



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD®
Shared Wisdom, Bottom Line Success



TAB AUSTRALIA MEMBER FINDS CLARITY AND FOCUS TO GROW HER BUSINESS

For many business owners, the first year of operations (or first five years) often presents the greatest challenges. Whether it's fine-tuning and introducing new products or services, coping with elements of the competitive landscape, or simply finding new customers, fledgling business owners can face daunting odds just to survive.

For **Rachael Atkinson**, co-owner of MB Automotive Fleet Specialists in Queensland, Australia, the first five years—while challenging—proved successful. They discovered a sizable demand for fleet specialists and were up for the challenge of meeting that demand.

But after the “opening phase,” Rachael and her business partner, **Matt Bolger**, found they didn't know exactly how to plan ahead for the *next* five years.

MB Automotive Fleet Specialists, located in Townsville, specialises in maintaining and repairing fleets of vehicles for local and regional businesses. These fleets include cars, light trucks and trailers—anywhere from a small fleet of one or two vehicles to fleets of 100 or more vehicles.

MB Automotive services, diagnoses and repairs these fleets, but as Rachael says, “We don’t just throw parts at cars, thinking that can solve the issue. We make sure the vehicles run smoothly and reliably each and every time.”

STEADY GROWTH AND A POSITIVE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Rachael and Matt started the business in 2014, with just the two of them in the office (and Matt as MB Automotive’s sole mechanic). Together, they built the business to encompass a workforce of three mechanics, an apprentice mechanic and a full-time office assistant.

“We believe in creating a positive environment for our employees,” Rachael says. “Given the challenges of recruiting qualified mechanics, we place considerable emphasis on our team living and working locally and enjoying the North Queensland lifestyle.”

At the same time, MB Automotive competes for skilled labour with major mineral mines. Finding the right people to meet the company’s growing needs is a constant challenge.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

After nearly five years of steady growth and achieving an annual revenue of \$1.1 million, Rachael and Matt found themselves pondering the company’s future. “We’ve been delighted by the success of our business, but in 2018, we discovered there was a lack of clarity and focus about where to go next,” she says.

That’s when she was approached by TAB Australia Facilitator, Mary Stevenson.

“Mary invited me to attend a TAB Board meeting to see if this group of business owners might help Matt and me with our situation,” Rachael says. “After the first session, I decided to become a Member. It’s one of the best business decisions I’ve ever made.”

As a result of her membership in TAB, she adds, “we’re achieving greater clarity around the direction of our business and our business goals and strategy. This helps us communicate more effectively with our staff and determine the right priorities for MB Automotive. Our business has a much stronger foundation to build on, and we have plans for our future, plans for our staff training and development, and plans to increase our revenue and profitability.”

WHAT TAB CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Rachael strongly believes that “to achieve your goals, it’s vital to focus, plan carefully, advance with confidence and be motivated to make things happen.” Also, “you should surround yourself with passionate people and inspire them to achieve.”

Finally, she adds, “you can’t be afraid to ask for help.”

Since 2018, Rachael has found the help she needs—and, in turn, provided valuable guidance to her fellow Members—in TAB Australia.

“Running a small business can be an enormous challenge,” she notes. “Sometimes it’s necessary to step away from working *in* your business and start working *on* your business. TAB has given me this opportunity.”

What does she say to other business owners looking for help and guidance from TAB?

“From being in TAB, you’ll learn that you’re not alone and that you have a great sounding board for your challenges and ideas. You’ll see it’s possible to enjoy the support of a like-minded group of business leaders who hold each other accountable for their decisions but aren’t judgmental. These people genuinely want to see each other achieve their personal and professional goals.”

Owning a small business can be a struggle, Rachael concludes, “so you need to ensure you have the right direction and balance between life and work.” She encourages business leaders to give TAB membership a try, particularly since prospective members have three months (at no financial risk) to decide if the peer group model is right for them.

“I absolutely believe TAB is worth investing in, and it’s likely you will, too!”

