

Liversidge (Windows & Double Glazing) LTD

How a series of 'lightbulb moments' led MD to embrace digital skills.

“ Our ambition is to be the number one window and door manufacturer. We know now that technology and digitalisation is the way to get there. ”

A manufacturer of doors and windows has embraced leadership skills to drive forward its digital transformation.

Liversidge (Windows & Double Glazing) Limited, based in Oldham, supplies products to trade and residential customers.

Now, with the support of Made Smarter, managing director Ian Liversidge has gone from 'digital dinosaur' to technology evangelist and is leading plans to roll out technology and embed new skills across the organisation.

The Challenge

Launched in 1969 from a terrace house in Oldham, Liversidge now operates from a 44,000 sq ft factory.

The business is run by the second generation of the Liversidge family, cousins Ian and Christian, who employ 30 staff and have a £2m turnover.

While the pandemic was financially challenging, it gave the business an opportunity to focus on overcoming some of its major challenges, with the support of Made Smarter.

A Digital Transformation Workshop analysed its people, processes and products and created a digital roadmap. The process revealed an efficient production process was being underleveraged by manual paper-based processes and disparate systems.

Meanwhile, Made Smarter's Organisation and Workforce Development (OWD) team identified opportunities to embed essential digital leadership skills

into the business. However, there was some resistance at leadership level.

Christian Liversidge, Business Advisor, explained: *"The business grew through innovation. But the truth is that for the last 20 years we had got stuck in the 'here and now' and had not harnessed technology for growth. We had become entrenched in the old ways of doing things, which meant staff spent too much time on low value administrative tasks. This extended to our MD Ian, who was sceptical about some of the changes being proposed."*

"The bottom line was that we could not survive without change. We needed to shake things up and create a digital strategy and a culture which was positive about the benefits of digital technology."

The Solution

The OWD team worked closely with Ian Liversidge, the managing director, facilitating visits to two other door manufacturers to demonstrate the benefit of technology adoption.

It served as a catalyst for him to participate in the Leading Digital Transformation Programme.

Using a blend of face-to-face workshops, online webinars, case studies and site visits to smart factories, including Print City, MMU's 3D additive and digital manufacturing hub, Ian was able to take away a set of practical tools and a strategy for digital transformation.

The process also crystalised a technology project, supported by a £20,000 grant from Made Smarter, which will eliminate paper-based processes and embed much-needed data and systems technologies into the business.

New software will manage quotes, order processing and invoicing. Meanwhile, an upgrade to production management software will introduce barcode tracking and automate material requirements for the glass department.

The Benefit

Ian is now much more digitally informed and empowered. He has his own office enabling him to focus on strategy to drive forward some of the changes identified in the digitalisation strategy.

Ian said: *"After 33 years at the company it has been difficult to find the time to step away and develop a strategy and learn some new skills. Admittedly, I am a bit of a digital dinosaur, so the leadership programme was somewhat terrifying. But I soon realised that I was part of a group that was there to help each other. Being able to visit other companies and see technology in action was priceless."*

"Working with Made Smarter and completing the programme has been a series of lightbulb moments."

"Our ambition is to be the number one window manufacturer and installer around the Greater Manchester area. We know now that moving forward with technology and digitalisation is the way to get there."



The project will ultimately free up staff from manual office tasks and use their time for high value tasks such as sales and give the leadership team oversight to improve efficiency and productivity.

The leadership programme has been a catalyst for change. Roles in sales, surveying, operations, and customer services have become much more clearly defined, freeing up staff to apply their skills to high value tasks.

Ian said: *"Working with Made Smarter exposed a lot of tough truths, especially the inefficiency of our processes. My role is now to communicate those challenges and solutions to our workforce."*

The Future

The focus, looking forward, is to implement the new technology

which includes back-office software and upgrading the production line with computerised scan points. This will improve visibility for production management and enable real-time updates to customers.

Christian said: *"Made Smarter has been instrumental in our shift towards a paperless system to make us much more efficient and productive. Upgrading our production line will similarly improve efficiency, reduce mistakes, increase profitability, and speed up the overall process."*



Donna Edwards from Made Smarter with Ian Liversidge.