

Waste not want not

Four years ago, Chris Dear was running a one-man show. Today Network Waste Solutions Limited is a multi-million pound business – and HW Chartered Accountants has been there every step of the way.

In March, Chris Dear, managing director of Network Waste Solutions, was at Anfield as a guest of HW Chartered Accountants to watch England defeat Uruguay. It is testament to the depth of their relationship and the speed with which the business has grown that Dear should be guest of honour.

The relationship began four years ago, when an existing client referred Dear – then a sole trader working from a Portakabin running a small waste management brokerage – to Chris Wright, managing partner of HW Chartered Accountants, Wilsbech.

"Initially, Chris needed somebody to deal with the compliance issues, to sort out his year end accounts and tax returns. I set him on the right road with a basic bookkeeping system," recalls Wright. He also recommended a part-time bookkeeper.

Dear adds: "Sales were not an issue for me, but I had no financial background whatsoever. I was able to call upon Chris whenever I required and very quickly I learned I could trust his judgement. When we first met we were turning over under £100,000 a year. Today Network Waste Solutions is a multi-million pound business and still growing. We have come a long way together."

Opportunity

Network Waste Solutions now operates out of three offices and is able to offer national coverage and bespoke waste solutions. It operates an online management system for its customers which provides order processing and analytical information as well as detailed calculations on potential cost savings through recycling. It guarantees new customers ten per cent savings from day one, working towards savings of up to 30 per cent within the first 12 months.

"With escalating landfill tax and landfill levies and the noticeable increase in legislation affecting the waste industry, it is the waste producer bearing the brunt. We show companies the value of recycling and bring innovative thoughts to the table on how to be proactive in changing times. Landfill increases can only affect those businesses that are sending their waste to landfill. By diverting waste from landfill for recycling, companies potentially can receive revenue from the waste they generate," explains Dear.

Direction

But the path to success is never smooth. When Network Waste Solutions entered other areas including the contract cleaning arena, it was Wright who pointed out that it was not a profitable move. Together, Wright and Dear implemented a new strategy to grow the business within the market to which it was best suited, Nationwide Skip Hire and National Waste Management.

"The accounts showed that it was better to concentrate on his core business of national skip hire and waste management, and I also helped to implement a new strategy to help Chris move forward – a strategy which has proved to be quite successful," adds Wright.

Costing and efficiency

With the success, came the need for new infrastructure and systems development. Wright advised on a computer system which would greatly reduce the administration involved in the daily activities which were being undertaken. On the back of Wright's recommendations, Network Waste Solutions made a sound investment in new order processing and accounting software which meant greatly improved productivity and efficiency, as well as providing valuable information to Dear. "Chris's business was growing very fast and it was essential that he had up-to-date management information upon which to base his decisions," Wright continues.

"As a waste broker, our main overheads are our office and staff. Chris's recommendations helped us to become more efficient and therefore more productive. This enables us to be more competitive for our customers," explains Dear.

Recruitment is one of the most arduous tasks facing growing businesses. However, Wright helped to find an adequately qualified financial controller to assist with financial administration and business development of Network Waste Solutions.

"The ideal client is one with sufficient confidence in me to ask my advice before he makes up his mind. Chris uses me as a sounding board. It became too complicated for the existing finance staff to manage the business; so I helped in the recruitment of a qualified accountant," adds Wright.

Today, Network Waste Solutions is an industry leader in recycling, and has recently won contracts involving Alfred McAlpine, Costain and United Utilities.

Moving forward, Dear hopes the Network Waste Solutions team can reach even greater heights through continued innovation and unparalleled levels of customer service to its customers, utilising the infrastructure and sound business base which Wright has helped him to build.

"Now we have the infrastructure in place to compete on a national scale including a qualified accountant within the business, I don't talk to Chris quite as much as I used to. But I know when I do call, he always reacts quickly, and I have 100 per cent confidence in his advice," concludes Dear. ■

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