



Accelerating business growth with ambitious scale up companies

## BRINGING FOCUS TO A FACILITIES MANAGEMENT COMPANY



**"It was brilliant to have that sort of advice. Simon was great - just brilliant."**

**Adrian Powell, Managing Director, Active FM**

**Active FM** has been trading since 1999, and in the eight years to 2016 it grew from a two-man band to a 35-person operation. Turnover was just over £5m with an enviable list of clients including Virgin Media, ITV and Innocent Drinks were using its office move, design and furnishing services.

However, with the senior management team working flat out to secure and maintain key contracts, Active's focus on its core offer had deteriorated.

The reasons why customers were using Active ahead of competitors had become unclear, and as the company evolved from a classic facilities management business to a relationship-based solutions service, procrastination had set in.

Fortunately Active's leadership team came across VitalSix.

In just six months our coaches helped Active's leaders to develop a core sales proposition, improve their governance and focus their efforts on exploiting opportunities in the Thames Valley.

Director Adrian Powell first came across VitalSix at a business-networking event. After being impressed by a VitalSix speaker, he signed up for our Business Accelerator programme delivered in partnership with Henley Business School at the University of Reading.

The three-day course allowed Adrian and three senior colleagues to examine their business and where it was going.

Adrian said: "We'd just been in the business, running it at 100 miles-per-hour. It was very difficult for us to get our heads above the parapet.

"We knew it would be good to get out of the business and learn some good practices.



"The days away got us thinking about our elevator pitch, and about our markets and where we should focus. Some of the things we worked on are things that we are doing now - for example our Target Thames Valley strategy.

"I thought it was excellent. I can't understand why any aspiring business owner wouldn't want to do it. You would be stupid not to.

"I still dive into the notes I made today."

Attendance at the Business Accelerator led to Active being asked to quote on two new jobs with local companies, but the support didn't end there. As a high growth scale up business, Active continued working with growth coach Simon Derry.

Adrian said: "For six months Simon came and sat in our board meetings and helped us in terms of structure.

**"We now know that our clients value our breadth of services, speed and flexibility. That is what we tell our people to focus on now."**

**Adrian Powell, Managing Director, Active FM**

Our clients are high growth innovative businesses led and managed by people who value objective input to work alongside their management teams to address strategic and tactical issues as the business scales up.

Visit [www.vitalsix.co.uk](http://www.vitalsix.co.uk) or call 0118 935 7369 to find out more



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"Simon interviewed each of us outside the business, asking us about what we wanted from the business, and then brought it all together. He stopped the procrastination that we sometimes had.

"Sometimes people talk to you about the theoretical, but Simon met us on our ground.

"He helped us understand where our strengths and weaknesses lay, and helped us to put the correct people in the correct places.

"He came back with some ideas about how we could work better - which we have done.

"Now we are targeting Thames Valley instead of a scattergun approach. We are trying to target it and grow our reputation locally, and then try to take it out more widely. There is definitely more focus on areas where we are going to try to win business, and are starting to win business."

Part of the coaching saw Adrian and his colleagues interview existing customers.

Adrian said: "We went with a questionnaire to find out why our clients were buying from us.

"What we thought before wasn't necessarily what we thought afterwards.

"We now know that our clients value our breadth of services, speed and flexibility. That is what we tell our people to focus on now."

Active recently appointed a non-exec director to ensure the learning from VitalSix remains central to planning.

Adrian said: "VitalSix has helped us build a foundation for expansion. It was of huge value to us. It's made us more aligned as a leadership team.



### **The business:**

Active FM Ltd | Reading  
[www.activefm.co.uk](http://www.activefm.co.uk), 0845 130 906.

### **The problem:**

Active's leadership team found the demands of day-to-day issues made it difficult to plan strategically. Managers had lost touch with why customers valued Active's services.

### **Support delivered:**

Business Accelerator programme, followed by tailored business and leadership coaching focusing on marketing, sales and corporate governance.

### **What next:**

Active is focusing on key markets, and is pushing out its refined sales message of breadth of service, speed and flexibility. It has recently appointed a non-executive director to ensure good practices learned from VitalSix remain part of the business.