

Cambridge company Zoom Answer Call has gone from strength to strength, thanks to support from business coaching service GrowthAccelerator. In this article we explore how creating a more focused sales and marketing strategy and prioritising leads has allowed the company to enter a new phase of growth

Company zooms to success via the Growth Accelerator

Chella Heyes, managing director of Cambridge-based telephone answering business Zoom Answer Call has always been hungry for business success. Providing services that range from basic message taking to virtual receptions, customer service, order lines and after-care service lines since 1999, the business has grown to 15 staff and £390,000 turnover under Chella's leadership.

Always looking for new opportunities, in 2012, Chella and her management team set their sights on doubling turnover for the Cambridge business within three years.

"We'd created a well-run business with great clients and loyal staff but we knew there was work to be done to take the business to the next stage and achieve the level of growth we believed we were capable of," she says.

Never afraid to seek the experience of others in her quest to build the value of Zoom's brand and make it a market leader, after a move to new offices in Nuffield Road to prepare for expansion, Chella and team signed up to the GrowthAccelerator service to achieve their next phase of growth.

GrowthAccelerator is a coaching programme, delivered by a national team of business experts who have a diverse range of experience and skills, and themselves have highly relevant experience of running, and growing a business.

These GrowthAccelerator Growth Coaches are matched with the management teams of fast growing, entrepreneurial companies in their area. Growth Coaches equip business leaders with the confidence and the skills they need to springboard their business forward and achieve rapid, sustainable growth.

Delivered throughout England, the GrowthAccelerator programme enables business leaders to discover the real issues that could be holding them back; define the right growth plan; and open doors to world class business experts and networks.

Working with Zoom Answer Call, Kirsten Masson – one of the growth managers based at St John's Innovation Centre who deliver the service for Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough – introduced the company to their growth coach



Chella Heyes,
managing
director of Zoom
Answer Call

"We'd created a well-run business with great clients and loyal staff but we knew there was work to be done to take the business to the next stage and achieve the level of growth we believed we were capable of."

Tina Dulieu – who has considerable expertise in helping entrepreneurial businesses achieve their potential.

Tina worked with Zoom to take a more planned and strategic approach to sales and marketing, and helped them to understand and analyse the balance they gave to certain elements of the business, focusing on selling the most profitable services and developing more targeted marketing.

As a result of working with GrowthAccelerator, Zoom now has a clear business strategy and three year plan. The business has formed an in-house growth team and includes operations and sales managers in the all-important coaching sessions with GrowthAccelerator. As a result, the business is now on track to triple its turnover within five years.

As Chella Heyes says: "This process led us to change the blend of our business. In the past we focused upon providing telephone answering and virtual reception services.

"Now, we aim to have a far greater share of our business focused upon providing added value services, such as in customer services, technical support and order lines. Ultimately, we want to focus upon one market and become the experts in that field."

Growth coach Tina Dulieu added: "The past six months have been revolutionary for Zoom. The senior management team have been central to the work we've done together on developing a growth strategy, sales have increased and targets are being met. Chella has also shown determination to succeed by being open-minded to business development and swift to implement the changes."

The impact of Zoom's collaboration with GrowthAccelerator is also evident on the company's bottom line. Zoom Answer Call recently won the contract to provide telephone services at the hospital of a well known medical client, which delivered jobs for two new staff in the area, and is currently negotiating to provide services to a vehicle chain.

For Chella Heyes, choosing this route to growth wasn't a hard decision. As she says: "In just a short space of time, GrowthAccelerator has helped me focus on analysing the core services we offer our clients, which led us to completely re-design and re-package them and I know that will be a contributing factor in our success going forward.

"We are very excited about what the future holds and will continue to look for opportunities to grow in the Cambridge region!"

For more information on GrowthAccelerator, please visit www.growthaccelerator.com

Local businesses unlock their true growth potential

The national Government-backed GrowthAccelerator has had an impressive first year since it was launched in May 2012 to support businesses looking to double their turnover in the next three years.

Over 8,000 businesses nationally have signed up for the service, and St John's Innovation Centre is already engaged with over 130 local companies looking to achieve this level of growth.

The St John's team of growth managers and business coaches have supported companies in the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough region, helping them to accelerate their growth and avoid costly common pitfalls, supporting many with developing new products, growing their team, or progressing from strategy to implementation.

Working with a growth manager can help companies to identify and overcome their barriers to growth and provide support to improve the quality of a company's financial proposition or help them to develop their team.

All businesses on GrowthAccelerator could be eligible for matched funding up to £2,000 per person for leadership and management training designed to help senior managers of high growth businesses build personal leadership skills. SJIC clients have so far received over £100,000 in grant funding towards training costs.

The national GrowthAccelerator service is designed to support companies who have the ambition, capacity and capability to double their turnover in the next three-five years.

It is part of a flagship government initiative to drive private sector growth in the economy with an ambition to deliver £2bn of growth. It is an England wide service, delivered locally, targeting businesses with high growth potential and the ability to grow by 20 per cent per annum by offering bespoke, intensive 1:1 coaching support to small and mid-sized companies designed around their individual barriers to growth by helping them to:

- Appreciate their true potential for growth and set achievable goals
- Identify and overcome the barriers holding them back
- Attract investment by developing their funding proposition and introducing them to funders
- Stimulate product development, commercialise their innovation and motivate their employees
- Energise their plans with one-to-one leadership and management advice
- Meet peers who've tackled the same barriers as them

The service can support businesses of all shapes, sizes and sectors. With experience helping thousands of businesses to unlock their true growth potential – GrowthAccelerator's impressive coaching pool spans a broad range of expertise including high-tech, life sciences, telecoms, manufacturing, construction, logistics and food.

If you are growing rapidly and want to ensure you achieve your aims, then visit www.growthaccelerator.com to see the wide range of ways in which you can be assisted. For more information and to see if you are eligible for the service call Growth Managers, Kirsten Masson or Penny Lord on 01223 421325 or email coaching@stjohns.co.uk



Growth coach,
Tina Dulieu