



grow



TEAM Clothing

Slow and steady can win the race!



Remember the tale of the tortoise and the hare?

The classic tale of 'The Tortoise and the Hare' told by Greek storyteller Aesop, isn't often a fable that successful business owners turn to. In a world where profits are key and competitors are aplenty, it's widely believed that one can only reach their goals faster by acting quickly.

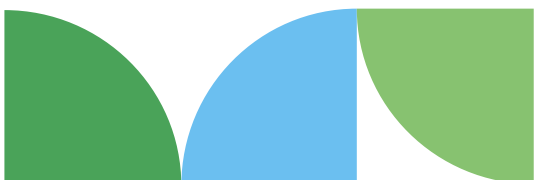
While a forward-thinking, energetic and visionary approach is a successful business strategy, it can fall flat if plans are inappropriate, unsuitable and poorly designed. How then can a business transform dysfunction into success, aversion into adoption, and disruption into order, without losing the race?



There is no stronger environment to succeed in, than a happy one

There's a reason the hare lost the race. He saw the finish line way too soon. He charged full speed ahead but didn't have enough steam under those ears of his. But do you know what the tortoise saw?

He saw his future and committed to getting there, one way or another. He started slowly, ended gracefully, and as the story goes, he won.



Where it all began

Established in 2001 and based in Durban, **TEAM CLOTHING (TEAM)** is one of the major uniform, workwear solutions and promotional items providers in South Africa, specialising in apparel for the petrochemical and quick service restaurant (QSR) industry. The company's conviction in its products is so robust that they give a 100 percent quality guarantee. Still, it's not only the quality of their products they pride themselves on, but their reputation of integrity and trustworthiness.

The company includes five departments, 35 000sqm of floor space over three separate buildings, a seven-member strong management team and a staff of over 40 individuals. Before the COVID-19 global pandemic occurred, TEAM was turning out an income of almost R99-million.

However, like with so many sectors colossally affected by the pandemic, TEAM faced enormous pressure that had different implications on its company. The growing crisis of the pandemic saw the corporation lose one of its biggest contracts, but, TEAM leadership pledged to retain all staff members, despite a large decline in income and profits in 2020.

Grow was by TEAM's side while weathering this storm. Ironically, the company's vision of creating a culture that focuses on employee happiness and work-life balance finally came to fruition during this time. This was a concept that management had been pursuing for many years but had never been able to achieve.



Building actionable plans

Grow first worked with TEAM to assist Gordon Johnstone, the company's Managing Director, in assembling and creating a management team.

At the time, Gordon, a 30% shareholder, wanted to "loosen his reigns" to allow management to lead, expand, and assume greater ownership and responsibility for the business, but was unsure how to accomplish this. Checking over every small detail himself, rather than delegating, meant he was left with very little personal time and his managers with little ownership within their roles.

While there was nothing fundamentally wrong with TEAM's strategy, leadership, critical skills, goals, or overall vision, the business had come to a crossroads in terms of ensuring the right people were in the right seats, doing the right things, while still maintaining an "all for one, one for all" culture.

Grow actively assisted in the implementation of a proactive and step-by-step holistic approach aimed at equipping the company's leaders. This was done by providing them with the tools and guidance necessary to reaffirm their long-term goals, build a stronger leadership team dynamic, communicate more effectively as managers and a company, and ultimately, drive workplace transformation.

Several critical issues were addressed, including the following:

- The need to find solutions that would allow Gordon to confidently step away and work on new products and markets, rather than ensuring the factory's wheels were turning.
- The need for proactive talks at executive meetings to assist leaders in delving deeper and reaching higher to achieve their full potential.
- The importance of developing trust within the management team and between managers and employees.
- The necessity of fostering a harmonious culture - one in which everyone was engaged in and knew their role within the organisation.

- The importance of maximising employee potential and placing people in roles that enable them to thrive, granting individuals authority and autonomy in their job functions.

Gordon credits Grow's coaching method with assisting him in identifying the missing puzzle piece he was seeking - the critical nature of work-life balance - not only for his own personal fulfilment, but also for the personal satisfaction of his workforce. Together with his coach, they discussed how a leadership strategy could enable Gordon to confidently release the reins and develop the company in ways he never imagined.

While working with his coach, Gordon realised he tended to bite off more than he could chew. He prided himself on being involved in every aspect of the business, but felt he was missing out on things he enjoyed. With his coach at his side, he learned the importance of making fewer commitments, but ensuring he followed through 100% of the time.



My coach pushed me and my assumptions, frequently coercing me out of my comfort zone and forcing me to act on issues I would normally complain about or tolerate. I am now making more informed and courageous choices

Gordon was able to find a good balance between work and personal life with the assistance of Grow, allowing him more time to pursue personal objectives and hobbies.

"I went through periods of productivity-driven burnout, where I was reliant on my calendar. I was always convinced that I needed to fix myself and judged my worth by the number of tasks I completed. On the surface, I appeared to be effective, but on the inside, I felt out of sync. Now, I'm the happiest I've ever been - work is more enjoyable and effortless."

TEAM & Grow' collaboration

Gordon explains how he bumped into his Grow coach simply by chance, but ironically, realising they knew each other from their younger days, where both attended the same school.

"I was paddling in Durban harbour when myself and my future Grow coach crossed paths. He explained what he did and how Grow helped other companies scale. I told him that I was skeptical by nature but that I would potentially partner with Grow," says Gordon.

"Not long after, I was competing in an endurance race when another competitor and a close friend of mine mentioned how Grow's methodology and systems had helped his company. Still not quite a believer in the power of business coaching, I decided to collaborate with Grow on a three-month 'trial' period. If I felt there was nothing valuable gained from the experience, we would part ways. No hard feelings, no strings attached."

Gordon says that within a few weeks, he realised there was a lot he could learn from his Grow coach.



Probably the biggest lesson I learned early on was 'accountability'. With my Grow coach constantly ensuring I was on the mark when it came to deliverables, I was better able to manage daily operations and deliver on key metrics efficiently. The second biggest thing was understanding just how crucial effective communication within a company is.

Grow also proved to be essential when COVID-19 struck, helping Gordon and everyone within TEAM understand their roles and drive them towards the company's goals, despite the global pandemic.

"COVID-19 had the ability to sink us. When the lockdowns were first implemented, we had to shut down completely.

All our operations dried up, and very quickly we realised that if we were to survive the storm, we had to grab a lifeline. That lifeline came in the form of designing, manufacturing and selling face masks. We made well over a million facemasks, which saved our business. We were able to keep all our staff, and – better yet – avoid any salary payment cuts. We were down roughly 30 percent in 2020, but in 2021 had a record turnover year."



The Aha! moment

Leadership in the workplace can be tricky to navigate. Good leaders constantly look for new ideas and innovative solutions to move their company or team forward. However, even the best leader stumbles without good morale and a positive working environment.

Since partnering with TEAM, Grow has made various reforms, including strategic planning workshops and leadership training that focuses on influence rather than control. Numerous meeting rhythms were created to promote communication within the leadership team in the form of a weekly cadence, during which managers could truly delve into weekly progress and projections. These meetings provide an opportunity for team members and employees to exchange ideas and information.

“By convening the team at a predetermined time to share and discuss concerns, challenges and goals, we established a pattern and rhythm for people to engage and collaborate, as well as improved social contact between team members”, says Gordon.

Another significant change occurred when the management team’s ideology was shifted away from the belief that the performance of resources and teams was solely the responsibility of those in managerial positions, which previously caused senior members to feel overburdened with work and out of touch with their team.

By the end of 2021, Gordon recognised that the time had come to transition away from day-to-day operations into a more strategic role. Anita Marshall, the current Sales and Marketing Manager, was the ideal candidate. Given her close ties to sales and marketing, Anita had already been collaborating closely with the operational teams. The opportunity would enable Anita to infuse new vitality into the business and build on Gordon’s foundation, strengthening and progressing the day-to-day operational teams into the next TEAM journey phase.

Anita’s promotion created an opening for a new Head of Sales. As with Anita, there was a natural fit and Candace Prinsloo stepped seamlessly into this role.

These leadership changes within TEAM have provided excellent opportunities for Gordon, Anita, and Candace, to develop as leaders in their respective roles and have infused the business with renewed energy and new ideas at the ideal time – as TEAM’s international expansion gained momentum.

TEAM has historically focused on the domestic FMCG market. Still, by developing strong relationships and providing world-class service to their clients, international opportunities in the UK market have opened up and appear to be the perfect fit for TEAM’s growth ambitions in 2022 and beyond.


Thinking forward

To be successful and command the attention you desire, your business plan does not have to be outgoing, brutal, or loud. TEAM exemplifies how solid, consistent and predictable work is always preferable to flashes of brilliance.

TEAM has successfully aligned its aim to create a healthier lifestyle and a happier work environment for all members with the assistance of Grow – and is winning the race!

“I love analogies,” says Gordon, “and one analogy I can liken our experience with Grow to is running a race. Before Grow came on board, it felt like all of us at TEAM were running a race without a finish line. For me, the biggest ‘lightbulb moment’ was finally realising there is no finish line in the race to success. You must keep moving forward at a sustainable pace, power past any speed bumps along the way and keep moving and growing. Now, TEAM sets goals, gets goals and celebrates achieving.”

After three-and-a-half years of coaching, TEAM has renewed the business’s strategy. It was the deliberate, gradual, and consistent application of business principles that unearthed new energy and enthusiasm within the team and today, the big picture is clear and all members understand how their efforts fit into that picture.



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.



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



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