

Keeping it in the family

When Adam, Geoff & Beverley Boulter, from family run company Design Systems, met with JFP, they were not your typical client, but as a company they were keen to grow and improve their business practices, so could clearly see the benefit.

Adam explains: I knew that this would be a really new thing for us. Having met JFP at a business meeting, I was particularly interested to hear how they could help us develop a plan, that we could all focus on for the next 5 years but would also enable us to go forward, in all aspects of the business.

Geoff: Prior to this, we had literally traded day to day. If something worked, then great and if it didn't, then we didn't do it again. We knew we were at the starting level and I very much felt that once JFP were on board, that was literally day one of the new business. I knew we had reached a plateau and become a little bit stale. We just didn't know how to take things forward.

Working with JFP has literally turned things around for us.

Adam: Within a family run business there are obviously different goals that you each have and different levels of enthusiasm too. You can often end up getting very frustrated. The planning process at the beginning with JFP allowed us to bring all of this out into the open. This was really very useful, as we then began to focus and formalise where we all wanted to go, both individually and as a company.

They also showed us that there were some very simple things that we could put in place and work on. It would mean that instead of chasing sales all the time, they would naturally start coming to us.

Having put these actions in place, this is exactly what has happened! We now have a proper management system in operation, with all the information we need at our fingertips. Everyone has a clearly defined role, that draws on their particular strengths and they are happy with. There is also a clear line of accountability too. Monthly and weekly meetings are also a regular occurrence. This means there is much more communication between us all and from these meetings we set targets for the forthcoming month.

Beverley: In particular my role has really developed since JFP's involvement. Previously, I really dealt with the admin, but now I am much more involved in the accounts side of the business. We now have an efficient book keeping system, which is allowing us to really get to grips with cash flow and forecasting. This has been really useful for the business. "

Adam: Developing my skills with people who have good quality advice, has been great.

They've literally been there and done it, so you know they are talking with knowledge. I am now much more confident in what I am doing."

Geoff: Before we started working with JFP, it was difficult to imagine what progress we would have made, but after a year we can clearly see that we have come on leaps and bounds. Our turnover is currently up by 30%, but more importantly, the way in which we now operate as a company, our general confidence and the day to day enjoyment all have improved too.

Beverley: I believe JFP have been a real asset to all of us. They have given the company a new lease of life.

Nobody likes change, even if you know you need to make those changes, but JFP have been really patient. They have listened and worked at our speed to make it all happen.

Geoff: It has been a very big commitment for a company of this size to take on board. There will be few companies out there that will have the skills we have been introduced to, especially if it is a family run business. I feel this has given us a much more competitive edge.

We always believed we had a good core business and we had the faith and commitment. but with no formal business training we also knew that there were plenty of things for us all to develop in order to move forward.

JFP have helped us with that. After all, there is running a business and running a successful business and thanks to the help of JFP, we are now definitely on our way to the latter!



A Lesson in Chinese

There is a character in the Chinese language made up of two parts

The upper part translates as **OPPORTUNITY**. The lower part as **DANGER**.
Put together they translate as **TURNING POINT**.

In the Small & Medium Enterprise (SME) sector, businesses pass through these turning points far more frequently than in the corporate sector. So, recognising them and doing the right thing at the right time is a critical skill.

JFP Strategic Planning specialises in helping SME's to improve their chance of doing the right thing at the right time.