

A change of direction

Molly Pipe was the owner of Trinity Engineering, leading specialists in the service and restoration of post-war Aston Martin and Legonda cards, based in Cobham, Surrey. She explains how progressing a business can often lead to unexpected consequences...

"I originally met JFP in 2004, at a time when I was beginning to get frustrated that Trinity was not moving in the direction I had originally envisaged. Having previously built and sold a very successful business that employed 150 full and part-time staff, I was struggling to come to terms with the fact that my strategies, all be it from a totally different background, did not seem to be working. So we decided we needed some external assistance.

We began this by having an initial planning day with JFP at their offices. This was excellent. It was not only really useful, as we clearly needed help to run the business and make it grow, but it was also a great experience. As a management team, it meant we all started to communicate much more effectively.

They were able to draw out issues and help us identify ways in which we could get the business in to better shape. This confirmed some of the areas I knew we needed to improve, as well as highlighting things that I personally should approach in a different manner too. JFP equipped me with some excellent strategies on how to deal with certain issues and it gave me great hope about the company moving forward.

There is logic to doing most things, even in business, but this can sometimes fall down if everyone is not focused. JFP gave us a plan with defined aims and objectives that we would report back on at monthly meetings.

They were also extremely good at working with every level of the business, not just the management side, on both an individual and group basis. This meant it all became increasingly structured for everyone, with a clear direction and greater communication that enabled us to work much more effectively.

One of the key things they instigated was staff meetings; a very simple thing, but imperative if you want to keep all your employees informed and feeling that they are part of a team. Its funny though, in helping the company progress, which we can definitely thank them for, JFP were also instrumental in identifying some radical changes that we could never have envisaged when we had our first meeting with them 4 years ago.

Part of this was the decision that I should no longer be personally involved in the day-to-day running of the business. A tough thing to admit at the time, but now something I know was very clearly the right thing to do. So, in the Summer of 2007, I decided to relinquish my stake in the business by starting the process of a management buyout with the assistance of JFP.

In preparing the company for the MBO, JFP worked as the main facilitator, in particular dealing with the due diligence aspect of the business.

They were particularly good at listening and working with everyone involved to ensure the job got done and the final agreement was what we were all happy with, whilst personally they gave me a great deal of reassurance and confidence throughout the process too. Obviously no one could have envisaged that JFP would have ended up assisting us in the way that they did. Our plans changed enormously in our time that we worked with them, but throughout they were a great support and inspiration that I will remember in anything I am now involved with in the future.

ASTON MARTIN

