



grow

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Manufacturers of Distinctive Decorative Coatings

# SHOWROOM

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Please note - no product sales



# Cemcrete

Cementing a family's  
business success



What they signed up for as a one-year process turned into a 12-year partnership

## Cementing a family's business success

**One day Cemcrete was owned and run by Brian Bendall. The next it was in the hands of his wife, son and daughter.** Cemcrete, a third-generation family business, was founded in 1973 by Brian's father, Graham. In 1995, when Graham passed away, Brian took over the business. Then, in 2008, the unthinkable happened. Brian was tragically killed in a plane crash. While dealing with this personal tragedy, his wife Dee, son Shaun and daughter Jo inherited the family business.

Running any company is tough. For the Bendall family, it was even more so as they were, quite literally, thrown in at the deep end and asked to swim. Although Shaun (then 25) had been involved in the company for a year, on the product development side, Jo (then 23) had just completed her veterinary science degree and Dee was a former landscaper and nursery school teacher. None of them had any experience starting or running a business.

For a year, they struggled to find their feet and make any inroads into the business, which manufactures high-end cementitious products. Then Jo's husband heard about a seminar being run by Grow, an event designed to introduce people to the benefits of business coaching and answer any questions about the process. The family attended and it was there that they met their Grow coach, and started their journey of business and personal growth.

What they signed up for as a one-year process turned into a 12-year partnership that has transformed the family into a slick and strategic business team and seen Cemcrete grow into an ambitious company looking for global growth. Today, Cemcrete's product range includes decorative coatings, screeded floors, cement-based wall products, pool marbelite and waterproofing products.

# A family's coaching journey

**Back in 2009 the Bendall family needed someone to coach and mentor them on what was a rather foreign journey.** Other than a keen enthusiasm to make the business work, they had no business skills on which to build. To ensure they succeeded in their desire to carry on Brian's legacy, the family embarked on a four-phase journey with Grow.

## Phase 1

**When the Bendall family took over Cemcrete the global economy was reeling from the 2008 global economic crisis.** The business was under pressure from a trading perspective and the management team was further depleted when a very senior management team member, the sales and marketing director, had resigned. This meant the business was critically lacking in skills and experience.

"In the beginning we considered bringing a managing director in, someone from outside the company. However, our coach pointed out that we would still have to know what was happening to ensure that the person was doing their job," said Dee. "So we decided to run this business together." Dee took on the role of CEO, Jo took on the sales and marketing function and Shaun continued to work on the product side.

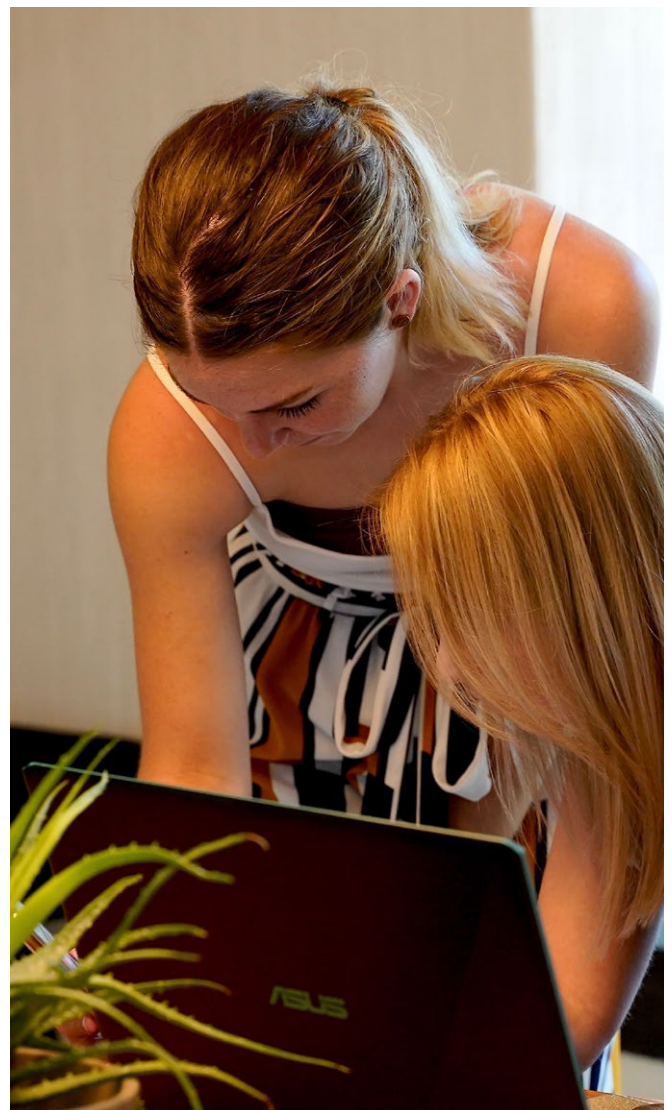
During this first phase, the family was taken through business basics. They were shown how to read financial statements, how to manage a team and how to make tough decisions and act on them. Looking back on that time, Shaun recalled, "Our coach gave us a lot of confidence because we knew someone had our back. This is something we needed at the time. He gave the business and the family much needed stability."

One of the biggest challenges the family were facing at the time was around staffing. "When the financial crash happened, Brian had just died," explained Dee. "The company was facing union issues and a lot of our staff members were rallying against us." The company, the family explained, had a huge loyalty divide. "We were coming in with no experience. We were in charge of people who

had been there for years," said Jo, who understood that the employees did not trust the family to head up Cemcrete.

If the business was to work, the family had to address the staffing issue. And quickly. "I needed to help them make tough decisions. I had to support them and give them the confidence to make those decisions," their coach explained.

The first book that the family was given to read was 'Good To Great' by Jim Collins. The book speaks about getting the right people on the bus, sitting in the right place. During this time, the family decided to reduce their staff complement and only retain the people who wanted to be on this journey with them. Then they started to upskill everyone and ensure that each employee knew exactly what they were employed to do and knew their value to the company. This turned out to be a lengthy journey but, ultimately, it has paid off.



## Phase 2

Once the family had found their footing around the business basics, their coaching process moved onto phase two. **This phase was about getting them to grow into their roles as a management team.** Their coaching was about making sure they were getting financial information every month, and that they read and understood all the numbers.

This phase saw the family set about implementing important management disciplines. The coaching encouraged the family to get into meeting rhythms, including annual and quarterly strategy sessions, and regular coaching sessions. This created greater discipline within the management team. It also helped them to start focusing on where they wanted the business to go. "As our confidence started building and we were getting more experience, we were asked to start setting long-term goals and execute on them. Coaching taught us to work to 90-day plans," said Jo.

This chapter of the coaching was characterised as the phase of management and team building for the family, especially for Shaun and Jo. "Dee plays less of a role in the day-to-day management of the business. So Shaun and Jo needed to get comfortable managing the team, dealing with ongoing staffing issues and have the tough conversations," explained their coach.

## Phase 3

By this stage, the family had started to get on top of the day-to-day operations and had grown in confidence in managing the business. Although Cemcrete was 'doing fine', according to their coach, it was stagnant. "It was not growing. Revenue was almost the same year on year, but because costs were increasing, it meant the profits were falling," he said.

Together with their coach, the family studied the businesses accounts. It was estimated that if they continued on this trajectory the business would no longer be profitable in six years. The family agreed that they had to do something differently. They needed greater energy, focus and drive. As a

50-year-old business, work ticked over, but there was no growth in a tough local market.

At their next strategy session, the team - which included the family as well as Graham Fish, who oversaw the factories, and Dave Rose, head of the national sales team - made the decision to ramp things up and move forward on a new growth trajectory.

Jo and Dave were going to drive marketing and sales. Dave was going to work on building a more effective sales team while Jo was going to bring the company into the digital marketing sphere through developing a social media marketing strategy and redesigning the company website. It was a positive move. Their coach noted that they have had a lot of success with the new marketing campaign and generated sound leads that supported the sales team. "In addition, Dave has proved to be an exceptional sales manager," he said.

While the sales and marketing functions were being ramped up, the team decided to reinvigorate the product development side of the business. They were not only going to enhance and improve their current range of products, they were also going to bring new products to market. "We have not fully seen the benefit of the new products yet," explained the coach. "But they have created some really great products, and that presents some really good growth opportunities for the business."

The boost in energy and focus has resulted in a 15% to 20% growth in company revenue per annum which in South Africa's current market is impressive growth. The management teams' work has reversed the trend and resulted in a turn around in the business.

Although the team are still driving the phase three strategy, they are slowly moving into the next phase of their operations: taking the business global.



## Phase 4

The reality for Cemcrete is that their South African market has essentially been tapped out, and the potential for ongoing growth is shrinking. Recognising this, the family realised they need to start looking to new markets.

There are two areas the business can grow. Locally, some of Cemcrete's decorative products could be suited to the informal market, so Cemcrete is looking to penetrate and grow that base.

But it is expanding internationally that is really appealing to the company. Cemcrete already has small markets in Southern Africa up to Tanzania, but they are now looking to partner with distributors in Australia, Dubai and Europe.

As the company seeks to boost its export sales it will provide further growth for Jo and Shaun as leaders to expand from a local operational to an international business.

The Bendall family are excited about taking Cemcrete to the next phase and are grateful to Grow and their coach for all the help and support over 12 years of learning.

"Things change every day, and we are going through another huge growth phase. Our coach is part of that team, driving Cemcrete forward," said Jo.



A big focus for the family is for us to grow into Africa and the world. That is where the market really is. We have plateaued in this country, so it is a no-brainer for us to focus on exports

## Coach, mentor, team member

When the Bendall family were forced to take over the family business, under extremely tragic circumstances, they needed someone who could guide and support them. **Their Grow coach was just the person they needed in their corner.**

With his help and guidance the family were able to build their skills, confidence and leadership abilities to build on their father's legacy, to grow his business and create a well-oiled and structured team capable of taking the business into a whole new era. It was an evolution of which Brian Bendall would be proud.


Going forward, as Cemcrete expands globally, the family will still value their coach's input. After all, as sales and marketing director Jo Bendall said, "Our coach is part of the team. He is instrumental to Cemcrete's success."

Shaun Bendall, who heads up the product side of the business, agrees with his sister. "Business owners often lose sight of the company in a holistic form. They don't see the big picture and where the business is going, coaching always brings us back to reality," he said.

After 12 years, Grow and the family have cemented a strong bond. Not only is their Grow coach tremendously experienced in business practices, he also brings a great deal of knowledge from his work with other businesses. "I feel like we are part of a team of collective companies, and that coaching is growing us all together. We are all learning from each other," noted Shaun.

The family, however, attributes their success in coaching to the fact that Grow has guided them, coached them and held them accountable as a team. Coaching has helped them navigate the complexities of working in a family business, while urging them to bring their personal strengths to the table in order to grow a sustainable business well into the future.





When things don't seem clear, it's time to **find focus.**

When you're at the top. Everyone's looking to you for the answers. You're the leader, thinker, decision maker, mentor, planner and doer. Sustained growth and scaling up weighs on your shoulders. Yet, so many questions ruminate in your head.

When you are feeling stuck or overwhelmed yet committed to a sea change, you need a thinking partner to help you see the wood for the trees. An impartial sounding board with years in the seat and war stories to share. Don't lose sight of the bigger picture, and don't do it alone.

**Grow. Helping businesses find clarity and the confidence to lead with it.**



The Growth Formula is an easy-to-understand model that sets out what you need to master to build a truly successful, profitable, and enjoyable business.



### You the Leader

This is about your effectiveness as a leader. The success of your business is directly proportional to your capabilities as a leader.

### Setting Direction

This is about disciplined thinking and having clarity on where you are taking your business to, and ensuring everyone in the business is clear and aligned around this direction.

### Winning Team

Your business is bigger than just you. To build a successful business, you need a talented and engaged team of people.

### Operational Excellence

This is about disciplined action to ensure everything is working in your business to allow it to grow without drama.



Build your business with **clarity and confidence.**



## Contact us

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