

S Knights Recruitment

Business Background

S Knight Associates is a recruitment agency specialising in Welfare to work and Work Based Learning sector with a key focus on Employability and Skills.

Their customers are predominantly Private Training Providers, FE Colleges, 3rd sector and Charitable organisations.

The business, which was based in 2013, is based in Olton, Solihull, and currently employs 6 members of staff.

Introduction to Transformation for Growth

The business had been focussed on establishing itself, and as a result had not previously accessed business support prior to engaging with The Transformation for Growth project.

They became aware of the support through as a result of an Aston University employee forwarding them information about the project. This provoked interest, partly because the business recruits into government-funded training programmes and wanted to know more about this area, and partly to develop the tools needed to grow.

The good reputation of Aston was also a positive draw to the business.

Activity within the Project

As this was a relatively recent start-up much of the discussions with the Business Engagement Manager focussed around various aspects of developing a business – profit and loss, learning the right terminology, the life cycle of the business, assessing risks etc. Those discussions have been ‘the most valuable part’.

Through the project the business has used business modelling tools, and is more aware of issues to think about relating to business growth, and of the potential risks facing the business.

The owner completed Receptivity for Change, which they found interesting although they had already reviewed many of the areas the questionnaire highlighted.

Find out more

S Knight
81 Warwick Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7HP
www.s-knights.co.uk

Visit: www.thetransformationproject.co.uk

Contact: Dr Michael Butler

Supported by:



+44 (0) 7919 926362

info@thetransformationproject.co.uk

Discuss co-applying for grants and ideas for impact

Impacts

- Due to time constraints, recommendations have not yet been put into practice, but the owner realised that he now needs to step away from the business a little, to think about strategy, rather than being constantly busy with day-to-day operations. The discussions were credited with clarifying future steps to improve the business: 'I knew something had to change, it was figuring out what those changes were'.
- The owner is thinking more about the structure of the business.
- The focus for planning has changed slightly, from thinking about recruitment as driving growth to focus more on profitability. The project encouraged him to go through the thought processes which gave him the confidence to do so.
- There is greater engagement in terms of meeting with employees, talking about growth, and explaining what his thinking is, and he is more willing to consult the staff to a greater extent – 'I know I've changed, but I don't know if I'm executing things as well as I should. Ask the team!'

- In the longer term, when the focus has shifted more towards strategy than operations, they may recruit a mentor or non-executive director.
- The business has engaged a new marketing company, to look at different approaches
- Both The Transformation for Growth and other Aston support programmes changed the owner's attitudes to risk and growth 'massively'.

Summing up the impact

'Recognising the importance of working on the business as well as in the business.'

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