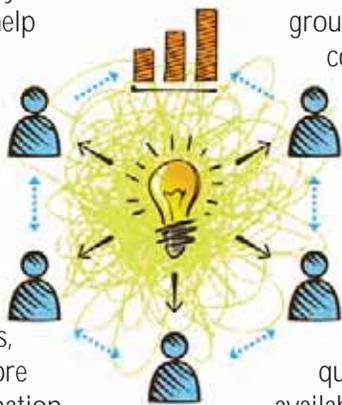


Better information, better decisions — and a better way to help your company!

You know more about your company than anyone else. But like most CEOs you could probably use some help when it comes to decisions about new markets, generating sales leads or deriving more value from your website.

Economic gardening represents a new way of thinking about supporting growth companies and letting business owners know how important they are to our local economies. So instead of offering traditional incentives like tax credits or real estate discounts, we're offering something that might be even more valuable to you: information — strategic information — gathered with your guidance and specifically for your company. We've observed this model in many other areas around the country and seen what kind of impressive results it produces.

Here's how it works: Partnering with GrowFL, we've set up a local network to provide virtual access to a team of highly



skilled research specialists that will be matched with a select group of qualifying companies. Using private conference calls and a secure online workspace this team will interview your and your team to help identify specific issues. The team devotes about 40 hours for each engagement to your company over the course of the program as they work quickly to deliver action-oriented information. (Amount of time may vary depending on funding source.)

We emphasize the phrase “select group of qualifying companies” because this program is available only to companies that meet certain criteria — and is offered to them at no cost. As a growing company, you make a positive impact on our local economy. We want to help you make an even bigger impact. Economic gardening services are specifically designed to help growing companies make better decisions while navigating the challenges associated with growth.

Who should apply?

To be eligible for the program, participants must:

- Be a for-profit, privately-held company that is headquartered in Florida.
- Generate annual revenue or working capital of between \$750,000 and \$100 million.
- Employ between 6 and 150 full-time employees.
- Provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets.
- Desire to grow beyond second-stage.

What to expect

Fees: Companies can choose to either self-fund or apply for grant assistance, if available.

Time: Accepted companies will spend 10 to 20 hours collaborating with their research team over the period of the program. The team, in turn, will be spending additional time behind the scenes working on your company's issues.

Potential issues: Identifying and prioritizing sales leads and business opportunities; refining your core strategies and business model; and using social media to connect with customers and create buzz about your products or services.

Logistics: You don't even have to leave your office. All communications are handled through the phone and a secure online portal where a workspace will be assigned to your company.

Hundreds of companies across Florida have tested and implemented this program with outstanding results:



"As a small business, we have struggled at times to find resources to help with strategic planning and to identify and expand our current product portfolio. The GrowFL program and the Economic Gardening Institute have helped to provide these essential resources. We have found the strategic insight and quality of market research to be extremely helpful. As a result of the input by the Economic Gardening Team, we are identifying potential business opportunities and refining new product requirements."

David Akers, President, SmartSAT, Inc., Largo

"My participating in GrowFL has been one of the best decisions that I have ever made for my business and for myself. The knowledge and expertise available through GrowFL along with the hands-on problem solving discussions that take place at each CEO Roundtable are invaluable tools for small businesses. I will tell you that this program has refocused our entire business operation, and has brought back the drive and determination along with newly gained knowledge that will allow my management team to hurl our company to the next level."

Robert E. Sanchez, Vice President/COO, United Screening Services Corp., Miami

"The take-away for us was that we were able to say, 'Look, we're a niche business. We happen to sell scientific equipment and we can't be everything to everyone.' The team cleared that for us. They defined that for us. Since then, we've cleaned up our website with their help. We are able to look at different markets. We took all the information and applied it to our business... in January and February 2013, we had a 100% increase in revenue over the last year. I attribute those results to the support and information that was given to me by the GrowFL team."

Ramon Rivera, CEO, Diamond Systems, LLC, Titusville

How to get started

- 1 To ensure that you understand how the program works and if you would benefit, businesses can contact GrowFL directly or work with a local participating organization. To find a one in your area, call 407-823-0388.
- 2 Complete the online application at <http://www.growfl.com/apply>. Among other things, you'll be asked to submit revenue and employment for the past five years. You'll also be asked to list strategic business issues in which you need help.
- 3 Someone from our organization will contact you within 24 hours.
- 4 Your application will be reviewed by the selection team.
- 5 Once accepted into the program, we'll schedule an interview between you and the research team to start the process.

Value for your time

We understand that your to-do list already has reached a mind-boggling length. This program is built to accommodate an entrepreneur's time-crunched schedule. All research specialists in the network have been trained and certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening that enables them to catch up to you and your company quickly. Plus, participation in the program is completely virtual. Communications are conducted via phone and through GrowFL's online software system.

In this online portal, you'll be assigned a secure workplace to interact with the research team. Any information that you submit here is confidential and will be seen only by the research specialists assigned to your company.

For more info, contact:

Tammie Sweet
GrowFL
Ph: 407-823-0388
Email: TSweet@GrowFL.com

GrowFL was created in 2009 by the Florida legislature as an economic development program focused on assisting second-stage growth companies to prosper in the state of Florida. By providing strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth through Strategic Research and peer-to-peer CEO mentoring, GrowFL helps companies overcome obstacles to growth and leads them towards prosperity. Based on the philosophy of Economic Gardening®—to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state—GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute, is a critical component to the state's economic development strategy and Florida's entrepreneurial ecosystem. GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the Edward Lowe Foundation. GrowFL has assisted more than 700 companies through our Strategic Research and CEO Roundtable programs and recognized 200 successful entrepreneurs through our annual awards program, Florida Companies to Watch. Learn more at <http://GrowFL.com>.

Strategic Research Team: Engagement Samples

Market Research/Competitive Intelligence

Client	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Manufacturer of radiation therapies to treat cancer	Conducted extensive competitor search.	Gave company greater insight into its competitors' product offerings and pricing structure for similar or equivalent products.
Financial services	Provided list of all companies that had registered as financial services providers within the state and explained how to locate these resources in the future.	This information provided the company with a large list of prospects, along with the ability to update that list on a monthly basis.
Manufacturer of high-end bicycle components	Provided information about the size and number of companies in the U.S. hand-built bicycle industry.	Gave additional customers and resources to client (which was considering suspending parts manufacturing due to foreign competition).
Provider of customer intelligence	Supplied case studies showing effectiveness of its current product offerings — and possible future offerings.	This gave client reference materials to present to prospective clients, demonstrating the value of its product offerings.
Construction company	Provided list of all permitted commercial, civil, and multi-unit residential construction projects in the state.	Allowed company to target its marketing efforts to firms and contractors needing its services.
Manufacturer of cutting-edge medical testing devices	Provided list of biodefense research hospitals, university departments and private research facilities — and contacts.	Allowed company to reach out to specific researchers who would be most likely to use its product.
Consumer goods and medical manufacturer	Provided competitors' patent applications.	Allowed the client insight into its competitors' activities and future plans.

Internet & Social Media Strategy/Search Engine Optimization

Client	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Manufacturer of pet products	Provided list of popular pet bloggers, Twitter users and online pet-related groups as well as related strategy to increase online exposure of client's brand and products. Educated the company's CEO and marketing director on social media, SEO and how to monitor their brand online.	Client is positioned to better harness the power of Internet marketing to increase its exposure and expand business.
Provider of health-care educational programs	Provided detailed SEO report that included assessment of company's website, list of current keyword rankings in major search engines and recommendations on improving those rankings.	Gave the company valuable information to improve its search engine visibility and increase customer inquiries.

Internet & Social Media Strategy/Search Engine Optimization

Client	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Provider of computer software training	Utilized professional online monitoring tools to produce a report of online conversations that were relevant to the client's industry. This included message, author, time/date shared, profile link and more.	Equipped with this information, the client was instructed on a strategy to increase its visibility and credibility within the market.
Manufacturer of unique biomedical device	Provided a list of top health-related blogs and online groups. Also provided a correlating strategy to increase online buzz and press.	Led to higher and awareness and website traffic.
Provider of Web-based software	Made recommendations on how to utilize pay-per-click marketing and affiliate marketing. Assessed the client's top online competitors and created detailed report containing keywords and strategies.	Improved marketing and increased sales.
Sign designer and manufacturer	Provided a LinkedIn and Twitter strategy to connect with graphic designers and residential and commercial developers. Also shared list of applicable LinkedIn groups, Twitter users and bloggers.	Information could lead to strategic relationships and build new business.

Geographical Information Systems

Client	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Tests pharmaceuticals on lab immune system	Gathered data and developed maps that describe spread of sexually transmitted diseases within older populations.	Clients can use info to drive legislative funding for development of pharmaceuticals and plans to serve an upcoming medical need.
Developer of localized Yellow Page directories	Identified demographic trends for each distribution area. Provided detailed lists of companies in each area.	Client will use data to increase number of advertisers in its directories and create directories that are targeted to a specific population.
Agent for major cell phone provider	Provided spatial intelligence about each of the agents' locations.	The agent can make better decisions about local marketing efforts by understanding the competitive environment around each store. The agent can also use the information to better locate new stores by looking at locations with similar success characteristics.
Hispanic-focused media company	Targeted specific demographic areas for launch of new magazine.	Information will help the company target delivery areas most receptive to magazine's content.

Geographical Information Systems

Client	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Environmentally-focused window manufacturer	Located apartments and condo building in an age range when windows typically need to be replaced.	By targeting these specific buildings, the client is able to better focus its sales efforts on buildings that are more readily accessible to its installers.
Refiller of printer ink cartridges	Defined the demographic profiles around specific office supply retail stores.	Using these profiles the company can reach out to retail stores that may be frequented by a similar type of customer.

Core Strategy & Referrals

Clients	Services Rendered	Outcome/Potential Outcome
Market research company	Conducted review of business strategy. Made recommendations and considerations related to competitive threats, niche market approaches and phasing of rollout. Conducted review with CEO and COO of the company.	Info could transform the company from a niche player into a full-service marketing company.
Manufacturer of packaging products	Reviewed business plan to bring current international offerings to the United States. Discussions included competitive offerings in relation to the competition, U.S. sales approach and partnership opportunities.	Expand market by bringing international offerings to the United States.
Specialty optics manufacturer	Provided introduction to major aerospace systems integrator.	Company was able to parlay this intro into a prototype order and potential high-volume production contract.
Plastics manufacturer	Provided referral for a process/metrics consultant.	Help client operationalize strategic objectives.
Environmental consultancy	Provided referrals for workforce and staffing agencies.	Expand sales staff by hiring national sales manager and outside/inside sales reps.
Electronics assembly company	Provided referral for private investment coaching (angel, venture, mezzanine funding).	Obtain capital to expand.
All clients	Provided referrals for workforce training grants that were set aside exclusively for the state's participating companies.	More than \$50,000 in grants was awarded to three participating companies in fall 2010.

CASE STUDY

Pioneer and World's Largest Online-Only Retailer of Amish Furniture Teams with GrowFL to Boost Success

JMX Brands Experiences Surge in Revenues, Growth

The JMX family of brands is quickly becoming one of the most recognizable and successful enterprises in the country. Founded in 2003 by Jim Miller, what started out as a small, local company in Sarasota has evolved into becoming the world's largest online-only retailer of Amish furniture. While their signature brand is *DutchCrafters*, JMX is also the parent company of *Garden Tones*, *JMX Bamboo* and *Ocean Fare*.

Miller teamed up with GrowFL in 2013. At the time, JMX was embarking on an effort to open the company's brand up to more business-to-business (B2B) customers. Although JMX had a plan in mind, GrowFL encouraged Miller to participate in a team led Strategic Research study to determine the best approach for their growing enterprise. The project involved several key persons from the JMX team. Staff received vetted research reports prior to meetings, giving them time to digest and understand the findings and develop relevant questions. As the exercise progressed, the team identified an alternate – yet more effective – approach to reach the company's desired sales and expansion goals.

"It was invigorating to watch the process," says Stephanie Kempton, team lead for GrowFL. "JMX started with a strategy, but through teamwork and research, discovered a more effective and streamlined approach to reach their target market. This exercise saved the company from heading down a path that would have proven not to be nearly as successful or profitable."

As a result of their work with GrowFL, JMX has grown substantially. In 2012, the company employed 10 and earned \$2M. Revenues grew by 106% in 2013 and again by 59% in 2014. Today, employees have more than doubled to 24 and earnings have surged to nearly \$6M. Customer service has remained a foundation of the company's success, even during times of peak growth.

They boast a 4.8 Rating on eKomi and similar scores on other review sites. JMX is considered one of the fastest growing private companies in the United States, making the 2014 *Gulf Coast 500, Inc. 5000*, and *Internet Retail 1000* lists.

"The CEO roundtable was particularly helpful as it afforded me opportunities to learn and share with peers from similar fast-growing companies in our community," says Miller. "This allowed me to sharpen my strategic focus and question some of my assumptions. We also used the strategic research to help us better understand our customers, avoid a B2B initiative that might have been a costly mistake, better understand our sales process, and develop some clarity about the purpose that our new facility will provide."



Joan McGill, Vice President of the Business Development for the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, has worked extensively with JMX and observed the direct benefits GrowFL has brought to the table.

“Mr. Miller is an enthusiastic participant in GrowFL,” explains McGill. “He considers the CEO Roundtable to be his ‘board of directors’ and seldom misses a meeting. He also has had a great experience with the Strategic Research program this year and received information that will help grow his customer base and, in turn, his bottom line.”

McGill was pleased with how GrowFL partnered with the EDC to deliver the program on a local level.

“The growth and success of JMX Brands confirms and solidifies the EDC’s partnership with GrowFL,” says McGill. “Sarasota County is a community of entrepreneurs, like Jim Miller, so the resources offered by GrowFL are invaluable to our business retention and expansion program. As a small EDC, our staff and financial resources are limited and couldn’t possibly support the program that is offered by GrowFL. Their professionally facilitated CEO Roundtables’, layered with sophisticated Strategic Research capabilities and access to sophisticated data, provides our CEOs with solid information to guide the growth of their companies. JMX Brands success, along with others, is rewarding and endorses our investment in GrowFL.”

According to Miller, GrowFL offered tools to help him and his executive team think carefully about their company from a strategic point of view - well beyond operational and tactical issues – and the accountability to continually keep their eyes on the “bigger” picture. JMX has outlined a series of lofty goals for the future. If the past two years are any indicator, the company will prove to be one to watch in 2015.

AAJ Technologies

CEO: Amjad Shamim
Employees: 32
Location: Southeast Florida (Broward County)
Website: www.ajtech.com
Product/Services: IT systems integration and technology service provider

AAJ Technologies, headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, provides IT systems integration and technology services to mid- to Fortune 500-size companies. While planning the launch of AAJ Technologies' new health insurance systems software, CEO Amjad Shamim knew there was an untapped customer base that he needed help reaching.

The AAJ Technologies GrowFL Experience

After sharing information about his company with the GrowFL Strategic Research team, Amjad began receiving detailed information from the team. Amjad explains that he was very impressed by how quickly the team was able to understand the complexities of his company and respond with helpful information.

The Strategic Research team first helped Amjad in identifying his competitors for a new product that streamlines the process of buying and selling health insurance. The GrowFL team provided Amjad with detailed information about who his competitors are in this new market are and the number of employees they have, number of offices, what product features they offer and other detailed information that would not otherwise have been available to AAJ Technologies.

The GrowFL team provided Amjad with valuable information on prospects for future sales. The team provided information on who would most likely be interested in purchasing AAJ Technologies' current products and services, as well as their new software system.

The Strategic Research team also provided Amjad counsel on integrating the principles of search engine optimization into his website and provided suggestions for a complete redesign of AAJ Technologies' website. Amjad believes an improved web presence will allow his sales team to reach out to more qualified sales prospects and ultimately lead to an increase in revenue.

Making full use of the suite of Economic Gardening services provided by GrowFL, Amjad found the CEO Roundtables to be an invaluable piece of his experience. In addition to providing advice and recommendations, his CEO peers have provided Amjad with referrals to experienced salespeople and lead generation experts. Amjad said he has been approached in the past by companies who provide services similar to GrowFL's CEO roundtables, with a price tag around \$15,000 per year.

The GrowFL program provided Amjad with the tools he needed to help his business prosper. He is currently in the process of implementing the strategies recommended by the GrowFL team and has begun to see the effects the program will soon have on his company. Amjad plans to add at least five positions to AAJ Technologies within the next 12 months. He also expects the new insight he gained to greatly affect his bottom line in the near future.

Case study compiled at the end of first engagement 2010.

Aegis Business Technologies

IT Company based in Tallahassee, FL
Pam Butler, CEO

Our 16-employee I.T. business was trying to make the decision to move our new product offering to a larger geographical service area beyond Tallahassee. As is the case with most Second-stage companies, ours was a problem of growth.

Thanks to the economic gardening program, we've expanded the reach of our business in a matter of months – a feat we couldn't dream of completing in six months. The aptly named Jump Start team did just that they gave us a jump start on this problem by immediately flooding our inboxes with volumes of information:

- Instructions on expanding our customer base
- Research on what other companies and competitors have done to serve national markets
- New pricing models
- Remodeled profit margins
- Our management structure

And because I can't possibly take the time to explain the wealth of information that this amounted to, I carry all of their research, analysis, suggestions and correspondence in a folder that comes with me everywhere I go.

This was information we couldn't have paid to have employees do while still keeping up the regular business operations. These invaluable tools have already helped us retool our Web site, develop our marketing presence and expand our customer base.

Since enrolling in the economic gardening program, we have gained clients in other regions of Florida, Georgia and even Maryland. We have added one position and are looking forward to the further growth of our business.

Testimonial provided following engagement in 2010.

A.G. Findings

CFO: Alan Kleinman

Employees: 37
Location: Southeast (Broward County)
Website: www.agfindings.com
Product/Services: Electronics Accessories and Cases

Founded in Fort Lauderdale in 1993, A.G. Findings originally focused on developing jewelry findings and clasps. Since then, the company has transitioned to the wireless communication industry by providing innovative mobile accessories and cases. As the mobile communications industry has experienced rapid growth, so has A.G. Findings. CFO Alan Kleinman learned about GrowFL from his banker and immediately saw it as an opportunity to deal with many of the challenges he faces in a growing, second-stage business.

Just-in-Time Strategic Research

Alan found that GrowFL's customized Strategic Research program helped the AGF executive team focus on a few key efforts that were particularly important as the company grows. One thing that stood out to Alan was the insight the GrowFL Strategic Research Team provided on Internet marketing.

GrowFL's Internet marketing services analyst explained the nuts and bolts of interactive marketing, search engine optimization and pay-per-click marketing," Alan explained. "Receiving an overview of the tools and tactics that are available to make our company more accessible online has been very valuable." Since participating in the program, A.G. Findings has hired a new employee to manage these programs for the company.

The Strategic Research Team also helped A.G. Findings discover new markets for their products, both domestic and international. One of the biggest challenges AGF faced was how to expand distribution channels and maintain a sustainable level of growth.

"More than anything, the GrowFL team acted as a resource for information when I didn't know where to start on solving a particular business problem," said Alan. "I was able to pick up the phone and call GrowFL, and suddenly I had access to a wealth of information and professional business resources."

Alan said he was impressed by how quickly the Strategic Research team acted on the items his team brought up with them. He said it was a pleasure working with a team of highly motivated and knowledgeable experts.

GrowFL CEO Roundtables

Alan found the CEO Roundtables to be a particularly rewarding experience, notably the insights he receives from fellow second-stage business owners.

"The CEO roundtables offer a unique opportunity to sit down with other business owners and executives who are dealing with similar issues that we are going through," Alan said. "To me, that experience has been invaluable."

Meeting with other entrepreneurs at the same stage of growth proved to be a great benefit for A.G. Findings. Not only did it help Alan solve various problems he was facing, but it also allowed him to connect with other second-stage entrepreneurs, something he hasn't found to this extent elsewhere.

"The opportunity to sit at a table and forge relationships with people who are facing similar problems is hard to come by," Alan said. "Gaining insight and advice from my fellow business executives—several incredibly bright businesspeople—has been very rewarding."

Florida's Inaugural 50 Companies to Watch

In 2011, A.G. Findings was selected as one of 50 companies for the inaugural group of Florida Companies to Watch. This nationally recognized awards program, presented by GrowFL at the University of Central Florida, celebrates growing second-stage companies throughout the state.

"It's nice to be recognized as a company that's viewed as doing well," said Alan. "It's refreshing to know there's an organization in the state that's watching the accomplishments of smaller companies, rather than just the Fortune 500 companies that some groups are constantly trying to attract to the state."

Alan said he also benefited from attending the Florida Companies to Watch awards gala, which took place in Orlando in February. Similar to his experience with CEO Roundtables, the gala presented a great opportunity to expand his network and connect with other second-stage business owners and executives.

Overall, Alan feels participating in the program was a very beneficial experience. He now sees the GrowFL team as a resource he can turn to when solving complex business problems.

"When I learned about the program a little over a year ago, I attended a breakfast seminar to learn more," Alan explained. "It seemed like it could be interesting and useful so I decided to participate. The Strategic Research program was helpful but as I took advantage of more of the program's offerings, I learned how everything fits together and the true potential of the program."

Since participating in GrowFL, A.G. Findings has added 10 employees. While not all a direct result of the program, Alan credits GrowFL with helping him manage the company's rapid growth. A.G. Findings has already added two people this year and Alan said he expects the company will add another three or four positions throughout the remainder of 2011. He also said participating in GrowFL has had a positive impact on A.G. Findings' bottom line.

Case study compiled at the end of first engagement 2010

JFH Technologies d/b/a Amertron

President: James Harhi

Employees: 49
Location: Central Florida (Brevard County)
Website: www.Amertron.com
Product/Services: Contract manufacturing of electronic products

Melbourne-based Amertron is a contract electronics manufacturer for military and defense clients including Lockheed Martin and Harris Corporation. With the help of data provided by the GrowFL economic gardening team and funding from a low interest Economic Gardening Loan administered by the Black Business Investment Fund, Amertron was able to introduce a new technology into its industry.

The Amertron GrowFL Experience

When Amertron needed additional marketing and strategic support to introduce its modular overmolding technology, owner James Harhi sought the help of GrowFL.

James was looking for a second set of eyes to review his company's business plan and confirm that he was making sound business decisions. Thanks to the in-depth research and recommendations provided by the GrowFL team, James received the validation he needed to ensure his company was on the right track.

After the initial conference call, the GrowFL team provided James with a wealth of information on potential sales leads, industry research and competitive analysis. Through these analyses, James learned about Amertron's competitors and potential sales market. The data gave him insight on whether there would be a demand for Amertron's new modular overmolding technology, dispelling his concerns that the market was already saturated.

The GrowFL team provided James with tools he needed to better market Amertron to potential customers. They provided him with information to establish Google Analytics on the company's website and advice on reworking Amertron's e-mail marketing strategy to better communicate with potential and current customers. James is looking forward to implementing these tools in the next two quarters.

James put the strategies and recommendations from the GrowFL economic gardening team into practice with financial support from the Economic Gardening Loan administered by the Black Business Investment Fund.

Overall, GrowFL provided James with the data he needed to market and grow his business. He said a consulting firm would have charged thousands of dollars for the information the GrowFL team provided to him quickly and free of charge. James has already added two people since participating in the GrowFL program and he hopes to hire two or three others later this year, due to his experiences with the program.

Case study compile after first engagement 2010

Bit-Wizards

CEO: Vince Mayfield

Employees: 23
Location: Northwest (Okaloosa County)
Website: www.bitwizards.com
Product/Services: Information technology and business consultancy services

Fort Walton Beach-based Bit-Wizards helps its clients solve business problems through technology applications, specializing in software development and integration, Web design, e-commerce and IT consulting as it relates to companies' software needs. The firm takes a client-focused approach to software development, focusing on how it can help a company solve its unique business challenges.

The company's business model almost directly reflected that of the GrowFL program, so it was easy for Bit-Wizards' CEO Vince Mayfield to see the benefit of a business assistance program that was entirely free.

"GrowFL was a no-brainer," said Vince. Since starting the company in 2000, Vince and his business partner, Louis Erickson, have received support from several regional economic development and professional networking groups that first introduced him to the customized business assistance tools available to second-stage companies through GrowFL.

"Louis and I are software engineers, not MBAs. We've been successful in our business so far, partially because we knew what we didn't know and sought help from people who did."

Those support organizations included the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, Florida's Great Northwest and iTen Wired. Through these organizations, Vince received the building blocks for taking his business further but soon realized he was reaching a new level of growth and sought help to address those challenges.

"If you're going to be a successful business owner, you have to realize you don't know everything. The GrowFL program gives you access to qualified experts that can provide invaluable advice for those things that you don't know," said Vince.

Just-in-Time Strategic Research

The customized approach by the GrowFL Strategic Research Team of research analysts provided Vince information about his company on a scale that he had never received before. Through a variety of topics including market research, geographic information systems (GIS), search engine optimization and social media marketing, Vince was able to implement strategies that would help him grow his business through new client outreach and sales recommendations.

One way the Strategic Research helped was by identifying industry trends as they apply to Bit-Wizards' business. The company had worked with several clients that were comprised of employees mostly working outside the office and help them solve mobile software and virtual support needs. GrowFL used this target market to identify a list of other niche industries that typically involve mobile workforces, including the maintenance and insurance industries. This information helped Vince get a better understanding of what industries he could pursue to help garner additional business.

GrowFL also provided Bit-Wizards with specialized GIS services to find new clients geographically, so that Vince could hone in on specific areas to focus his marketing efforts to potential clients.

Although Bit-Wizards provides search engine optimization (SEO) services for its clients, GrowFL was able to provide Vince with information he hadn't yet considered for his own business. By implementing GrowFL's suggestions, Bit-Wizards' ranking improved on search engines and the company has become more accessible to its online audience.

GrowFL CEO Roundtables

Vince and Louis also participated in GrowFL's CEO Roundtables and found the process of interacting with their peers and learning from others' experiences very rewarding. It became clear that meeting with other entrepreneurs at the same stage of growth would give them insight into solving some of their company's challenges.

"Being able to talk with other CEOs, bounce ideas off them and learn from their experiences was a big help for our business. Sharing our experiences with the other CEOs was also beneficial as it helped us examine what we had done right and how we can improve in the future."

Florida's Inaugural 50 Companies to Watch

Bit-Wizards was one of 50 companies recognized among the inaugural group of Florida Companies to Watch in February 2011. This nationally recognized awards program, presented by GrowFL at the University of Central Florida, celebrates growing second-stage companies throughout Florida.

"Making the list was a great honor, and it has brought a lot of recognition to Bit-Wizards," said Vince. "Our phones have been ringing from people that heard about us through this awards program. We've gained recognition not just throughout the state, but outside Florida as well."

Overall, Vince has been very impressed with the results of the GrowFL program.

"Bit-Wizards' growth had tapered off some in 2008-09 due to the recession, and we knew we needed to hunker down and really focus on improving internal processes," said Vince.

Vince compares flying an airplane with running a second-stage growth company. When flying an airplane, checking gauges and levels is very important. "In flying, if you neglect something, you're going to die. The same goes for running a business," he says. "You have to really work at it in order to succeed."

He says participating in the program helped him weather a challenging economic time by getting a handle on what was going on and how he could position the company to come out of the recession strong.

With the work Vince and his team have already done, Bit-Wizards has added two positions since starting with GrowFL. Over the course of the year, Vince expects to hire two additional people and see the company's revenue increase up to 22 percent from the previous year.

Case study following first engagement in 2011.

Blue Orb

Developer of video game controllers
Orlando, FL
Pete McAlindon, CEO

The GrowFL economic gardening program and the Jump Start team have been an incredible catalyst for my business.

My company, Blue Orb, designs a new series of controllers for the video gaming industry, which provides limitless potential for our technology. With the assistance I've gotten from GrowFL and the Jump Start team, I can already see more opportunities to expand.

The team suggested creative strategies that have really resonated with our target market. My company developed a video game tournament using our controllers and the standard controllers of our competitors to demonstrate our product. The awareness and word-of-mouth generated from these competitions has driven sales of our controllers dramatically.

Another invaluable service that the Jump Start team provides is in-depth analysis and reports on industry trends.

On a number of occasions, the team has quickly responded to me with highly focused market statistics that I can then turn around and add to investor presentations or reports. The video gaming industry changes so quickly; having this team to provide me with the latest research on key demographics, new technology and advancements in my market leads to greater confidence in my abilities to focus on my business.

They operate like a natural extension of my company—they know the industry, our challenges, and our competitors, but they are also far enough away to see the things that I can't see. It adds a new dimension to our business, and accelerates our growth in a way that we couldn't have done alone.

Testimonial provided in 2010

Boca Bearings Company

Vice President of E-commerce and Marketing: Jason Flanzbaum

Employees: 15
Location: Southeast (Palm Beach County)
Website: www.bocabearings.com
Product/Services: Miniature bearings for industry and recreation

Boca Bearings imports and exports miniature bearings for industrial as well as radio controlled (RC) devices, bicycles and other recreational uses. The company has experienced rapid growth at a rate of more than 25 percent per year for the last five years. Boca Bearings' vice president of e-commerce and marketing, Jason Flanzbaum, said the company had been experiencing many of the "growing pains" associated with second-stage companies. When he learned about GrowFL, he saw it as a great opportunity to get a fresh perspective on his growing business.

The Boca Bearings GrowFL Experience

For Jason, participating in the GrowFL program meant free business support to help Boca Bearings through its next stage of growth. The company was experiencing some of the challenges many growing companies face, including infrastructure, hiring, strategic planning, legal issues and more. Jason saw GrowFL as a resource he could turn to for advice to help his company overcome some of these hurdles.

Jason said the GrowFL team provided him with a wealth of information and advice that he looks forward to working into the company's processes. One solution Jason found particularly helpful was the legal advice the team provided through one of GrowFL's referral partners. Through this interaction, Boca Bearings was provided background research and information on judicial precedent that had a significant impact on a legal issue Boca Bearings was facing, saving the company hours of time and costly fees, while helping avoid a potentially damaging legal challenge.

The team also provided Boca Bearings with a wealth of information to help it more effectively market the company. Specifically, GrowFL provided Jason with information regarding multi-channel marketing and search engine optimization (SEO) for the company's website. He said this information is quickly actionable and will help him better communicate with current and potential customers.

Since participating in the program, Boca Bearings has already added one additional position. Jason expects the company will hire two people this year and another three in 2012. Thanks to the information he received from GrowFL, Jason feels the company is better equipped to make strategic business decisions as it enters the next stages of growth.

Jason said he looks forward to becoming further engaged with the GrowFL program. While he appreciated the wealth of information GrowFL provided, Jason plans to focus on working with the team on solutions for one or two specific business challenges during a second engagement. Overall, he found it refreshing to have a team approach to address his business concerns and would recommend the GrowFL program to other growing, second-stage businesses.

Case study following first engagement in 2009.

Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS)

CEO: Waymon Armstrong

Employees: 50
Location: Central Florida (Orange County)
Website: www.ecsorl.com
Product/Services: Simulation and mobile learning environments

Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS) has provided educational games and simulation, interactive performance assessment tools, mobile learning environments and enterprise-wide information management systems for the past 13 years. Recently, ECS has experienced exponential growth that has caused CEO Waymon Armstrong to seek business assistance. With the simulation industry rapidly growing in Central Florida, Waymon saw his business nearly double in size over the last two years and needed assistance sustaining this incredible growth.

The ECS GrowFL Experience

After sharing information with the GrowFL Strategic Research Team, the analysts quickly responded with a wealth of information about marketing ECS, all information that Waymon did not have time to collect for himself. Operating within Orlando's Modeling, Simulation & Training cluster and just a stone's throw from two military simulation and training commands, ECS experienced growth mirroring that of the industry. To maintain that same level of growth, the GrowFL team suggested he explore different markets outside of the local area and the primary customers in the simulation and training industry. The team provided Waymon with metrics by which to compare ECS with companies similar in scale and at the level of growth he wants ECS to reach.

From specific trending research, the GrowFL team provided Waymon with their forecasts on which aspects of simulation were most likely to attract funding in the future. This knowledge allows Waymon to target his strategies for funding requests to better meet his objective of sustaining ECS's growth.

One aspect of the GrowFL program that Waymon found very helpful was the CEO Roundtable. As an entrepreneur, Waymon had no supportive outlet to discuss business issues. The GrowFL CEO Roundtable group provided him a forum to hear from CEOs in similar situations through an intimate network of peer advisors.

Waymon is using the information that the GrowFL team provided to rethink his business strategy. In the time that he started participating in CEO roundtables and through his experience with the GrowFL Strategic Research team, his business has grown from 25 employees to 56. He hopes to continue growing his business and looks forward to having the necessary tools to sustain Engineering & Computer Simulations' continued growth.

Case study compiled after first engagement 2010

Endorphin Corporation

President: Vince Smith
Employees: 10
Location: Tampa Bay (Pinellas County)
Website: www.endorphin.net
Product/Services: Rehabilitation and fitness products

For more than 20 years, Endorphin Corporation has provided high-quality rehabilitation and fitness equipment for hospitals and long-term care facilities. Recently, Endorphin created a new product for direct consumer purchase and use. Endorphin President Vince Smith knew that by entering the consumer market, he had the potential to quadruple the size of his business. He also realized that he needed help with this new business model.

The Endorphin Corporation GrowFL Experience

Vince explains that the process of launching a product in a new market was similar to starting an entirely new business within his existing company. He turned to Pinellas County Economic Development for assistance and was introduced to the GrowFL program. Vince said he needed help to begin rolling out his company's new rehabilitation machine.

The GrowFL Strategic Research team provided Vince with detailed information on potential market demographics, marketing strategy, market research and competitive analysis—all crucial research data that his team would not have been able to compile in a short amount of time. Vince compared the team's service to having several high-level professionals on his staff, something the company would not have been able to afford on its own.

Immediately the GrowFL team addressed Endorphin's Web strategy by showing Vince how to optimize the company's website for Internet search engines, in addition to incorporating Facebook advertisements into the company's marketing strategy. Vince explained that the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and social media tools that GrowFL provided him were a quick, inexpensive and relatively easy approach to assist with sales lead generation.

The team also helped Vince explore new target markets for the company's new consumer-focused product line. In addition to identifying these new markets, the GrowFL team provided detailed information on their buying habits and behaviors based on extensive research and demographic information.

For Endorphin, the most beneficial component of the GrowFL program was the advice it received on the company's core business strategy. The team helped Vince narrow down the direction his business needed to take as it grew.

Overall, the assistance provided by GrowFL helped Vince improve his business plan and create new marketing strategies. Vince expects to double his workforce in the next two years and expects his bottom line to improve significantly with the increased flow of sales resulting from the new product line. He credits GrowFL with his recent success and expects the benefits of the program to manifest even more over the next few months.

Case study compiled in 2010

Florida Supplement

President: Doug Brown
Employees: 25
Location: Southeast Florida (Broward County)
Website: www.floridasupplement.com
Product/Services: Contract manufacturing and packaging of nutraceutical supplements

Since its founding in 1995, Florida Supplement has manufactured and packaged nutritional supplement products for a variety of clients including health food, grocery and drug stores, mass merchandisers, network marketing firms and Internet retailers. Florida Supplement President Doug Brown sought out the GrowFL program to learn from the experiences of his CEO peers and gain technical expertise to help him grow his business.

The Florida Supplement GrowFL Experience

As a small business owner, Doug didn't have an outlet in which he could express ideas and concerns about his business. When he learned about the GrowFL CEO Roundtable program, he saw it as an opportunity to have an informal sounding board where he could discuss ideas and learn from his peer group. Doug attributes better business decisions because of his interactions with the CEOs in his roundtable group.

Doug also received GrowFL Strategic Research, which he says provided him the resources he needed to define and refine his business' strategy. He received a wealth of information that helped him guide his long-term strategy and grow the company's short-term sales.

The GrowFL Strategic Research team provided Doug with sales leads, saving him the effort of finding and qualifying potential customers. This invaluable service would have cost him more time and money than he had if he were to research himself.

As Florida Supplement grew, Doug faced a new challenge in his business. Growing from a small to a medium-sized business with a new middle management team created new challenges for running the company. The CEO Roundtable group was instrumental in working through these challenges with his peers who had similar experiences and valuable advice to share.

Overall, Doug credits the GrowFL program with helping him dramatically grow his business in an uncertain economic environment and doing so with a much lower level of risk than he would have had on his own. Florida Supplement also benefited from the low interest Economic Gardening Loan administered by the Black Business Investment Fund. With this additional capital, Doug was able to enact the strategies and advice he received from the Strategic Research team of the GrowFL program.

Doug is now preparing for a second engagement with the GrowFL Strategic Research team and continues to participate in CEO roundtables. Over the last year, Florida Supplement has grown its sales 80 percent and more than doubled its staff by 31 employees, partially due to the GrowFL program. Doug's goal is to continue to grow Florida Supplement more than 50 percent per year with the help of the resources and strategies he received from GrowFL.

Case Study compiled in 2010

Gulf Coast Signs of Sarasota

CEO: Hidayet Kutat

Employees: 22
Location: Southwest Florida (Sarasota County)
Website: www.gulfcoastsigns.com
Product/Services: Electric and non-illuminated interior and exterior signs

Gulf Coast Signs of Sarasota (GCS) is an Underwriters Laboratories-approved electric sign company located in Sarasota for more than 35 years. As Florida's commercial construction problems began escalating in 2007, and new construction plummeted, GCS felt the hit. The company's CEO, Hidayet Kutat, knew he needed an improved marketing strategy to broaden his customer base.

The Gulf Coast Signs of Sarasota GrowFL Experience

After discussing information with Hidayet about his company's needs, the GrowFL expert panel suggested several recommendations to improve GCS's overall marketing strategy. These recommendations included Hidayet aggressively seeking out franchised companies as customers. Establishing relationships with newly formed franchises will assure that GCS will be their sole sign provider as the franchise grows, leading to a future of sustainable growth so that they could grow as the franchise grew. Hidayet and his executive team attended a franchise expo in Miami in search of a new long-term customer base.

The GrowFL analysts examined GCS's website and found deficiencies, such as a lack of vital key words needed for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). As the result of highlighting this issue, Gulf Coast Signs of Sarasota hired a local SEO company, who not only updated the entire concept of their website, but also implemented tactics for improved SEO capabilities. Traffic to the site has already increased and has started to pay dividends. To better showcase the company's products and professionalism to the Web-based audience, the team recommended adding videos to the site and incorporating the use of a YouTube page, a strategy which Hidayet is currently implementing.

Before beginning the Strategic Research program, Hidayet utilized a very conservative business model, practicing what he called "lean business concepts" to minimize wasteful spending, while maintaining a steady workforce. The team supported Hidayet's plans to diversify the business so that future downturns in the construction industry would not be as detrimental to the company's bottom line.

Hidayet is currently working to implement some of the GrowFL team's many recommendations. He is updating GCS's strategic marketing plan to penetrate the high-end American Disabilities Act-approved and interior sign markets, as well as branching out into the digital printing industry. Hidayet plans to address the other recommendations summarized in the team's final report over the next six to 18 months. He also hopes he can one day help other business owners who are facing challenges related to sustainable growth.

Case study following first engagement in 2010.

Infinity Technology Solutions

CEO: Terry Hedden

Employees: 37
Location: Tampa Bay (Hillsborough County)
Website: www.infinityit.com
Product/Services: Managed IT services

Infinity Technology Solutions provides telephone, computer and website technical support for clients throughout Florida and Georgia. For Infinity Technology Solutions' CEO Terry Hedden, participating in the GrowFL program meant free business support to help his company grow.

The Infinity Technology Solutions GrowFL Experience

When Terry learned about the GrowFL program, he saw it as an opportunity to receive external, impartial advice and assistance for his firm. As a small company, Terry had no internal sounding board to turn to for advice or support.

Coming into the program, Terry expected the GrowFL team to challenge him with big picture questions, forcing him to examine issues at a macro-level – something a CEO with little time typically does. For Terry, the program was successful at pushing him to step back and work on his business, rather than just in it.

Specifically, the GrowFL Strategic Research team provided Terry with go-to-market strategies and information to better target potential customers. GrowFL provided insight on potential market segmentation and how to best reach these potential customers by providing detailed marketing lists in these new markets. Terry feels this information will help him save time and money reaching out to client prospects and provide better tools to communicate with potential customers.

Overall, Terry was most surprised by the level of talent within the GrowFL Strategic Research Team. He normally would have spent a lot of money for the opportunity to talk to such experienced professionals and was impressed by their wide breadth of knowledge, spanning several disciplines.

Since first engaging with the GrowFL program, Infinity Technology Solutions has already hired three additional employees. Terry expects to add two management-level positions and two or three more technical positions just in the next 90 days.

Terry is looking forward to implementing some of the marketing strategies set in motion by GrowFL. He expects these efforts will boost the company's revenue once they go into effect. After he has had time to put these strategies in motion, Terry hopes to participate in GrowFL's second level of engagement, which he will use as an opportunity to dive deeper into some of the information the team provided.

Case Study compiled in 2010

Micron PharmaWorks

Manufacturer of packaging machines for the pharmaceutical industry
Odessa, FL
Peter Buczynsky, CEO

As a second-stage company enrolled in GrowFL, I count myself as one of the lucky ones to receive this kind of free assistance in the program's first year. Companies like PharmaWorks are all stuck in the same box. They're stable ... but stagnant—they just don't have the "growth" mentality.

After the first call with the Economic Gardening Team, we immediately identified areas that were keeping us from growing. Our issues with employee temperament and communication were creating bottlenecks with how information was transferred within the company.

On top of HR and efficiency issues, the Economic Gardening Team's business analysts assisted us with new online media techniques to find and take advantage of extensive databases of suppliers and customers. It's this information that I can immediately hand over to my sales force to target new audiences and use new approaches for lead generation.

I don't know where we would be without this outside help. Before starting the program, I couldn't see the forest for the trees. Thanks to the program, I'm getting on the right path to grow my company.

Client testimonial provided following first engagement in 2010.

Myers-Seth Pump

CEO: Teresa Myers

Employees: 12
Location: Northeast Florida (Duval County)
Website: www.myersseth.com
Product/Services: High volume mechanical pumps

In 1991 Teresa Myers and her husband, Doug, purchased Seth Pump & Valve Co., a manufacturer of diesel-powered pumps and equipment for the construction industry. Since then, they have brought the ailing company, now Myers-Seth Pump, from one full-time employee, one product line and a couple of hundred thousand dollars in revenue to the next stage with a staff of 12, seven product lines and more than \$3 million in annual revenue. The couple also operates MSP Rental LLC, a sister company that rents pumps and construction equipment with locations in Jacksonville and Orlando.

The Myers-Seth Pump GrowFL Experience

While the company had shown veritable growth in the last two decades, the slow economy also slowed the company's growth and demonstrated weak areas in the company's business model.

After discussing the obstacles Myers-Seth Pump was facing, the GrowFL Economic Gardening Team addressed Teresa's concerns about competitors and where her company fell in the marketplace. The team gave Teresa in-depth research and analysis that she had needed but couldn't afford to invest the time and money to get.

Teresa received detailed information on her competitors' market share, what type of products they offer and where their strong suits lie. From that data, she's repositioned her company's bidding strategy and only goes after jobs where she knows her company has the competitive advantage. This knowledge also helps her stay ahead of her customers—she can sell the unique benefits of her specialized pumps, such as water efficiency and maintenance costs.

The team's experts in search engine optimization provided her with the special insight needed to be found online through Internet searches by a new group of customers, including those located abroad—a market segment that Teresa was interested in pursuing to grow her business.

The team mapped geographic areas of the region where the water table is very high—and how it varies across the state. This data gave Teresa a key understanding of the different pumps her customers needed based on geography.

Teresa is staying involved with the GrowFL program through her CEO Roundtable group of peer second-stage business owners and Myers-Seth Pump plans to add five or six new positions in 2010.

Case study following 2009 engagement.

PlusOne Solutions

Founder and CEO: Craig Reilly

Employees: 46
Location: Central Florida (Orange County)
Website: www.plusonesolutions.net
Product/Services: Administrative and support services

With more than 24 years of operational management experience at Sears, Craig Reilly started his own business to provide field services, training and background screening for companies that require complex customer service management systems. Established in 2005, PlusOne Solutions took a few years developing its products. Reilly turned to several entrepreneur-support groups in the community for assistance with his business plan; help finding start-up funding and recommendations for gaining customers.

Reilly recognized that the help he was getting from those organizations was invaluable. "As an entrepreneur, I could see then that the connections I was making would help me navigate the many unforeseen obstacles every entrepreneur encounters and that this would take my company to the next level," said Reilly. As a result, PlusOne Solutions had grown out of the startup phase and the help he needed was different. At this time, the partners who had helped him before introduced him to GrowFL.

As an early participant in the GrowFL program, PlusOne Solutions took advantage of the full suite of services offered to CEOs. Reilly met with other small business owners in his local region once a month to discuss business issues as part of the GrowFL CEO Roundtable. He attended multiple CEO Forums to hear presentations from successful third-stage business owners who shared their companies' stories of growing pains. Perhaps most valuable, though, was Reilly's experience in the GrowFL Strategic Research program where he received one-on-one attention and recommendations from experts in business development.

Just-in-time Technical Assistance

"When the GrowFL team first introduced themselves on the call and explained what they could do, I felt like I was at the grocery store on an empty stomach," said Reilly. The team answered Reilly's questions on legal concerns, patent licensing and business strategy, all within a few days.

"What surprised me most was the quickness of the team," said Reilly. "Here is a team of experts who specialize in just about every aspect of business that you could think of—and they turn around information to you immediately and point out issues that later on could be troublesome if not handled appropriately."

Reilly utilized the GrowFL team's expertise on topics ranging from Internet marketing using social media to the IT pitfalls of creating open source technology and the benefits of creating nonprofit affiliations. More importantly, the team provided him with solutions that became major advantages for the expansion of his business.

When Reilly realized his company was beginning to outgrow his office space, the team connected him with a broker—an approach he wouldn't have ordinarily taken. The broker was able to negotiate a lease in a more favorable location which included furniture, doubled the size of his previous space and upgraded his technology capabilities, all while maintaining his current lease and facility costs.

"As an entrepreneur, you're all alone, and you think you have to take on challenges all by yourself," said Reilly. "The recommendation to use a broker instead of trying to do it ourselves was a huge savings to us in both time and money." PlusOne Solutions moved into that space in June, and Reilly already expects to outgrow it by March. The broker that GrowFL referred is already helping Reilly find additional space in his current building.

Reilly's experience with the GrowFL team supplied him with tools and strategies that he could implement to grow his business. "It was so much information and help that we're still moving on their recommendations six months later," said Reilly. While the management team implements those strategies, Reilly stays connected with a group of peer CEOs through GrowFL's roundtable network.

GrowFL CEO Roundtables

Being involved in the CEO Roundtables armed Reilly with tried and true advice right from the source. Through the roundtables he has recognized the value for the CEOs who need an outlet to discuss the issues that keep them awake at night. The Roundtable addresses all of the facets of running a business, from financial and legal issues to personal and family concerns. "All of those areas have to be healthy, not only for the company to survive, but the CEO as well," said Reilly.

After hearing about the hiring practices of other CEOs from his roundtable group, Reilly modified and implemented a recruiting program to hire smarter. "Part of what PlusOne Solutions does requires a number of customer service representatives, and with our standard practice of hiring, we had a significant turnover rate," said Reilly. "I took note from another CEO who suggested another way of hiring: by identifying the right skill sets, recruiting stronger and paying higher salaries, we could ensure success by keeping the best employees. We even use better evaluation processes to make sure they are performing optimally."

PlusOne Solutions is a "Net Job Creation" company meaning PlusOne adds new jobs to Florida. When Reilly started in the GrowFL program, his company had 34 employees. Thanks in part to the GrowFL program, PlusOne Solutions has grown to 46 employees. He plans to further extend his staff, including additional management, technical, and marketing positions. From the company's headquarters in Orlando, PlusOne Solutions services clients throughout the United States and in Canada. Reilly is planning to expand into Mexico in 2012 and enter into additional markets and industries.

"If it weren't for these programs, I can say without a doubt that my company wouldn't be where it is today," said Reilly.

PRC Digital Media

CEO: Ray Hays

Employees: 10
Location: Northeast Florida (Duval County)
Website: www.PRCDigital.com
Product/Services: Multimedia and Digital Media Services Provider

PRC Digital Media was created to serve the multimedia production needs of television and corporate video producers. They have worked on documentaries, corporate training videos, commercials and other video production projects. Since its inception in 1988, PRC Digital Media has moved beyond video production and has also begun specializing in Multimedia Job Performance Aids (MJPAs). These interactive training tools are used by the Navy and Marines to provide just-in-time knowledge for maintenance and system operations in a safe and efficient manner. CEO Ray Hays needed help determining the best marketing strategies for this niche product and turned to the GrowFL team to help him find these answers.

The PRC Digital Media GrowFL Experience

Ray knew that identifying qualified sales leads outside of the military was his biggest obstacle to growing his business. The GrowFL Strategic Research Team provided him with the information he needed to market MJPAs more effectively, including what benefits commercial customers sought from the products and who the most likely customers are. Ray said the most beneficial aspect of the GrowFL program was having an outside set of eyes to analyze his business and provide the information he needed to grow PRC Digital Media. Ray said participating in the program forced him to dedicate time to improving his business, something that often got pushed aside as a small business owner.

The GrowFL team provided Ray with the research he needed to broaden the types of commercial customers he targets. Based on the Strategic Research Team's deliverables, Ray was able to quantify how much more effective MJPAs are than traditional training methods in learning and training. He used this information to develop a white paper that outlines how MJPAs can help his potential customers.

Another aspect of the GrowFL program that Ray benefited from is the CEO Roundtable. Meeting with other second-stage CEOs gave Ray the opportunity to question his business decisions and determine if he was taking the best course of action for his company. Ray says the Roundtables reintroduced him to lessons learned along the way he had forgotten. Ray considers the Roundtables an invaluable factor in achieving the level of growth his business has attained.

After participating in the GrowFL program, Ray was able to reach out to more clients and use a more direct approach in his marketing tactics. He expects to hire more project producers within the next six months as a result of participating in the program. Ray also looks forward to seeing the positive effects to PRC Digital Media's bottom line in the long term.

Case study following 2010 engagement.

Presstige Printing

CEO: Bob Weidenmiller
Employees: 18
Location: Southwest Florida (Collier County)
Website: www.presstigeprinting.com
Product/Services: Commercial printing and design services

Founded in 1980, Presstige Printing is a leader in commercial printing solutions. With a solid foundation in high-quality printing services, Presstige Printing began offering a host of additional services including graphic design, binding, high-speed digital printing and direct mail services. Presstige Printing President and CEO Bob Weidenmiller explained that before beginning the GrowFL program, his business did not have a targeted approach to reaching customers which led to a frustrated sales force and a lot of time and money spent reaching out to unqualified sales leads.

The Presstige Printing GrowFL Experience

After the initial conference call with the GrowFL Strategic Research team, Bob spoke with the specialists on an individual basis. The expert specialists gave him detailed information regarding competitive intelligence, management's strengths and weaknesses, the company's product line matrix, Web strategy and regional market analysis.

The GrowFL team provided Bob with detailed information about his competitors, something that he says was invaluable information. He had an idea of who he was competing with for business but the information provided by the Strategic Research analyst panel provided deeper insight into how his competitors operated. This information steered Bob's decision to update Presstige Printing's business model. Bob now understands that his company's strength lies in a more sophisticated approach to printing and customer service rather than targeting customers with basic printing needs.

This competitive intelligence, coupled with regional market analysis, allowed Bob to better train his sales staff. By knowing more about their competition and the needs of the marketplace, Presstige Printing's sales force can approach more qualified leads which results in more sales being placed, and ultimately, increased profitability.

In addition to the Strategic Research program, Bob found the monthly CEO Roundtables to be a helpful component of the GrowFL program. Meeting with CEO peers to discuss and analyze business problems was a valuable experience that brought much insight into running his business more effectively.

After completing the program and seeing how beneficial the Strategic Research team's counsel was, Bob said that he found the program to be "a very rewarding, efficient experience." The Strategic Research program and CEO roundtables helped him gain confidence as the owner of a second-stage business and the team's recommendations provided direction on where his company is headed in the future. Bob has already added two positions to his sales force and looks forward to seeing the increased profitability Presstige Printing has enjoyed since participating in the GrowFL program.

Case Study compiled in 2010

Westhorp & Associates Inc.

CEO: Brenda Westhorp

Employees: 10
Location: Southeast Florida (Miami-Dade County)
Website: www.westhorp.com
Product/Services: Environmental and civil engineering services

Founded in 1997, Westhorp & Associates Inc. is an environmental and civil engineering service provider for public municipalities. Westhorp & Associates was in the midst of several large projects when CEO Brenda Westhorp learned about the GrowFL program. She knew it was exactly what she needed to help her company grow to the next level in a sustainable way.

The Westhorp & Associates Inc. GrowFL Experience

A major obstacle Brenda's company faced was overcoming potential clients' perceptions that she was a small business. Brenda says she was in a growth mode but needed tools and information on how to sustain that level of growth while developing her client base. The GrowFL Strategic Research Team provided her with the resources she needed to break out of the small business mold and begin attracting larger engineering projects.

This was done first by optimizing Westhorp & Associates' website so that potential clients can easily find them in an Internet search. The GrowFL team provided Brenda with information about redesigning her website using the principles of Search Engine Optimization, ensuring that Westhorp & Associates can be found by search engines. At GrowFL's suggestion, Brenda incorporated the use of Google AdWords to expand Westhorp & Associates' Web presence.

Based on database research and market analysis, the GrowFL team suggested that Westhorp & Associates expand its reach into more diverse markets in Latin America and the Caribbean. Brenda is enthusiastic to get started on this endeavor and expects to begin exploring these opportunities this fall.

Brenda says the GrowFL program has provided her with the tools she needs to maintain Westhorp & Associates' current status and prepare for future growth. The GrowFL team's recommendations have allowed Brenda to place more emphasis on long-term strategic planning and marketing programs, rather than being entrenched by the daily operation of her business. Participating in the program has given her ideas on how to positively impact her bottom line, and she looks forward to implementing more of them in the near future.

Case Study compiled in 2010