



**BARRIER**

# CASE STUDY /

Barrier Group is a family run business that works primarily in the offshore oil and gas industry on new build projects, offshore maintenance, repairs and upgrades. In 1995, their then Group Chairman, the late Robert Bowles, and Alan Nightingale were under some financial pressure. Their whole industry was feeling the effects of the worldwide oil crisis of 1990. Robert and Alan needed a better understanding of where their business was currently and a plan for how to move it forward. That's when they came to Robson Laidler for help.

## SPOTTING OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE PAST COMPETITORS

During our audit reporting, we were able to give Robert and Alan an accurate picture of how their business was performing. Robert and Alan didn't want to just survive the worldwide oil crisis; they wanted to thrive and grow Barrier over and above similar companies. The first step to achieve this was building confidence in the business. We helped negotiate payment terms, present cash flow analysis, and develop forecasting reports that gave clients and creditors the confidence to continue working with Barrier.

Next, our auditors, business advisors, and tax team worked collaboratively with the Barrier Group team to explore their industry and spotlight opportunities to develop different services.

Steadily, things began to get easier and, as Barrier Group diversified its business model, it gained more financial stability. Some of the steps we took to achieve this were:

- Introducing new products including fire protection, insulation services, and pipeline coatings and spraying.
- Expanding into the marine market by carrying out corrosion protection and scaffolding to Ministry of Defense ships and nuclear submarines.
- Forming new companies and subsidiaries to extend the capability of the company into markets where its services were needed .
- Establishing joint venture companies in the Middle East, Papua New Guinea, Guiana and Ireland to assist in the training of local labour for offshore procedures

With all this growth and development, we knew that Robert and Alan were in the perfect position to take advantage of certain tax incentives, like research and development. Our business advisors and accountants supported them through the application, which has allowed them to continue excelling in their market.

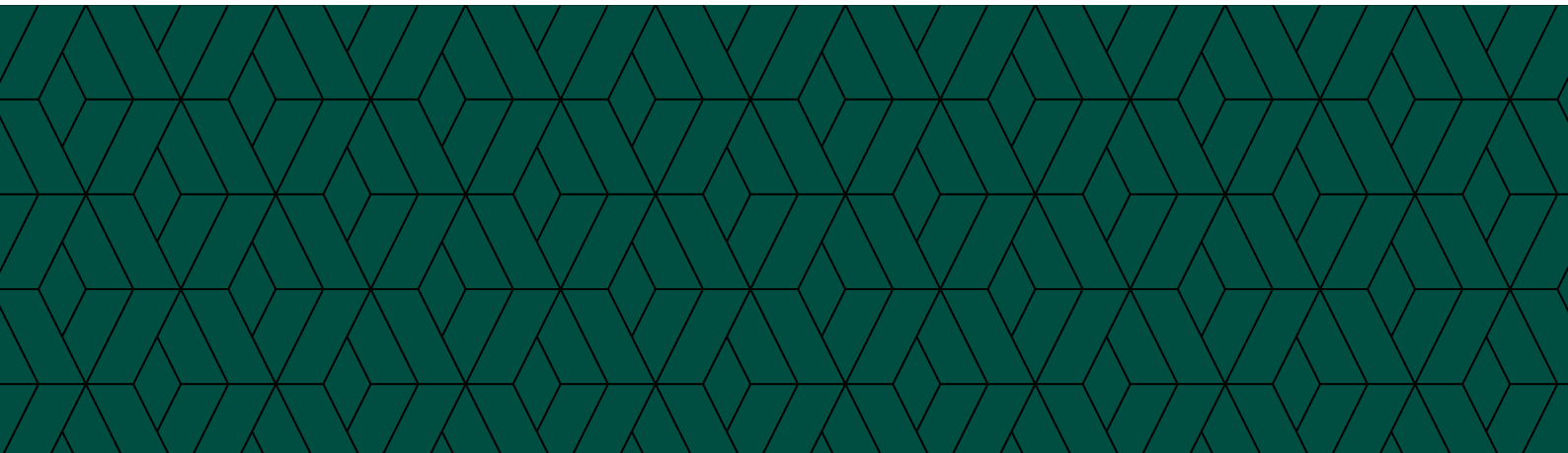
## MITIGATING OVERSEAS TAXES

Recently, we were able to support Barrier through its operations in the Netherlands.

Barrier's current director, Dave Alderson, and now-CEO Alan were excited to bring their Barrier Fire Protection arm to a Dutch workforce and gain a presence in Belgium. The contract was initially short term, and therefore not expected to operate for the length of time required to pay Dutch taxes. However, as the success of the project continued, Barrier were deemed to be resident and got stuck in the Dutch tax system. As a result, they were facing many complex overseas tax issues, like having to deduct payroll taxes in the Netherlands as well as the UK and Dutch authorities gaining eligibility to tax their profits. Once again, they turned to Robson Laidler for help.

Through our international associates within the UK200 Group, we were able to call upon international trade experts for country-specific support. The initial investigations were laboursome and, at times, frustrating. We were fearful that due to language barriers we were not getting the right information required from the Dutch authorities in a timely manner.

To solve this, we organised Belgian and German interpreters and held meetings over Teams with the Dutch authorities. All members of the call were asked to



download an interpreter app to allow quick and effective interpretation, resulting in a hugely successful and far swifter turnaround to implement a solution.

Some of our other victories include:

- Creating a permanent establishment (or tax presence) in the Netherlands to enable Barrier to continue trading with the correct liabilities in place.
- Re-organising and streamlining the group into The Barrier Belgian Group, allowing us to mitigate and reorganize corporate and personal taxes more efficiently.
- Introducing a STEP plan - a step by step plan to streamline efficiencies in the group by tidying up loans, transferring shares, putting legal agreements in place and dealing with the Trusts.
- Continuing to speak with Barrier Group's lawyers, Hay and Kilner, to ensure all legal and tax compliance matters are dealt with in real time.

## FORWARD PROGRESS NEVER STOPS

Dave and Alan's main concerns today are improving efficiencies within new companies and mitigating overseas taxes. Their quest for growth and development has never slowed. Recently, they've established a new subsidiary in Ireland and discovered oil off the coast of America. We're proud to continue working closely with them in these new projects by collaborating with their payroll team in Ireland and introducing them to advisors in the states including lawyers and American tax officials.

Barrier are in a competitive industry, and thanks to our state of the art data analytics software, we are able to interrogate data to help the Group plan better, take advantage of opportunities early and continue expanding as market leaders across the world, increasing value to all its shareholders.

## TESTIMONIAL /

*"Robson Laidler is part of the family. Their skill and reputation has helped us grow, develop and become financially stable again. Without Robson Laidler as our auditors there is no way we would have had the confidence and the financial insight to enter international projects. Robson Laidler removes the pressure from us, freeing our minds to have the trust in knowing that all new business operations are being run as efficiently as possible. They are more than just our accountants and auditors, they help us innovate, collaborate and grow."*

**DAVID ALDERSON**  
Barrier Group CEO

If you want to experience the same support as David, tailored to your own needs, see [\*\*which action plan suits you best.\*\*](#) We start with a free meeting to discuss your business and personal goals and put it together into your one-page plan.

