



“There are a lot of people that need CRT’s mentorship, but they either don’t know it, let their egos stand in the way, or think they don’t have time for it. CRT helped us move through an important phase of growth more rapidly and less painfully than we ever could have on our own.”

- Lindon Crow
President & Co-Founder
Productive Learning & Leisure, LLC

Company Profile

Founded in 1992, Productive Learning and Leisure is committed to providing life-enhancing programs. The company’s mission is to provide the tools and experiences to help people create an “extraordinary life” in a relaxed atmosphere of fun, sports and recreation. A staff of experienced trainers and speakers facilitate the curriculum that helps clients become more aware of their underlying beliefs and attitudinal currents and assists them in closing the gap between potential and performance.



www.productivelearning.com

MENTORING SERVICES CASE STUDIES

Productive Learning & Leisure, LLC

The Learning Experts Learn from the Experts

The founders of Productive Learning & Leisure (PLL) needed a second opinion. After running a successful business for nearly eight years, they were ready to grow more rapidly. They had developed a plan to drive this growth, but was it a good one? Was the strategy on target? And would they be able to execute? To answer these and other key questions, PLL began searching for experienced advisors who could challenge their thinking and provide valuable insights.

Networking Pays Off

At a networking event, a banker suggested that PLL contact the Chairmen’s RoundTable (CRT), a diverse group of seasoned executives who offer free strategic counsel to growing businesses. It was a suggestion that would prove invaluable. “After our initial meeting with CRT, we realized we’d found exactly what we were looking for – experienced advisors who were committed to helping small companies grow,” said Lindon Crow, president, PLL. “We immediately filled out the application and were thrilled to be accepted into the program.”

So Many Questions, So Much Time!

The PLL executives had so many questions. They knew they needed to diversify in order to achieve significant growth. But how would they finance it? Was the sales strategy too narrow, or perhaps too broad? Was it time to change the corporate structure and if so, what was the best form for their needs? Where were the holes in the plan they had put together? What were they overlooking because they were just too close to it?

“The CRT mentors that were assigned to us were very generous with their time, and truly exceeded the scope of what they agreed to do for us,” said Crow. “We were able to tap into veteran business executives with impressive

Strengthening SAN DIEGO, One Company at a Time

About Chairmen's RoundTable

The Chairmen's RoundTable is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised of successful Chief Executive Officers with diverse industry backgrounds who provide businesses in San Diego County advice on how to manage and grow their businesses through a well-defined mentoring program. CRT members provide this service free of charge to qualified area businesses as a way of giving back to the community.

www.chairmensroundtable.com

experience in operations, sales and marketing. They analyzed our expansion plan and offered valuable insights into areas for improvement. It was quite an education – and exactly what PLL needed.”

Implementing Change

Growth dictates change, and PLL was no exception. “CRT made many recommendations for enhancing our strategy,” Crow said. “Some of them have already been implemented. Some of them are in process and will take time, but we are committed to them. And some of them are waiting in the wings for the right time, place or budget.”

CRT submitted its recommendations to PLL in March 2002. Since that time, PLL has reviewed and refined its sales strategy, incorporated as an LLC, established a bank line of credit to fund growth initiatives, made key staffing changes, focused the roles of the principals, strengthened the finance function, assembled an advisory board as an extension of what CRT had done, and defined an exit strategy.

“We never even discussed an exit strategy before our discussions with CRT,” said Crow. “Quite frankly, our business is our passion, and we can’t envision a time when we will want to ‘exit’ it. But CRT helped us to realize that this passion is exactly why we should have a well-defined exit strategy. We wouldn’t want the work that we do to stop when we leave the business. It’s too important. And building a company that has the value to support an exit strategy means that no matter what happens, our work will continue.”

Key Challenges:	Recommendations:	Results:
Looking for more significant growth and diversification	Study sales cycle, create metrics, study customer demographics	Better understanding of sales cycle and demographics, created metrics, hired new sales manager
Moving from sole proprietorship/ entrepreneur to corporate structure	Change legal structure to provide corporate shield and review organizational structure and role of principals	Incorporated as an LLC with an S Corporation tax structure
Financing the strategic plan	Based on business and lifestyle objectives, avoid angel and VC funding (other options provided)	Financing growth with a bank line of credit and cash flow of business