



Challenging Times Require New Strategies for Families in Business: Growing Your Business in Today's Marketplace

Ray Attiyah, Founder and Chief Innovations Officer of Definity Partners & Steve Schmitt, Vice President of Operations for Jet Container Company

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In this study presented at the Conway Center for Family Business, Ray Attiyah, Founder and Chief Innovations Officer of Definity Partners, and Steve Schmitt, Vice President of Operations for Jet Container Co., joined forces to illustrate how their companies worked together over the past two years to develop strategies that made Jet Container more efficient and more accountable while improving its bottom line.

Attiyah explained how Definity Partners' unique Run-Improve-Grow business model gives owners a way to be proactive at a time when their instincts tell them to hunker down and be reactive. He asked participants to look at how they run their business now and how they hope to be running it one year from now.

Run-Improve-Grow(RIG) is designed to help owners achieve quantifiable results by examining how they allocate their time. Run includes day-to-day tasks. Improve includes the actions you take to support growth and ensure reliable day to day opportunities. Grow is using new products and pursuing new customers and new industries, not going after existing customers with existing products.

Attiyah stressed that you control your own destiny by transforming what you do to support growth. Unfortunately many companies don't use their time to focus on growth. The top two reasons being their lack of confidence in people and processes. However, if they can overcome those two issues they can reap the benefits, including more time for marketing, more flexibility, and increased productivity and profitability.

Jet Container's Story

Jet Container's Steve Schmitt illustrated just how RIG works by sharing how the model helped improve Jet Container, a 32-year-old family-owned business started in 1977 by Steve's parents, Joe and MaryAnn. The company buys sheets of paper cut to customer spec and converts them into small boxes, jumbo boxes, displays, and long tubes. Jet has one of the largest machines in Central Ohio that can print, die cut, fold and glue all in one pass.

Jet used RIG to overcome challenges in several areas. In the communication area, Jet went from having little employee involvement and no specific goals to having daily huddles, a monthly performance meeting and an employee rewards program. Before starting RIG, employees at Jet "used one measurement board as a coat rack", Steve Schmitt admitted. "We did very little tracking and measuring - evaluating only machine efficiency and did not track waste". That changed to setting plant goals and measuring overall equipment effectiveness, which has increased from 45% to 60% since implementing RIG. Jet also increased its production up-time by 20%, improved efficiency by 7%, and cut waste by 45%. Being able to measure and report

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these successes has been an achievement in itself, something Jet could not do prior to using RIG, according to Schmitt.

In the procedures/processes area, Jet added job cost exception meetings which allow it to identify and correct problems on specific orders, tooling checks, and an action-item list that keeps the company on top of emerging issues. Jet also changed its organizational procedures to get employees more involved by rewarding them for meeting daily and monthly goals and by streamlining its plant layout to save time and increase efficiency.

Final Thoughts

Focusing on growth may sound like a no-brainer but companies often get mired in traditional business practices that can have them tripping over themselves as they try to make changes. Keep these three items in mind so that you can stay focused on growing your business:

1. Have confidence in your people – spend more time working with talented employees who will contribute to your company's success rather than difficult employees, who may drag you down by taking up too much of your valuable time.
2. Look at what went well – Many companies use reports that examine problems rather than successes. Look for benchmarks that will tell you what's working. It's important to figure out how to do something, not just what to do. Also, look for ways to drive ownership to your employees – make them accountable for their contributions.
3. Don't revert back to your comfort zone or "run-mode". It's just as important for you to stick with the new system, even if makes you uncomfortable at first, as it is for your employees.

Presentation Materials Available

Members can obtain a copy of the Ray Attiyah's power point presentation on the Run-Improve-Grow business model by visiting the Members Only section of our website at www.familybusinesscenter.com. If you have questions or would like to know more about this presentation, please contact Nick Williams at Definity Partners, nwilliams@definitypartners.com.