

YOU CAN'T BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT A POSITIVE MINDSET

Building a company can be hard. Doing it on the side of a day job while marrying and getting children can be even harder. Jef Van Hyfte and Koen Mortelmans from Mobile Locker did it. How? "By having the right mindset", says Jef Van Hyfte.

Door David Hanny

You and Jef started Mobile Locker on the side of a full-time freelancing job in marketing. How did you manage to build up a company while still working a 40-hour workweek?

When you start a business you must be willing to put in the effort. Sometimes I did shifts of 18 hours I think. Koen and I didn't sleep much - we invested all our time and energy into Mobile Locker. We really worked our asses off.

How long did it take until you could quit your job as freelancers?

I finally quit in 2015, when we had investors. Koen and I already had families back then so we wanted to have a secure income.

When you say you also have a family, how do you manage to split up private life and work?

That's not easy. Every minute I don't work I spend with my family. This means that there's no spare time for friends or other stuff. That's what building a business is like though. Your whole energy goes into the company or the family. Mobile Lockers is like an extra child in the family.

Were there also moments where you just thought "hey screw this"?

Probably yes, but never that much that I would say I don't want to do this anymore. But there are definitely moments in which I think life used to be easier. Less complicated. But that's how the cookie crumbles. It's a lot of running against walls and picking yourself up again.

I think as an entrepreneur you have to have a lot of confidence in yourself, a lot of confidence in your idea and a good network that you can trust. You also have to have a positive mindset. You can't succeed in entrepreneurship if you don't have a positive mindset. You really need to believe in the idea and be optimistic.

You started out with your partner, now there are eight people working in your office. Does running a business get easier with more employees?

Sometimes you can delegate - but we're still a young organization. We're still figuring out what is going to be our end strategy. My colleague Koen still drives the truck if needed. I also go to festivals if I need to. The work needs to be done.

Did you use any knowledge you got from your education when building your company?

I don't think so. The education I got was something completely different. I studied interpreter for Russian and English. I use my languages of course. That for sure. But on the business side of things we had to learn everything from the ground up.

FULL MINDSET

What would you do different if you could start over again?

If I had the experience I have today I would do a hundred things differently. For example, Koen and I lost a lot of money because of needed consultation for every new step we took with our company. We had zero experience in running a business. Today I can assess business situations better and therefore make better decisions. But that's the learning curve.

Would you ever have imagined becoming that big?

I always believed we had a good idea. I always thought that we had something with a lot of potential in our hands. If you don't have the ambition and belief, I don't think you can keep a company running. You need the long-term ambition and a growth mindset.



TIPS AND TRICKS

Be enthusiastic. Always have a vision in front of your eyes.

Look for help in areas where you need it.

Failure is part of the game.

Believe in your idea. Be confident.

Work with the education you have. You don't need an MBA for running a business.

Aim to think positive.