

Business Advisor Programme

Business Case: Chilltech

Trade: Electrical Solutions

Size: 20 plus employees



Background

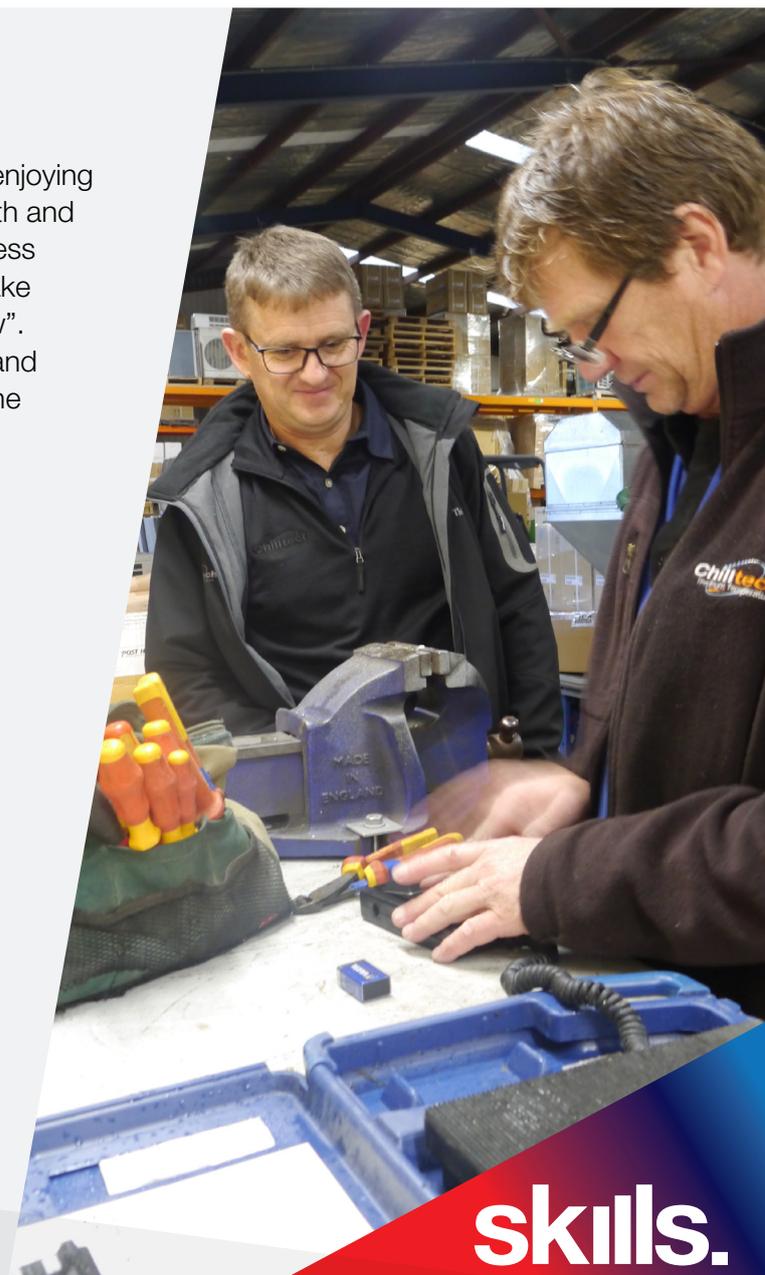
Chilltech opened their doors 21 years ago and is now a well-established business that provides electrical, heating and cooling solutions for both residential and commercial use, throughout the Northland region. With over 25 staff they're a sizeable and successful SME. Coming from an entrepreneurial family, Richard Crum initially started the business in partnership with one other, but 14 years ago he purchased his partner out.

The starting point

At the outset, Richard knew he had a business that was enjoying organic growth. However, he wanted more focused growth and was looking to further develop his leadership skills. Business performance had plateaued and he was unsure how to take it to the next level - "You don't know what you don't know". Richard was considering employing a General Manager and even went so far as to identify 'himself' as holding back the business from reaching its full potential.

Richard was clearly open to outside input and when he was approached to join the research study for the Skills Business Advisor programme, he was already an active member of local business associations such as the Chamber of Commerce. After six months of insight from the programme, Richard was encouraged to participate in the Icehouse Owner Manager programme. He felt both these programmes have complemented each other perfectly and is continuing with both.

Armed with ambition and a desire to learn new leadership skills he was perfectly poised to benefit from his involvement in the Skills programme.



Richard's experience

Richard regularly met with Trevor, a trade based advisor whom he really enjoyed working with due to his practical knowledge in business. Richard went on to describe him as “a great sounding board”. So far he has found the advice provided by Trevor to be tailored to where Chilltech is at as a business. “Trevor is causing me to think more on the business and to start formalising and documenting stuff around mid and long term planning and strategic direction”.

During the course of the research study Richard would say he's had “lots of little light bulb moments” which is a reflection of the stage of business growth Chilltech is experiencing. Already a well-established business, they're focused on fine tuning the engine for even greater success.

Trevor's experience has enabled Richard to gain clarity around the need for better structures, to measure the numbers and to understand the opportunities while placing some mitigation around any perceived risks. Also, he is developing further understanding of how to be a better employer and further valuing staff which is a direct investment back into his business.

Richard is pleased that he is “becoming a better businessman and is now growing his business in a more strategic role”. And in his own words, he “now has an awareness of what he didn't know”, which was an outcome he was hoping for when he became a part of the programme.

Results

Key measures of success for Chilltech:

- Significant increase in sales and steady profit
- Better understanding of financials and need to measure numbers
- Improved structure, business planning and strategy
- Understands importance of valuing employees and providing career progression
- Owner happier and more confident

Their suppliers noticed the transformation as well, citing Chilltech as being their top Northland account and having had their “best year ever”. And from their perspective they're more organised and their staff have stepped it up.

Concluding remarks

An already successful business, Chilltech has had a timely injection of energy. Thanks to some external input and guidance including the Skills programme, which Richard is continuing with, Chilltech has regained some of its original spark. Richard has found a renewed interest in the business and has stepped up his leadership to a new strategic level.

