



Jean



Roopa

Entrepreneur Jean Zammimba, 36

Jean turned to entrepreneurship after suddenly finding herself unemployed when the company she worked for as an accounts clerk closed down. She started out with an import and retail business which she later abandoned due to the high costs of importing. She then moved into the restaurant business setting up Golden La Manna.

Consultant: Roopa Murthy, 34

A project finance specialist with over 15 years' experience in infrastructure finance, Roopa was sceptical about her ability to help a small business entrepreneur. "What I do in my job is very specific-project financing. I'd never done strategy before so I wasn't sure how much help I could be." Roopa however decided to take on the challenge with an open mind, willing to lend the skills she had and acquire new ones.

Business challenges and objectives of the project

One of the biggest challenges Jean faced was stiff competition from other restaurants in the area. Golden La Manna is located in an area with many restaurants and she needed help figuring out ways to differentiate herself and attract more customers. Roopa worked with Jean on finding out what her customers wanted and improving her customer support. One of the ways they did this was by placing a suggestion box at the restaurant to collect feedback from her customers. They also covered basic financial analysis to equip

Jean with the skills to make more informed decisions about her business.

The results

From the suggestion box, Jean was able to establish that the biggest complaint customers had was the service delays during the lunch rush hour. Following a suggestion from customers, Jean implemented a self-service style buffet at lunch time which has greatly reduced delays. Jean was also able to determine that there was significant demand for some local Malawian dishes which she went on to incorporate into her menu. Jean says these small changes have helped grow her business, increasing profits by about 10%.

The Impact on Jean

"It was good to have someone to talk to about my business challenges and advise me. Hiring a consultant is so expensive. I would never have been able to afford it so I'm really grateful. My business is growing and I now have high hopes for the future. One day I want to open up a complex providing accommodation, restaurant and conference facilities."

The Impact on Roopa

"My confidence grew. It was encouraging to know that my skills could be of use to her and that my ideas could be helpful. It is a great experience and you start to feel like you are part of the business. A lot of it is listening and offering support. Do not underestimate the skills you have to offer. Overtime you will be able to see things that they don't and offer advice."

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