

## Case Study



“Gil has helped me regain my drive”

Michael Struebel has owned and run a specialist SAAB Autocare Company since 1986. The business performed well for the first couple of decades. As Michael said “I was able to buy a house bigger than my wildest dreams. I also bought a second property as an investment.”

However, seven years ago he relocated the business to a small village outside Cambridge. He also expanded his offering to include servicing all makes and models of cars. This was when the problems started. He spent a lot of money on the best equipment and got himself into debt. As he remarked “In hindsight, I realise although it seemed we were moving forwards we had actually moved two steps back.”

The increased overheads and unanticipated loss of custom meant that he struggled. Then when the recession hit Michael initially thought he could ride it out. As he said “I didn’t think it would affect me the way it did. So I didn’t take any action.” However, things got worse and he struggled to make the payments on his loans.

Throughout these difficult times Michael’s friend David McDougall from Dover Design had been telling him about how his own business had benefited massively from the help of business coach Gil Devlin from ActionCOACH. It took Michael twelve months before he acted on David’s advice and hired Gil. As he said “Looking back I can see that time was a year wasted.”

Michael started on Gil’s ActionCLUB group coaching programme. This involved monthly group meetings with other business owners over the course of a year. Each month they covered key topics that every business owner needs to understand in order to thrive. Additionally, Gil was available for telephone coaching in between sessions to help embed the learnings and ensure they were acted upon.

Michael found the group coaching very useful. As he said “When I looked at my goals over the first six months I realised that I had achieved a whole lot more since starting to work with Gil on the group coaching programme.” However, it was when he started on 1-2-1 coaching with Gil that things really started to take off. They began having weekly face to face meetings where they discussed how the business was performing, set goals and created action plans.

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One of the first areas they focused on was the financial side of the business. This was driven by the ActionCOACH 5 ways model which looks at all the key metrics that drive profitability. These metrics include leads and conversions through to sale value and margins. By monitoring the key metrics carefully it meant that Michael and the team could put plans into place to improve them. This made rapid impact on his profits. Importantly it enabled him to develop a clear plan to pay back his loans. This will result in a positive return on the investments he made when he relocated and then create a platform to take the business to the next level.

Another key benefit that Gil has bought to Michael is focus. She has helped him to prioritise jobs and then holds him accountable for getting them done. Previously Michael, and the team, would give themselves too many jobs to do and get few of them completed. Now Michael and the team are focused on one or two activities at a time which means they actually get done. Importantly Michael can now spend more time working on driving the business forwards and not getting so caught up in the day to day work. This has renewed his enthusiasm, as he remarked "Since starting on the 1-2-1 coaching I have particularly regained my drive. I am going to start working on my business more and less in my business."

Another important area that the ActionCOACH five ways model looks at is marketing. Gil has helped Michael to implement some systemised communications to existing customers. Plus she has helped him with some highly targeted lead generation activities for new business. She has also encouraged him to track and measure all activities so he knows what works and what doesn't.

In conclusion Michael feels that Gil's coaching has helped in many ways. Most importantly she has bought him a new perspective. As he said "Over this last year working together with Gil I have realised that my way wasn't working anymore. I have now broken that vicious cycle and adopted new ways of doing things, using the teachings, tools and systems of ActionCOACH."



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