

# Making Things Happen

American author Francis Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "The reason one writes isn't the fact he wants to say something. He writes because he has something to say." Dana Bonello sets a date with Angelo Xuereb to discuss his self-titled autobiography.

I have always believed that most people seek guidance and naturally listen to people in their vicinity that share seemingly similar experiences. It is almost as though we host the innate need to learn from other people's experience by reading and relating stories that can help us, or others, handle one of the various situations that life throws at us at the most unexpected of times. I believe that this philosophy applies to everyone at some point or other, irrespective of how experienced they are or how highly they have ranked. Business, I reckon, tends to follow a similar pattern. No matter how many years of management experience you have accumulated, or how loaded your portfolio appears to be, looking at the horizon ahead of you, rather than at your own shores, can be a beneficial exercise that allows us to identify aspects which may have otherwise been overseen.

It is with this in mind that Malta's entrepreneur, Angelo Xuereb, has chosen to put pen to paper and launched his official autobiography. The self titled hardback book sports an ambitious slogan on its cover; "An inspiring autobiography for those determined to succeed". Fortified with an inspiring testimonial from none other than Lateral Thinking Master Edward de Bono himself, I felt it was only natural to feel the need to get myself a copy.

I reluctantly leafed through the initial pages, thinking I would be bored to shreds reading about clichéd past experiences and irrational bursts of 'good luck', but a good half an hour into the second chapter I was hooked. The book is written in a simple, unpretentious tone making it a light and enjoyable read, and the author is so candid and vivid in his explanations that I found myself being gradually transported back in time, to a place where Malta was still majorly undeveloped, and severely lacked in resources. Quite simply, a time of no mobile phones, internet access, ergonomic office chairs, multifunctional tablets and designer cufflinks. No bling, no tech; just a lot

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of hard work, an incredible dose of ambition and a king-sized protein shake each morning, or so I imagine anyway.

Following this interview, I would describe Angelo Xuereb as one of Malta's most intriguing, enduring business leaders out there. As founder of the AX Holdings Group, Mr Xuereb has established a highly interesting, self-taught approach to business management and development. He is mild-mannered, courteous and almost excessively patriotic. "Malta is truly an unpolished gem, I find it very hard to believe that it is not extremely evident to everyone," he beams. Interestingly, every chapter of this autobiography is closed off with a different QR code that promotes the Maltese Islands as an idyllic, sun-kissed nation in the heart of the Mediterranean.

"I chose to write the book in English primarily for this reason," explains Mr. Xuereb. "Till now we have launched *Angelo* in Malta, Australia and the UK and who knows where else it will take us?" he enthusiastically comments. Surely, for someone who has always taken life by the horns, writing a book must have been a piece of cake? "Actually, it was one of the hardest things I have ever done," he reminisces. "I have never been involved in publishing so I really had no idea what it would entail! I started off by drafting my first manuscript, by hand, over a period of nine months. I would allocate specific hours during the weekends to do so, and it took a lot of self-discipline and determination to actually finish it on time. Following that, it took almost another 16 months of constant fine-

tuning before we were able to send it off to print!" Why the enthusiasm? I humorously enquire. "Autobiographies are normally written when one retires. Since I have no plans to do that, I felt that it was time for me to put my experiences to paper while I could still remember details, facts and episodes in close detail."

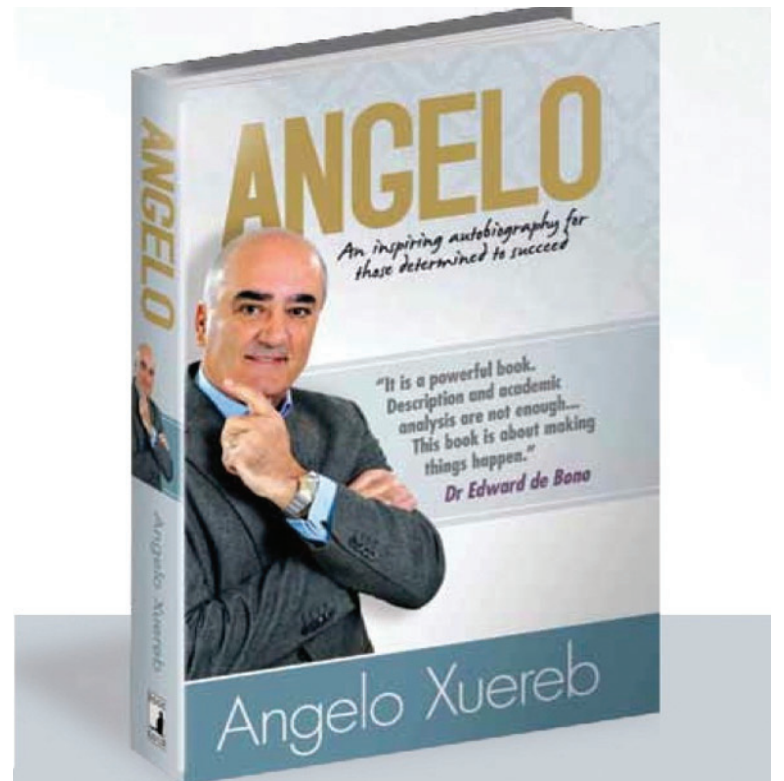
You talk about inspiring those determined to succeed, how? Angelo Xuereb sinks back comfortably into his chair, "Many people think that success is based mostly on luck; I have always believed



Angelo Xuereb sketching new plans

that success is 80% perspiration and 20% inspiration. Life in itself is a challenge which I often like to compare to a snakes and ladders board. We all know how that game is played, however no matter how many snakes the dice throws at you, it is important to bounce back and always move forward. No great leaps have ever been made looking backwards," he jests.

So how many 'snakes' were harmed in the production of *Angelo*? "I'd say the largest challenges must have been the time factor, writing Chapter 18, *The Tragedy*, and distilling my entire life experience to a mere 300,000 words; not necessarily in that order." What about the ladders? "Chapter 4, *Meeting Jessie*, was probably my favourite chapter. She was my first and only girlfriend, and at the time approaching a girl and talking to her was the hardest thing in the world. Chapter 9 on the other hand, *Baptism of Fire*, was another favourite to write and deals with the building of Malta's largest hotel, the Suncrest in Qawra, at a time when the government was nationalising banks, I was 33 years old and I was singlehandedly handling the largest project on the Island. Back then, AX Holdings generated 1% of the national GDP which is remarkable in itself. Writing this book has allowed me to identify patterns which have replicated themselves throughout my life. It was fascinating to look at my life and I changed, both on a personal as well as on



ANGELO - An inspiring autobiography for those determined to succeed

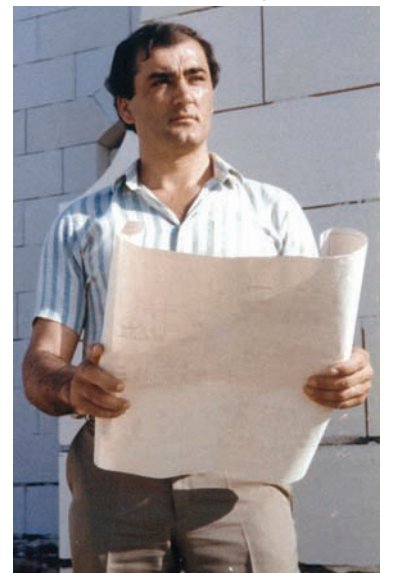
*"Many people think that success is majorly based on luck; I have always believed that success is 80% perspiration and 20% inspiration"*

of tampering with evidence; I felt that it was my fundamental right to do so."

On a lighter note, what other public broadcasts should we be expecting from Angelo Xuereb in the near future? "I plan on publishing a second book entitled '*A Vision for the Maltese Islands, 2050 and Beyond*' which will include many ideas and projects which I have thought up throughout the years and believe should be implemented in the future." Mr. Xuereb pauses for a sip of water and sighs, "The reality is that life is completely unpredictable. Who knows what might happen tomorrow! The important part is always to believe in yourself, be as innovative and efficient as possible and always be determined to succeed. Nothing in life ever comes easy and perseverance is the corner stone of any success story. In the words of Winston Churchill, 'kites fly high against the wind - not with it.'"

**Angelo Xuereb is Chairman and C.E.O. of AX Holdings Ltd** For further information about *Angelo*, the Autobiography, kindly visit [www.angeloxuereb.com](http://www.angeloxuereb.com)

**'Angelo' Book can be purchased from The Maltese Herald by ringing the Office on (02) 9637 9992 or purchased through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).** All proceeds from this book will be donated to charity.



Angelo supervising construction work



Angelo Xuereb appointed Mayor of Naxxar