

“Feel in Control”

Client Profile

Category:	Small Business Consulting
Industry:	Talent Representation
Age of business at start:	15+ years
Stage of lifecycle:	Maturity
Assignment length:	12 months
Enterprise summary:	5+ employees, 1 owner

This business owner approached us because he wanted to be able to supervise his business remotely. His life circumstances meant that he had to split his time between three different countries and he couldn't do this and still run the business himself.

The first thing he needed was someone to run the enterprise. We helped him identify a candidate within the business to take on the role of general manager (“GM”), but his key concern was keeping a sense of control. He had started the business and viewed it as an extension of himself, and was correspondingly nervous about handing it to someone else.

This is a common problem with business owners and often requires extensive coaching. But there are also consulting options that help the process. Chief amongst these is to establish the systems of reporting and oversight that enable remote governance.

We began by clarifying the relationship between him and his GM: she was to run the business day to day, while he was to act as the “board” to guide and supervise her on behalf of the shareholders (himself). This often sounds strange to people when there is only one owner and a GM, but it is critical to establish the nature of the relationship.

Next we helped the owner and GM to agree frequency of contact and the nature of the interactions, “general catch-up”, “formal meeting” etc. Finally, we helped to establish written approval and reporting structures to provide information necessary for the owner to feel in control. These included approvals for expenditure and updates on performance in key business areas such as finance, sales and production.

We still had to coach the owner through his discomfort in being removed from the business, but this gave him a good base from which to start.

Key Learning: Information breeds confidence.

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