

## Summary

*For most organisations, as they grow, at some point, the people can become the bottleneck to growth. Whatever the strategy, there comes a point when a better understanding of individuals' strengths and motivations can help to clarify the issues and remove the bottleneck. APPLIED HR™ identifies the issues, and provides a solution to help the organisation achieve to the next level.*

## Overview

People lie at the heart of all businesses. Their impact is immense regardless of the size of the organisation. Consider Lehman Brothers: an established business, considered a 'safe pair of hands' for investors, brought to its knees by one employee, despite its huge resources. . At the other end of the scale lies the small business, whose success is inextricably linked to their ability to secure work and deliver well. For every ambitious Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) the people dimension determines the ultimate success or otherwise of the business.

Understanding the business you are in is a key starting point for any entrepreneur. This is not about **what** you are doing: it is about **why**. Being clear about the strategic objectives enables good planning and requires a realistic assessment of the resources required to deliver the plan and therefore achieve the strategic objectives.

It is rare for ambitious SMEs to work totally on their own: they may work collaboratively with other SMEs, or look to expand their own team. Taking each scenario in turn:

## Collaborating with others

Effective collaboration has several complementary elements including:

- ✓ A shared definition of effective collaboration. This ties in with the strategic objective: why are you working in this way?
- ✓ An agreed collaboration plan. Allocating roles and responsibilities and agreeing expectations (outputs and outcomes) is vital otherwise the strategy will not be achieved.
- ✓ An agreed monitoring mechanism. Ensuring that the collaboration is working is an obvious requirement however it requires commitment, time and resources otherwise it simply won't happen.

## Building the team

Having the capacity and capability to deliver is important for many SMEs. Appreciating the fact that no one person can do it all, leads to the natural conclusion that recruiting a team makes sense. Selecting the best candidate(s) requires clarity of roles and responsibilities, key personality traits as well as defined skills, knowledge and experiences need to successfully deliver the role.

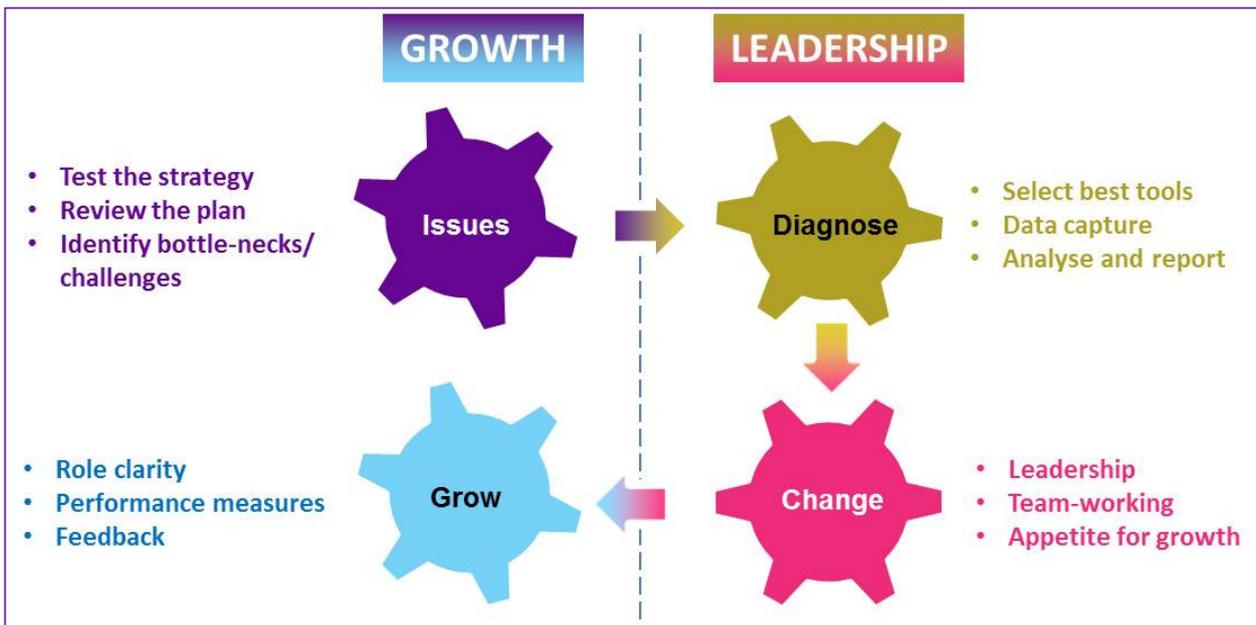
**This is where Applied HR™ fits in.** Whichever option is pursued there are some common requirements around the personal drivers i.e. why does the person want to collaborate/be recruited and what do they bring to the table? Put simply, both options require a Person Specification and Job Description.

Underpinning all of this are the personal attributes of the individual. It is vital that an SME business owner explores these drivers in a pragmatic way. For example, why does X want to collaborate? Is it so that we can both benefit from an opportunity that on our own we could not? Is it more about getting access to my clients through me? Or perhaps they are really a competitor trying to pick my brain!

Only by systematically exploring collaboration as outlined above will the truth come out. When recruiting to the team, the questions will vary, however understanding the personal drivers remains important especially for a smaller SME where an individual's performance has a significant impact on business success.

## Applied HR™ from Ministry for Growth

The Applied HR™ approach is summarised below:-



## The business growth agenda

Understanding the client's business is our starting point: strategy before planning! This allows us to critique the strategy and ensure that the business plan will deliver the anticipated outputs and outcomes.

We blend this with an established personal assessment tool, Strengths Deployment Inventory (SDI®) which explores the personal motivators and how they will play out when things are going well and when the environment is challenging (i.e. things are not going so well!).

People are at the heart of any business whether as collaborators or team members and for individuals to gain an insight into their personal motivators as well as those of their colleagues is invaluable. Understanding motivation helps the organisation/team to identify strengths and (potential) weaknesses and to plan accordingly.

## The leadership agenda

As the business grows there is a greater emphasis on personal leadership skills. The CEO, Managing Director and Senior Directors are often (at least) one step away from the day-to-day operational aspects of the business. Yet their decisions can have a huge impact and they benefit from being aware of their leadership style and its impact down the organisational structure.

Successful leaders know their strengths and weaknesses in terms of how they lead. At the most basic level people follow leaders they trust to have their (i.e. the business's) interest at heart. It is human nature to want to be associated with success however leaders need to work hard to secure a loyal following. The flipside is the need to ensure continuity of the right sort of leadership.

Promotion is the most common way of rewarding excellent performance however care must be taken to ensure that the required leadership skills (or their potential) exist within the promotion candidate. Objectivity is vital here to ensure that the skills will support the organisation's strategy and plan.

In this scenario we blend the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) explores personality types and its impact on others. MBTI helps people easily understand why differences arise at home and in the workplace. It is a framework which helps to build relationships and teams. Providing self-awareness is the starting point for exploring how and why others respond to us in the way they do – in short 'how they tick' – which enables the leader to bring out the best in each member of the team for the benefit of the organisation.

Can you see how this approach can help your business?

To discuss this further, get in touch with Hilda for an initial view on people issues facing your business.

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