

Turning Crisis into Opportunity

What do you do when you lose 90% of your business?

In early 2009, I was facing a complete shutdown of my business, and I didn't know which way to turn. I own a silicon and silicon nitrate manufacturing business, Vesta Si, through which we source materials, process them in Sweden and then distribute them globally to automotive and various manufacturing industries.

In early 2009, we lost 90 percent of our revenue stream. First, I received shutdown orders from a customer in the Far East. A week later, I met with another customer who told me to shut down production immediately. A few days later I received another "shut down" call and between these three major customers, we lost 90 percent of our business. I needed to figure out how to re-align the business and to be able to detach myself emotionally and make rational decisions. It was hugely complicated because of the implications on personal lives, partnerships, business relationships and customers. I didn't know which way to turn. What I needed was clarity, and I turned to Beth Green and Todd Benton for consulting.

I had known Todd from the days in which he taught Mission Control, and what I knew of him was his level of ethics and integrity in helping his customers. His willingness to work with me and trust in me under the most difficult and onerous financial conditions was immediately a huge morale boost. And what I knew of Beth was her incredible ability to help people in being grounded in reality – to face reality honestly and without self-deception.

The two quickly helped me to clear up tough spots in my business. Most of the time, our problems are self-inflicted. Beth and Todd taught me how to examine how I was inflicting the wound on myself and find the cause. First, I needed to re-define my relationship with my business partner and take ownership of the problem.

Working with Beth and Todd allowed me to make long overdue changes in my staff and develop a new team, which has also resulted in an amazing relationship with my company's new CEO, who has an exemplary track record in this industry for integrity, clarity, ethics and execution—everything I was looking for. In the spring of 2010, the business started to grow again. We have a new team, very little debt and we're growing our cash flow position. I feel like we're on more solid ground having worked through the foundational issues in our business.

I feel so indebted to Beth and Todd, I'm almost overwhelmed. Beth provided an incredible level of clarity in a time when I didn't know which decision to make and wasn't making any. And Todd provided continuous support. I felt he cared about the business as much as I did. He was my partner, by my side on a daily basis.

In business everyone wants to measure tangibles, but many times it's the intangibles, like the internal strengths you gather, that give you access to doing things you couldn't do otherwise. And that intangible strength was available to me through working with Reality for a Change.

- Santosh Limaye, Owner and Chief Scientist, Vesta Si, LLC