

Case Study

ADVANCED MAINTENANCE Case Study



*“Taking Control
with
ActionCOACH”*

By the time Frank Cleary met ActionCOACH at a seminar two years ago, his business had been operating for 10 years, it had grown and was successful - but Frank didn't feel in control of it.

Frank started his business Advanced Maintenance UK LTD, supplying new boilers and air conditioning units to both domestic customers and commercial clients, in May 1998. For the first 6 years he ran it from his home, where he gradually built the business up with help from his son and business partner, David Jones.

In 2004, Frank moved his business to offices in Theale, near Reading from where the company continued to grow. Frank comments, "With the business growing steadily and moving into the new offices, it was doing well but became harder and harder to manage. From just being a three person organisation at the start, there were now 8 or 9 people and I had no formal training in dealing with employees, finances or planning future development."

As the business grew and got busier so did Frank Cleary. Frank continues: "I have always been hands-on, so when I started the business I had to work on engineering which I knew and the paperwork, which was to some extent new to me. I knew very little about delegation, employee motivation, investment or future planning; so in 2008 I had quite a large business, but not the tools to manage it the way I wanted. I didn't know where I was heading or how to get there without giving myself an almighty headache. I was so busy doing the work that I just wasn't managing the business as well as it could be. I had to take action and after having meetings with several business coaches, I decided on ActionCOACH, and have not regretted that decision."

"I attended one of their business seminars and this is where I met my Action Coach. Their approach seemed straightforward and made complete sense. I liked the way he instantly understood the problem I faced. He talked in really practical terms about office systems and procedures - and I thought yes, this is just what I need."

His coach first focused on understanding where Frank wanted to take the business, his goals and vision. Based on this insight he then helped Frank re-structure and put a fresh business plan together, covering growth targets, employees, delegation and investment. He then helped Frank look at specific aspects of the business to get them systemised and working at their optimum.

For instance a growing business would mean more customers - and in 2008 Advanced Maintenance already had 1500 domestic customers and 600 commercial ones and some commercial customer have up to 170 sites for us to look after - so it was vital to ensure that customer handling was top notch. When his business was small it was easy for Frank to ensure that customers experienced a great level of customer service as Frank was either looking after the customers or close at hand. But this was harder to do as the business grew and his team expanded.

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To combat this Frank's business coach helped him develop flow chart systems around how the business handled all of its tasks. Using this Frank has been able to regulate all of his engineers and it has helped them understand what procedures to follow when taking customer calls.

Frank explains: "We have a data system in place called CLICK; if a customer calls their details are displayed on the screen highlighting their job history to date, so we can

see what has already been done and what needs to be done. Having this system in place together with the flow chart, means any one of my employees can answer the phone and deal with the request. Plus if anyone new joins the team, they know exactly what to do by just following the flow chart."

Frank's team has grown and another priority for him was to find better ways to manage and support them. With Action's help, Frank put in techniques for problem solving. He now has regular team meetings and has created a real team spirit.

"This new positive attitude towards staff has created a different mindset within the company and has really helped individuals develop their potential. Our ongoing training helps the engineers keep up to date with new legislation and new products. Plus we also offer an apprentice training programme, showing commitment to future development, but also providing support for our younger employees."

His business coach also suggested Frank introduce a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) system. This records the performance of the business on critical measures such as sales, profit, time to respond to customer call outs and time spent on the job. This means that Frank can monitor how well the business is doing overall, as well as being able to analyse the performance of each engineer, Frank explains:

"I now employ 25 engineers so it's quite a task keeping track of the jobs they are assigned to. Before we had no formal system in place, but the KPI system now lets me know how they are doing, it identifies who needs extra training and in what area, and how quickly they respond to customer call-outs - all the crucial things that I need to keep on top of."

All of this systemisation has also given Frank some much needed extra time. "I have more hours in the day which is extraordinary when you think that the company is twice as busy now! Time was my biggest enemy, but now thanks to my coach's help, I manage my time far better. I delegate more and have time to think about the business and to plan."

Frank also values having the external perspective that his coach brings: "It is great to have someone on board that isn't involved in the business - after all the onlooker sees all. Thanks to ActionCOACH my business is healthier than ever before and it continues to grow, in fact, it has doubled in size and staff morale is fantastic - and yet it feels really much easier to run than before, which is amazing."

The numbers bear this out. In the past two years, since Frank began using an ActionCOACH profits have doubled and turnover has risen from £800,000 to £2,000,000. "Yet I have never felt more in control," concludes Frank.