



Ten questions in ten minutes with Sarah Trotman

Sarah Trotman is the founder and driving force of the Bizzzone Business Expo and the Vero Excellence in Business Support Awards. In these challenging times, Sarah advises business owners not to use the doom and gloom as an excuse for poor performance.

Business to Business: What inspired you to start up your business?

Sarah Trotman: When I was working in our family business my father had a boating accident; so, as I was his right hand, I was fast-tracked to the position of CEO at the young age of 26. With little support and little training for this new role I experienced real challenges and isolation. Later when this business was sold I took up the role as CEO of Business in the Community where I spent more and more time with business owners, and realised that my business challenges and the isolation I experienced, despite having great staff, was all too common. While a business owner is generally very technically proficient, they often lack skills to run and grow a successful business. The business expo was conceived as a one stop shop for the busy business owner, where they can work 'on' their business not 'in' their business, and make real connections to innovate, energise and grow their business.

BtoB: Who has influenced you the most professionally?
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ST: Sir James Fletcher was a tremendous mentor for me, and I am privileged to be able to tap into the expertise and experience of many great business people like my father, Craig Heatley, Colin Bass, Sir Ron Carter etc. I've tapped into different support depending on the issue I've needed to get my head around. Generally business people are very generous and will give you some of their time.

BtoB: How would you describe yourself as a businessperson?

ST: Courageous – I push the boundaries too far to ever describe myself as confident. Energetic. Impatient. Resilient. Totally focused.

BtoB: What do you consider your greatest achievement?

ST: My children – nothing is more important than the developing mind of a young child.

BtoB: And in business?

ST: My business – we attract 13,000 business owners nationwide to our Bizzzone Business Expo, making it the largest event for business in New Zealand. We also produce the largest

circulating business magazine in the country – 40,000 Bizzzone Business Support Magazines target business owners and SME influencers.

BtoB: With hindsight, what is the one thing you would do differently?

ST: When we went to research international business support initiatives we were expecting to be inspired but realised Bizzzone's business support model is world class so we could have developed up our global plans a lot sooner.

BtoB: Who do you find inspirational and why?

ST: Sir Peter Blake, he was a courageous leader who contributed enormously to the spirit of New Zealanders but also significantly to our economy. And there was Bill, a bloke who lived in a boarding house I owned. Life had been tough for Bill. He taught me that luck actually does have a lot to do with your success. My friendship with him was humbling and very special.

BtoB: What is your favourite website and why?



■ Sarah Trotman

ST: www.bizzone.com – it rocks.

BtoB: What is the first thing you would do if you became Prime Minister?

ST: I would never want to be Prime Minister, I am an entrepreneur. But... I'd tell business owners that Government provides a framework
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within which business can be conducted, Government is not responsible for your business success. The greatest impact anything or anyone can have on your business is YOU.

BtoB: What is the best thing about being in business?

ST: The exhilaration!