



## Percy Hawkins & Son.

Kettering

Special wire drawers of aluminium and other non-ferrous metals

## Case Study

Using Networks to help clients' MAS, MCCR & IIB join forces to help Percy Hawkins & Son



"Peter Kroeger has been so good for us. He has provided outstanding help to us, in defining a strategy and developing a business plan, in raising us much needed grant finance where he "took the problem away" and did it all in an unfussy, practical and efficient manner, and against a very tight deadline. He arranged grant aided production consultancy and ensured its success.

He looked past just the capital grant and ensured we have sufficient working capital to handle the increased business, helped us find a key employee and ensured we are legal in all things HR related. We could not have done this without help, and in Peter Kroeger (and his IIB network) we found all that we need. I have no hesitation in recommending Peter to any business owner who needs a true business friend and a helping hand to do the difficult stuff".

**Diane Grayson-Hawkins, Finance Director**

"Buying major items of plant and machinery, arranging their shipment, making space for them in the factory, learning how to make them work properly and delivering new product has occupied me fully. Having Peter help Diane to handle all the funding and business expansion issues, largely by himself but with astute use of his IIB network to pull in specialist help, has made a massive set of tasks achievable. I cannot recommend him more highly to help small growing businesses expand rapidly."

**Paul Wooding, Managing Director**



### The Business Opportunity

In 2007 there were only 3 independent wire drawers left in the UK. One of the remaining 3 businesses was closing down and selling off its wire drawing equipment. This presented an opportunity for Percy Hawkins to acquire the machinery, and with it the customer base and **double** the size of the business.

The company owns its own premises and was able to borrow most of the capital required but there was a shortfall.

And doubling the business from £800,000 to £1.6m or more was expected to place great strain on the company's working capital.

### The chosen solution

Percy Hawkins engaged Peter Kroeger, Executive Associate of The Institute for Independent Business (IIB) and a member of MCCR & Associates, an accredited Centre of Expertise to the BERR Manufacturing Advisory Service.

Through Peter's extensive Networks he was able to bring together and coordinate the activities of a team of specialists to help Percy Hawkins & Son.

### Making it happen

#### Grant application - SFIE

Peter identified a grant available from *emda* – Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFIE).

Working with Geoff Price, another IIB-er and the MCCR & Associate responsible for Coordinating MCCR MAS Activities in the East Midlands, Peter made an initial application to *emda* which was successful and the company was encouraged to make a full application for assistance under this scheme.

**Cont'd over**

### Key Achievements

- ◆ Percy Hawkins & Son is now well on the path to meeting its long term mission.
- ◆ The company is now one of only 2 specialist independent wire drawers in the UK, with turnover at a run rate of £1.5m and climbing.
- ◆ The customer base includes leading companies in the automotive and the Critical National Infrastructure sectors
- ◆ The factory layout is efficient.
- ◆ The recently acquired plant is running well.
- ◆ The company is fully staffed and has sufficient working capital to trade and generate increased profits.

# Case Study

## Percy Hawkins & Son Ltd

### Making it happen (Cont'd)

The company now needed to develop a business plan and detailed budgets and cash flow forecasts in order to complete the complicated grant application forms.

This was completed by Peter in a tight timescale to secure the promise of funding and to ensure that the company met the seller's timescales for the purchase of the machinery. As with all grants, the cash had to be expended before it could be claimed, and Peter handled the claim process with utmost speed.

### Factory layout to accommodate new equipment - MAS

The arrival of several large items of plant and machinery required a review of the layout of the factory. Through MCCR & Associates Peter arranged grant funded assistance from the Manufacturing Advisory Scheme (MAS) and project managed the consultancy programme, excellently delivered by John Ransford of PERA, who run the MAS programme in the East Midlands, which resulted in a new layout in the factory to accommodate the arrival of the plant lines and to maximise throughput.

### Working capital

Peter then arranged trade finance, through IIB-er Andy Beck of Javelin Trade Finance for the first shipment of aluminium alloy rod from Bahrain to meet the initial orders from the new customers acquired with the equipment.

### Increased employment

Expanding the business meant that the workforce needed to be increased. Kettering has very low unemployment so a novel approach was suggested. Through the IIB network, Peter obtained the assistance of IIB-er Fiona Brunton of Brunton Consultancy Ltd, specialist recruitment advisors, and arranged a low cost web based employment programme which successfully resulted in the employment of a warehouse and despatch controller.

### HR legislation

As an aside, and given the plethora of new employment legislation, Peter then arranged for IIB-er Diane Rylatt of Creative HR Solutions to perform an HR audit and bring all the company's HR documentation and procedures up to date.

## Percy Hawkins & Son Ltd

### Company Profile

Based in Kettering, Percy Hawkins & Son provides wire drawing services for pure and alloy aluminium wire. The company also provides a copper reeling service. Through a continual willingness to invest in product development, we manufacture wire to thicknesses and at a quality that meets our customers' exact specifications.

There has been a Hawkins wire business since 1879. This company was established in 1942 and the current management team wishes to ensure the business is available for future generations of the Hawkins family. The objective is to grow the business so that it has a firm asset base, is substantially free of debt, dominates its market place and has a reputation for high quality wire products, underpinned by a first class quality of service delivery.

For a personal or verbal reference please call us on 01536 523229

Email [enquiries@percyhawkins.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@percyhawkins.co.uk)  
Web [www.percyhawkins.co.uk](http://www.percyhawkins.co.uk)

Directors: F M H Hawkins; D M Grayson-Hawkins; L M Maynard; P F C Wooding.  
*Registered in England. Company Registration No. 377994.*  
*Registered Office: Carey Street, Kettering, Northants. NN16 0JL.*  
*VAT Registration No. 229 2856 41.*

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### For more information please visit or contact

Contact: Mel Lockett  
Tel: 01977 661 118  
Email [mel@mccrassociates.biz](mailto:mel@mccrassociates.biz)

Contact: Peter Kroeger  
Tel: 01327 260 753  
Email [peterkroeger@iib.ws](mailto:peterkroeger@iib.ws)