



Re-establishing Growth at Instem LS

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Phil Reason, CEO

Background / Challenges

Instem is one of the leading providers of information solutions for drug and chemical development globally. They work with most of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, as well as the smaller, often faster moving companies that support them or aspire to be the GlaxoSmithKline of the future.

An unexpected customer contract termination and a sudden economic downturn in the pharmaceutical industry put a significant kink in the company's progress. It was clear that the company needed to get back on its growth trajectory and that this required a further period of superhuman effort from a team that had already experienced a five-year period of constant and significant change. People were convinced that the team just couldn't raise its performance any higher.

Instem, was, however the leader in its highly specialised global market. It had the best products, a strong customer base and an exceptionally experienced team – it 'just' needed to find the way to step up yet another level, to be re-focused and re-energised.

Solution

CEO Phil Reason explained, "We needed to find a new external partner, one that could help remove some self-limiting beliefs, to go beyond the good support we'd already had from other suppliers and to convince the team they were capable of running a four-minute mile when they felt like they'd just completed a marathon. Strong departmental teams existed but there were opportunities to create a more unified company, to further increase our client focus and to improve our creativity and entrepreneurialism".

He decided to explore a range of external partners and attended one of GKPSYP's breakfast briefings where he learned more about their approach. He formed a small team, who attended a New Impetus open programme as a pilot exercise. The pilot team came back from the programme with a very firm view, they believed that it provided exactly what was required – a burst of positivity, energy and drive, together with the tools to improve performance and productivity.

The management team witnessed the effect on the pilot group and decided to make a substantial impact on their business by placing every member of staff through the programme.



"We wanted to make an immediate but sustainable impact on our business and we realised that if we were going to do it properly that we needed to include everyone, not just 10%," stated Phil. "It was a serious investment, but I have no doubt now that it was the right decision - you only have to look at our business performance and our staff and customer satisfaction measures to prove it. "

The entire Instem team – from receptionist to CEO, including all of the staff in the USA - participated in the New Impetus programme, thereby creating a common language and set of experiences as well as a shared vision for the future. Participants learned how to take ownership of the business' performance, to view the future positively and to understand how to invigorate their working day. The team began to work as a team.

Outcomes

As a result, the business re-established its growth pattern. Customer satisfaction scores improved, as did staff satisfaction measures and financial performance. The team embarked on a programme of sales growth underpinned by a focus on existing customer development using the positive energy that had been released by the programme.

The market continued to be turbulent, and servicing the debt from a share buy-back was an added challenge - but the Instem team, newly confident and positive, overcame these challenges and continued with their mission to stabilise and grow the business.

Phil believes that the GKPSY programme has made a significant impact on his team's performance – "People's resilience and robustness in the face of financial pressure has been fantastic – like all businesses, we have had to make some tough decisions but I genuinely feel that our team have understood, and have worked with us to build this company in to the successful enterprise that it is today"

"We wanted to create strong, positive, long-term relationships with our customers and we recognised that our people need to be capable of delivering this and sustaining it over time. The GKP programme has enabled us to create an environment of positivity and performance under pressure"

Figures

The Instem business goes from strength to strength, fuelled by its commitment to its customers and staff. In early 2003, when the GKP programmes started, the business had just experienced a 7% decline in revenue and a 128% decline in profitability. Since then revenue has grown every year, last year by 13% to £7.4m with a 73% profit growth to £1.5m

Staff satisfaction scores have improved every year since the programme began – up 19% overall.



In conclusion

"We are an ambitious company and we need to attract and retain the type of people who thrive on opportunity, and who are willing to take calculated risks to deliver the best products and services to our customers – the New Impetus tools have developed those skills for our people"

"I firmly believe that the GKP intervention has been a key part of our success as a business, our people have experienced enormous change, embraced it and are now thriving on it."

Graham Keen adds, "The Instem team deserve every bit of their success. They have shown courage, made bold choices and worked hard whilst keeping their goals and values clearly in mind. They achieved an extremely impressive business turnaround – they took on a fragmented business in a turbulent market and have created a strong forward-focussed enterprise. It has been a joy to help equip them for this change – by providing the tools to release people's energies and talents and the resilient positivity that has allowed them to perform in demanding circumstances."