



Always Be Reinventing

Leading Edge Aerospace

Stan Unruh has lived through a few downturns in the economy. As a former farmer he knew the highs and lows of the economy and what it meant to business.

In 2010, it was hitting his composites manufacturing business, Leading Edge Aerospace pretty hard.

A lot of hard decisions were being made in aviation related industries. Short of cash or access to capital to get through the rough patch, many suppliers were laying off or shutting their doors.

Unruh was faced with some of these same challenges. Alan Badgley, consultant with the Kansas SBDC at WSU, reached out to Unruh and offered strategic planning assistance to Unruh and his team at Leading Edge at no cost.

In the midst of a multitude of challenges is not when you'd think a small business would take time to work on the business, but that's exactly what Unruh did.

Together with his Kansas SBDC consultant Alan Badgley, Unruh and his team took a hard look at internal communications, various key processes, and sales. Badgley used ProfitCents industry financial analysis to analyze and benchmark Leading Edge's finances. Because slow sales in the industry overall were challenging, a great deal of emphasis was placed on identifying profitable customers and the overall sales process.

With a strategic plan of action, Leading Edge Aerospace has been able to grow sales by more than 500% and obtain additional capital for growth since it began working with the Kansas SBDC. Leading Edge has improved profit margins and gained some high-profile clients including Textron Airland LLC and Bell Helicopter.

Unruh credits the SWOT analysis process he worked on with Badgley with helping the company focus on its strengths and raise awareness of company weaknesses. Because of the analysis, Leading Edge was able to concentrate on utilizing their strengths and work on improving or overcoming its weaknesses to move aggressively forward. "Realizing that finding the right personnel to assist on the financial side of our business was very important. The ability to understand the weekly expenses and better forecast future costs prepared us to strategically take on more jobs," shared Unruh.

Unruh further credits implementing the changes in his business with the results that Leading Edge is experiencing now, "In the last three years we have grown to become one of the premiere specialty composite manufacturers in the U.S. for expertise and development programs in carbon graphite materials. Investing in larger, more sophisticated equipment has helped us to become a one-stop show. Our customer base is not longer regional, but spans across the entire U.S."

“ Leading Edge Aerospace benefited during the last three years - financially, in customer relationships, marketing, and in solving internal management processes - from Kansas SBDC on-site programs through a process designed by Kansas SBDC to help companies identify solutions for improved marketing strategies, both internally and throughout the industrial community. We are grateful to Kansas SBDC and Alan Badgley for their commitment to helping the community bring forth more productive manufacturing institutions.” - Stan Unruh

Learn more about Leading Edge Aerospace call 316-942-1301 or visit leawichita.com.

Assisted by
Alan Badgley, consultant
Kansas SBDC at WSU
Wichita. WSU KSBDC | 316.978.3193 |
wichita.edu/ksbdc | ksbdc@wichita.edu

Represented by
Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Jerry Moran
Federal Congressional District KS-04 Mike Pompeo
State Representative District KS-095 Tom Sawyer
State Senate District KS-025 Michael O'Donnell