

Case Study

Sunrise Medical Case Study



“ My ActionCOACH has been instrumental in taking us to the next level ”

Sunrise Medical manufacture and supply mobility devices such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters as well as many other homecare products. They have been in operation since 1985 and have global sales of approximately £300 million. However, despite providing a great range of own brand and third party products they had begun to see a lack of growth.

Jim Barratt took over the reins of the UK commercial division back in 2008 and wanted to help drive change and increase growth. However, he found that his previous product based background didn't fully prepare him for the sales environment he now led. Also, as Jim said “Several years of upheaval and change had left the teams demoralised and success was hard to find.”

Although Jim hadn't heard of business coaching he was referred to someone from ActionCOACH through a colleague “I could see straight away that the skills and knowledge he possessed and the structured approach was what I needed.”

Jim and his coach have now been working together for over 2 ½ years and they meet every 2 weeks to discuss progress and set objectives. Jim said “My ActionCOACH is a great sounding board and is always challenging me to consider all the facets that drive the business.”

The first 18 months of working together were aimed at building a solid foundation to drive profitable sales. For example, ActionCOACH helped Jim and his team to develop sales tools such as lead generation marketing packs for use by the dealer sales teams. As Jim remarked “ActionCOACH focused us on providing materials that would help support our dealers to pull customers to their businesses, which helped us to help them.”

Jim and his team also attended SalesENRICHED training course “Over 2 and half days we learnt a great deal about focusing our efforts profitably, sales negotiation techniques, improving conversions and importantly it helped team morale hugely.”

ActionCOACH also encouraged Jim to put an incentive programme in place that set realistic targets but still pushed the teams to go that bit further. The programme encompassed sales and customer service which helped bring the two teams closer together. Jim said “we buddied the sales teams with customer services so they now work together to proactively seek growth opportunities for ourselves and our customers.”

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This first period of working together was aimed at stabilising what Sunrise Medical had and increasing efficiency through clear systems and process.

The results were clear. After year on year decreases in profit, the first year of working together saw an increase in profits of 70% with a 25% increase in year 2. Jim remarked “It wasn’t about top line increases at first. We needed to hit the bottom line. We did this incredibly successfully which created a fantastic atmosphere of drive and optimism.”

When the business had firm foundations to build upon ActionCOACH and Jim turned their attentions to driving top line sales. A key element ActionCOACH introduced was the segmentation of customers around a hierarchy of value to Sunrise Medical products. “We also strive to help B class clients become A class by really understanding their needs, the segmentation enables us to focus our energies effectively.”

When Sunrise Medical began to see increased growth, ActionCOACH then assisted with the development of the team. Jim commented “We now have a clear process for recruitment and understanding of roles and responsibilities. This means more people have structured input rather than the ad hoc methods we used in the past. This has led to better quality people in the right positions.”

The teams have also attended advanced SalesENRICHED courses to reinforce and develop the skills they previously learnt. In addition, everyone is more empowered to take responsibility through utilising the ActionCOACH ‘six steps’ model to highlight where improvements can be made. This has led to people utilising the principles of coaching and mentoring throughout the business. “ActionCOACH has now coached a few other executives in the business. The ActionCOACH health check was performed by all senior managers and reported back to the Global CEO.”

The systems that ActionCOACH has helped to implement have enabled growth in other territories including Scandinavia, Germany and Australia, Jim highlighted this “the duplication of what we did in the UK has led to similar success in other territories. It has helped us to efficiently manage and drive growth across the globe.”

Jim believes that the introduction of well planned systems and processes has been one of the key benefits that ActionCOACH brought to Sunrise Medical. The other key benefit, as Jim put it is “drive and optimism, coaching helps everyone stay focused and positive in a difficult trading environment. Our coach is a ‘glass half full person’ and that rubs off on us.”

In conclusion ActionCOACH has enabled Sunrise Medical to stabilise a declining bottom line and then build a business that can now positively grow the top line aggressively on a global scale. As Jim remarked “Our ActionCOACH has easily paid for himself many times over and it has been a pleasure to work with him on taking Sunrise Medical to the next level of growth.”