helping others achieve their own goals. I realised early on that the only way to achieve my own goals was to own a successful business.



What have been the biggest obstacles in running your company?

Tax bills and banks. The first bank we were with wouldn't lend us \$10,000 without all sorts of security, so we felt very limited by that, until one day a mentor suggested we talk to the ANZ who have since helped us finance the acquisition of several competitors. Since we began our relationship with ANZ three years ago our turnover has increased over 200 per cent.

Name one thing you've learnt while in business and from whom?

My mentor and business coach Grant Raven from Advantage Business has been working with us for about four years now and one thing I learnt from him is to negotiate everything. This advice has saved us tens of thousands of dollars in various fees over the years.

What are your business and personal goals?

My personal goal with the business is to put the best people in place to cover all aspects of its successful operation. I believe that when you give people responsibilities that may put them slightly out of their comfort zone they will step up and do a great job.

As we create new positions in the company we always try to hire internally to give our staff the opportunity to grow with the company.

Our main business goal has been to reach 20 per cent market share for web hosting and domain names in New Zealand. We currently have 15 per cent. We've also launched a service in Australia last year and are looking to grow this business significantly.