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How a local Sushi restaurant turned their business vision into a £350,000 turnover reality

Sushi Me Rollin is a sushi restaurant in the heart of Newcastle, formed in June 2018 by Kurt Toulson and Simon Whitehead. The friends had the vision of establishing a multi-location Sushi restaurant business, serving up big flavour with local ingredients.

Although Simon and Kurt had a wealth of experience as chefs, useful contacts in the supply chain and genuine passion for their idea, they were lacking some of the main ingredients needed to run a business.

Lack of business experience isn't unusual for new business owners. Most of our clients have started a business because they have a genuine love for their craft, and a desire to build their own lifestyle. What Simon and Kurt needed was the right support to make it happen, and the confidence of knowing they were on the right track.

It all starts with a conversation about your motivations

We started by listening to Simon and Kurt's goals and how they planned to achieve them. We did this to gain a real understanding of what motivates them, their "why" for doing business.

But most importantly, we helped them to assess whether they actually had a real business to take forward.

- **We put efficient systems in place** - to ensure they were thinking about what was needed in their business in the short term, but also how things would evolve over time if they achieved their goals.
- **Together we looked at pricing** - Simon and Kurt now understand that raising prices too much can affect a change to the demographic of their customer base. This can have a detrimental effect, resulting in people spending more with their cheaper priced competitors.
- **We looked at the plans for the business' future and what factors they would face as they grow** - As the business gains a reputation for being one of the finest Sushi

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restaurants in the North East, naturally, more people will want to come and sample the delicacies. It was clear based on their model they would be facing different challenges in months 12-24 than they would in the first 12. We made sure to plan ahead for these, so it was a smooth transition and everyone understood what was happening, when and why, to make the growth stages of the venture far easier.

The team were offered an opportunity to appear on TV early days in the business. Instead of jumping at the chance blind, we helped them to plan for it in a strategic way, in order to get the most benefit from the opportunity.

This involved the preparation of forecasts and budgets which proved to be extremely useful in showing them first-hand how important it is to have this information. When you can see how much money you'll have in the business down the line, you're able to take opportunities and avoid pitfalls. Most importantly, we showed the team how to track the actual results against the budget. One of the key features of this task was to make them sit back, look at their business objectively and understand where things could go wrong, what the impact would be and how to reduce the risk.

It actually turned out that the figures were a little on the conservative side once the traction picked up. Refreshingly, they did not become complacent when they had a great year. Instead, this made Simon and Kurt appreciate that working smarter, taking risks and maximising opportunities when they came along would help grow their business.

The challenge: are we ready to take on an employee?

One major challenge for Simon and Kurt was deciding if or when to take on their first employees.

We were able to advise from experience with other clients who had faced the same decision. The pair feared failure in this area. They didn't understand exactly what being an employer involved – especially from a compliance perspective.

Requirements such as setting up schemes, paying employees, dealing with contracts and share incentive schemes were all issues raised. How could they make sure they were complying with laws and give a team what they deserve? Being available to answer questions and alleviate

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concerns was fundamental to increasing their appetite for risk, and helping them make the move they desired.

To help them figure it out, we introduced them to a decision matrix - a useful tool for visualizing the reasons why a decision is made, based on the factors most important to them. The decision matrix helped them reach a decision on their next move based on factors that were important to them such as impact on culture, quality and service. This ensured they made the right decision, for the right reasons, removing any personal or subjective factors out of the process.

Despite Covid 19, Sushi Me Rollin are set to hit £350,000 in annual sales turnover this trading year

We've loved every part of supporting Kurt & Simon from their pre-trading start to date. Here are some of the exciting outcomes they've seen:

- The team are now employing two additional staff
- Buzz about the new business generated regional press coverage:
 - [Article in Bdaily News](#)
 - [Article in NeConnected](#)
 - [Article in Chronicle Live](#)

Do you have a business vision you'd like support to turn into a reality? Like Simon and Kurt, you can learn how to safeguard your passion with strategy and financial support. Your goals aren't as far away as you think!

Take a look at the packages we offer.

Testimonial

Sushi Me Rollin chef and director Hugo Embleton-Black said: *"It was clear from our first chat with Robson Laidler Accountants that they could help us with more than just our accounts. Not only have they saved us money and given us sound business advice, but they have set us up with our till systems, receipt management and invoice control. They are also able to advise us on sales reporting with a bespoke growth, profit and loss software which we are excited about."*