



YS UP GOVERNANCE AND BOARDS PODCAST

Episode 6 – The Shark Tank Experience & The Benefits of Sales Training with Ryan Tuckwood, ISR Training

Transcript

Intro:

Welcome to YS Up Governance and Boards podcast brought to you by 3YS Owl Governance Consultants. Covering hot topics in governance, risk, latest regulatory changes and issues keeping directors and executives awake at night. Here are your hosts Ainslie Cunningham and Deb Anderson.

Ainslie:

Welcome to another episode of YS Up. Today we're joined by Ryan Tuckwood, welcome Ryan. Ryan is one half of the Shark Tank victors at ISR Training, ISR is a multi-award winning sales coach organization based on the beautiful Gold Coast and they now train people across five continents. Ryan openly admits he was a reluctant sales professional struggling initially, and even sleeping on a bathroom floor at one stage. He has now coached over 5,000 businesses and individuals globally. Showing his clients how to close over \$1 billion in new sales revenue in the last few years alone.

Ainslie:

Ryan and business partner Jack Corbett boosted their profile in 2018 after appearing on Channel 10's Shark Tank, where they became the first company in Australian history to successfully secure the support of three Australian entrepreneur powerhouses in Glen Richards, Steve Baxter and Andrew Banks who now sit on the ISR board. Welcome Ryan.

Ryan:

Thank you very much, and thanks for having me. Nice cold winter Gold Coast day.

Deb:

24 degrees outside.

Ryan:

That's cold to me. The electric blanket is out. It's always interesting hearing that rap, and we spoke about it as a team this morning that very rarely do we sit back and have a look at what we've achieved and show a level of gratitude. It came from one of our guys, Chris, that I think you might know, Chris Blackburn, he just moved into a bigger house from where he was before and he said he had a little moment on the weekend where he was sitting there going, "I've worked bloody hard for this." And he said he never does it, he doesn't actually take stock to sit back. So, when you go through and you read that rap it's a mix of really awkward, just waiting and actually going, "Oh, we've done all right." So, thanks for the intro.

Ainslie:

Yeah. Well, tell us a bit about ISR Training, Ryan.

Ryan:

In a nutshell, we work with business owners, entrepreneurs, sales professionals, from all walks of life. From your owner operators, sole entrepreneurs, all the way through to your C-Suite execs, your corporate enterprises, ASX listed fortune 500 companies, and we help them grow their businesses through what we call ethical sales training, which is a bit of an oxymoron at the best of times. What we've created is something called SWISH, which stands for Selling with Integrity and Selling Honestly.

Ryan:

It was founded, and I'm sure it will come out during this conversation anyway, it was founded due to a frustration of all the regurgitated 1980s sales tactics that were out there that were teaching people to lie, bully, and manipulate. What we wanted to show was that sales and communication, for all intents and purposes, could be done a different way and actually be an enjoyable process to be in as well for all businesses. And that's where we came from.

Ainslie:

So, tell us a little bit about some of the things that you've learned through the process of going on Shark Tank.

Ryan:

Shark Tank in particular? Wow. Firstly, you don't get the money as soon as they say yes, so you don't walk behind the cameras and then they hand over a cheque. They hand over a piece of paper that says, "We're now going to go through due diligence and rip you to pieces." So, it is a process. What you see on the show was 12 - 12 1/2 minutes I think they put on TV, and we were in there for just over two and a half hours in total back and forth negotiating.

Ryan:

I guess one myth I'll dispel straight away about Shark Tank is, there's no prep, they don't know anything about you, there's no scripts. It is just hard out negotiations in there, and it's quite intimidating. I'm an introvert by nature, so to put yourself in that environment was pretty scary. Lessons that I've learned, one of the big ones that I always say is from Glen Richards, the Founding/Managing Director of Greencross Vets, he said to us very early, "My job as a leader is to challenge your thinking." And I've taken that on board with my team. I believe my job as a leader, as a business owner, as a sales coach is to challenge people's thinking, and to raise your line of sight.

Ryan:

So, stop looking down and in, and start looking up and out. I remember when they came to us, so we got Steve, Andrew and Glen, they came to us once the deal actually went through and they asked us to come with our three-year projection. We had our three-year projection, we put it on the table, and they came with their version of a three year projection. There was about a \$10 million variation in the projections, and that just really hammered home for me that we weren't looking up and out, we weren't thinking big enough. So, when I got asked that question, that's probably the most common answer I give is that we think a lot bigger now, but then we're very strategic with the way that we think big as well.

Ryan:

It has to be realistic, but having the framework, having the systems in place gives you the strategy, and that will probably be the second big message that I've got is that systems breed the freedom. I know a lot of people get a bit fearful of systems and processes, and I'm somebody that loves it because I'm an engineer at heart. I was an engineer for eight years, but having the structure of literally what is every single person doing every minute of every hour of every single day, has led us to have 300% growth in the 18 months since those guys have come on board. So, that'd be a couple of the major ones I think.

Deb:

How much input are they having in terms of mentorship and support?

Ryan:

More than I thought. The literal answer is two hours a month. We're supposed to have two hours per month with each of them as per their shareholders' agreement, what it actually turns into is pick up the phone whenever you like, and just ask them a question, text message them, but every single interaction is with purpose. That's probably another real big lesson, Ainslie, that I've got from them is utilising my time wisely and valuing my time. So, not being rude or short and sharp with people, but making sure that there's a purpose to every single meeting.

Ryan:

So, if Steve Baxter rings me for instance, I know that it's going to be a two or three minute call, and it's going to be a valuable call. He's calling for a reason. We're not calling really to find out about how his twin daughters are or how Maverick is, my son is, that has been happening organically over time as we build the relationship, but there's usually a purpose behind it.

Ryan:

So, two hours a month is the official answer, but they speak at our events, they tour for us, they do podcasts, they coach and mentor on our accelerator program now as well. They've been unbelievable, and I think that's probably another myth around Shark Tank. I think people think that they just give you the money and wish you all the best. I cannot speak highly enough of those three guys, they've been amazing.

Ainslie:

And so, as an executive and managing director for ISR Training, what's some of the things that keep you awake at night?

Ryan:

Pre-COVID?

Ainslie:

Well, both. At the moment, what other word's on everyone's mind except for pandemic?

Ryan:

Yeah, I think for me it's responsibility. I'm not from a business background, I'm sure there'll be people listening to this or watching this that might be in their first business venture, and all of a sudden they've been thrown into an executive role, CEO, managing director type role, and they've got people they're responsible for. For me, having a team of people that have their extended families, their kids, we sponsor people as well to stay in this country, the survival of our business means the survival for them. That keeps me up at night, especially during COVID.

Ryan:

The idea that we could have lost everything, and we put ourselves in a very fortunate position. Obviously, I could leverage off the Sharks experience, they've been through recessions before, and I was able to get my head round it very very quickly and manoeuvre quickly. My worst-case scenario is something that previously kept me up at night, but my worst-case scenario reality is bankruptcy. You lose everything, I go back to the U.K., but the responsibility to my staff, that they then lose everything as well because I hadn't made the right decisions, that 100% keeps me up at night. Still does a little bit.

Ainslie:

Yeah, definitely. What are the little gems of experience they've passed on to you at the moment in terms of managing through a crisis?

Ryan:

I don't know if it's a specific gem, but it's more of a light at the end of the tunnel and I think that's what we need right now. I remember Glen said to us, "Your job as a leader is to absorb fear and exude hope." You absorb the fear of everybody around you, and we spoke about it previously before we came out here, the team expects you to have all the answers, but if we're honest with ourselves, we don't have all the answers ourselves, but we need to create that light at the end of the tunnel.

Ryan:

What they did for us was create the light at the end of the tunnel that, "Hey, look, we've been through this before. There's been recessions, there's been crashes before." They just basically showed us the history of what happened after a big crash, and what that did for me was give me a sense of hope. I then on explained that to my team and said, "Look, we will come out the back end of this, but what we need to do is risk mitigate where possible. We need to lean everything up." Right now, the market is going through grief. If we look at the change curve or the grief curve, we're in a state of shock and we're in a state of grief.

Ryan:

We weren't spending at the start of April, but they said historically, that will last a couple of weeks, which it did, and then we saw a buying behaviour start to resume. Which, when they tell you that, and then the first bit happens that gives you another little bit of trust, and then they tell you something else, and then you get more trust. And then eventually you just start buying into everything that they say, because these guys have created billion-dollar empires, right?

Ryan:

For me, they created a light, they created hope for us, and they told me to be super patient. They explained that we shouldn't be trying to sell hard to people, which we'd never done. SWISH, selling with integrity, selling ethically is what we believe sales should be anyway, so I believe that the market has been forced to sell in a way that we should always be selling. Andrew Banks kept saying, "Communicate 10 times more with your prospects than you have been already."

Ryan:

I've got my daily non-negotiables, which I think you guys know about. I've got my 10 daily non-negotiables, that previously was to touch base with three of my current prospects every single day. Prospects or indeed current clients. We put that up to 10 people a day, and that came from Andrew. He's like, "Reach out to them more, ask them what's going to change for them in the future. What can you do for them right now?" And we created more value in the market.

Ryan:

We were recent and frequent because they knew an upturn was going to come, they knew stimulus packages were going to come. They knew that JobKeeper was coming, we didn't know what it was at the time, but we knew something like that would come, and that would fill the market with confidence, which it did. And then when the market's ready, they'll start spending and they'll spend with the people that were there for them, the ones that were trying to give, not take, during a time of crisis. We did all that, and it's working, and we saw a tremendous back into April, May has started phenomenally as well.

Ryan:

We did a 14 day sales challenge, which you guys know about, and we had almost 700 people in total register for that in the space of less than 10 days, which shows that the market is also shifting to online training as well. I guess if they're little nuggets, they're definitely the sort of practical things that they gave us, that created hope and a desire to want to continue when most people want to just throw the towel in.

Ainslie:

Yeah, absolutely. How have you found staff morale and the culture of having to go through this? It's probably the first time for a lot of your staff, and working from home and those sorts of challenges, how have you found leading through that?

Ryan:

I'm pleasantly surprised. I think the first week to 10 days maybe there was a level of, "I don't like it, it feels weird." And now, if I'm being brutally honest right now, I prefer it. As you know I've got a young family and growing family, I've got a nice rhythm now. The team are as productive as we've always been, our market and our clients are getting just as much service as they were previously and if anything, I'm questioning why I've got such a big overhead for a fancy office in surface paradise.

Ryan:

From a team morale perspective, we again, we haven't really changed an awful lot. We do our morning meetings every single day, we do Monday Motivation, Tuesday Training, Wednesday Wow, Thursday Think Tank, Friday Fun, which is a quiz. We still do it, we just do it via Zoom. We do an afternoon whip every single day. I talk to my team more than I probably did before. If anything, it's just very structured about when we go about it. My team have surprised me, which says that I've got the right people in the company.

Ryan:

And I think there's a level... I think it was a lady called Shari Levitin who I'm interviewing, she's an American sales coach, and she said, "To gain trust, you need to give trust." And what we do I think very well as an organisation, we give trust to our team. We say, "Hey, look, we're an outcome based organization, so this is what we expect from you every single day. These are your KPIs. At the end of every single day I want you to deliver a daily feedback email to me letting me know your productivity, your questions, and challenges, and any wow factors where you went above and beyond for a client."

Ryan:

And we just trust that they do it. And when you do that, and you don't micromanage them, and you don't keep looking over their shoulder, they actually become even more productive. That's exactly what we've seen. I'm over the moon with how it's happened so far, but we are, as a caveat to that, we are going back into the office next Monday.

Deb:

It's like talking to a friend because I spoke to Rob last week, and we just had this long conversation. You've got some beautiful people working for you.

Ryan:

Yeah, we always talk about the three Ps, right? We talk about people, process, and performance. If you get the right people there in the first place, and if you look at all of our staff, every single one of them has come through the program. They've done the sales training programs with us either physically or digitally, they've seen impact in their own life personally and professionally. So, they thoroughly believe in what we're doing here and what we're trying to achieve. When you get that, and then you put them into a process that works and you give them a level of fulfillment, the performance just pops out the back end anyway.

Ryan:

I think the problem for a lot of businesses is we focus on performance, and we focus on profits instead of trying to get the process right. Trying to empower your team by giving them personal and professional development. The biggest reason that people cite for leaving companies is that they didn't feel that they were progressing. They were just there to do a job and make one person rich.

Ryan:

It was a pyramid scheme, whichever way I want to look at it. Whereas if we give 1.5% of their salary back to them in personal development every single year that they have to spend outside of our company, that means that they're going to continue to grow with us. So, hopefully that's why you have enjoyable conversations with the likes of Rob. Who's an absolute legend, by the way. He's just a nice guy as well.

Ainslie:

I think it's testament to your business with all the awards and milestones that you guys have won in terms of winners of Young Entrepreneur of the Year for 2017, named in the Top 100 Young Entrepreneurs in Australia in 2018 and 2019, Top 40 Under 40 Entrepreneurs for 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, Winner of the Gold Coast Business Excellence Awards for Mayor's Innovation Award for 2017, 2018 and 2019, with Shark Tank success in 2018, Citizen of the Year finalist in 2018, and like you mentioned earlier, 300% growth in 2019. That's an impressive list of awards.

Ryan:

Sounds all right. I'm running out of years for the young entrepreneur one though. I was leveraging off Jack for a long time because he's nine years younger than me. I'm 38 this year, so you have to be under 40 to win any of those young ones. I've got a couple more years left and we'll see if we can add to that list.

Deb:

A bit of pressure for 2020, isn't it?

Ryan:

Yeah, I know. Yeah, there is. The most ironic one in there I will say is the Citizen of the Year one. We were runners up for Citizen of the Year in 2018, which is beautifully ironic because I'm not a citizen, so if I'd have won that, that would have been fraud. It was one by Sally Pearson. She's an Olympic gold medalist, so fair play to Sally. Go and get it.

Ainslie:

Yeah, you don't mind losing to a worthy candidate, do you?

Ryan:

Exactly right, yeah.

Ainslie:

Tell us more about your mission to change the perception of sales. How do you find some of your clients and their perception when they come to you versus their perception now that they're onboard and they're seeing the results from the SWISH methodology?

Ryan:

Yeah, well firstly, the mission started because of my journey. My journey came from, as I alluded to earlier, Mechanical Maintenance Engineer for eight years in the U.K., moved over here in 2010, fell into sales kicking and screaming in a call center, absolutely hating it. 300 dials a day, had to find out if somebody was qualified for \$15,000 to \$25,000 in the space of 90 seconds. Massive levels of rejection, which gets you at the best of times, and especially if you're an introvert like I was or still am deep down. What I realized when I started studying sales, it was all the same sort of regurgitated stuff. Just say this, fabricate this, mirror and match. Mirror and matching is essentially, you're actually lying.

Ryan:

I was in the call centre and I was hearing people say, their prospect was saying they've got two kids, and they will go, "Yeah, I've got two kids as well. I hear where you're coming from. I feel, felt, found." All of that old school stuff, and I'm like, well, there has to be a way that we can communicate value without lying, surely. That's where the SWISH methodology in essence came from. I realized there was five core fundamentals to sales. You have your introduction, your discovery, your presentation, your trial closing, and objection handling and mindset. There was a common sort of thread.

Ryan:

What I started to do was stop studying sales, and start studying buying behaviours because human beings make decisions in a very similar order, and then without going too deep into it right now, there's four different personality types that then have a routine that they go through in their own buying cycle. I started to studying buying behaviours as opposed to selling techniques, and it totally changed the way I got results because now I was putting myself in the consumer's shoes. When I did that, I realised that all I was doing was telling my truth better.

Ryan:

I would then talk about sleeping on a bathroom floor, having 31 cents to my name, I was talking about my dad. My dad's been pretty sick for the last 18-19 years. I would talk about my struggles in sales, and there was a direct correlation with me being super vulnerable, super open, and my sales just going through the roof because the more I opened up, the more they opened up. Whereas what I find gets taught, especially from a corporate perspective, even with the enterprise companies that we've worked with; AMEX, Westpac, Mercedes, that, "Now, put your corporate hat on. Be ultra professional. You're the expert."

Ryan:

I don't believe that's true, and we've proven that it's not true because you're still speaking to another human being. In 2020 real recognizes real. So, you can still open up and be a professional, you can still be a real human being and be an expert in your field. I think that's what we've helped people do is communicate both sides of character, professional and personal, which means you get an emotional and logical connection with somebody which in turn increases their ability to actually make sales and build long term relationships.

Ryan:

The biggest challenge we face is that people don't want to be in sales. "I'm not in a sales position, no, I'm in customer service. I'm in HR. I'm a receptionist. I'm an administrator." Whatever it is. If you have any person in your organisation that has any sort of physical interaction with one of your prospects ever, they're in sales.

Ryan:

Prime example of this, I was at Baby Bunting yesterday... We've got another baby on the way so I had to buy another car seat. You drive around the back of Baby Bunting, they put the roller doors up and then they chuck the car seat at you basically. The guy just went, "Order." I was like, "Yeah, there's my receipt." And he goes, "Okay." went and got it. "Where do you want it?" "Well, in the car please." No communication skills. No, how's your day going? What are you having; baby boy, baby girl? Nothing. No skills. That's my lasting memory of Baby Bunting as I walked out of there. Yes, they've got the sale, but will I go back there? Probably not if I'm going to be treated like that.

Ryan:

So, although he was working in the factory part of it and he was working on a fork truck, he is still in sales because everybody is representing your brand, and everybody can learn to communicate the values of your business better. That's the biggest challenge that we face, and people don't realise it because they only look at they're the sales guys, let's give them some sales training. Which then it falls over on the backend, where the best place to make money is for your existing clients right and treating them well.

Ainslie:

Yeah, definitely. I had a similar experience at the start of the year with changing over our car. It was coming up to a few years, and had to change it over, and went in there. My husband's a tradie, went in and he had the high vis] shirt on, they made an instant judgment about him before they'd even started. They didn't even realize because he pulled up in his work ute, they didn't realize we had the other car and they made an instant judgment about him, and essentially lost a very big sale.

Ainslie:

We ended up buying from a completely other brand when all we were doing was upgrading to the latest model, and they lost it completely because there was no follow through in the service department, the sales team let everyone down. That was a brand that was locally trusted on the Gold Coast for many years, and they recently sold out to new management and now essentially damaging that reputation of that brand that had been built up over a long period of time.

Ryan:

Well, that's what they say. It takes five years to build a reputation, and five minutes to break it. The phrase that we always say, "You're forever building on and/or repairing your first impression." We've got clients in our online training, again as you guys know, that have been with us for two or three years. We say that you haven't made a sale until somebody buys from you a second time. What I see goes wrong, the car is a great example of this because you get a three year lease or whatever it is or

a finance package, and then a month before your package is due to expire they give you a call and go, "Hey Deb, how are you going? Just touching base, just wanting to see how everything..." No, you're trying to make a secondary sale. I know exactly what you do because I've just popped up on your CRM system.

Ryan:

That totally is not respecting the intelligence of your consumer. We live in a sophisticated world right now, we live in a more educated consumer generation than ever before, and what we teach is the touch points that build value over the course of that relationship. Whether it be three months, three years or 30 years, you still do it periodically. You're not just touching base just to make a sale, you're touching base because it's the right thing to do, and you're doing it because you want to add more value and get feedback so you can improve your services. So, the car... Yeah, don't get me talking. That's why I love coaching car salespeople because they can see phenomenal results really quickly with some tiny, tiny changes.

Ainslie:

Yes, it's the car salesman, the real estate agents, the-

Ryan:

The English sales trainer on the Gold Coast that wears a scarf indoors.

Deb:

My experience has been quite good because every time my car gets serviced, they ring up, they ask for feedback on what my experience was like.

Ryan:

That's good. Did we train them?

Deb:

I haven't asked them. Not to going to mention names, we'll have that chat offline.

Ainslie:

Yeah, no brand representation. What are the things that you have learned throughout being mentored by the Sharks that you may have done differently in the benefit of hindsight?

Ryan:

I think playing defensively is a big one, which I guess with you guys, that's why we need businesses like yours around because you have the... I don't want to say the non-enjoyable conversations, but it's the conversation that we don't want to have.

Deb:

This one's quite enjoyable.

Ryan:

It is. This is enjoyable, yeah. But it's the real part of business, right? The enjoyable part is making sales, marketing, building websites, social media, all of that. What you guys do is-

Ainslie:

Well, it depends who you're asking if that's enjoyable.

Ryan:

Yeah, exactly right. But for me, what you guys do, I'd never really thought about it. It was only when the Sharks came on board that they were asking if we had risk mitigation policies in place, have we got health and safety procedures in place, have we got all of our employment law. Like, I don't know, Steve. We're just trying to run a business here, mate. Just giving it a go. That's the reality. I think there would be a lot of business owners out there right now, if they're really honest, "We had an idea, we gave it a go, it got bigger than we thought, and now all of a sudden we don't have policies in place that we should." And as we scale, you can self-implode very, very quickly.

Ryan:

We did it with our Academy. We stopped for six weeks, we stopped selling our online training program because... And Glen picked up on it really quickly. He said, "You guys are going to self-implode here. You're actually going to bring on more people than you can service. You're going to make front end revenue. You're going to get complaints on the back end because they're not getting serviced the way they should be." And he made us stop selling for six weeks so that we could then build the infrastructure behind it to support the new people coming in.

Ryan:

When you're in early stage, we were about four years in at that stage, but I'm still classified as early stage, when you stop selling for six weeks that's a big freakout. But it was the best thing that we ever did because now all of those people are now rolling into a second year. They're using us again because they got the service that we promised on the front end. So, I think from our perspective playing defensively, making sure that we've got all of the insurances that we need in place, making sure that it's front of mind.

Ryan:

Every month we do our 30, 60, 90 day conversations, so I sit down now and I have conversations every week. Just a quick half an hour with Head of Marketing, Head of Operations, Head of Finance, Head of Accounts, Head of Admin, Head of Sales every Friday. My Friday morning's just wrapped up with all of that. The communication side of things, which is, I just assumed that my team knew stuff. I don't know why I did that, but I think it was Glen. Glen said, "You have to treat them as though they know nothing and treat them as though they forget it every single week as well."

Ryan:

So, constantly resetting around what our targets are, what our KPIs are, what our mission is, and role play repetition around our values, and making sure that we keep hammering all of that home. They're the sort of main things that I've taken from them, and then also I think leverage. Understanding the power of putting yourself into the right place at the right time, being recent and frequent. We know that the law of familiarity suggests that people will do business with businesses that are most recent, frequent, front of mind, and adding value.

Ryan:

I've had to get over my own debilitating fear of this type of thing; going on camera, standing on stage, to put the business at the forefront and get the message out there because you can't sell a secret. And we were a secret. We were the best kept sales training secret where if our mission was truly to impact the world and change the perception of sales, I needed to be comfortable in getting out there. They did that by actually forcing us into the market, and actually showing us that it can work, which they all did with Shark Tank. Right? That was a marketing tool, we know that.

Ryan:

Less than 10% of deals that were made on the show, I think its 9% actually went through. So, most deals, over 90% of deals, that get offered on the show fall over, which is why we're so proud of the fact that we kept all three. The chances of keeping all three were little to nothing, but we did, but that was a marketing tool. They put themselves out there to do that because it builds brand, it builds recognition, and it builds credibility. As a business, I believe in 2020 we need to be comfortable doing it the same way you guys are doing this right now as well.

Deb:

With your 14 day SWISH challenge, which Ainslie and I were proud to be part of the inaugural one.

Ryan:

You were, yes.

Deb:

Where did that idea come from? Did that come out of the pandemic?

Ryan:

It did, yeah. It was a bit of a play on the isolation days, the 14 day. Last minute we changed it from being called an isolation challenge, we just called it the 14 Day SWISH Sales Challenge. The idea was that people are obviously isolated right now, they're at home, they're getting their commute time back, so we did a bit of research with our clients and it worked out on average people were saving about 40 to 45 minutes a day. In one of our creative meetings that we do every Friday, I said, "Well, what can we fill this 45 minutes with for them? They've got all this time back now." Because what we do with that is important, right? It's a gift.

Ryan:

I was like, "Why don't we create a challenge where for 15 to 45 minutes every single day for the next 14 days, if they're in isolation, we teach them the fundamentals of sales, negotiation, communication, body language, emotional intelligence, blah, blah, blah." And then we did it. The first thing we did was put a deadline on it. So, we had the idea and then we gave it a deadline, which is of paramount importance because otherwise it would have kept getting pushed back. We called it the 20th of April, and it gave us less than 10 days in the end to actually get it built.

Ryan:

Bearing in mind, everybody's working externally, so I've got a camera set up in my house, I'm filming everything myself, I'm then sending it over via Dropbox to my videographer, who's then downloading audio to Rev.com or something, and then putting it all together, and then marketing girls creating this beautiful marketing collateral. And we did, and we pulled it all together, and we had almost 700 people register. What we wanted was 50 people to beta test it, and we thought, "We'll just iron out a few creases, see how it goes. There's things that are going to go wrong. Things that will go well." It just blew up, and what that's actually done for us Deb, is it's made us realize that there's a demand for short, know when I'm going to start, know when I'm going to finish education.

Ryan:

We're actually changing our model a little bit because as you know, our SWISH Academy is a 12 month program. Now we've started to create 14 day challenges, which the second one has gone crazy as well, and now we've got a 60 day stretching program that we're actually going to officially release next week. So, know when you're going to start, know when you're going to finish, and people

like that because there's an end point in sight. We spoke about the light at the end of the tunnel, and then people that want to go all in and have us hold their hand, then the SWISH Academy is still there for 12 months program as well. So, that's where it came from.

Deb:

Are you going to keep that running, the 14-day challenge?

Ryan:

Yeah. We're on our second one now and we're going to do it every two months. We're going to build some excitement around it, and the idea is to get around about 300-350 people in each one. I think as you guys know, I was up until midnight, 1:00, 2:00 in the morning, replying to all of the comments. Every single time a comment comes in, because it's in a private Facebook group, I get notification and you almost feel guilty. You know when I spoke about responsibility? I feel like that was my baby, and I said to you guys, I'll be there for you every step of the way. You go all in, I'll go all in.

Ryan:

What I didn't expect was hundreds of people to go all in, and bearing in mind that went all around the world, you would have seen there were people in Sweden, England, America, Canada. 24/7 there was notifications going off, so I wanted to reply to every single message. Second time round, I've managed the expectations better and told people I will endeavour to reply to as many as possible, but what has happened, and what I'm loving about the community that we've created in there, is that the likes of you guys that were in the previous challenge, you're now watching the new people in it, and you're now coaching the new people because you've already learned the questions they're asking. You become my coaches for me. It's bloody genius if I do say so myself. Humble as well.

Deb:

You certainly pushed me out of my comfort zone.

Ainslie:

Yeah, likewise. We're not from sales or marketing backgrounds so it was actually good to change our perception on what we think sales is.

Ryan:

Yeah, and that's the important part because you do come in with an idea of what it's going to be like, and all we ask is you just have an open mind. If you have an open mind to a different way of selling, a relationship trust based approach, I think you'll come out of it pleasantly surprised. Without putting words in your mouth, it's not just sales, right? It's life. I don't want to be a life coach, and I don't want to be a motivational trainer, but getting your Headspace right, getting your daily structure right, having your goals and your vision right, that will equate to you increasing your sales and growing your business anyway.

Ainslie:

Yeah, absolutely. I thought that was quite beneficial as well. I know you touched earlier on risk and risk mitigation, do you have to do any risk reporting and how do you manage risk within the business and also with your advisory board mentors? Is it something that you bring up regularly with the team on risk of execution on your strategic vision?

Ryan:

Yeah, we do. With the team we do, as in my internal team, so not the investors, but as an internal team, we do a quarterly reset. A 90 day reset where we go through everything which includes risk, which includes vision, which includes literally down to how many people we need in each program for us to achieve the target that has been set by our investors, and also me. With the investors we just do a shareholder's report every 30 days, which includes all of that as well.

Ryan:

They've got their finger on the pulse, but I think that side of things, people think it needs to be really complex and they don't want it. The reality, Steve Baxter for instance, he's got 31 companies in his portfolio. He owns 13% of our business now, they all do, they own 13% each. We're small fish to him, but the economies to scale of our business are huge because it's a SaaS product because it's online training. He's got a vested interest, he wants to know, but he wants it to be very, very simplistic. What's your budget to actual every single month? What does HR look like? Have you added anybody? Have you taken anybody away?

Ryan:

Simple P&L, pull of a spreadsheet and they're happy. Whereas when they first came on board, I was just writing paragraphs and paragraphs. "First week went well, everybody seems to be enjoying it, great..." I didn't know what I was doing. I think again, if we're really vulnerable, you don't. I'd never raised capital before. I'd never run a business before until this business. What I would implore people to do if they feel the same is reach out to people like yourself that specialise in this because there's not enough people out there teaching what you guys teach.

Ryan:

I think sometimes we have our pride hat on where we don't want to ask for help. I used to be that person because I also used to think, "If I ask it I'm going to look stupid because it must be something that everybody knows." Usually when you ask those questions, I know for me, Steve, Andrew, and Glen, every time I asked that they've told me directly they've got more respect for me now because I asked, because if I'd had gone out and tried and figure it out by myself, I'm just actually reducing the speed of which we grow.

Ainslie:

Yeah, absolutely.

Ryan:

So, ask questions.

Ainslie:

I think too, what we find a lot in what we do is people don't know what they don't know and so it almost becomes an educational piece to businesses around corporate governance, and how regulatory changes impact each of those underlying areas of the business, and also how to focus on non-financial emerging risks as well, and really try and drill it down to those in each industry, in each business, and have it so it's tailored to the size and nature of that business.

Ryan:

Well, I think that's part of looking up and out, right? That's one of the strategies that you need to be looking up and out for. Any sort of legislation changes that are going on, you guys are the experts and your down and in is to look for those types of things anyway, because that is your business. My down and in it is to focus on my business, my market, my customers, not legislation changes or any sort of compliance that's changing behind the scenes. You guys bring that to life and go, "Hey, look, I can see

that you've just moved into that area, that's really, really smart. I think it's going to work for you. Just be aware of X, Y, Z." And sometimes you just need somebody to show you a red flag of the holes that you might be going down, and that's what those guys do, and that's why I think you guys are fantastic as well. It's important.

Ainslie:

Thanks Ryan.

Ryan:

I mean that, it's true.

Ainslie:

Yeah. A lot of people find it rather boring content, but we have a passion for governance.

Ryan:

You can make it exciting.

Ainslie:

Yes. Well, I think that's all we have time for today on today's episode of YS Up. But thank you so much, Ryan, for joining us and sharing about ISR Training and the SWISH sales methodology. It's been really exciting hearing about that, and your experience on Shark Tank.

Deb:

Good luck for your 2020 awards. We look forward to hearing about those.

Ryan:

They'll probably be digital awards, we might not be able to get in a room. But guys, yeah, thank you sincerely for having me, and thank you for everything you've done for our company as well. You've definitely opened my eyes to a few things, and hopefully stopped us making a few poor decisions, which we were probably going to go down.

Ainslie:

No dramas at all.

Ryan:

Thanks for your time.

Ainslie:

Thanks, Ryan.

Outro:

That's all for today until next time, happy podcasting. And remember if you're enjoying the show, check out our other episodes and all things governance at www.3ysowls.com.au.