

turning visions into reality

David Guille FCA is passionate about running his own businesses.

Story Geoff Kingswood **Photography** Raw Image

David Guille FCA acknowledges it was his father who was the initial and main influence to go into business – even though they probably didn't realise it at the time.

"We talked about his work at the dinner table. Dad would find old lawnmowers, fix them and sell them in the Sunday newspapers. It was here that I first experienced the effects of value creation and that money was an idea – (profit didn't equate to effort and secondly the idea that as long as people thought they were getting a bargain, the sales process was made easier," says Guille.

Guille's father also helped him when he was 11 or 12 to buy shares in the Adelaide Advertiser. "I couldn't understand the annual report although it did have me interested.

"As my brother, Simon, and I got older Dad would take us to car yards and bargain with the salesman and then later explain the techniques that person used. I think

Bachelor of Business would go a long way to realising his dreams. It was the same family friends who convinced him that becoming a Chartered Accountant would be another very wise move.

"It was now 1984 and my university marks were solid but not spectacular, so I found it difficult to be noticed by the larger firms. It was a sole suburban practitioner who finally gave me an opportunity at one of his two offices. The guy was going broke and slowly shedding staff and closing down his operations but I was gaining invaluable experience fielding queries and doing work for clients," says Guille.

"I moved on to a city firm with five partners and worked as a tax accountant – I think after hearing about my struggles in a less-than-ideal work situation, they were impressed by my passion to remain in the industry.

that had now grown from 30 staff to more than 150, his own small business division numbering 12.

His first real hands-on experience in business came at the age of 26 when two of his clients purchased a well-known hotel in the nightclub district of Perth and invited him to be a director and shareholder. The operation included 25 staff and required Guille to visit most nights after his day-job hours to review operations. "I soon realised that this type of business required full-time supervision to ensure cash flows were adequately guarded. After 15 months I sold my shares and declared to never again invest in a business unless I had left the profession and could devote 100 per cent of my time to it," says Guille.

In 1992 Guille went solo – starting his own public practice from scratch. He remained a sole practitioner for the next seven years, increasing staff levels to four and concentrating solely on business clients. Guille sold the practice in 1999 and took some time out to think about what made him tick and who he wanted to be tomorrow.

Guille's first contact with his construction company partner, Marcus Kotsoglo, was via Kotsoglo's parents in the mid 80s - completing their tax returns. It was 2004 when Guille arranged a meeting to see if he was interested in starting a business in the industry. On 2 January 2005 Building Solutions (Aust) Pty Ltd started its first project – a small office fit-out for a public company.

"Neither partner had any experience running an organisation in this industry although Marcus had been in the field since starting as a carpenter at age 15. "We had no personal brand names to leverage from, a small amount of cash, no clients, no staff, no sub-contractors and no affiliations

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this was the reason Dad got into the car industry. He was very good at sales and won numerous awards – exciting for Simon and myself (still not teenagers) as he would always come home in different cars – we'd explore them and then go for a drive."

PASSION FOR BUSINESS

Guille recognised early on he had a passion for business, but thinking university was only for 'smart people' was unsure on his next steps. Luckily, close family friends cemented the idea that along with learning the ropes, a

"The firm was a major player in WA's mining boom and under the direction of one of the partners I was able to lead the float of Tectonic Resources NL. I consider my time at this firm critical to my experiences of today. Gaining valuable advice directly from these partners – ranging from soft skills to technical skills – made me realise that to be successful is not a job, rather a way of life."

Guille completed his Chartered Accountants qualification in mid-1988 and by 1989 he was a manager at the firm

with established organisations. Yet, through very regular 60-70 hour working weeks, we have created a business that has never borrowed funds for working capital, employs nearly 20 people directly and over 150 indirectly and has seen turnover increase to a level that will reach the vicinity of \$30 million by the end of 2010.”

Since its inception, Building Solutions has also become the private builder for numerous wealthy individuals and public companies and won awards from the Master Builders Association in WA. In 2009 they received the prestigious John Roberts Award as the Best New Commercial Builder in WA. Welcome recognition from the industry indeed.

Business Solutions offers a full design service ranging from concept design ideas to full working drawings. It arranges all aspects of council application and submissions and, on occasions when required, has the convenience of its sister company Planning Solutions (Aust) Pty Ltd to offer its expertise on town planning matters.

“Naturally, when you are so busy life always tends to add to it and in April 2005 my brother approached me to see if I would be interested in going into business in Broome setting up a motor vehicle repair facility. Simon had been there for seven years working as a service manager for a local repair shop and could see a good opportunity to open his own business.

“We started up Broome Motors and repaired vehicles, 18 months later we obtained a motor vehicle dealers’ licence and commenced selling second-hand cars. All those times spent in car yards with our father were going to pay off,” recalls Guille.

In 2007 Broome Motors was awarded a Hyundai franchise and Broome Hyundai took off – with turnover pretty much doubling every year. Recently, they were awarded a second franchise for Isuzu utes. The business now represents the equal biggest service outlet in the Kimberley region.

“I am extremely proud of my brother as he implements the strategies we regularly discuss and has been absolutely integral to the creation of one of the best equipped and presented facilities in the region. Broome Motors has won a Small Business Development Corporation Award as the best business in the Kimberley region with between 10-20 employees.”

With improvements in remote access, Guille now only needs to travel three to four



times per year to review activities and be present at dealer principal meetings, as required.

SIMILARITIES

Guille sees a lot of similarities between the construction and accounting professions in terms of results and underlying ethos. “The construction game is all about solving problems and to make ethical decisions in providing solutions. Our company’s brand position is *Building Our Reputation on Solutions*. Marcus and I are committed to building our reputations and to not sacrifice anything simply for a quick buck.”

He notes that going into business doesn’t free up your time – in fact it is the opposite and you need to be prepared to invest a large amount of hard work to be truly successful. “You can spend your whole career seeking to attain that nirvana of a balanced lifestyle, but in reality it does not stay balanced for too

long. Be prepared for that.

“I also believe that personal growth cannot be developed unless you share some of your abundance. I established the Dawn Guille Scholarship a few years ago – in honour of my mum – to help young people. The scholarship provides financial and mentoring support to a graduate of the West Australian Institute of Fashion and Textiles. We choose the candidate who possesses the goal of excellence. When combined with their skills, they offer the promise of effective service to the community in the years ahead.”

“I challenge all those members of the Institute who dream of starting their own business to have a go – you have built up skills and knowledge so take them out for a spin! Happiness is not derived from having a king’s ransom in the bank – it’s pushing your personal boundaries to higher levels, learning new skills, seeking new adventures, setting goals and achieving them.” 