

Growing Boys: An Insight Case Study of Small Business Growth

By Shelley Moore, Insight Strategic Concepts® Inc.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates over half a million (671,800) businesses were started in 2005. However, approximately 544,800 businesses closed that same year. Statistics predict 63% of all small businesses fail within the first 6 years.

Why is it so difficult to grow and sustain a business over the long haul? To build a successful and long-lasting company, small business owners must expertly navigate and creatively overcome challenges that surface during the first crucial seven years. Insight Strategic Concepts® Inc. guides owners and leadership teams toward forming and implementing informed initiatives that capitalize on choice opportunities.

Logo Boys Inc., located in northern Indiana, hired Insight for advice and expertise during its early years. Logo Boys was founded in 2000 as a fifty-fifty partnership between two owners. By spring of 2005, Dean Himelick, the president and sales manager knew the company needed a fresh marketing plan and realized they needed much more than a logo to market their services. His past contacts were exhausted and he was keenly aware that attracting new prospects was the only way to grow the company. He also believed they needed to expand their existing image and inform other businesses that Logo Boys does more than just embroidery and screen printing. Heiden Creative, a Pathfellow® member, referred Dean to Insight. In collaboration with Shelley Moore, founder and strategist at Insight, they initially planned a new marketing and sales strategy which would utilize their existing strong but

unknown brand and integrate a new theme that would educate potential clients about their services in their advertising, literature and website. Most importantly, Logo Boys needed to specifically communicate their brand promise and build stronger top-of-mind awareness by clearly distinguishing themselves apart from 80% of their competitors who were much smaller, less reliable, and offered less services because they operated out of home offices by “passing paper” rather than offering an integrated business solution.

After digesting this market growth plan, Logo Boys considered their internal challenges for growth. They asked Insight to critically assess the strengths and unique potentials of their organization. Shelley introduced Logo Boys to the Insight Integrated Mapping System which aided them in examining four areas crucial for growth: Passion, Strategy, Collaboration and Process. Shelley has found that once an organization fully understands the integration of its core leadership competencies, unique market strategies, and alignment of people with strategy and work processes, growth is virtually assured.

Initially, Insight conducted extensive employee and customer interviews as well as market research. Guided by the results, Insight led Logo Boys leaders to clarify growth goals. Insight also helped identify Logo Boys’ target market, determined the best marketing techniques to reach this segment and how to integrate their brand identity. The results indicated that Logo Boys was indispensable for clients



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in need of promotional items at the last minute; unlike most competitors, Logo Boys had in-house embroidery production lines. They also provided distribution and warehousing services that saved time and money for clients. Thus, the new brand identity portrayed the Logo Boy logo as a S.W.A.T. team member who rescues the client from promotional demands at trade shows, sales presentations and company events.

Employee and customer interviews indicated a perception that Dean was the company's sole salesperson. He had years of contacts and experience to tap into; however, Logo Boys was looking for new ways to grow and it was clear that more sales representation was needed. The challenge was to find people who fit in with the company culture, who understood the values of Logo Boys and who were self-starters. According to Dean, Insight helped him with the interviewing process and challenged him to consider new ways to motivate sales representatives to achieve more sales.

Growing the volume of business was only part of Logo Boys' issue. At peak times, there was internal chaos that distracted the company from important business decisions that could lead to growth. Internal turf wars and lack of communication created errors, confusion and animosity among the team. Insight discovered a troubling divide between production and administrative staff members. The building design and work flow structure literally and physically impeded collaboration, and team members' lack of understanding about their responsibilities stifled communication. Employees in these two divisions failed to constructively collaborate and, as a result, hampered the company's productivity. After this discovery, the leaders of the organization, in consultation with Insight, decided to move to a new building so as to improve work efficiency and productivity. This new facility created a stronger atmosphere for production and administrative staff interaction and team-oriented

collaboration. It also put leadership in the position to build equity in the building rather than leasing space for the same monthly payments. Insight assisted the owners in this transitional time by preparing the refinancing presentations to existing and potential banking partners. Shelley created profit/loss projections that helped the owners, accountants, and banks understand the impact of the new facility. After the financing package was secured, she also developed a monthly operational budget.

Another part of the chaos was due to an insufficient organizational structure that bred employee and team disharmony. Individual job duties were not orientated to achieving the overall goals of the company. Employees received very little feedback through performance reviews and most employees lacked an understanding of the company's job expectations. With Insight's help, Logo Boys established the groundwork for clearly defined HR functions, such as a policies, procedures, job descriptions, performance logs, evaluations and day-to-day employee problem-solving. These changes set a tone in the workplace for respect and accountability at all levels that tied back to the company's growth goals.

Logo Boys also utilized BLOOM®, a web-based performance optimization program designed by Insight and Connelly Design Studio. BLOOM is a customizable system that automates easier communication of strategic goals, action plans, employee development plans, and the completion of many other common human resources functions. BLOOM is fully customizable to each organization. Logo Boys used the system to define job descriptions, complete performance reviews customized to each employee's job expectations, track training, display policies and procedures, and track wage scales.

Once the right people were in the right places, Insight investigated work processes; the final step in



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Insight Integrated Mapping System. By completing this step, the owners of Logo Boys realized the necessity of clearly articulating core process steps and how they related to daily work flow for each person. By outlining the steps employees should follow in each certain work process, employees understood their responsibilities to help the company be more efficient and timely. Standardizing work processes, such as production schedules, order entry, art work orders, and rush orders, eliminated dropped projects and poor communication habits. Additionally, the creation of flowcharts to imitate work procedures facilitated the proper training of new employees.

Insight also challenged Logo Boys owners to spend time and re-assess their own personal goals and reasons for staying with the company. Recently, Dean's partner decided to sell his share of the partnership. This decision was difficult, yet mutually productive in helping the business gain more focused leadership for growth. Even though they have dissolved the partnership, the prognosis for Logo Boys looks very good. Thus far, Logo Boys has achieved record months of sales over the previous year. Logo Boys expects these increases to maintain at a minimum of 10% increases per month over the previous year's monthly sales into 2009.

Logo Boys is confidently moving ahead toward the future. With reference to the support he has received from Insight, Dean states, "I consider Shelley like a partner in my company. She helps me move forward with business. I feel comfortable heading out into the future with Insight here to back me up and support me in my decision making and planning for the future."

As a child, Dean recalled working alongside his grandfather who owned a sporting goods store. His grandfather instilled in him strong values that prepared him for leadership; hard work, personal character and above all, honesty. Until he worked with Insight, Dean wasn't conscious that he could be

a business owner and a strong leader. Spending time with his grandfather and knowing how much dedication and commitment he put into his business now shapes how Dean leads Logo Boys—with an open mind and spirit, always attentive to new ways to grow.

By Shelley Moore, Founder/Strategist
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