

Case Study

imageOne

Location: Oak Park, Michigan

2015 Revenues: \$13.7 million

Employees: 52

Industry: Sales & Service

Highlights



Challenge

Reverse a financial slide where revenue and profit growth had gone negative.



Solution

Open the books as a way to unite all employees to think and act like owners.



Results

ImageOne ended 2015 with a 10% growth in revenue and a 517% growth in profit while bringing a new sense of cohesion to the entire team.

“The Great Game helped us become better communicators, better leaders, more engaged team members, and brought us together as a team.”

imageOne

imageOne is a 25-year-old company that provides managed print services, which includes sales and service for copiers, printers, scanners as well as supplies and software solutions.

Company Background

Rob Dube and Joel Pearlman, the founders of imageOne, first became business partners in the 9th grade when they teamed up to successfully sell Blow Pops to their classmates – buying them for a nickel and selling them for a quarter. When they finished college, they teamed up again to start a business refurbishing used printer cartridges out of their basement. That business eventually expanded into a provider of complete managed print services. The founders actually sold the business in 2004 to a public company, but then made the bold decision to reacquire it in 2006. The business had continued to grow until 2014, when revenue and profits began a backward slide. That’s when Dube, who had encountered the Great Game of Business through the Small Giants Community, decided to commit to opening his books.

“It took the weight off my shoulders so I wasn’t alone in trying to figure everything out.”

Playing the Game Together

Implementing The Great Game of Business at imageOne meant that Dube needed to show his vulnerability. “Making the transition from feeling comfortable reading an income statement to teaching finance to an entire company was a humbling experience,” he says. “Everyone here is a learner and I realized they wanted to know even more. Admitting that I didn’t have all the answers and that the Great Game of Business was something we would all learn to play together encouraged team member participation and a sense of togetherness.”

Since half of imageOne’s team members work remotely across the country, it faces a significant challenge of making sure everyone is included and engaged in the Great Game despite geographic distance from headquarters. To overcome that hurdle, the company holds monthly all-staff meetings to review progress on monthly, quarterly, and annual financials and goals- including its bonus program. “This meeting is one of our most important avenues of internal communication and team building,” says Dube. To help recreate that experience for remote team members, the company holds a separate video webinar-based meeting where all remote team members receive gift cards so that they can enjoy a special lunch on those days. Following each company meeting, the team conducts an extensive survey to garner feedback from the entire team on how the information was presented and to make sure everyone understood the numbers.

“I love when I hear people talking about the challenge and they automatically start talking about how to turn it into a MiniGame.”

Rapid Financial Results; Lasting Cultural Change

Playing the Great Game of Business provided leadership opportunities to imageOne team members across the company. The accountability that comes with The Great Game of Business helped front-line team members step up in exciting ways that lead to real bottom-line results. For example, one of the company’s team members, Fred, was responsible for the line item showing how much was spent on cell phones for technicians. Fred took this responsibility to heart and proactively found ways to reduce how much they were spending. “He showed leadership skills in identifying areas of potential cost savings, presenting his ideas, and ultimately implementing them and saving the company money,” says Dube. While owning a line item made a leader out of Fred, mini-games allowed another imageOne team member named Connie to express her creativity and communication skills. “When Connie jumped in to help team members with MiniGame names and visuals, we all saw a creative side of her that she didn’t get to express in her day-to-day job responsibilities,” says Dube, noting that one MiniGame helped shave \$250,000 of unnecessary inventory. “Her creativity helped everyone start to think more critically and use mini-games to solve business challenges.”

More recently, imageOne rolled out the High Involvement Planning process. “This process proved to be a great way to involve all team members, especially remote ones, and to give everyone a sense of contribution in being a part of imageOne’s future,” says Dube.

“Everyone is so knowledgeable about our business now – they are truly bought in.”
