

"I also got the feeling that I was reinventing a lot of wheels – producing proposals, which led to papers, which led to proposals, which led to reports. I was doing the same thing over and over again and I felt there must be a simpler way.

"I was very conscious that I was just managing a series of separate projects and that my business was too small to devote time and resources to developing a system. Then I got tempted back into big business. That was a mistake. I should have carried on doing my own thing."

But two years ago Moore found himself being lured back into business coaching. In a massive lifestyle change, he bought a £39,000 Icon franchise and set up business in the small Kent town of Tenterden.

CONSISTENTLY DELIVERED

"I spoke to a number of business coaching franchises but Icon were the only ones who consistently delivered – in minor ways like always returning phone calls, to being absolutely open about the nature of their business and their expectations. I knew they would be an extremely good bunch to work with," says Moore.

"Almost immediately, Icon pointed me in the right direction: Tenterden only has a 7,000 population and I expected business would come from the larger towns in the area. But Icon assured me that in fact I would find plenty of business within five minutes of my front door, and they were right."

Early clients were a lawyer, an IT consultant, an agricultural machinery importer, a commercial cleaning company – and the accountant. "I soon found that although there was virtually nothing you could tell these people about the tricks of their trade, there was a fair bit you could tell them about running a business," he says.

Small business clients, Moore discovered, usually fell into two basic categories, both of which could be helped by the systemised advisory techniques originally developed by Icon's Australian founder, Nick Clarke.

They were:

- A specific problem, as in the case of the accountant.
- Challenges associated with development and growth.

A specific problem can usually be dealt with fairly easily by putting some operational system in place, but meeting the challenges associated with growth can be more tricky.

"A typical case is a small business which is growing to the point where the owner no longer has complete control but is unwilling to delegate," Moore says. "You get people saying: 'I once knew the names of all my employees, I had the bank statement figures in my head and I knew what all the orders were, but now I just can't cope with all the detail and I'm worried I'm losing touch.'

"These are the guys who are still working at 10 at night trying to catch up and never have time to properly plan for the future. Studies have shown that 90 per cent of small businesses want to develop but they've never had the time to work out how to do it.

"You find a boss trying to be a book-keeper, accountant, personnel director, sales manager and operational controller while there are people in the firm who are under-employed.

"What I often say to clients is: 'I think you're a bit of a control freak. We can give you the control from a business perspective – and then we can take out the freak.' We enable them to develop the business by putting in controls which mean that they can see the business is running to their high standards without physically being there to do everything."



DELEGATION & OUTSOURCING

The Icon system stresses delegation and outsourcing – often outsourcing within the business. Glyn Moore cites one recent case in which a boss was asked to write down all the jobs he did within the firm in the course of a week – and wrote down a total of 17.

"When I asked what everyone else in the place did, he said: 'They do what I tell them.' We went through his list of 17 jobs and outsourced 10 of them to other members of his staff. The boss had started the company and now he simply couldn't delegate. He had lost sight of the fact that he had capable people around him just itching to take on responsibility.

"Eventually we managed to convince the boss that what he needed to do was to devote the majority of his time to actually growing the business."

Moore's own business has expanded faster than he anticipated. "I have done some cold calling and am currently planning an advertising campaign, but for me networking is by far the most effective marketing strategy," he says. "Because what I am offering is so intangible, what people are buying is me.

"A client is investing in the degree of confidence he has in the consultant and you can really only influence that by sitting on the other side of his desk."

Moore says he's settling well into his new lifestyle, agreeing with Icon UK managing director Jonathan Sawyer, who says: "Our business advisers enjoy the flexible working environment that we offer. They have proved that people need not work strictly from nine to five every day five days a week to enjoy a successful career. The key is to work smarter."

"I was getting increasingly fed up with the daily grind of leaving home at 6am and not getting back before 8pm. Now I can even manage to get out and play golf. I enjoy the work and the potential is probably bigger than I imagined," Moore says.

He doesn't for a moment regret leaving the pressure of the business Premiership. "I had got to the point where I wasn't entirely convinced that I was making any difference," he says. "Now, as well as being well rewarded, I can hold a business meeting, chat to a client for 10 minutes and leave in the hope that I might have actually altered not only the course of his business but his life, too.

"And if I've got it right, that's a pretty good feeling." ■

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