

**WORLD-LEADING IDEAS AND INNOVATION, FOUNDED
ON ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP, FROM RESEARCH TO APPLICATION**

HR101

Business Background

HR101 is an HR consultancy and support for SMEs. They take clients on a retainer basis, with different levels of subscription giving a variety of HR support services.

The business was formed in autumn 2013 by a merger between the businesses of two owners, specialising in business psychology and human resources, respectively.

The business is based in the Birmingham Research Park, Edgbaston, and is operated by the two owners with support from freelancers as and when required.

Introduction to Transformation for Growth Project

The business is positive, but wary, towards using business support - although they have previously obtained grants, mentoring support and attended seminars, events and networks to develop their skills and provide business referrals.

Engagement with the Transformation for Growth followed the business attending a networking event. The business was attracted by the one-on-one assistance offered: 'it was not just a workshop, but very bespoke - there would be time invested in us'. They were looking for signposting and suggestions - 'not a plan, but a confirmation that we were going in the right direction, and ideas for how to achieve that' - as well as more specific advice on marketing.



Activity within the Project

The Receptivity for Change Toolset was praised as effective at clarifying issues and raising questions which had not occurred to them.

The workshops on marketing and strategies were also valuable in helping them to understand their core competencies and refocus their business niche; the chance to network and discuss issues with other owners in a similar position was also seen as effective.

Discussions with the Business Engagement Manager helped them 'tweak' and clarify their initial ideas about targeting, and gave them new directions to potentially pursue (which they have not had time to do yet). This support helped them to understand what markets and areas to target or investigate further, and which could be discounted as too specialised.

Find out more

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Discuss co-applying for grants and ideas for impact

Impacts

- The owners' attitude towards management has changed – they are now more organised and systematic, giving the business more structure, and a heightened awareness of the requirements for progress and growth. This includes making more use of data as intelligence, going beyond a simple SWOT approach to implement CRM software, to track referrals and leads, and total spend. This then feeds back into marketing plan, using actual customer behaviour to better focus their efforts.
- They obtained a Growth Voucher, in order to get support on planning.
- The project supported the business and clarified that the next step required was to recruit employees, as it helped them realise they 'can't do it all' themselves
- The owners are now more aware that this is a business, rather than just people working by themselves: 'we're now aware that people not just flocking because we're there – we need to be more proactive, understand that marketing is important'. The project helped them focus on their niche and how best to market it, and helped them think about identifying their ideal types of customer, including prompting thinking on how to increase the size and value of customers and contracts.

- They are more ambitious, and more prepared to take a risk on investing, as there are now systems and processes in place which will aid in both calculating and achieving returns.
- They are more positive about business support, given the good and practical advice they received from the project compared to their previous use of mentors. 'We walked away having learnt new things, not just regurgitated old stuff: questions were asked that we have not thought of or discussed before. It's a premium level of expertise'.

Summing up the impact

'The programme has given us greater focus – and the desire, motivation and impetus to get on and do it.'

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