



Business Leader Turns to TAB BECAUSE "IT FELT LIKE MY HOUSE WAS ON FIRE!"

SINCE 2007, MAIRA RIBEIRO HAS SERVED AS OPERATIONS MANAGER at MT Solution, based in Clarkston, Georgia. MT Solution is a wholesale business specializing in the distribution of medical and surgical supplies to foreign markets. The company negotiates and coordinates with suppliers, and navigates international bureaucracies so clients receive the products and services they need and can focus on their own core business.

ORIGINALLY FROM SÃO PAULO

Maira practiced law for five years in Brazil before she became a legal consultant for MT Solution. At the time, the company was in a transition stage, becoming part of a multi-country consortium.

In 2006, Maira and her husband came to the U.S. to build a business for sourcing and exporting orthopedic components and devices to Brazil. Within seven years, she and her husband built the company to annual revenues of \$35 million. After the decline of the Brazilian economy in 2014, the couple purchased a company in Chile. Her husband assumed leadership of the Chile project and Maira stayed in the U.S. to oversee continued operations here.

That's when she realized she might be in over her head.

"THINGS WERE FALLING APART!"

Maira faced numerous challenges on her own—everything from the best way to capitalize the business to hiring people to fill key executive vacancies. Personnel issues dominated her time, a challenge that required grasping the cultural nuances involved in hiring U.S.-based warehouse employees, call center agents, operations managers and other staff that could support a complex international operation.

"One month into my husband being off in Chile, several key employees resigned and I was faced with changing our employment payment structure, in order to ensure our salaries were competitive within the industry," she recalls. "I needed help because it felt like things were falling apart!"

Around this time, she crossed paths with TAB Facilitator/Coach Buddy Hull. Maira was aware of TAB and had, in her typically efficient manner, thoroughly researched the organization beforehand. But attending a Business Owner Advisory Board Meeting convinced her this might be the answer to her challenging executive-level challenges.

"It was clear to me I needed the benefit of some outside perspectives," Maira recalls. "Since joining TAB, we have completely revamped our HR structure, created a comprehensive employee handbook, instituted regular lunch meetings with staff and designed other key policies to make the workplace environment more attractive and productive. Before joining TAB, I'd never considered these actions before."

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

For MT Solution, things are still very much in flux. The Brazilian partnership is dissolving, with a new partnership recently formed to expand operations in Portugal and Germany (with other potential international locations being considered as well).

"Right now we're busy formulating a vision for the future that includes expanding our client base and providing additional services in these international locations," Maira says. "TAB Members have proved to be very helpful in reviewing my various growth strategy options. It's been very eye-opening in the sense that I get a variety of operational perspectives on how to do things differently than I have in the past."

In addition to planning for the future, TAB has helped Maira hone her executive skills in numerous other ways. "I've learned how to better manage my time and delegate more efficiently. Slowly but surely, I've also learned how to hire people I know I can trust and avoid micromanaging them once they're on board. This has been a tremendous help!"

These days, Maira is very excited about future growth opportunities. But she still vividly recalls the time several years ago when she was in crisis mode.

"Beyond addressing all the day-to-day issues and not having someone else to help with key decision-making, I had no time to work on things that were most important to the organization," she says. "It felt like my house was on fire! Joining TAB helped me put out that fire."

Best of all, Maira's fellow TAB Members are helping her explore opportunities for personal growth, so she and her husband can create a new life for themselves in the years to come.