

CompTIA®



Spotlight on Success

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David Watson



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Going for Growth

Under the spotlight this time is Evolve Computers Managing Director and CompTIA UK Executive Council Member David Watson.

Over the last two years, managed services provider Evolve Computers has been reshaping its offerings and processes to create new opportunities. Through a series of engaging and insightful answers, Watson discusses the drivers, challenges and pitfalls involved in striving for growth, and the steps you can take to empower your business to reach for new goals.

CompTIA: We understand you have been extremely focused on growing Evolve, but what was the catalyst for wanting to seek out that growth?

DW: At first the drivers seemed to be a myriad of different things: to earn more money, increase prestige and to set myself greater challenges. When I sought more specific insight, I realised that I really needed to align my personal goals (and those of my family) with my work goals.

I needed to re-energise business, which had become comfortably stagnant. I felt this could be best achieved by growing. I had to re-focus my efforts in the business and start to drive the changes [we] needed.

CompTIA: Have you had to change your focus to achieve growth?

DW: Although I have not fundamentally changed what we do, our business focus has become clearer. The management team spent a lot of time and effort clarifying what we do well, and importantly, what we don’t do. With this understanding we have been able to motivate and unify our team, communicate better with our customers and develop better services.

CompTIA: What has been the biggest challenge you have encountered?

DW: Some days it has really felt like we were taking one step back to take two steps forward. When you are in embroiled in the day-to-day execution of the plan, you sometimes lose sight of where you are heading.

Additionally, in the beginning it can feel like nothing is changing. All this leads to doubt, which you need to be able to manage, both in yourself and your team to keep things on track. By keeping your focus and being persistent, all of this can be overcome.

CompTIA: Have you had to change your leadership style to achieve growth?

DW: One of the big changes was learning to delegate. That has proven to be a very important

part of the process. As business owners will understand, at first it is hard to let go of the reins that you have grasped so tightly.

As you start to see it working, however, you want to do it more and more. As you empower your team, you start to find their hidden depths as they rise to the challenge. On the flip side you also discover those that are not capable or willing to step up, and although it can be tough to lose people, you end up with a really strong team.

CompTIA: Do you see a challenge in sustaining growth? If so, how would you overcome that challenge?

DW: The obvious challenge revolves around resourcing to meet the increased demand for our services. The biggest challenge for me is to continue to learn and hone a new range of skills, particularly around sales and marketing. Key to overcoming these challenges is to use personal time management and delegation to keep focussed on your priorities.

CompTIA: Did you use any tools or systems to help you achieve growth?

DW: A starting point for me was to find a good business coach to help me think differently and create initiatives to help the business grow in the right way. In addition, we needed to reach out and find new clients, and therefore had to make a significant investment in marketing the business.

CompTIA: How would you say growth been achieved?

DW: We spent time reviewing and streamlining our existing services to identify ways we could create additional value for customers. We targeted our existing customer base to promote and grow our services within them. We also spent significant time refining and improving our sales and delivery processes. This time was well spent as it has helped us to attract and win new customers.

CompTIA: If you could go back and offer yourself some advice what would it be?

DW: Be bold, plan well, trust your decisions and then don't look back.



David's three tips to help you focus and grow your business:

1. Take a couple of days completely away from the business to work out what makes you truly happy. Make that your goal and work towards it.
2. Get some help from a coach or mentor. Choose them carefully—ensure they are the right person for you, at this point in your journey. When it works it will transform your life.
3. Keep going. Don't give up. Tenacity is a significant part of success.