

Business Advisor Programme

Business Case: Johnson Richards Plumbers

Trade: Plumbing

Size: 2-9 employees



Background

Johnson Richards is an established well recognised small business providing residential and commercial plumbing, drainage and roofing to Whangarei and the wider Northland region.

Tim Golder had been working as a certified plumber/drainlayer in Whangarei for several years with GC Richards Plumbers and then Alec Johnson Plumbers. When the previous owners of these reputable Northland plumbing firms retired, Tim took the next step to buy both businesses creating Johnson Richards Plumbers. With an excellent grasp of the technical side, this was Tim's first experience owning and running a business, with a handful of existing staff from both companies.

The starting point

Tim looked for pointers in running a business and attended local workshops but found they weren't relevant to his trade business. He felt his business was just cruising along and while he could do with assistance, didn't know where to go for the right help.

When Tim was approached to participate in the Skills Business Advisor Programme he had been managing Johnson Richards for four years. Tim was partnered with a Skills trade-based Business Advisor, whom had run his own successful business, to work alongside him like a personal trainer.



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Tim's experience

Tim developed a positive relationship with his Advisor Trevor, trusting his insight into his company. He explains, "Trevor was approachable and constructive. He was from a trade so he understood the realities of working in the trade, running a business and spoke our language".

Tim admits, "I came into this programme somewhat skeptical and with little expectation. However, with a changed and very positive perspective, I am now seeing my business in a new light." Tim finds instead of focusing on just immediate concerns, he is thinking about the future of his business, staff and himself.

And its enabling business growth and scale. "We're now growing, becoming more self-sufficient, and a better business". Leigh, the office administrator, is now more part of the business having taken on more leadership of the day to day running of the office and Tim is more relaxed and confident.

Tim comments "I look at my business differently it has given me the drive to do better on a daily basis". Tim feels he has been given great advice and perspective into how to look at staff, particularly investing in an apprentice. "I've taken on one apprentice and am looking at taking on others".

The results

Key takeout's for Johnson Richards:

- Better organised in business
- Better understand the business financials
- Understands the benefits of employing apprentices and valuing staff
- Significant increase in sales and net profit
- Owner and employees happier and more confident
- Reduced work stress

The wholesaler has also noticed Johnson Richards are more organised with increased sales and are generally easier to deal with and the staff are happier.

Concluding remarks

For Tim, the Skills programme has given him business direction and clarity about how to get there.

Tim explains, "I felt like I needed help before but wasn't sure what help I needed or where to go". With the Business Advisor's help he acknowledges he has grown in confidence and has more ambition for his business with a better understanding about the development of strategies that benefit both him and his employees.

