

Improving the bottom line

With an annual turnover of around \$14 million, Australasia Liquid Storage (ALS Group) is a leading supplier of commercial water storage to businesses in Australia and around the world. Only eight years ago, ALS Group was a one man business operating out of a garage. After completing a TAFE Diploma of Business Management in 2009, CEO Alan Walker completely restructured his company and has seen a 100% increase in revenue over three years.

New skills lead to restructuring

Alan undertook the TAFE diploma course after slowly growing his company over a number of years, when he realised he needed further skills to take the company to a new level. "I am probably typical of my generation, a hands-on construction person who wasn't pushed into higher education and lacked a number of management and financial skills," Alan says.

Alan said the course has given him a completely new outlook, and he has since changed most of his business procedures, from his website, marketing and sales, to banking and financing. "Prior to the course, we were a purely service-oriented company. I have since restructured ALS Group so we now manufacture, install, service and supply. I now work on the business, not in it, and have far more time to leverage opportunities that arise," says Alan.

100% increase in revenue

Since completing the course and restructuring, revenue has doubled. "The course opened my eyes to a range of business practices, and encouraged me to look at further options, including expansion. TAFE has really taken me from a small business to a medium sized enterprise. Our annual turnover has gone from around \$7 million to \$14 million, and we now have up to 30 staff on the books."

Learning from other business owners

Alan said one of the best aspects of the course was the chance to meet a diverse range of business owners taking the course. "The TAFE trainer came to the course with in depth experience across several sectors, and the other business owners had a wealth of ideas to share. It wasn't just a typical course — I found I picked up things you just don't learn in books," Alan says.

Fast tracked qualification

Traditionally a two year course, the TAFE Diploma of Business Management is offered in a fast track format that recognises participants existing knowledge and experience. Aimed at managers with at least five years of operational management, Alan's previous experience was recognised and he was able to complete the course in six months.

Expanding the business overseas

Alan is now building on the recent success of ALS Group, and is now in the process of franchising areas of the business. At the time of interview, he was also just about to spend a month in Europe to investigate several business opportunities. "Since completing the course, I haven't looked back. In the 20 years I've been involved in the industry, this course has been the most beneficial and satisfying thing I've done," Alan says.

Alan Walker
Chief Executive Officer
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