



Mom and Pop Party Store Gets Down to Business

Accountability

Schedule

Actions

Goals

Targets

Purpose

Core Values

Nobbies

Gordon and Joy Watanabe founded Nobbies, an online and brick-and-mortar party supply store in 1988, which has grown to three locations in Iowa and Nebraska. Currently they carry more than 36,000 different items including partyware, toys, balloons, decorations, educational supplies, costumes, home décor, and wedding invitations. While Nobbies has its beginnings in an international operation (Gordon's father Harry founded Oriental Trading Company), Joy and Gordon's business was built on a "mom and pop" foundation.

"Before we were just a mom and pop business, and we expected that everyone knew what to do and how to work. We didn't really have a good communications process before. When we would give a directive, it wasn't carried through. It was like that old game of telephone, by the time it went to the end of the line, the directive was changed. It didn't revolve around a common goal. Our business grew more quickly than our communications plan, or lack of plan," said Gordon.

Through Gordon and Joy's involvement with EO (Entrepreneurs' Organization), they were familiar with the Rockefeller Habits process, and wanted to look further into its implementation.

"Around two years ago, we looked at the Rockefeller Habits website, and found Monte Wyatt's name as a coach. We checked out his website, and were very impressed by the testimonials we read. They were very positive, and we felt like our organization could benefit from his services," said Joy. "Retail had become very challenging, due to the economy and other factors."

Communication Key to Conquer Challenges

Before meeting with ActionCOACH Business Coach Monte Wyatt, Joy and Gordon struggled with implementing some of the techniques they'd learned through their EO group and Rockefeller Habits book.

"After we read the book, we talked to people about it and tried to implement it, but we needed some help, someone to help us facilitate. We needed a coach to take us to that next level. We didn't feel like the staff was taking it seriously," said Gordon.

There were several areas Joy and Gordon hoped a business coach like Monte could address.



ActionCOACH Monte Wyatt Client Success Stories

Monte Wyatt is one of the top ActionCOACH Business Coaches in the world.

"Our communications needed improvement and we needed ways to put measures in place to hold staff accountable," said Joy.

Through working with Monte, they've established successful systems.

"Now, we have what we call team huddles every day. Everything flows down from the main huddle to the store huddle. Our leadership teams act as ambassadors to carry the correct message out to their teams. It's much more effective," said Gordon.

Right People in the Right Seat

One of the hardest aspects of creating change within the organization has been putting the right people in the right seat, but it's an effort that's paid off.

"The team we started the process with isn't the team we have now. We simply didn't have the right people in the right seat, as Monte likes to say," said Joy. "It's a work in progress, and it hasn't been easy. Through the accountability process and establishment of quarterly goals, we've had changes, but the team we have now likes it."

Gordon agrees: "The people we bring on now don't have the same mentality of the people we had before. Now, we take more time when we hire, and have a better idea of what we're looking for. It's a certain type of person, and before, we didn't have goals in mind. They might be a great worker, but just not right for our culture. We're in retail, so they have to like working with people. We look now for personality just as much or more than a certain skill set."

One thing that was discovered through Monte's process was that not only do you need the right people, you need the right seats to begin with.

"We now have a general manager who helps us run the company. He's been on board a year. That's been a positive thing for us and a position we didn't have before. We needed that professional management," said Gordon.

Hard Questions Reveal Best Solutions

"One thing you should know before working with Monte is that he will ask you some hard questions, those things that are staring you in the face but maybe you don't want to deal with. Some of our issues were evident, everyone could see, but they weren't being dealt with," said Gordon.



Owners
Joy & Gordon
Watanabe

Getting staff on board with their plans was perhaps the biggest hurdle they had to clear.

"I was trying to manage getting everyone on board with these new ideas from the Rockefeller Habits. But not everyone was buying into the idea. It was almost as if they thought it was just the idea of the month, and if we do nothing, it will go away. Monte helped us use more effective strategies to show our team this isn't going away. It's a culture change that's here to stay. Internal resistance was our biggest challenge," said Joy.

Through working with Monte, however, Joy and Gordon have taken steps to overcome these challenges, and are glad the hard questions were asked right from the get go.

"When you work with Monte, be ready for long, deep conversations. Get on the horse and hold on because you're going somewhere. He addresses a lot of issues you don't see or don't want to see or don't want to address. He's really good about putting things into perspective," said Gordon. "For us, he helped us realize we're not here to run a social organization, we're here to run a business, and that was a bit hard for us. We love people. We're a party supply store, after all. But if we don't succeed, there won't be a business for them to be employed by."

Joy and Gordon are glad they took their mom and pop business to the level it needed to be, and are poised for even more success in the future.

"The greatest value of working with Monte is that when we met him, he gave us a lot of hope and showed us how to make the changes we knew we wanted but didn't know how to do," said Gordon. "People weren't taking us as seriously as we wanted, and we were discouraged. But he shows us we can make this happen. We can do this."

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