



### **Name & Role**

Michael McGarry is the Managing Director and owner of Label One Ltd

### **Organisation**

Label One is a printing organisation with 35 employees. This case study is a personal reflection of the value Michael places on having a good blend of learning to support the real life experience he has developed through his career to date. Michael has had the benefit of a range of work and development experiences which he cites as being enormously beneficial in his decision to move in to ownership –

*“I joined Avery Labels as a Technical Engineer and Product Manager. By the time I left I was promoted to Production Manager. I left Avery to join Boxmore as Label Manager for Belfast and was soon being promoted again until I left as Operations Manager for Ireland. I left Boxmore to buy over my old firm Avery Labels Belfast, which has since changed its name to Label One Ltd, in December 2001. The business changed from being part of Avery to Label One as a consequence of a management buyout by the people who sold to me. We are primarily focused on the printing of labels for the food and pharmaceutical sectors in Ireland.”*

### **Management Development**

From his own perspective he believes that it is important to make the best use of every opportunity and looks back on his career *“I have gained much experience over the years after leaving school at 16 to join the Royal Navy the training I undertook along the way in mechanical and electrical engineering, as well as in management and leadership. I also was aware of what was needed to be done in order to rise through the ranks quickly. This all contributed to my understanding of the benefits of achieving higher goals”.*

### **Before M&L Development – Triggers**

He identified a need to develop a strong performance culture in every area of the business *“Having a staff that wants to achieve a higher level of performance is something that I have known to be beneficial for some time and trying to figure out a way to improve this within Label One was something that I was very keen to do.”* He is very clear about the need for the leader to be a role model, to have high personal standards and set expectations for the business.

### **Management & Leadership Development Activity**

As a role model he wanted to demonstrate his need for and commitment to developing excellent management and leadership skills. *“I participated in the Excelus Leaders Programme for two reasons, first being the fact it had been too long since the last time I took part in development activities, secondly because it sounded like a practical rather than academic way of learning. The*

practicality of Excelus Leaders was the most rewarding aspect of the course for me and the ability to be able to apply what was learnt into practice back at the office”.

### **Action, Outcomes and Benefits**

His own experiences proved that there was much to be gained from investing in management development and saw this as providing strategic competitive advantage to the firm. “Subsequent to my own development initiative I have sent my production manager on the Excelus Managers programme and the company is also now involved with Invest Northern Ireland. Our involvement with Invest Northern Ireland is with Business Improvement through Training initiative, proving this firm’s commitment to people development. I have benefited substantially from the developments I enjoyed in the Navy and I favour practical development initiatives that result in you being able to put learning into practice, in the workplace”.

***“So far monthly sales have risen by 50% since I took over at Label One. More importantly we have managed to continue to invest at all levels.”***

The staff in Labe One are all now involved and knowledgeable about the company, the aims and objective and what it is trying to achieve. All the staff are continually coming up with improvements to drive business performance and ahead of many competitors.

### **Leadership Style**

Michel states “My approach to leadership is straightforward, you must involve the people and more importantly you must allow them to make mistakes. There is nothing wrong with making a mistake as long as you and your colleagues can learn from them for future projects”

### **Barriers to Improving Management Skills**

Feeling like you are not allowed to make a mistake is what I find to being the biggest barrier. However the usual suspects such as I can’t afford the time or this costs too much are all to easy to trot out. Our experience shows that investment and engagement in building skills adds real value to our business.

