



THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS

In this, the first in a new series in conjunction with **UPstart Caribbean**, we ask entrepreneurs to reveal their tips for success...



Entrepreneur profile
SASHA MAPP
 MANAGING DIRECTOR

- * **Name of business:** Comprehensive Learning Academy
- * **Slogan:** Better Grades Start Here
- * **Years in operation:** 8 years
- * **Services:** Private educational institution offering after-school training and educational services for students aged three to adults
- * **Email:** learningacademy.bb@hotmail.com
- * **www.comprehensivelearningacademy.com**
- * **Employees:** 5 full-time; 2 part-time
- * **LOCATION:** Barbados
- * **Annual turnover:** US \$64,000



WHAT'S UPSTART CARIBBEAN?

We're a new movement fostering a culture supportive of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean. **Our mission?** To be the regional leader in Public Education campaigns that excite and economically empower our citizens to become entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, especially youth and women. Want to be an UPstart? Join us at www.upstartcaribbean.com

Q WHAT PROBLEM OR NEED IS YOUR BUSINESS DESIGNED TO SOLVE?
 The Comprehensive Learning Academy (CLA) seeks to make a significant contribution to the development of Barbados' human capital; thereby helping our nation to remain globally competitive. Moreover, its shuttle service also makes learning more accessible and convenient.

Q HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA?
 I initially started tutoring informally at secondary school as my Math teacher's teaching assistant. Later, while pursuing my Associate Degree in Business Studies and my Degree in Economics, I gave lessons to some of my family friends' children at the primary level. I started to really fall in love with teaching and began to advertise my services in the newspaper.

Q WHAT DISTINGUISHES YOU FROM THE COMPETITION?
 The Comprehensive Learning Academy is the only education service provider in Barbados that caters for all age groups (ages three to adults) and the only tuition service provider to offer the choice of live online or face-to-face sessions.

Q DESCRIBE THE EUREKA MOMENT THAT PROPELLED

YOU TO BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR.
 After completing my first degree I began a career as an economist but quickly realised that my heart and passion was teaching. So I spent my evenings, nights and weekends working in and on my business. Taking the step to become fully self-employed wasn't an easy decision and my friends and family strongly advised against it. In the end I chose my dreams over job security and financial stability by secretly pursuing my doctoral degree in education, resigning shortly after.

Q WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED AND HOW DID IT HELP YOUR BUSINESS?
 It came from my landlord who's also an entrepreneur. "Stop making heart decisions and start making business decisions." I became more assertive and decisive and made a number of operational changes. I also developed more prudent cashflow management skills, altered payment terms and reduced receivables considerably.

Q WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST USEFUL BUSINESS RESOURCES AND TOOLS YOU'VE USED?
 * www.siteground.com to create and host websites * www.e-lecta.com, for its affordable online tutoring platform * www.schoolhousetech.com, for their educational software

that enables fast personalised worksheet generation on demand and test development.

Q WHICH AGENCIES OR ENTITIES HAVE HELPED TO STRENGTHEN YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS?
 I received a loan from the Barbados Youth Business Trust (BYBT) and FundAccess. I also benefited from training and workshops in finance, social networks, human resources and marketing through these two entities along with the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES).

Q WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT FROM FAILURES OR SETBACKS?
 The two most valuable things I've learnt are: the importance of remaining true to God's will, which includes accepting that His timing and plans are best; and, regardless of how successful you become and what you accomplish, it's the lives you touch along the way that matter most.

Q HOW DOES YOUR BUSINESS 'GIVE BACK'?
 Each year we give from one to five vouchers to parents who can't afford additional academic assistance for their child. In addition, we offer free adult courses in math, english, reading and computer literacy. The greatest investment is one made in people.

Q DO YOU HAVE IDEAS FOR OTHER BUSINESSES, AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THEM?
 I'm working on a cloud-based international tutoring programme to be released first in the USA no later than 2015. It will then be amended and released in the UK, Canadian and Caribbean markets. ●



ABOVE: Sasha at work with some of her younger students

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