

Case Study



Safran Office Supplies Case Study

“*ActionCOACH has given me the growth I want*”

Safran Office Supplies was started by Sanjeev and Fran Bakrania in 2007. They provide over 35,000 office products to businesses across the UK through a mail order catalogue and a small retail unit. The business had seen some good growth but it wasn't at the level that Sanjeev wanted to achieve, as he said “I realised I had some limitations, some things I was good at and others I wasn't, so they didn't get the focus they needed. For example, I had no real marketing plans, poor cashflow and little accurate financial visibility.”

So Sanjeev knew he needed some outside help but had struggled to find the right person, as he remarked “I had tried other coaches but they were either too ‘woolly’ in their approach or we just didn't connect.” But when he met a coach from ActionCOACH at a business networking event he liked what he was saying “The ActionCOACH approach is structured and scientific, I liked that clarity.” Sanjeev and his coach began meeting every fortnight and in between his coach was always available for a chat over the phone. As Sanjeev highlighted “He is always there to provide support and reassurance, which is invaluable when you run your own business. It can get very lonely when times are tough.”

They have been working together now for over six months and one of the first things they did was to define clear growth goals. The ActionCOACH ‘5 ways’ model was used to understand what needed to happen to reach the goals. As Sanjeev explained “We worked backwards from the goals we set. So we knew how many leads, conversions and sales we needed to do every month in order to hit the targets.” This led to a clear action plan and constant monitoring of these variables means that Sanjeev knows exactly what they need to do.

Another key area that they worked together on was enabling Sanjeev to control key metrics by monitoring them all consistently. They developed a dashboard that monitors everything from deliveries and leads to margins and cashflow. “This has helped me focus on areas which I didn't before. Like many business owners I concentrated on areas I felt most comfortable in. The dashboard gives me visibility across them all so I have to focus on what's important.”

One key area that the constant monitoring of performance has had a great impact on is delivery efficiency. As Sanjeev remarked “Our delivery errors cost us money and goodwill with customers. Over the time of working with ActionCOACH we have reduced our error rate from 10% to 1.8%. This has had a major impact on the business.”

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This control of all main areas of the business has been supported by Sanjeev doing a time analysis. This identified time that was used unproductively and allowed Sanjeev, with his coach's help, to focus his time on the things that drive profit and growth. "Before coaching I wasted time on things that didn't directly drive growth. But now he really pushes me to get these things done, he makes sure I do it, especially if it's not in my comfort zone."

Additionally Sanjeev can now educate everyone in the office about the 5 ways model and show them how the business is doing against targets. They now have monthly meetings where the figures are discussed and ways to improve considered. As Sanjeev mentioned "It's helped the team work better by focusing everyone towards the goals. I've rewarded everyone by going out for dinner, it's a small thing, but really good for morale."

It has obviously paid off as Jan, Feb and March were record months for them, as Sanjeev said "The first couple of months working with ActionCOACH were all about laying the groundwork, but now it's all come together, it's exploding!"

The growth figures reflect the sound basis the business is now building. The last 6 months, while working with ActionCOACH, has seen an increase in turnover of 35% against a previous average of 22%. When this top line growth is coupled with the increase in business efficiencies Sanjeev can see his goals are now much more achievable. As Sanjeev remarked "We are now definitely reaching the level of growth I wanted for the business."

This growth is reflected in the need to employ more staff. This has been another area that coaching has helped in, as Sanjeev said "We have brought all our recruitment plans forward as we are in a stronger position earlier than expected. For example, we now have many more quotes to get out of the door. I really need someone to help with that."

In conclusion Sanjeev stressed that his coach has easily paid for himself. Also, that the help has covered three key areas;

Firstly, with Sanjeev's personal development "You have to get better for the business to get better and ActionCOACH has made me a more effective businessman."

Secondly, in enabling Sanjeev to have more control over all areas of the business "This means I can drive the growth I want."

Thirdly, by pushing the boundaries and showing what can be achieved, as Sanjeev said "I didn't believe we could go as far as we have, but coaching has pushed me and shown me we can because we are doing it!"

The business still has a long way to go, but Sanjeev is feeling positive about the future and is even looking at making an acquisition. As he stated "We are growing quickly and I know I have a strong base to build upon. ActionCOACH has enabled this and I'm really looking forward to the future."

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