

Case Study:

# Furness Cars & Commercials

Equipping this vehicle servicing and recovery specialist with the tools to achieve future growth and success.



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## Background

Furness Cars & Commercials (FCC) is the leading provider of emergency roadside assistance and of fleet maintenance services across South Cumbria and North Lancashire. The company, a family-run business, has been trading for over 30 years and has grown substantially in recent years. FCC has established new sites in response to the increase in workload but the acquisition of a number of new contracts brought into focus the fact that the business has outgrown its main site in Askam-in-Furness.

Following an introduction from FCC's accounting advisors, RfM Business Consultant Tony Backhouse was engaged to carry out a formal strategic review of the business in order to prepare the business for its growth over the next 5 years, including a move to larger premises. The outcomes of the review would facilitate the development of a management baseline and defined growth targets, and provide a clear understanding of where efforts should be focused to drive the business forward.

Having ascertained that FCC would require additional finance to fund its plans for growth, Tony judged the business to be a good fit for grant funding based on its local experience and knowledge, growth mindset and relationships across the North West region. As part of the review, Tony also identified additional funding sources and available grants that to be accessed to help finance developments.

**“Over the past year, Tony has provided invaluable support and advice to help us plan and prepare for this phase of significant change for the business.”**

Gary Grieve, Director  
Furness Cars & Commercials

### Project Consultant:

**Tony Backhouse**  
Managing Director,  
RfM Business Consulting

Tony Backhouse, has over 30-years' experience in managing change. He has successfully set up and managed consultancy practices for leading consultancies. His expertise in carrying out strategic reviews and building innovation into programmes of delivery has been gained across both the public and private sectors.

# Our approach

The programme of work carried out for Furness Cars & Commercial comprised 5 key phases.

## 1. Review of growth ambitions

The aim of Phase 1 was to gain a clear understanding of the key objectives of the business which were primarily goals for financial performance. The process also resulted in an agreed 'vision' for how the business will develop over time.

Following a collaborative workshop session with FCC's senior team, Tony was able to gather the information that would allow him to define the agreed high-level objectives and to produce a strategy map which set out the steps the business must take to achieve its plans for growth.

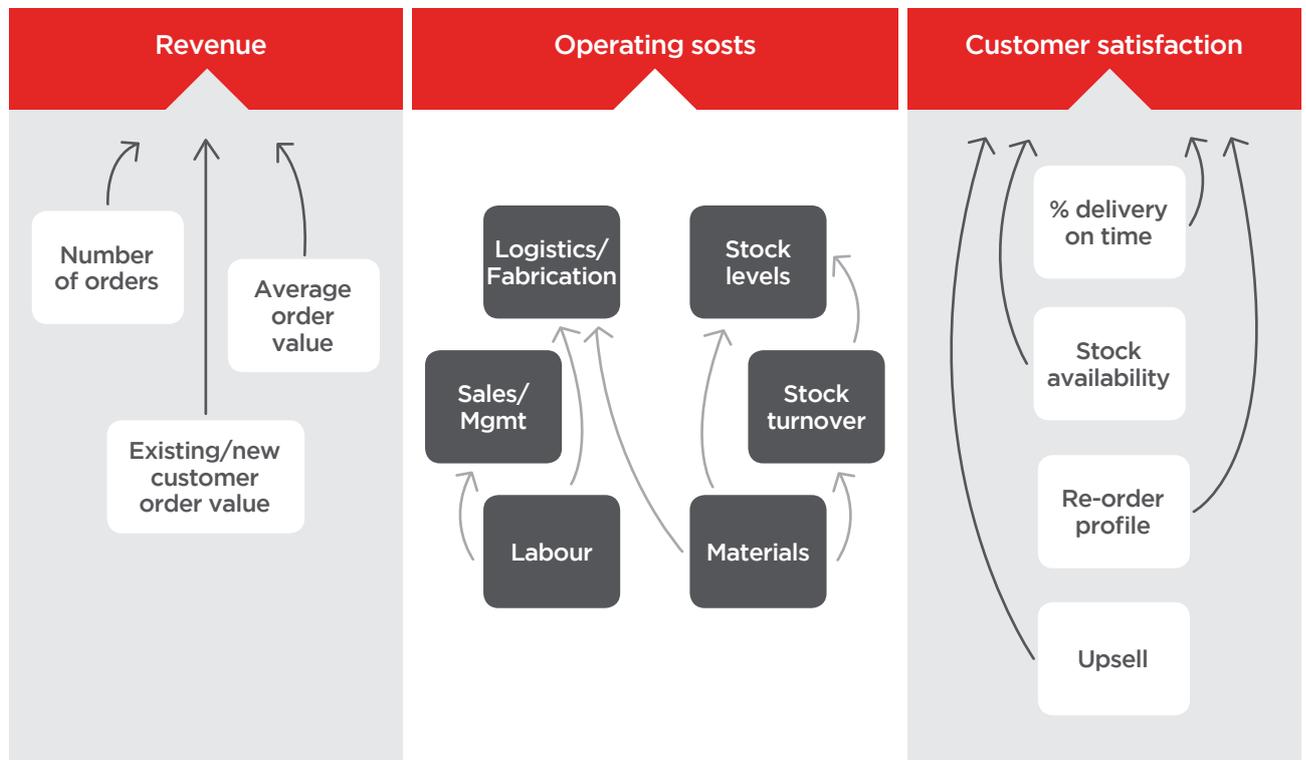
The review identified the desire to continue growing the company, whilst still maintaining the culture of a family-run business. In short a growing family-run business earning a good living.

The following diagram provides an example of typical measures and potential output.

### Overarching Objectives

Deliver £1.5m sales @ x% margin

### Key Measures



## 2. Financial analysis and reporting

Phase 1 led to the development of comprehensive cashflow forecasts, Profit & Loss Statements and Balance Sheets to support applications for banking finance (for the acquisition of land and construction of new premises).

## 3. Identifying the strategy 'baseline'

In Phase 3, Tony carried out an in-depth review of the business to understand how FCC were equipped to achieve the goals agreed in Phase 1.

The review considered all operational aspects of the business including:

- performance against key measures,
- how processes and regulatory demands are managed, and visibility of processes,
- what technology is in place
- team development needs
- premises

The review also identified the strengths of the company and areas for development, current issues internally and any external changes further down the line.

The insights gained in Phase 3 were documented and made available for everyone in the company to see.

## 4. Creating the Strategy Blueprint

Phase 4 brought the findings from Phases 2 and 3 together in a model that the senior team are now using to guide and measure progress towards achieving the objectives.

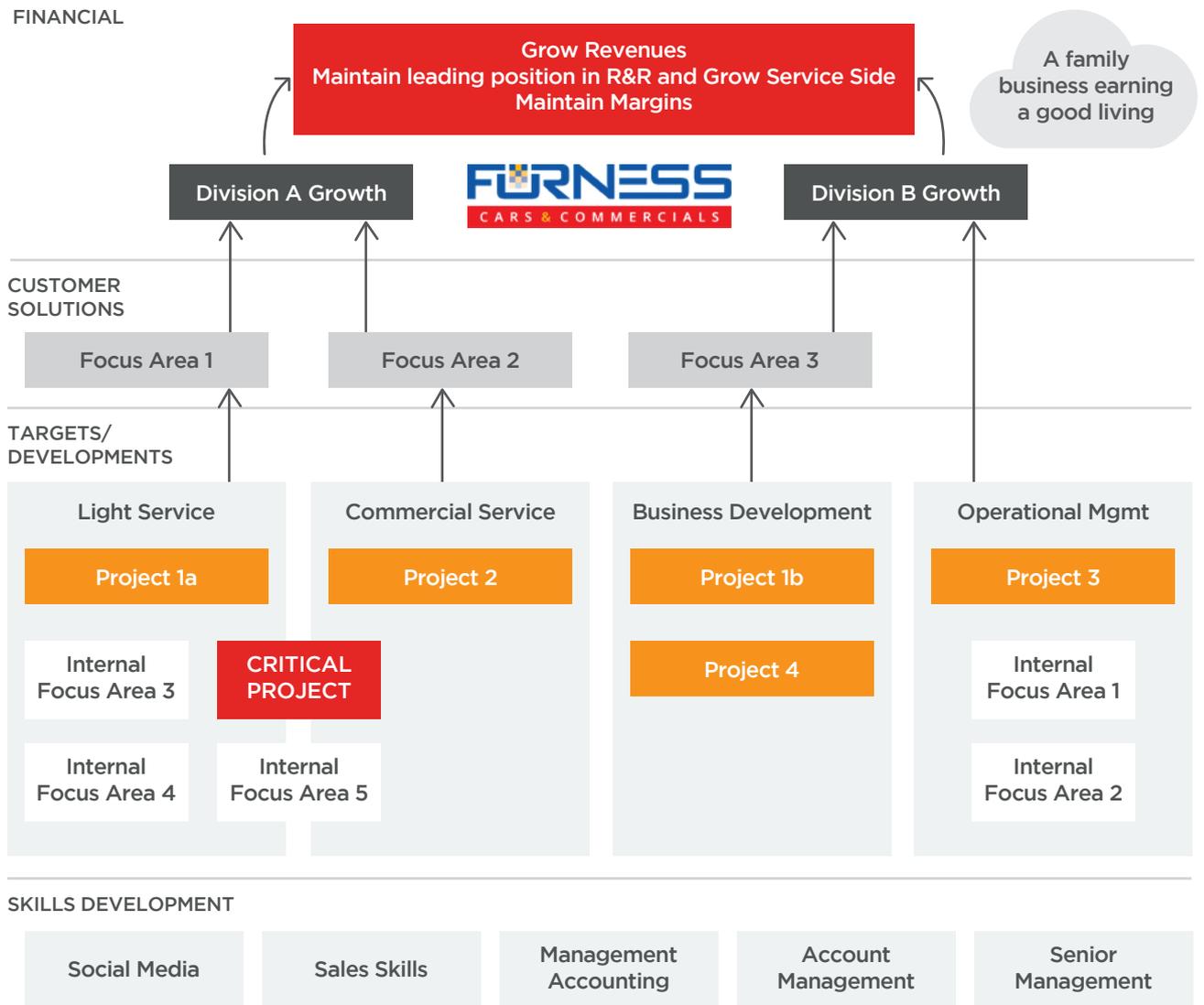
The Strategy Blueprint outlines the vision for FCC as well as the key measures and targets that need to be managed and met. It sets out the at targets to be met at defined points in the future (1, 2 and 3 years).

It also enabled the team to clearly see the scale of changes needed to achieve the high-level objectives across all relevant operations.

The following diagram shows the strategy blueprint for FCC that was developed in phase 4.

# The Strategy Blueprint for FCC

This diagram summarises the FCC Strategy, highlighting key objectives, customer solutions to deliver the growth, and a prioritised set of internal projects necessary to achieve this.



# Results

## Bringing the big picture into focus

Following the completion of this initial programme of work, the senior team at Furness Cars & Commercials have a clear picture of the over-arching strategic aims of the company and a map of how these goals will be achieved.

## Grant opportunities

An assessment of development funding and finance needs, and researching available developmental funding, revealed that the project could be eligible for funding from grants.

## Potential development sites

Tony facilitated an introduction to local land agents to test availability of suitable sites in the local area.

## Ongoing board-level support

The process of finding a suitable site for new premises for FCC is ongoing and Tony has been engaged to provide strategic support to the board over the longer term and will be managing the procurement process. Tony is also advising the company on senior staffing needs, setting up management dashboards and models to support the delivery of Operational Excellence.

**“Tony is very well connected and has put us in touch with all the right people to help make the project happen, such as land agents, planning consultants and funding bodies.**

**Tony adjusts his way of working to fit the size and nature of the business; I’ve found him to be really proactive and very hands on. Nothing seems to phase him!**

**It’s been a positive experience and we hope to carry on working with Tony through to the completion of the project.”**

Gary Grieve, Director,  
Furness Cars & Commercials

## Business Growth Service

RfM Business Consulting allows smaller companies to harness the calibre of strategic thinking usually accessible only to larger organisations, at a price they can afford.

**Are you looking to grow your business?**

**Do you need help in defining what the growth will look like?**

**Will you be creating new jobs locally?**

**Do you want to attract subsidy funding to support your growth?**

**Do you need support to produce Implementation Plans and applications for funding?**

## Find out more

call Tony Backhouse on [07969 900864](tel:07969900864)  
or email [tbackhouse@rfm-more.co.uk](mailto:tbackhouse@rfm-more.co.uk)