

Pamela Ison

New Smyrna Beach, Florida



Ison Consulting Group, LLC

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Pamela Ison:

When Pamela Ison, founder of Ison Consulting Group, LLC, graduated from The University of Florida with a degree in Horticulture, the plan was to do related research. Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned. Ison found herself in a situation that, for most new graduates, would result in panic and fear. Nevertheless, she kept a positive attitude and took control of her own destiny.

"The state pulled funding for the project I was going to be assigned to," she said. "I got the call the Friday before the Monday I was supposed to start working. Instead of dwelling on it, I went in a completely different direction and started a career in banking."

Throughout her career in banking, Ison worked with some great people and had fantastic mentors along the way. She gained experience in a

variety of areas including retail banking, agricultural lending, commercial lending, treasury management and more. Over time, she took on additional roles and responsibilities including HR Resource Director for the state of Florida. At one point, she was responsible for 900 employees from Jacksonville to Miami. When the banking group she worked for started looking at opportunities with other banks and insurance companies, Ison became a member of the Mergers & Acquisitions Team. She worked with employees to get them ready for the conversion. Her last position with the bank, before starting her entrepreneurial journey, was that of Strategy Director. She spent 18 months in this role, working closely with the bank president on project development, budgeting, marketing and more. Ison shared what happened next.

"My dad became ill," she said. "When this happened, I decided I needed to spend less time on the road and more time in Orlando, closer to him. I decided to retire. I was great at it for about six months and then I got antsy. That's when I decided to start my own HR consulting practice. I've always had the entrepreneurial spirit and felt like, at that point in my life, I was ready to go down that path. Also, when I was retired, people I used to work with would call and ask for my help with various things. I thought to myself, 'Why not get paid for something I'm already doing for free'."

For the third generation Apopka native with deep roots in the Central Florida community, business growth has been fueled primarily by word-of-mouth referrals. Ison shared that her biggest challenge in the beginning was deciding on what areas to focus on. She doesn't advertise that she does payroll, placement services or benefits

consulting, but admits to helping a few key clients with those services.

Most clients, including her first ever, know of Ison and her excellent reputation for delivering quality results. Her dedication, core values and professionalism exhibited throughout her banking career have thus far provided Ison with the fuel needed to grow her consulting practice. As one of the first female members of the downtown Orlando Rotary Club, she also credits her involvement in this organization, Junior Achievement, the Career Resource Center at Rollins, where she assists students with mock interviews, and other key organizations as helping to grow her business.

As Ison explained, her consulting practice consists of two distinct parts.

"I work with private individuals and businesses with less than 50 employees," she said. "For my private clients, I help students, working professionals and job seekers improve things like resumes, cover letters, interviewing skills, accomplishment stories and exit statements. I also provide compensation guidance, coaching and mentoring. On the corporate side, I work with businesses on employee handbooks, performance assessments, 360 type surveys, performance improvement plans, job descriptions and communication standards. I also deliver various levels of training such as HIPAA compliance, professionalism and harassment."

Ison shared that what she enjoys most is modifying a client's current resume and having her client say, 'Who is this person?', because they don't even recognize how well packaged their own accomplishments are. She also loves when students call to say they've been accepted to a college they worked hard to get into. On the corporate side of things, she

loves when a business comes to her with a dilemma and she's able to give them solid solutions and options. Looking ahead, she hopes to expand her scope of services, especially in the area of executive coaching. With five executives currently under contract, this is a piece of the business she thoroughly enjoys.

What advice does Ison have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "For those looking at starting a business, it's like working with students to pick a college. I recommend you get a legal pad and list out the pros and cons. Also write a business plan and look at it periodically. Sometimes the answer is the market is not ready for your business. Things might not be right today, but they may be in three months. Don't give up on it."

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