

How to develop a social enterprise from the ground up

In the realm of entrepreneurship, building a startup is often seen as a challenging endeavour. It requires dedication, resilience, and a clear vision to navigate the turbulent waters of the business world successfully. However, when the goal of your startup is to address significant societal and environmental issues, the journey becomes even more daunting.

This article explores the G.I.F.T. method to guide aspiring social entrepreneurs on their path to success. It also delves into the story of Gift Wellness Ltd, a social enterprise I founded in 2012 to provide high-quality sustainable sanitary wear, whilst simultaneously providing aid to women in crisis, to motivate others on their path to developing a social enterprise.

The G.I.F.T. method: a roadmap to success

As a budding social entrepreneur, it can be tricky to crystallise your purpose and catapult big ideas into reality. This is where the G.I.F.T. method can be

helpful for crafting a roadmap to success.

The G.I.F.T. Method consists of four crucial steps, each encapsulated in the acronym G.I.F.T.: Gratitude, Illustrate (your intention), Focus, and Triple-Bottom-Line. Let's delve into each step:

Step 1: Gratitude - Harnessing the past to fuel your future

Gratitude is the foundational step in the G.I.F.T. Method. It helps you overcome limiting beliefs that may stem from past tribulations. By embracing challenges and acknowledging the wisdom they bring, you generate a propelling force that catapults you toward your aspirations. Practising gratitude daily through prayers, affirmations, maintaining a gratitude journal, or even expressing gratitude for hardships can help recalibrate your perspective and build resilience.

Step 2: Illustrate your intention - Breathing life into your vision

Illustrating your intention is about giving life to your grand vision. It requires clarity and precision in articulating your aims and purpose, allowing you to focus your energies on essential facets. This can be achieved by envisioning your future self, creating a mood board, crafting a narrative, or constructing a mind-map. Regular engagement with your vision is crucial to keeping motivation alive.

Step 3: Focus - Sharpening your sights and directing your energies

Focus is the phase where your illustrated intentions translate into tangible actions. It involves cultivating a focused mindset, developing an action plan, utilising tools for focus, surrounding yourself with aligned energies, and celebrating small wins. Focus is the catalyst that accelerates the realisation of your dreams.

Step 4: Triple-Bottom-Line - Weaving sustainability into success

The Triple-Bottom-Line is the culmination of your intentions, focus, and actions into a sustainable and harmonious entity. It balances People, Planet, and Profit, recognising the value of human beings, environmental stewardship, and ethical earnings. Incorporating giving back into your business model and welcoming alignment and continuous improvement are key aspects of implementing the Triple-Bottom-Line.

Gift Wellness Ltd: An example of

purpose-driven entrepreneurship

Gift Wellness Ltd is an award-winning social enterprise that has made its mission to empower women by addressing period poverty, toxic menstrual products, and environmental waste. As the founder of Gift Wellness Ltd, I embarked on this journey after a personal tragedy – the untimely death of my daughter. This heart-wrenching loss inspired me to create a positive impact by supporting women in crisis situations around the world.

Despite having no prior experience in running a business, I designed and developed an innovative range of plastic-free menstrual products. Gift Wellness products, made from natural ingredients and biodegradable corn starch in place of plastic, are not only eco-friendly but also significantly more absorbent than conventional brands, resulting in longer-lasting products that minimise landfill waste.

One of the key features of Gift Wellness is its commitment to a “buy one, give one” approach. For every pack of menstrual products sold, the company donates period products to women in crisis situations, including those in homeless shelters, refugee camps, food banks, and schools. This approach not only builds customer loyalty but also solidifies the brand’s image as a purpose-driven entity.

Gift Wellness operates as a limited company and is a certified social enterprise, blending profitability with impact. Its governance model reinvests profits to further its mission, creating a business that contributes positively to societal and environmental well-being.

Conclusion

Building a social enterprise from the ground up is undoubtedly a challenging endeavour, but it can also be one of the most rewarding. The G.I.F.T. Method, with its four steps – Gratitude, Illustrate Your Intention, Focus, and Triple-Bottom-Line – provides a comprehensive roadmap for aspiring social entrepreneurs. By following this method, individuals can crystallise their purpose, navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship, and create businesses that contribute positively to the world.

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