



CORE
BUSINESS ACCOUNTANTS



CENTRAL TO YOUR SUCCESS

Case Study – Brett Graham

Then...

It's 2011 and sitting down to coffee, Brett Graham is relaxed and it's not just because he has taken three months off from his business to raise much needed funds for one of the Sunshine Coast's favourite charities.

He's relaxed because he knows his business will operate smoothly without him. Why? Because he trusts and empowers those around him, and in return they willingly take responsibility and enjoy the challenges of stepping up and being part of a much-valued team.

Brett makes business sound easy, but then it is easy when you love what you do.

For a real estate man, Brett is something of a quiet achiever even though in 2011, he had ownership or a financial interest in seven Ray White Real Estate businesses across the Sunshine Coast. He was also president of the REIQ Sunshine Coast zone at this time.

Brett managed the cluster of businesses as if they were one, offering training and leadership for all. The businesses share an administration hub, benefiting from economies of scale for operating expenses while enjoying the expertise and value of long term and trusted administrators who have worked with Brett for many years.

For Brett, good business goes hand in hand with good communication.

He's a listener. He listens to the market and the REIQ, to his clients and to his team. It's a skill he learnt in the Police Force which is also where his innate sense of community was developed.

He's a communicator, but not the loud and demanding to be heard type, rather the sort that has you hanging on every word. Brett is informed and genuine, and what he has to say is usually of great value.

Brett's also good at allowing others to do what they're good at, through mentoring, encouragement and creating an environment where success comes naturally.

He seeks out people with potential, coaching them through the various aspects of business. It is this process of personal and professional development that delivers competent and confident equity partners who go on to be business owners in their own right.

The direction and future of Brett's Ray White businesses are guided by a leadership team comprising managers, equity partners and a trusted team of advisors – his lawyer, banker and accountant.

Trust is central to this group. Brett talks about the foundation of his business model being the "Speed of Trust". The premise being that without trust, those around you can slow processes, create inefficiency and increase business costs. Conversely, trust accelerates the business as people accept responsibility, take control and usually complete jobs with precision and pride.

Ashley McGuirk from Core Business Accountants is Brett's 'trusted' accountant and Brett says "Ashley is simply part of the fabric of the business."

And now...

Fast forward to 2019 and sitting down to coffee again, Brett is planning ahead for a year off to travel with his wife Jenny.

He's still relaxed about allowing others to run his business, because he's still committed to the business bedrock he calls the 'Speed of Trust'.

When he announced to his Buderim management team that he planned to be absent for 12 months he asked them what they needed from him so that they may run the business.

Together they made a list and since then Brett has been working with each manager filling the gaps in their knowledge.

Providing this type of practical support is Brett's MO.

He leads by example, both in terms of setting up the physical structures necessary for operating a successful business and by ensuring a supportive culture is firmly in place.

On the topic of culture, Brett's definition is pragmatic, noting "culture is simply behaviours you're willing to tolerate".

When trust underpins an organisation's cultural, and therefore behaviour expectations, things tend to move quickly as there's no time wasted, second guessing or wondering about motives as everyone is simply on the same page. Hence, the 'Speed of Trust'.

This year marks 20 years since Brett purchased his first Ray White business in Maroochydore. During that time, he has expanded and reduced his holdings in various Ray White businesses across the Sunshine Coast. Today, he owns Ray White Buderim having sold most of his financial interests in the other Ray White businesses to the equity partners he introduced and helped to become the successful business owners they are today.

As for Core Business Accountants, Ashley McGuirk also celebrates Brett's 20-year milestone having been directly involved in Brett's business journey and an eye witness of his personal and professional success.

Brett says there haven't been many decisions over the past two decades that haven't involved Ashley, acknowledging that Ashley knows the business every bit as well as he does.

Brett also recognises Ashley's talent for looking into the future, strategising and implementing solutions for problems the business won't need to worry about. "Ashley's advice has become even more valuable, it's pre-emptive and intuitive." Longevity is one of many important qualities that have made this a successful business relationship. It has resulted in a great depth of understanding that spans the business as well as the bigger picture of Brett's family, business partners and team members.

Brett credits Ashley, Jenny Newport and the Core team with providing a diverse range of services – day to day accounting, complex advice regarding business acquisitions and disposals, business and tax structures, processes for introducing and releasing equity partners, strategies for involving financiers and financial planners which also takes into consideration Brett's considerable personal affairs.

While the pair speak monthly on average, they only meet formally three or four times a year. Given the complexity and extent of Brett's business and personal financial affairs this is significantly less than most would expect, but then, it all comes down to the 'Speed of Trust'.