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EDGE
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FROM GRADUATE START-UP TO A KEY INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTOR

How IDA Law spotted opportunities and accessed the right support

IDA Law is a dynamic collections and litigation solutions SME founded by graduate lawyers who spotted a market gap and, with the right support, has grown into a business of 345 staff with branches in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

With a modest start in 2010, founders Atish Dayha and Wahid Ismail initially began offering their services to businesses in Johannesburg's CBD. When they identified a gap in debt recovery services that they could solve and developed their business model accordingly, the business expanded, growing to a team of 78 and a solid client base by 2018.

But, as is often the case, small businesses can struggle when growth comes faster than they are prepared for. IDA's internal systems were under strain, and the company urgently needed strategic support to scale effectively.

2018 saw IDA Law invited to join the inaugural Edge Growth FNB External Debt Collectors programme, which offered tailored mentorship, bootcamps and access to sector specialists. In-depth analysis of the business' operations, as well as a strategic new approach to vision, purpose and values was precisely what this growing SME needed.

“Working with our mentor Jayesh Nair was a game-changer for IDA,” Dayha says. “He provided honest guidance, feedback, reflection and support throughout – acting as an independent source of advice, motivation, faith and courage.”

“The culture intervention reframed who we thought we were as a business,” says Ismail. “It gave us new clarity around our ‘why’ and ‘purpose,’ and allowed us to reimagine these and share them with the team in a very grounded and intentional way – building for the future.”

Following the many benefits of its initial programme, IDA Law joined the FNB C9 programme six years later, which focused on scale, leadership, and long-term sustainability. This came at an ideal time, as the business had grown to support 345 staff and had strategically shifted its portfolio to 80% debt collection and 20% legal services.

“This wasn’t just a diversification move; it was a response to market signals and client needs, underpinned by a new capability: real-time, data-informed decision-making,” says Ismail.

From streamlining systems and embedding analytics, to building a distributed management model and investing in a new call centre, IDA Law embraced the learnings and insights offered through both programmes under small business development specialist, Edge Growth. This support has seen IDA Law grow to become a key sector contributor, and top performer on EDC panels for clients including FNB, Nedbank, Standard Bank, Wesbank and Life Hospitals.

The business has also founded its own Seta-accredited training academy – providing critical qualifications and work experience for new sector entrants. “Through our Academy, we’re now able to ensure that school-leavers can find a point of entry for employment and overcome the barriers we started off with ourselves,” shares Dayha.

Looking ahead, IDA Law continues to leverage its mature business model and purpose-driven team culture to continue its growth, under the leadership of two intrepid and resilient entrepreneurs who took a “graduate start-up” to a key industry contributor.

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Edge Growth is a leading SME Development Specialist and Venture Fund Manager, specialising in developing small businesses and creating jobs and real transformation by connecting corporates and entrepreneurs, growing SMEs by addressing their key constraints: Access to finance, markets and skills. Our offering consists of three services areas, designed to achieve maximum IMPACT:

- ESD Strategy for corporates & building SMEs in their value chain
- Investing in and growing SMEs through fund management
- Scaling businesses to full potential through accelerator programmes

Go to www.edgegrowth.com for more information.

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