

Case Study

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D2NA Case Study

“*ActionCOACH has helped me control and drive the business forwards*”

D2NA provide IT support services to businesses across the West Midlands and the UK. It was started six years ago by Graham Doyle who had worked in IT support for a number of years. He had a good start when some large clients came on board and he reached a £250k turnover after three years. Then he merged with another small company which took the number of staff to six.

This merger prompted Graham to look closely at the business and decide what he wanted to do with it. As he said, “Although the business was healthy I now had more staff relying on me. This made me realise that to grow a stronger business I needed to learn some new skills. We were great at IT and customer service but didn’t know much about running a business. For example, sales and marketing was something I didn’t have a clue about.”

At this time D2NA moved into new offices and while meeting other tenants Graham came across a ActionCOACH business coach. Graham had never heard of business coaching before but after talking to the coach he realised he had what he needed. “The coach showed me he had the business knowledge and skills I lacked, such as sales and marketing.”

However, as a small business the cost of coaching initially seemed out of their reach. But his coach helped Graham get some funding that contributed towards his services. As Graham stated “The grant was really helpful but if I knew then what I know now I would have gladly paid it all to secure his help!”

Graham and his coach began meeting once a week and the first area they tackled was sales and marketing. This was the vital starting point for growing the business. His coach encouraged Graham and his team to work out the company’s core vision and values to set the base line for all the marketing messages. As Graham said “It was a really empowering process for us all. It gave us direction and a clear message.”

His coach then worked with Graham to raise the companies profile amongst local businesses. This included attending networking events. As Graham remarked “The idea of networking filled me with dread but with my coach’s help I learned how to get the most out of them. Now I love networking and have the confidence to present to groups of people. He pushed me out of my comfort zone and it was the right thing to do.” This sums up a key benefit of working with a coach. As Graham said “He pushes me to get things done I would never have tried before. But he does it in a very subtle and supportive way.”

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His coach also introduced Graham to the importance of measuring all the key variables in the business. This reflects the ActionCOACH '5 ways' model and covers everything from leads and conversions through to margins. Although much of this information was available in the business Graham didn't know what he should be asking for. "My coach and the ActionCOACH structured methodology

enabled me to ask the right questions. This led to a strong understanding of how the business worked."

Understanding the key variables empowered Graham to make changes to drive growth. For example many small adjustments to the way the business worked led to clear margin increases. "This meant that my coach has paid for himself along the way without us having to do very much."

Graham and his coach have been working together for over two years now and the numbers say it all. D2NA's turnover has doubled and the work force has increased by 60%. Graham is adamant that coaching has been the key reason for their success. For example they now have a dedicated sales and marketing person who Graham says he couldn't have employed before. "I didn't know what skills to look for, so couldn't have found the right person. But my coach has enabled me to do this and we now have more leads than we can deal with!"

Over the time they have worked together his coach has shown Graham how to systemise many areas of the business. The culmination of this has been the recent ISO9001 Accreditation D2NA received. This means that any new employees can quickly get to grips with their roles and responsibilities and still deliver the high level of service the company is known for. Also it means that the business is easier to run and more attractive to possible buyers. As Graham stated "The systemised approach means that anyone can run the business and gives me more options for the future."

Overall his coach has pushed Graham to spend time working on developing himself and his business. This has proved to be vital. Before meeting his ActionCOACH, Graham worked hard in the business and didn't spend enough time on the business. As he said "I am now in full control and driving the business to improve and grow. This also means that even when we are really busy the team's mood is positive as everyone knows it's manageable."

In conclusion Graham feels that coaching has been invaluable in enabling him to fill the gaps in his skills and knowledge. He believes the ActionCOACH theory of 'Working harder on yourself than the business' has made him a much stronger business manager. Plus he has encouraged others in his business to get coaching which means everyone is striving to improve. Graham enthusiastically said "Every business that is serious about growing should have a coach. It's an exhilarating and worthwhile experience."

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