



Case Study – Superstar Components

May 2014

<i>Sector:</i>	Manufacturing, ecommerce
<i>No of employees:</i>	10
<i>Turnover:</i>	£3m (2013)
<i>Location:</i>	Lincoln
<i>Growth Manager:</i>	Coral Willcox
<i>Service used:</i>	Business Development Coaching



Snapshot – impact of GrowthAccelerator

- A detailed plan of action that has transformed the company's management structure, key processes and prepared for growth
- The recruitment of an Operations Manager and three new employees and the purchase of additional premises
- The confidence to invest in equipment and bring manufacturing back to the UK from Taiwan and in a new generation e-commerce platform.

About

Set up in 2006 by cycling enthusiast Neil Wilkinson, Superstar Components sells mountain bike parts by mail order. It buys high quality parts, from brake adaptors to bashrings, hubs to hydraulic hoses and seatposts to saddles, from factories around the world, retailing them more cheaply than similar branded products direct to customers via its website.

The business challenge

Neil's entrepreneurial flair and commitment to fellow cyclists to deliver great products at sensible prices had seen the company grow at around 40% year on year. But there came a moment last year when he recognised that continuing on this trajectory could well expose the fact that 'stuff in the background wasn't right', a situation he knew might also scupper a plan he was considering to start manufacturing parts himself, in a bid to overcome problems caused by the long lead times of overseas suppliers.

How GrowthAccelerator has helped

Growth Coach and keen track cyclist Andy Aldridge arrived at Superstar last March to find a slightly sceptical Neil - who admits he's far more interested in engineering challenges than financial spreadsheets. 'We used the Orbit tool to prepare the business for growth over the next four to five years,' says Andy. 'Neil was really pleased with the detailed plan of work that came out of this, which closely reflected what he was thinking.'

The business now has the infrastructure in place to unlock growth, without risking its hard-won reputation, and the clarity to make significant changes, such as closing a sister business selling branded products. It also has a Managing Director freed up by this decision, the recruitment of an Operations Manager and more productive employees to focus on the future rather than just the day-to-day. Two more changes are set to have a big impact on this future: an all-new website platform with a smarter sales process and an investment in new machinery. This means the business can design and manufacture some of its own products, taking control of cost and quality – and cutting lead times from months to minutes. Weekly sales of these new parts were expected to be around 5 to 10. In fact, sales hit 300 within two weeks.

'GrowthAccelerator is not about paperwork and jumping through hoops, it is about someone with skills and knowledge and a different perspective getting to know your business and getting you to justify what you are doing to make sure it's the right thing,' says Neil. 'Instead of making it up as we go along, we now have a precise plan based on substance rather than being plucked out of thin air which means we appreciate the ramifications of every decision and are better prepared as a result. I found Orbit to be a very helpful tool and will continue to use it to see if we are where we said we'd be and, if not, why not.'