

Case Study



“ *A Fresh Direction with ActionCOACH* ”

FMW recycling helps businesses dispose of their electrical waste by shredding electronic equipment. Customers include SMEs and multinationals through to hospitals, schools and government departments – indeed any organisation which needs to comply with the WEEE directive (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment).

Despite its clear market niche, Helena and Paul Dunne who took over the business in 2007 found they were not clear about where the business was heading or how to get there. The husband and wife team were overwhelmed by the day to day to look beyond it. Then in June 2009, Helena discovered ActionCOACH, Sally Rainbow Ockwell and everything changed.

Helena picks up the story: “It was during the recession and I had decided to set aside 5 minutes of my time everyday to answer cold callers, read marketing emails etc and it was at this point that I took a call from Sally.

“During the conversation Sally asked me what percentage of time we were spending in the business rather than on it. I picked up my ears as I realised we were hardly working on the business at all and we needed to be. We needed to be working with Sally!”

Sally meets with FMW Recycling once a week for a one-to-one coaching session and once a quarter she spends a whole day with the couple helping them plan the next 90 days and set business goals. Helena explains: “It is fantastic; we cover everything from the fundamental steps of running a business through to putting strategies in place, marketing, sales and staffing.”

One of the big challenges for business owners is extracting themselves from the day to day so that they can focus on the bigger picture. To help Helena and Paul do this Sally got them to examine how they were spending their time and to then delegate many of the admin duties such as invoicing and the legal WEEE directive documentation.

She also helped them systemise the business by pulling together documentation for all the routine procedures. The result is a hand-over document which Helena and Paul have given to staff, in particular to the operations manager.

“This has got him more involved in the business, which is more rewarding for him,” says Helena, “but it also means we aren’t bogged down in the detail. We can delegate more.” As part of this process Helena and Paul have also more clearly defined the various roles in the company.”

“We have just taken on a financial manager, the role was always there, but Sally helped us clearly define it, like all the other jobs in the business. This means we all know what we are doing and when we should be doing it.”

The freeing up of Helena and Paul’s time has helped them focus on new business generation. Under Sally’s guidance they deploy a real mix of marketing methods and test and measure absolutely everything. This means they can focus more time and effort on the things that work.

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“Testing and measuring is really new to us!” Helena comments: “Quite simply we didn’t do this before, we didn’t know where business was really coming from.”

How things have changed. Today by logging everything onto a 10x10 strategy devised by Sally, Helena and Paul now test and measure every marketing strategy from cold calling and e-marketing to advertising and networking. They identify how many leads come through and how many of these turn into hot prospects, and then into actual business.

“We can now see what works best for us and adjust our expenditure accordingly. For instance we have found that networking more than pays for itself but that some other methods are less productive. As a result sales have increased by 50% - it is fantastic and all thanks to Sally.”

Indeed Helena has had to recruit more staff to keep up with the new business they are generating. Helena continues: “It is super, before ActionCOACH we were just a team of three, but now we are a team of seven and Paul and I actually have the time to plan our business future. Things are really motoring. You can just feel the buzz in the business, which in this climate is saying something!”

While it is exciting to grow the business, a growing team can bring with it additional management challenges, but Sally has helped with this too. Helena has put in place a meeting time with the staff to discuss any issues/news of the week. “We also have a daily huddle, adds Helena. “At some point during the day, we all stand up behind our desks and say anything that’s on our mind, for example, last week someone said – *the towels need changing in the bathroom.*”

Whatever the problem the weekly meeting and daily huddles have really boosted staff morale within the company and brought the best out in all the staff. Helena comments, “It is so much more fun to work here now, no more doom and gloom, it has helped us tremendously.”

Sally has also encouraged Helena and Paul to have a one-to-one meeting every week to go over targets and any business issues they are facing.

Helena explains, “This has really helped us as a couple running a business together. Before we would just randomly interrupt one another, which as you can imagine, can be very irritating especially when one is in the middle of something. Now we’re much more business-like, we plan, and formally meet to discuss how we’re doing. We have the time and techniques to see the wider picture.”

The main reason the couple took on their ActionCOACH Sally, was to gain a sense of purpose and grow the business and they have; the growth over the past months has been incredible, turnover has increased by 52% to and customer numbers have increased from 30 to 42.

However, all this growth has been matched by a much more orderly business. Everyone knows who’s doing what, they have a plan, a vision and a route map to get there. “Ultimately, we want the business to run without us and I really believe we’re on track to achieve this. Paul and I feel privileged to have Sally on board.”

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