

# Lessons from successful entrepreneurs

It's a rare entrepreneur who sets out to build a business based on billing more efficiently than the competition - but for Brian Timperley and Louis Jardim of Turrito Networks, streamlined billing turned out to be one of the unexpected factors behind their success.



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"We didn't know in the beginning that things like this were going to make such a difference," says Timperley; "we just knew we hated the monthly billing run and wanted to make it easier. The result was that our customers paid us immediately because our invoices were accurate - in fact, they started paying us in advance."

At the same time, he adds, "there was always something to query from our suppliers, so those payments were often delayed by 60 days or more. That gave us a huge cash flow benefit. As a small business, the challenge of managing cash flow that most entrepreneurs face was never an issue for us."

Co-founder Louis Jardim explains that Turrito Networks was built on the idea of offering enterprise-quality internet services to small and medium-sized businesses. "We'd worked as account managers for a large internet service provider, and we saw everybody below the level of major corporates struggling to get decent service. We realised that with our knowledge of the networks, and the quality of our technical contacts, we could offer five-star service to every client."

Turrito Networks now acts as a partner for all the core network providers, so it can offer its clients networking and connectivity solutions tailor-made to their needs. And because Turrito is now a major client in its own right, says Jardim, it can access volume discounts as well as dedicated account managers and service managers - all benefits it can pass on to its clients.

Client Pieter Snyman, CIO of Business Genetics, confirms that simplified billing is a benefit that matters. "The number of mistakes we were getting on invoices from our previous service provider was quite worrying. Billing for network services is complex and mistakes do happen, but the mistakes were never in our favour: There was a lot of over-billing and double

accounting. We only have two people in our accounts department, and they were spending ten hours a week just on billing queries.

Sometimes it took months to fix the mistakes - and those were just the ones we discovered. With Turrito, we know we are getting the correct billing, first time - they absorb and fix the problems themselves."

Timperley says the problem is industry-wide: "Everyone is tearing their hair out. The average account manager spends 40% of their time addressing billing queries. So we took the approach of making every invoice mirror what is in the contract, item for item. The client can see that they are getting exactly what they contracted for, every month."

Of course, adds Timperley, "we invest a lot of time in training our people on how to use the system effectively, and even more in consolidating the invoices we get from our suppliers. But it pays off, because there's never anything for clients to query."

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