

Business mentoring

YOUNG GUNS GO FOR IT

In the past year, Jens Buch has benefitted from the Chamber of Commerce's mentorship programme--an experience much appreciated by the industrious entrepreneur.

Text by *Neel Chrillesen* Photography by *Steve Eastwood*

He's a kind of impressive, yet likeable whiz kid. Never short of plans and ideas, Jens Buch not only follows up on them with actions and enthusiasm, he does so with a total and refreshing lack of arrogance. As the 34-year old says himself: "I'm just a puppy"--and a puppy more than willing to learn at that. Which is why he was happy to join the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce's mentorship programme in September last year.

raised in Luxembourg--studied in London and worked for several major corporations as an IT and internet expert. "It was well paid but I often found it monotonous and unproductive. In 2008, I was working in a bank, which, like many others at that time, was letting people go. I asked to be put on the list but it was refused. I was desperate to leave and set up my own business, so I went directly to the big boss who agreed to let me go."

After starting up what later became Online-marketing.lu (initially with a friend) and all the while continuing its wide range of web services, Buch went on to create SurviCam with Ronny Beweng in 2011. "What we offer is video-surveillance with a difference. The recordings are transferred via internet to our data centre, so people don't need to invest in recording devices all while knowing the images are stored safely." SurviCam won RTL's start-up competition "Success Story" and has a variety of customers--"from private homes and shops to cow sheds and construction sites"--in several countries. "Future projects include expanding our market in the UK." As if this wasn't enough, he is also working with videographer Raoul Schmitz to launch a website with workout videos enabling users to build a personalised, targeted training programme.

One of the things that distinguishes Buch from other young entrepreneurs is probably this aptitude and a willingness to cooperate with others. The merger of his Online-marketing.lu with web-agency e-connect and communication consultancy InsideOut therefore comes as no surprise. "I had been working closely with them when it dawned upon me that merging would be a great idea. My mentor gave me a lot of practical recommendations."

When pushed slightly, Buch admits to having a lot of other ideas he'd like to carry out. "My mentor told me to be careful and not take on too much though, so for the moment, I'm sticking with my three activities!" //



JENS BUCH
Appreciates honest advice

PROVEN RESULTS

As the third mentoring season comes to a close, there's no denying mentees have made progress in their self-management and leadership skills. Of the companies led by the 2010 and 2011 mentees, 95% are still in business, show an average staff increase of 28% and have increased their revenue by 29% on average. Moreover, 29 jobs have been created over the first two mentoring seasons. So far 74 entrepreneurs--including 35 mentors--have joined the programme.

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"Once selected I was paired up with a mentor. I've since met with him once or twice a month and it's been valuable on so many levels. My mentor has been in the same sort of situation as me many times, so he's been able to give me great advice. It's not like coaching; it's more like 'have you thought of this', 'I'd be careful with that'... It's a simple and extremely honest relationship and that's very important. I've learnt a lot from my mentor and it's made a difference in how I've done things. The mentees in the programme aren't the only ones to benefit though; mentors say they get something out of it too."

Buch already had three business activities when he joined the programme. Before starting those up, however, the Dane--born and