

## Case Study



“ *ActionCOACH makes perfect sense to this entrepreneur* ”

When Victoria Williams began working with ActionCOACH Rob Pickering in late 2010 her main objective was simply to master the skills she felt she lacked. However, Rob has helped her achieve much more than that. Today, her business is on a major path to growth and she's taking on some of the biggest translation agencies in the UK – and winning!

#### Background

A highly experienced British Sign Language (BSL)/English Interpreter, Victoria set up terptree in 2006. The interpreting agency based in Berkshire, is the place to go for services for Deaf people. Her clients include hospitals, local authorities, police, courts, charities, Deaf people in the workplace and many more.

She picks up the story: “When I established terptree, I knew my profession inside out but I didn't necessarily know about running a business. This didn't matter for the first few years but as the business grew it became more of an issue. I prioritised the things I felt comfortable with, but other important areas, that I had little knowledge of, such as finance, were much more of a challenge.”

#### Meeting ActionCOACH

Then in 2010 Victoria met Rob at an event and heard about the ActionCOACH approach. She felt he would be perfectly placed to help her: “I loved the fact ActionCOACH operates a very flexible structure and looks at every aspect of your business, systematically, one element at a time.”

However as Rob got Victoria looking at her business in more detail she realised that terptree was not making as much money as it could be. Her overheads were too high and some of terptree's contracts could be more profitable.

Victoria again: “Although this wasn't great news to hear, Rob didn't simply highlight lots of bad news, he was equipped with the knowledge and techniques I needed to get more financial control in place. He made me feel full of confidence that my fundamentally good business could be even better and that I was able to make it happen.”

#### First Improvements

With Rob's support Victoria looked at every aspect of the business. He helped her get her regular reporting and KPI's established, improved the processes for credit control and he helped her downsize numbers of staff, reducing the office overheads. Victoria also outsourced the financial aspects of the business so that they are now professionally handled and prioritised.

Victoria continues: “Rob stopped me spending time on things that weren't taking the business forward. He also made me take a long hard look at all of our customers and reconsider which projects we should be working on. It was certainly a challenge, but one that I was ready for!”

#### More Customers

Having identified the contracts where her business makes money, Rob then helped Victoria think about how to attract more of those clients. Under his guidance she has set up a referral scheme, as a lot of work comes in this way. She is also revamping the business' website and she measures where every business lead comes from, and the cost of generating that lead.

Rob Pickering

01183 400 351  
07929 351 244

robpickering@actioncoach.com  
actioncoach.com/robpickering

Spindlewood House  
Whitchurch Hill  
Reading, RG8 7PG  
South Oxfordshire

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Still with the focus on business growth, Rob has helped Victoria come up with a money back guarantee. This is rooted in 5 service standards, in which the business will fulfill, if not offering a money back guarantee. These really appeal to the company's customers, especially universities who are incredibly sensitive about service as Victoria explains:

"When universities buy from you they are committing to a contract that will span the students' time at the university and much of the relationship

will be over the phone, so they really have to trust you. It's a big leap of faith but our service guarantee is a real reassurance."

### **More Staff**

Importantly to help ensure it maintains its standards and meets its expanding customer base, terptree has also ramped up its interpreter recruitment so that the business has more choice and can fulfill bookings faster and more effectively.

Under the new regime terptree's financial reporting is now really strong. In fact in April, Victoria noticed a few discrepancies in the reporting and was able to take immediate action. "Before the new financial measures were in place, things like this would have gone undetected, but now these things are spotted immediately."

### **More Time**

Victoria is understandably pleased: "We're now working much smarter. I have a more robust, organised, and profitable business. We're making more money with fewer staff - and I'm making much better use of my time."

This is important for Victoria as she balances running terptree with a young family. She has a 17 month old son and is expecting her second shortly. "This time round I will be able to go off on maternity leave for at least three months which I absolutely could not do with my first child."

Indeed, Rob has helped Victoria maintain a great work life balance. She runs the business while working from home and she only works two days per week. Such remote working means communications with her two other staff members are vital. Again Rob has helped Victoria with this.

"ActionCOACH really focuses on developing the team as well as the business owner. Everyone has input into the business. I've taken care to ensure they know what we're doing and why and I really encourage their ideas. With Rob's help I have developed a five year plan which has been formally presented to the team. Their input and buy in moving forward will be really important."

### **The Future**

The five year plan will see the business grow by a further 500% - which looks well within reach. Indeed terptree is already making inroads into that plan and has just won a large contract in a competitive pitch against one of the biggest translation agencies in the UK.

"I now have the confidence to know that I am more than capable of winning contracts like this. I know terptree is an excellent business and that I have the skills to move the business forward. It's an incredibly powerful feeling.

"We're not chasing an abstract vision" Victoria continues. "We have steps and targets and we know how we're going to get there. We've got the systems in place and the confidence to take on much larger competitors and, thanks to our incredible levels of service and quality, win!"

To see what ActionCOACH can do for your business call or email Rob

**01183 400 351**  
**07929 351 244**

[robpickering@actioncoach.com](mailto:robpickering@actioncoach.com)  
[actioncoach.com/robpickering](http://actioncoach.com/robpickering)