

Business Growth Collaborative Program puts Orion Entrance Control on the path to success

Company Background:

From its humble beginnings out of a garage in 2009, to a 17,000 square foot facility today in Laconia, New Hampshire, Orion Entrance Control, Inc. has become the premier manufacturer of technically superior, architecturally pleasing optical turnstile solutions.

Stephen Caroselli, CEO and Founder of Orion Entrance Control, Inc. had worked in the security business for over 22 years. This was long enough for him to realize he needed to make a change and strike out on his own. His technical expertise and knowledge of buildings security led him to develop turnstiles that not only functioned properly but were designed beautifully.

In the early stages of the company's existence Steve had to make all of the sales calls while manufacturing Orion's turnstiles. His hard work paid off quickly. In only about a year and a half he won 4 projects and never looked back. Orion Entrance Control now employs a staff of 20 in Laconia and 2 sales managers out of the state, 1 in CA covering the west and 1 in GA covering the southeast with about 30 sales representatives in locations throughout the world.

"Custom is our standard, while providing Access in Motion," said Steve Caroselli. Every aspect of Orion's turnstiles is customized to what the customer needs and wants. But their relationship does not end with the customer once the turnstiles are installed and working. "We have a cradle to grave business philosophy." said Caroselli. That means Orion will be there for the customer from design, manufacture and installation, to service, support, upgrades and beyond. "We deliver piece of mind," said Caroselli. "We're in it for the long haul."

Orion Entrance Control turnstiles can be found in high-rise buildings, government centers, education campuses, banks, hospitals, and corporate headquarters, anywhere entrance security is needed.

Situation:

After such rapid growth Orion Entrance Control began to experience growing pains. Things at the company were getting stretched and internal and external communications began to suffer. Steve was also finding it more difficult for him to do sales and marketing while trying to run the business. "We needed to get back to cohesiveness," said Caroselli. "We needed an outside perspective. We needed a business growth plan."

Steve knew any growth plan would include a way to differentiate Orion from their competition, a way to capitalize on building the Orion brand, a way to track and measure sales successes and failures, and a way to develop and implement a solid, on-going marketing strategy.

But how do you do all of that? Where do you begin? Whose advice do you follow? It seemed almost overwhelming.

Solution:

In February of 2015 Steve received an email from NH MEP about a free hour long information session called 5 Steps to Sustain Business Growth. He read how the information session goes into a proven 5-step marketing strategy to help a company accelerate and sustain business growth. It was designed specifically for small and medium-sized manufacturers who seek innovative and cost-effective approaches for customer retention and expansion.

Intrigued by what he read Steve and his Marketing Manager, Nancy Chase signed up that day for the free session. From that session Steve and Nancy learned about the NH MEP in-depth series of workshops and coaching sessions called the Business Growth Collaborative Program. Again they wasted no time and signed up for the Business Growth Collaborative Program that started in March of that same year.

The series of workshops dove into topics such as:

- Setting smart goals to empower business growth and optimize a solid return on investments
- Identify customer needs as it relates to product development
- Define their brand and business value proposition
- Improve their sales tactics and systems to facilitate growth
- Analyze customer data to determine the optimal sales, marketing and business tactics to deploy
- Develop a comprehensive business growth plan that will enhance their growth potential

Steve and Nancy found the workshops interesting and informative and the materials easy to understand and use. They also liked the business knowledge and expertise of the instructor who taught them business growth and marketing strategies, tactics and methods that related directly to their business.

But the most important aspect to the Business Growth Collaborative Program was just that, the collaboration. "The interaction with the other companies attending was vital," said Caroselli. "We discussed our challenges together, talked about what worked and what didn't, and solved problems together." The collaboration fostered comradery and trust paving the way for open communication and learning. They also had the opportunity to tour the other companies to learn more about each other's business.

Results:

The NH MEP Business Growth Collaborative Program gave Orion Entrance Control the tools to grow and sustain their business long into the future. "With a solid business growth and marketing plan it helped sharpen our focus on the whole business," said Caroselli. "After not being sure of where we're going, we now have accountability and know what we've accomplished from month to month."

The Business Growth Collaborative Program helped Orion realize how to stand out from their competitors. That manufacturing turnstiles to a customer's specific needs are what sets them apart. They now react more quickly and efficiently to customer demands. The program helped shape the Orion brand which exemplifies quality, durability, reliability, beauty and the commitment to the customer of always being there for them.

Sales doubled from the previous year in large part by implementing the methods, tactics and strategies Steve and Nancy learned in the program. With the increase in sales it enabled Orion to purchase a new, more robust CRM system.

The program also helped Orion make sure their employees are included in their business growth process. "Our employees are treated like our customers," said Caroselli. "They are all part of a team working together toward a common goal." Since Steve and Nancy have been through the program Orion has hired a Chief Operating Officer, an Operations Manager, a Sales Manager, a QC Manager, 2 outside sales reps and brought in a summer intern.

Finally, to enhance their marketing efforts Nancy is working with a web developer on a new website while introducing new marketing initiatives that include more efficient participation at industry trade shows, events, and engaging in out-reach to the press

The following results for Orion Entrance Control can be credited to having gone through the NH MEP Business Growth Collaborative Program:

- Sales were good before the Business Growth Collaborative beginning in February of 2015 and ended strong. After the Business Growth Collaborative sales grew by 27% by the end of 2016
- Added 5 fulltime employees in 2016
- Increased investment in a new CRM at the cost of \$50,000
- Increased investment in a new website at the cost of \$12,000
- Gives them an edge over their competitors

Testimonial:

"From the first class we knew that we made a great choice in the Business Growth Collaborative program. We had a great group to work with and we got constructive feedback and support. With Beth Goldstein's guidance, we were able to see what changes needed to be made to move the company forward. Understanding other company's challenges and how they came up with solutions, and in turn getting the same interaction on our challenges, made it a worthwhile investment in the company's future. Our plan is to stay in touch with the workshop companies to continue the support."

- Stephen Caroselli, CEO of Orion Entrance Control, Inc. - www.orioneci.com