

of New Insights Africa Coaching & Communication cc

After 27 years in corporate life, the last six spent abroad, entrepreneur Bill Burridge, together with his wife, Jenni, and two children, returned to South Africa and turned life as they knew it upside down, looking inwards to find the life and lifestyle they really wanted and then empowering others to do the same.

"I knew that finding corporate employment at the same level in Cape Town was an unlikely prospect, so it meant starting my own business, something completely foreign to me," says Burridge, adding that any tinge of excitement was "overshadowed with fear and trepidation", something he has clearly overcome.

"I got into this business thanks to a series of synchronicities. While in London I was trying to help a family member in Cape Town and, on the recommendation of my wife, started looking at life coaching as a possible solution. An Internet search turned up very little in South Africa, but I ended up applying for a brochure from New Insights in the United Kingdom. One thing led to another, and soon I found myself having lunch in a top London restaurant with the owner (and former chef), Neil Asher – a delightful and inspiring man.

"Neil quickly saw in me someone who thrived on helping others develop to their full potential and suggested I take his concept back to South Africa. With mild curiosity and some scepticism I decided the proof of the pudding was in the eating and I signed up for coaching. After just a few sessions I was a passionate convert. My feelings of anxiety about the change I was about to embark on gave way to confidence, excitement and impatience to get home and set up this wonderful life-changing business. I knew instinctively this was the business for me."

Burridge's venture, New Insights Africa, which he has been running for two years, holds the license to distribute the New Insights Life Coach Training and Certification Programme for home study in Southern Africa.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Where does New Insights Africa operate?

Although I have personally chosen to live and work in Cape Town (who wouldn't?), we market throughout South Africa and the adjacent southern African states.

Do you manage the business yourself?

I am very much a hands-on owner and manager. I am a strong believer that, in this kind of business, especially when marketing over the internet, you simply have to give excellent and attentive customer service if you want to survive and prosper.

How many hours per day do you work?

I typically work from around 8am to 6pm, but the great thing about this business is the flexibility it gives me and the incredible fulfilment I get from hearing every day how our coaches are changing people's lives in such a meaningful way. Compared with the stress of corporate life, the long

commutes and the time spent travelling and away from family, my current working life is a breeze!

How do you market your business?

Word-of-mouth is of paramount importance. Our customers are always hungry to hear how other trainees are finding the programme and how well our certified coaches are performing. Other than that, we use our website and Internet advertising extensively, along with a few choice co-operative advertising deals.

How would you rate your customer loyalty?

In a recent survey answered by over 500 people who had had dealings with us, 97.4% said they would recommend us to a friend. That's a pleasing statistic.

Would you recommend starting a wellness business?

I would recommend starting any business for which you have a real passion. I believe it's the passion and the intent that really count towards your success. Of course, the wellness industry is a good one to choose because you can add great value and joy to people's lives, and what could be better than that?

What growth potential do you see for your business in South Africa?

I think there's a huge market for quality life coaches in South Africa and southern Africa. I specifically highlight the word "quality" because there is a danger that the term coach can be abused by people who add it to their title and business card without having had the benefits of sound training. In my experience, I honestly believe that almost anyone can gain tremendous personal benefit from the services of a passionate and well-trained life coach.

What advice do you have for those wanting to become involved in this industry?

Focus on being passionate about the people you are serving. Enjoy the fulfilment that comes from knowing that you are improving people's lives. Be grateful for the personal growth that the business affords you. If you can do all of this, then I believe the financial side of your business will take care of itself.

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