

Innovative Future Leaders Programme – Sam Walker – Executive Summary

Business Challenge: Will a rebrand help D&T embrace change and encourage a better working culture?

Darke & Taylor

The business was started in 1958, starting out as a sole trader and has grown to one of the largest privately owned building service businesses in the Southeast. The offerings have developed over the years from small electrical installations to design, delivery, and maintenance of all mechanical and electrical systems, turning over around £30million in 2022. The business relies heavily on succession from within, with most employees in senior positions having started with Darke & Taylor as apprentices and the apprentice intake being the biggest recruitment strategy, taking on 20+ in the last two years.

Application Targets vs Now

How Darke & Taylor can future proof the services and the staff development programmes it offers to enable the company to deliver the rapid technology advancements in our industry. To keep our clients aware of the broad range of expertise the company has and what it is doing to keep up with technological and environmental developments.

An ongoing target but something that has substantially improved as a business, using tools like Instagram, LinkedIn, website has enabled us to spread the word a bit more, although I still feel we have a long way to go. Not all of our employees talk confidently about everything we do so the culture is still heavily *electrical*, hence my business challenge of a **rebrand** was born, to both make the outside world aware, but also create a better culture around the new modern technologies at Darke & Taylor.

Business Challenge

As a business, Darke & Taylor has made some big changes in recent years, starting, and growing a mechanical side to the business, undertaking more works in the IOT and establishing the design department as a true player in the industry. Internally, Darke & Taylor are currently on a mission to change the culture within the business with all internal staff having attended a 'Working Miracles with Performance' course, which highlighted key areas that could improve the business's culture, but this has taken a back seat since due to numerous reasons but one thing that has been overlooked is a re-brand. **Darke & Taylor** has grown from a £15 million turnover company to a £30million turnover company in the last 5 years, could this be even more with a rebrand that gives the company a clear identity and represents everything that Darke & Taylor does and showcases the values of the business. Not only could this be a massive commercial benefit, but a rebrand could also change the feeling of the business for current and new employees, and help move the business towards a new, better culture. **The risks of the re-brand**; it could fall flat when put into practice, and a failed rebrand can be costly in terms of both money and reputation. Darke & Taylor has a strong customer base with many repeat business clients who trust Darke & Taylor and view it as a dependable business, could a rebrand cause confusion or make them lose trust?

Creating a Proposal

To modernise the business and encourage a positive culture within the company a rebrand seems the obvious answer and now is the time for this in my opinion, with none of our competitors doing anything like this now and haven't before.

Our identity can showcase our values as an employer and push forward a culture of change and innovation in-line with the modern ways of the working world. Through a rebrand and making people more aware of our offerings, we will be able to increase both revenue and profit. All of this will also help us attract top talent and a more diverse workforce by staying ahead of our competition. All of this will have to be carefully thought through and planned out so with our internal marketing team, that is the stage we are currently at, creating a proposal for the board of directors.

Key Takeaways from IFL

- Thinking Expansively & Thinking Bigger
- Creating the Right Mental Conditions
- Working Collaboratively
- How to be a Good Leader
- Being a Good Listener

Implementations

Thinking bigger: I would not have had the confidence and thought processes to produce this business challenge.

Mental Conditions: Timing of meetings and where meetings are located.

Working Collaboratively: Previously I would often try to work through things alone, not always recognising that other people may be best placed for certain tasks. I have now started being more open with tasks and ideas allowing others to buy into it.