EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW

Bente Ottersen

Seizing Opportunity

Through chatting to Bente, we've learned that she loves a challenge and is always ready to take on calculated risks, but is never reckless. Her inspiration to succeed in life and business comes through playing sports, skiing, horse-riding and martial arts where her teachers have urged her to always reach for higher goals and focus on details while keeping the long-term goal in sight. We'd say this has served Bente really well in her entrepreneurial journey, so let's find out more!

So far, what are you doing now?

Right now, this business is in the media services industry, meaning that we give Film and Video distributors, or sellers, subtitles and dubbing all of the things that need to go to the global market. Titles - On is relatively young, our company started in 2019.

What inspired you to start a business in this industry?

I started in translating. I did it for a while, I learned the trade, it was cool. I saw that the industry suffered from complete chaos, when it came to asset management. There were assets all over that nobody had control where they were, or anything. So I and a few others, we designed a system to put all these assets into order in a database and make them accessible directly to clients. I mean to view whatever, wherever you were, you could access any language. So we made a system where we had a patent for it but we weren't able to bring it into the market, because of licensing practices. So I had to put that aside and then I was contacted by a few other people in the industry and they said why don't you start in the subtitle industry? You know, the trade is needed. I looked at it and I saw that it's really a good business opportunity. So that's how I started

The key to the story is you saw a need and you served a need.

I saw a need and I saw an opportunity. I knew the trade, I knew the craft and the people. So I just needed to do something.

So when you were really little, say under 10 years old, did you dream of having a company? Do you have any particular dreams?

I wanted to be a fisherman. Either that or a child psychologist. So I was a little bit like this, a little bit like that. We lived near a clinic or a hospital, really for children who had severe trauma. So I used to play with them and thought that, yeah, I'd like to take care of kids like this when I grow up. On the other hand, I also found it romantic to be out at sea, maybe alone in a storm. Luckily, that never happened.

So when did you figure out what you wanted to do? People ask me that all the time, how do you figure out what you are meant to be doing?

I didn't figure out I just went with the flow in a way. That could happen for some maybe but for me, it was never that way. I was just drifting along. I saw an opportunity, I went after it. I saw another opportunity, I went after that.

Did you ever find any point in your career that there were particular challenges that you faced because you're a woman?

I think that, you know, especially with individual meetings, you sometimes face things that you would not have faced if you had been a man. I suppose I have experienced mansplaining and all of that, which is annoying. Sometimes you go along with it for a little while, because you need that person at that time and then you can correct it at some other point. Yeah, so I've had my share of that.

Do you have any particular tips or anything that you've done to deal with those sorts of challenges?

You just must recognise it. And then once you recognise it, you have to make a decision. Shall I stop it now? Or shall I let it go on for a little bit for tactical reasons? You know, but you have to stop it at some point, and definitely not be manipulated by it.

Can you give us your top tips for anybody at the beginning of their business journey?

I think they would have to really be sure they have a good thing going. I heard yesterday from a woman who thought of herself as a very good entrepreneurial type. But you know, to become a good sailor, you have to be courageous, you have to be able to take the sea to be able to be out there. But you also need to ship. The ship part is very important and to be an entrepreneur, you have to have a business idea. If you don't have that, you can be a lot of good stuff as a person but you're not an entrepreneur, until you have a business idea that you want to build and grow and bring to fruition.

This has been a small snippet of our interview with Bente Ottersen.

In the full interview we cover all the technical aspects of running a technology and media based business including raising funds and working with investors, working with developers, the ups and downs of patents and legal issues and building a team.

The full interview will be released in the She Speaks book, coming soon!