



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOME IS WHERE THE START-UP IS

When Jan Juc's Eve Fisher spent \$15,000 on a credit card turning part of her home into a short-term rental, she never imagined it would result in a business that has been headhunted by one of Australia's largest property management companies.

It started on a whim when Eve, 43, fancied the idea of generating additional income to offset her large mortgage. Attracting occasional Airbnb guests seemed the most sensible move.

"I'd rented out rooms on the short-term market in the past so I knew when I started it would likely be a success." Eve says.

"I listed the space as soon as it was ready, using secondhand furniture and cheap linen. As it got busier I spent more money on higher quality furnishings."

Demand for the cozy space shot from occasional to constant in the blink of an eye, with the investment quickly paying for itself and generating a healthy profit. All the while Eve, with her experience in hospitality, secured the essential Superhost status on the platform by ensuring a consistently high standard of service.

"I was obsessed from the outset about value-adding for each customer. I wanted them to feel special, even if they'd only paid a low rate," Eve says.

This meant guests were often left little surprises, like chocolates, beer or breakfast, and unsurprisingly, the result was consistent five-star reviews.

After three years renting out her place more than 300 days annually, Eve realised she had expertise to share and wondered about the possibility of managing other people's properties for them. Her first order of business was to approach a childhood friend and marketing professional, Rachel Allan, 42, about partnering up.

“I always knew Rach would be the first person I’d go to with a good idea. She loved it straight away, wanted in and we started building the Flairbnb brand from that first day,” Eve said.

Rachel’s experience running her own successful consulting company in Ballarat, accompanied by the pair’s collective entrepreneurial prowess and long-standing relationship, meant Flairbnb emerged with gusto.

This led to Hometime - one of the fastest growing property management platforms in the country - poaching them as a partner.

“At our first meeting after they contacted us, I put on my journo hat and was quite suspicious and aggressive. I demanded to know who else they were schmoozing on the Surf Coast and who we would have to compete with,” Eve recalls.

“Of course they were only talking to us and once I realised they had selected us carefully, I became excited at the potential of partnering with a big player in the industry.

“I knew they could help us scale our business by taking on marketing and lead generation roles, and sharing their unique software.”

Hometime saw Flairbnb’s potential from the outset.

“Flairbnb have nearly 500 five-star reviews from their guests, which is the single greatest indicator of future success” said Hometime’s co-CEO, William Crock, when asked the reason for approaching such a young and small business.

“Eve and Rachel are passionate about delivering an outstanding experience. They had already demonstrated the hard work, determination and ambition required to be successful in this industry,” he said.

Aside from the duo’s drive and passion, the speedy success of Flairbnb is also a culmination of their work and life experience.

Rachel’s career began in events for the City of Ballarat where a hands-on mentor kick-started her confidence and training, later leading to a position in tourism management in Ararat. This eventually inspired Rachel to work and travel across Europe, giving her a taste of life as a guest, moving through an array of accommodations. She also worked in business development and even kitchens, covering more bases in the tourism industry.

Building her own business in the sector is a dream come true, Rachel says.

“Eve is full of ideas but this one caught my attention and I could see the potential straight away,” she says.

“Flairbnb is the success it is today because of our combined strengths and experiences, and conviction to not only provide great service to our guests but to operate a strong healthy business.”

Eve has been a journalist since she left school and has spent several years living abroad, managing a busy bar in the UK, baking bagels in Canada and working in sales and customer service in Ireland. Her later experience back home as a teacher and a Surf Coast Shire councillor reaffirmed her knack for public relations, communication and organisation.

Such rich life skills and thorough research meant the pair knew it was imperative their brand stood out with key points of difference.

The inclusion of consumables such as tea and coffee, and Sukin toiletries (not to forget Easter and Christmas goodies) as well as hotel quality linen and five-star cleaning add to the luxury of each property, which the women had discovered many Airbnb properties lacked.

They also employ cleaners and tradespeople local to the houses they manage, ensuring they continually support the economy where properties are located.

However, a setback came soon after the business began in the form of the global pandemic, which we now know to have significantly undermined the tourism industry around the world.

Yet Flairbnb didn't just survive the apparent worst of it, it thrived, a point which William says also caught Hometime's attention.

"Having launched months before COVID and persevering through the toughest times it was clear they would be a fantastic partner," he says.

Eve and Rachel quickly gauged that despite harsh lockdowns, many travelling workers within the state still required regional and city dwellings, and focussed considerably on those groups for steady business, which helped forge their reputation. They now run houses between the Great Ocean Road and the Grampians.

Their recently signed partnership agreement with Hometime will only further enhance that success, due to an array of advantages and increased exposure.

"We are already collaborating with marketing and lead generating activities to drive more business in the region," William says.

"We are also getting them set up with software and finance support to save them time and make their business more efficient.

"We hope to see Flairbnb double their business by the end of the year."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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