

Samantha Coom's remarkable journey from corporate success to thriving entrepreneurship

 By [Imran Salie](#)

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This week, as part of our ongoing #StartupMentoring feature, we chat with Samantha Coom, founder and CEO of The Social Craft, an employer and corporate branding agency that specialises in building corporate and personal LinkedIn and digital strategies.



Samantha Coom | image supplied

Before founding The Social Craft, Coom managed the talent media LinkedIn product across growth markets regions (Africa, Israel, Turkey, Malta and Greece). The transition from a corporate role to entrepreneurship was challenging for her, but thrilling at the same time.

"In the corporate world, I had a narrowly defined role, clear deliverables outputs and KPIs. Stepping into the entrepreneurial sphere demanded an understanding of various domains and new skills and territories that were, quite honestly, far beyond my strengths.

"I had to learn not just what I needed or didn't know, but who I needed to rely on to make my vision and that of my clients a reality. The shift from 'I' to 'we' was a significant mindset change, especially as someone accustomed to independent work and my upbringing as an only child," says Coom.

Here, Coom delves deeper into her transition from the corporate world to entrepreneurship and offers valuable mentorship advice for individuals contemplating a leap into the entrepreneurial realm

🔴 **How would you advise aspiring entrepreneurs to tackle similar challenges?**

When facing similar challenges, it's vital to admit that you can't do it all alone and start seeking the right support. Our business culture thrives on the principle that we don't have to be good at everything if we have the right people around us, who excel where we may not, and that play to strengths we may not individually possess.

Moreover, when seeking mentors, it's crucial to be careful. Not everyone has your best intentions at heart, so being picky about who you choose to guide and develop your thinking and strategy is key.



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The ability to prioritise and manage your time is another invaluable skill. In the beginning, it's easy to be a "yes person" when you're building but what and who you say yes to determines the foundation of your success.

🔴 **What specific lessons have you learned about personal and professional growth while building your career and founding your agency?**

When it comes to personal and professional growth, I used to believe it was all about seeing my successes reflected at me — a better life, more travel, more exposure, and more income.

But I've learned along this journey that true growth isn't just about individual achievements; it's about how you nurture the people around you and help them develop.



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It's about multiplying that success into our collective growth - seeing your people catch a flight for the first time or getting promoted and doing that course they always dreamed of - has certainly been key.

Another lesson I've picked up is the importance of self-belief and self-discipline. If you've got the vision to start your own business, you have to have the motivation and discipline to keep pushing through, even when self-doubt and technical challenges try to hold you back.

It's a tough lesson I've had to learn on my journey, to truly back myself- because if you don't believe in the dream, no one else will make it a reality.

Another important learning is the power to say no and having the courage to be disliked. As a leader, we must make tough decisions, even if it means not being everyone's favourite. Learning to say no, even when it's hard, has been vital in maintaining our standards of quality and protecting the business and our team.

🔴 **As an entrepreneur and leader, what essential qualities and skills do you believe every young entrepreneur should cultivate?**

There are quite a few essential qualities and skills that every aspiring entrepreneur should strive to cultivate but two stand out in my experience:

- Personal brand is a big one and a game changer for me. It's not just about creating a polished image or a strong online

presence. It's about authentically representing yourself and your values to the world as a credible thought leader.

The power of a strong, consistent personal brand and effective communication cannot be underestimated.

Your brand becomes intertwined with your business, showcasing your unique strengths, experiences, and expertise in a way that resonates with your target audience and distinguishes you from the rest.



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It's about crafting a narrative that reflects your vision and mission, and consistently living up to that narrative in every interaction and every piece of content and face-to-face interaction with the world.

- As a young female leader I have made core the cultivation of self-awareness and the ability to leverage emotional intelligence (EQ) as this stands as a fundamental pillar for professional and personal success.

It costs nothing to be a nice person, and offer an empathetic and consultative approach regardless of the deal size or revenue.

🚩 ***Are there ongoing projects or initiatives at The Social Craft that young entrepreneurs might find particularly inspiring or instructive?***

Ongoing projects and initiatives that could interest young entrepreneurs include our collaboration with an organisation called [Year Beyond](#). This fantastic programme is all about nurturing the talents of our youth, giving them on-the-job mentoring, and weekly personal and professional development training.

Year Beyond is the ultimate springboard for these rising stars, giving them the solid foundation they need to make a real impact and get a head start in the professional world. Economic opportunity is core to our mission as an agency and what better way to make an impact in this space than partnering with a progressive local NGO?

We don't just talk about culture and growth; we live and breathe it. That's why our monthly Lunch & Learn sessions, Level Up Team Conferences and consistent regional connects are such a big deal and these craft and foster our special culture.

These sessions, in particular our Lunch & Learn monthly meetings aren't like your typical seminars; they're handcrafted to offer our team a space to nourish their digital intellect and sharpen their creative crafts and skills and our team gets a digital Mr D lunch on the house! We take pride in staying ahead of the game, trends and industry predictions and these sessions are our secret sauce for staying fresh and innovative in our ever-evolving people industry.

🚩 ***Can you share the key principles or strategies you used to establish a successful employer and corporate branding agency like The Social Craft?***

If we delve into the nitty gritty of establishing a successful employer and corporate branding agency like The Social Craft, there are some key principles and strategies that truly set us on the path to triumph.

1. It all started with a demonstrated ability to understand our industry inside out, becoming a go-to platform guru for LinkedIn and TikTok and of course being a specialist in our niche, employer and corporate branding.
2. Building a robust network and community through personal brand investment played a pivotal role, allowing us to tap into valuable data, insights and collaborations that helped us navigate the agency startup landscape.

3. However, our true success came from solving real-world problems. We aligned our unique selling proposition with the pressing issues faced by leaders across various industries, especially with the persistent challenges of skills shortage and talent acquisition which is no longer just an “HR problem” but a leadership priority.



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4. We recognised it's all about having a brand of purpose, not just being another run-of-the-mill agency. Understanding the industry triggers, pain points and opportunities - carving out our unique space to solve tangible problems—that's the golden ticket to our success.

When you're not just chasing profits, but striving to make a meaningful impact, success isn't far off. At The Social Craft, we've realised that being a brand of purpose has been the cornerstone of our growth. It's what sets us apart in the dynamic world of content, digital marketing, branding and communications.

5. Hire for culture first. Sometimes we can employ the most degreed and academically astute people, but when values, mission and vision are misaligned that employee or business won't thrive, making it an expensive and unproductive exercise.

People who align with your culture go the extra mile and stand out, generally are very adaptable and resilient and are open to learning and developing. In a startup, you need employees who can navigate in a dynamic and autonomous environment.

If there's one lesson young entrepreneurs can take away, it's this: understand the core problems you're solving and build your brand's identity around making a meaningful difference.

In the end, it's not just about being another brand; it's about becoming that purpose-driven credible brand that your candidates, employees, customers and suppliers can't help but rally behind.

🔴 ***Are there any specific initiatives or projects at The Social Craft that you're particularly excited about, and what lessons can young entrepreneurs learn from your current endeavours?***

I guess at the top of any business owner's mind is expansion. We've got big plans on the horizon, and it's all about taking our African heartbeat to a global stage.

Our recent strides have us laying foundations in Europe and the Middle East, and we're all set to infuse our unique brand into these exciting, international territories. You can expect The Social Craft to establish a strong presence in those regions with our sister brand, The Skills Collective.

Speaking of growth, one of the exciting projects I've been contemplating is our move toward hosting the first-ever industry-leading employer branding community event in Africa, supporting the regions where we currently operate.

It's not just about expanding our business; it's about creating economic opportunities and developing the key skills in our industry that we need to solve for a future of work for tomorrow.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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