

## Case Study

### A Strategic planning and market positioning exercise

Allan Webb Ltd, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

#### Synopsis

Allan Webb, a leading provider of technical documentation and parts management services to the defence industry, embarked on a strategic review and training exercise facilitated by Douglas Grieve of Grieve Strategic. As a result the management team leveraged the core strengths of the business to diversify its services and broaden its customer base, whilst maintaining focus on core activities. The team is now building a platform for continuous and sustainable growth.

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##### Company background

Allan Webb is a leading provider of technical documentation and parts management services to the defence sector. This specialist defence work has been the backbone of the business for 40 years, but has become increasingly competitive as supplier numbers continue to reduce in favour of larger supply contracts. Allan Webb also provides document scanning and management services to other sectors.

##### The business challenge

The exposure to large defence contracts stimulated the need for the business to diversify its services and broaden its customer base. Therefore an in depth approach to business planning was required to review current activities with an emphasis on service development and market positioning. The process, involving and engaging the whole management team, would aim to redefine the key objectives of the business for the next 3-5 years.

##### The solution and process

Business Link Gloucestershire had completed a “Business Performance Diagnostic”, which built a 3<sup>rd</sup> party profile and made some key observations. This was the stepping-stone to provide funding and secure the services of an appropriate consultant to facilitate a team-based project. Business Link put forward three consultants with experience in this area. Allan Webb chose to work with Douglas Grieve of Grieve Strategic, an independent consultancy that specialises in strategic planning.

##### The programme

The programme commenced with individual management interviews followed by a business analysis and tailored workshop preparations. A two-day “Strategic Planning Workshop” was the core activity and amongst other areas covered:

- Verifying the purpose and intent of the business.
- Internal strengths & weaknesses; external opportunities & threats.
- Competitor analysis and market positioning.
- Defined objectives with strategies and action planning.

The workshop activity ensured that all participants were included in the ensuing debates. Facilitation involved the use of visual models to provide an element of training and stimulate opinion forming. All discussion points were recorded on flip charts and latterly written up in a workshop notebook.

This process inevitably highlighted areas requiring additional attention, which were tackled in follow up workshops on “Innovation”, “Sales Development” and “Profitability Scenarios.” These workshops resulted in new ideas being developed for services and sales routes and also explored how the business would adapt to accommodate such changes.

John Hardcastle, Managing Director of Allan Webb: *“The workshops really helped us to focus on where we wanted to be as a company and our core strengths, which was exactly what was needed.”*

Alex Moreton of Business Link: *“We were really pleased that Allan Webb benefited so much from the training and then went on to fund additional management training themselves. Sometimes businesses need to be able to step away from their normal procedures and try something new as it opens up fresh opportunities.”*

#### The results

The business has not only maintained focus on their core activities to ensure continuity of key accounts, but also now has the confidence to develop and expand their services into new areas of opportunity.

Allan Webb has increased staffing by 42% since the training commenced and expects a similar increase in turnover to follow reflecting the newfound focus of the management team.

Alex Moreton: *“We can really see how the company has gained from the project, they are going from strength to strength and growing new areas of the business.”*

John Hardcastle: *“We are very glad that we became involved in the project. It has given us new goals and clear strategies and now it is up to us to make the business the best it can be.”*

There are plans to continue with this training programme to ensure that momentum is maintained and the results are evidenced through enhanced financial performance.

#### Additional information

If you would like to find out more about Allan Webb Ltd and how this training programme has changed their business outlook then please contact them on 01453 824581 or visit their website [www.allanwebb.co.uk](http://www.allanwebb.co.uk)

Douglas Grieve of Grieve Strategic has specialised in developing sustainable strategies for aspiring businesses. If you would like to find out how your company could benefit from a fresh approach please email [doug@grievestrategic.co.uk](mailto:doug@grievestrategic.co.uk) or call 01608 651644.