



Justin Doobov

# Young gun

Failure is not an option. That is one indisputable philosophy for Justin Doobov, managing director of Intelligent Finance. He's a man who knows his stuff. Entrepreneur and a high achiever, Doobov has a love for learning and is a perfectionist for whom only the best is good enough. And, with a splash of luck and a lot of skill and hard work, he is doing exceedingly well.

Doobov initially studied engineering and worked in manufacturing for about three years. He moved into project management as an operations manager, then e-commerce as the national logistics manager. At the same time he went back to university to study finance and accounting – while also running his own small engineering contracting business in his 'spare' time. "I pretty much worked full-time and studied full-time so I could get the degree finished as quickly as possible," he recalls. Must mention that he also got high distinctions in most subjects. Swat.

When this hectic schedule started impeding his fitness fanaticism, what did he do? He set up a business as a personal trainer – every day running for an hour with someone, then doing another

hour of weights. He says: "This way I could earn money while I trained, and I refined my customer relationship skills by the quality one-on-one time that I spent with my training partners."

Towards the end of his degree, Doobov decided to focus on finance and accounting and worked as an accountant at Arthur Andersen (now Ernst & Young). He realised that, while he was qualified to work as an accountant, his personality did not suit the accountant mould. He was also just too plain ambitious, and wanted to run his own business or become a partner in an existing business. So he looked for an industry that would let him use all his experience, both practical and academic. "I was extremely fortunate to be offered many jobs and chose to work for a small finance broking firm in Chatswood," he explains.

Three years later he reached a point where the idea of having his own business started to appeal again. Itchy feet and ambition spurred Doobov to draw up a three-year budget outlining how much his company would need to make each month to be viable. He handed in his resignation and left the company on Tuesday 30 September 2003. The next day his plans to wash the car hit a snag due to water

**You want success, you want to win big, you work for it, you make plans, achieve your goals, strive to be the best that you can be and never settle for second place. That's exactly what Justin Doobov of Intelligent Finance did, and by all accounts, it's what he endeavours to do every day of his life**

restrictions. "With time on my hands, I began to ponder how to achieve my budget. Ten minutes later a friend called me and said he would like to obtain some finance – I hadn't even had a chance to join an aggregator, so I spent a lot of time ringing around to place the finance. I was off and running!"

Doobov exceeded his three-year budget in the first six months of operation and has now spent four years in the broking industry, running his own business in

***"With time on my hands, I began to ponder how to achieve my budget. Ten minutes later a friend called me and said he would like to obtain some finance. I was off and running!"***

Bondi. Last month, Intelligent Finance was Choice Home Loans number one introducer of business. His client base tends to be professionals and high net worth individuals, so the average loan size sits around the \$500,000 mark. Doobov is proud that he has "never needed to cold call prospective clients. The majority of our clients have been referred to us".

And the future? Doobov would like to open franchises, using 'best practice' techniques, or help other brokers to become more efficient with their

processing. "I want to keep Intelligent Finance as an independent company focusing on clients needs before profit. Profit will come once those needs are met." His ultimate plan for Intelligent Finance is for it to be the broker of choice for borrowers, and that he can take a holiday knowing that he has grown the business in such a way that his staff are treating each client with the same level of care and attention that he would.

Doobov attributes his people skills as one of the secrets to his success. "I would still do a deal even if I was not earning any money from it, I love to help people," he says. It's all about going the extra mile, customer service. "My clients can call me about anything, I will always help, even if it is unrelated to finance." He recently helped a client renovate a home, assisted another to negotiate the prices down on properties they purchased, referred clients to tree loppers, and is currently working on a concept

that could double one client's income. On another occasion a client wanted to cancel her evening meeting because she had to prepare dinner for her husband and kids. He suggested that he could pick up take away on the way over so she did not have to cancel. "She was very happy with my offer, and we sat around the dinner table eating Chinese take away, while we discussed their loan options."

The keys for Doobov are to never say no if he can't do something, but to find someone that can; to be contactable 24/7; always hire the best staff, use the best products, give the best service; to break his goals down into achievable steps; and when faced with a difficult deal, think: "If someone can achieve it, why the hell can't it be me?"

One major factor to Doobov's success is his passion for the job. "Enjoy what you're doing or get out." He has even fitted the office with a Street Fighter Two arcade game and dart board. When it is time to play, the 31-year-old enjoys holidaying in Hawaii, cultivating his professional skills, and is a culinary whiz that loves cooking and making cocktails. "I built a cocktail bar at my home, and make great Tim Tam, Mint Slice and Mango Daiquiris. The bar is always open for visitors." Cheers. ■