

QUENTIN NOLAN OF LIQUID SNOW TOURS FEATURED IN 'THE SWITCH' MY CAREER PROFILE

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THE SWITCH

From marketing to snow tours

Young and ambitious, Quentin Nolan, a former retail marketing executive, has since set up his own business in snow tours – making millions by the time he was 25 years old.

Nolan, as the owner of ski and snowboard travel company Liquid Snow Tours, organises ski holidays and tours to a number of Japanese ski resorts. He also owns and operates a 69-bed ski lodge.

"I have a passion for snowboarding and saw an opportunity to travel and meet interesting people while I did lots of [snowboarding] that also gave me the potential to earn a great income," he says.

Though business demands mean he doesn't snowboard as much as he would like, the upside more than compensates. "I live a fun lifestyle while I am developing a healthy business," Nolan says.

It all started with tours to the NSW and Victorian ski resorts. "Our first season was quite successful and I saw an opportunity to run a group trip to Japan," he recalls.

"We took a group to Hakuba [Japan] during 2006; that quickly extended to 15 groups and 500 people a year later, after which time we bought our ski lodge [The Lab Hakuba]."

Those numbers grew to more than 1500 during his recent ski season in Japan.

"The best part is seeing how happy people are after a day's skiing, or boarding in dry, waist-deep Japanese powder snow," Nolan says.

Nolan was initially a one-man band, using his work experience in retail marketing, where his ambition and desires outpaced

opportunities. He now has a team on board, which allows him to take a more strategic role in his business. "I do all the planning and implementing, keeping an eye out for opportunities while I manage day-to-day operations," he says.

But it was the short stint working in the travel industry organising group ski trips for a now-defunct Sydney-based wholesaler that gave him a healthy taste for setting up his own business. "That job gave me an opportunity to learn about the industry and spot a gap in the market before jumping in full throttle," he adds.

Study also gave Nolan an added edge. He completed a bachelor of commerce at Wollongong University while in business, after which time he took on a master's of law degree. "But it was at a time of growth opportunities ... the business was more important, so I deferred studies," Nolan says.

Business demands weigh heavily on him, as he recalls a situation while taking a group on a "singles tour" from Sydney to the snow.

"There was an accident on the way, so we didn't arrive until 3am.

"The group, a bunch of hysterical singles, refused to carry their skis to the lodge and on check-in I discovered one room had been double booked, so I gave my room away and proceeded to carry skis from the bus drop-off to the lodge until 5am ... then slept for two hours – on the bus.

"But I was up by 7am to meet the group at brekkie and get them sorted for the day's skiing!"

YVONNE NICOLAS

Know someone who's made 'the switch'? Contact yvonne.nicolas@bigpond.com



THEN

NOW

SALARY \$40,000 a year.

HOURS 40-hour week.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE A hobby researching business activities made life enjoyable.

SALARY Turning over more than \$3 million a year enables Nolan to draw a healthy wage.

HOURS 80-hour week.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE Despite the long hours, Nolan says he is young and having a great time running the business.

LOWS Early days establishing the business in a small, out-of-the-way office was hard going.

LINKS

ski-hakuba-japan.com
ski-resorts-japan.com
thelabhakuba.com



Snow days ... Quentin Nolan in his Liquid Snow Tours office (top) and during his days as a marketing executive.

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