

Core focus helps business Tidy Up

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TONY Berry's first priority upon inheriting his father's one-man rubbish removal business 10 years ago was to grow the operation by focusing on its strengths.

Now, with nine staff, Tidy Up is still a family company, offering commercial and residential bag and bulk rubbish removal, and tree cutting and collection services, to the Perth CBD and eight surrounding shires.

After dabbling with the idea of offering other services, including an earthworks service, Mr Berry decided that growing and improving on what the business did well was the key.

"Branding has been a big part of moving business forward."

- Tony Berry

"I went off on a bit of a tangent, but it didn't work. It tied me down, there was too much administration and we couldn't control quality," he said.

"That's when I found it was doing more of what we do, rather than trying to expand on the brand and offer people more services."

After the handover, Mr Berry worked on getting the business back on track – focusing on its core competencies and implementing more efficient business systems.

"When it's a one-man business you can get away with a lot, but as you move forward and start to employ people, your weaknesses get exposed," he said.

Mr Berry identified areas of weakness in the business in order to drive growth.

In an effort to reduce equipment down time, the first investment he made was to improve the quality of the equipment used.

Brand new equipment was bought to replace the mainly second-hand gear, while a hire-purchase arrangement was im-

plemented for extra equipment, realising added tax advantages for the business.

With the logistics of the operation updated, Mr Berry then began building and refining the business systems and formalising administrative procedures with the help of West Leederville-based boutique accounting firm, Brentnalls.

One of the first things Brentnalls did was address Tidy Up's cash flow issue, by implementing a new client payment system.

"This changed our cash flow around from a situation where we were constantly chasing up small debts and allowing customers to accrue debts, to a system now where we basically charge in advance for hire," Mr Berry said.

"That's made a massive difference to our business.

"It's reduced our administration and made things more efficient on the road. It's also enabled us to clear our credit cards, given us a healthy amount of working capital to work with and the opportunity to re-invest in the business."

Mr Berry then implemented a marketing campaign, which included branding, a new logo, and online and print advertising.

A long-time client, who was also a graphic designer, offered to assist with the design of the logo and branding.

Bi-monthly strategic marketing meetings were also introduced, allowing Mr Berry to track the success of his marketing strategies by monitoring sources of all new business.

"Branding has been a big part of moving business forward. Now it's been a matter of really monitoring our results, finding out what's working and taking out those advertising things that aren't bringing strong results," he said.

With the aim of growing the business model so that it could be duplicated around the state, Mr Berry said his five-year aim was to establish a presence from Mandurah to Joondalup.

He remains in close relationship with Brentnalls, which has been pro-active in encouraging



TIDY WORK: Tony Berry aims to grow Tidy Up's business model so it can be duplicated around the state. **Photo: Jemma Howard**

and supporting growth companies, holding bi-monthly meetings with a group of business owners to discuss their issues.

Mr Berry believes the meetings are an invaluable opportunity to pick up information and ideas on how to solve business problems, and how to address them by "looking outside the box".

Free from the day-to-day operations side of the business, Mr Berry said he was now able to work on attracting new business – encouraged by a 100 per cent increase in turnover in two years and the balance sheet registering cash-flow positive for the first time in five years.

PROBLEM SOLVING

COMPANY: Tidy Up

BUSINESS: Commercial and residential bulk rubbish removal and tree cutting.

PROBLEM: Growing the business after inheriting it from father.

SOLUTION: Build and refine business systems, with the assistance of business adviser; establish branding and marketing.