



An Australian Government Initiative



CASE STUDY:

BUSINESS REVIEW – Silver Lynx, Glenroy, Victoria

Silver Lynx manufactures bedroom, occasional and dining furniture, as well as furniture specifically designed for aged care residences. Established in 1962, the business employs around 40 staff.

With the local furniture industry under pressure from a rapidly changing market and increasing imports, General Manager of Silver Lynx, Simon Bowler, welcomed the opportunity to get professional advice on how to maintain current business figures and initiate new growth strategies.

“The Business Review program came at the right time for us. Our industry is going through a tough time. We needed to respond to these changes and find better ways of doing things.

It was easy to develop a rapport with Paul Smarrelli, Business Adviser for Partner Organisation NORTH Link. Paul has a strong background in manufacturing and a lot of relevant knowledge. It was great to deal with a manufacturing professional who understood the issues and knew what I was talking about.

The process was easy. Because Paul scheduled appointments with us well in advance, I didn't find time spent on the program intrusive. I just worked it into my day as I would any other meeting. Sometimes I needed to find information to give him, but Paul did most of the hard work himself. Once I realised the benefits to us, I could see it was time well spent.

The experience was challenging for me personally, and made me think in different ways. Some things that Paul suggested were obvious in retrospect but that's the value of having an external expert on board. He looked at all our systems and suggested quite a few improvements. In particular, he introduced us to reporting software developed for manufacturing businesses. That's making a big difference.



Benchmarking us against other businesses was a really useful exercise and it threw up a few surprises. For example, I thought we were pretty good at R&D, but compared with overseas manufacturers, we are weak in that area. That's something we'll look at down the track.

After delivering the report and recommendations, Paul continued to help us, answering questions or meeting with our staff to clarify issues and give extra advice.

We've learned a lot from the process and also started to make changes. For example, Paul pointed out that our succession planning wasn't good enough and that our business was vulnerable if key staff moved on. So we employed someone new to take that role. We increased our focus on lean manufacturing, looking at opportunities to reduce our production costs. And we also refined our market analysis by investigating strengths and weaknesses in the market to define our future directions.

Many of Paul's recommendations are already under way and the longer-term ones are in the planning stages. This program has been a real benefit to us and I'd strongly recommend it to any business looking to improve and grow in the future.”

Silver Lynx was provided with a Business Review during 2009 by Enterprise Connect Partner Organisation NORTH Link and Business Adviser Paul Smarrelli.