



Small Business Case Study

Products Used: Intel® Centrino® Duo mobile technology.

Company Size: 1-25



Franchisees Put Business Into Action

Case Summary

Action International coaches guide business owners in expanding their skills to break through to the next level of success. Juan Folch, a franchise owner in the greater Toronto area spends most of his days at client sites; reviewing business processes and plans, setting objectives and helping his customers reach their goals. To do this, he needed a mobile solution with enough power to run many programs and work in multiple languages simultaneously.

Challenge

Action International, ranked by Entrepreneur Magazine as the number one consulting service franchise and one of the top 25 fastest growing franchises, is a business coaching franchise whose members teach small and medium-sized business owners how to grow their sales and improve management structures to increase profitability. Action International coaches work with small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in 23 countries around the world to achieve their chairman, Brad Sugar's vision: "World abundance through business re-education". Juan Folch launched his Action International franchise in 2004, and has worked with businesses in the greater Toronto area to help them grow. He puts systems in place that not only increase profitability but provide the owners with a greater work-life balance.

"We give them direction and help them focus on the right issues to reach the next level of business growth," says Folch. "Coaching is an education. You know the adage: give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. We teach business owners to fish ... how to find the answers to their business challenges and the skills needed to foster long-term business success."

For most SME owners, Folch says there are three common issues: time management, team management and financial management. To address each of these issues, coaches like Folch hold weekly meetings with their clients, review previous activities, set goals and next step actions. Each week, a new facet or challenge of the business is discussed, and tools are provided to help the business owner move their business plans ahead.



“When you are writing and your train of thought is derailed, it takes time to get back on track. It’s not unusual for me to be running four or five programs simultaneously...”

As an independent business owner himself, Folch needed the flexibility to give presentations at networking events and speeches at conferences while having continuous access to his files, e-mail and presentations on the road in order to support his clients. In addition, Folch does business in three different languages and needs access to multiple programs to effectively write in a multi-lingual environment.

“My old laptop was running at full capacity. I would often need to close programs before opening others which cost me time. Sometimes I would lose my train of thought as I switched between programs.”

In addition, some clients just embarking on their coaching program don’t want their staff to know about the coaching. So meetings are held in coffee shops, away from the office where there are fewer interruptions. To be effective, connectivity to Action International’s intranet for course or reference materials and the Internet for other information is today a must.

Solution

For Folch, the easiest solution was to upgrade to a wireless laptop with more power and better wireless access. When the motherboard on his old laptop cracked, the opportunity for an upgrade presented itself and Folch leaped at the chance to buy a new Dell® laptop with Intel® Centrino® Duo® mobile technology.”

Key Advantages

With greater processing speed, easy to configure wireless access, and the ability to simultaneously run multiple programs without difficulty, Folch is thrilled with the new mobile computer.

“I can switch between programs faster than ever before. Even if I close a program, it reopens very quickly,” he says, adding the screen is brighter and makes for impressive presentations when meeting with his clients.

One of the biggest benefits is when Juan is writing in a different language. To get the right accents or letters, he needs to work in Microsoft Word, then copy the text into other programs. In the past, his computer took a long time to switch programs and he would forget the ideas he was trying to communicate. Today, the transition between programs is seamless and fast.

“I don’t know how much time I wasted before. When you are writing and your train of thought is derailed, it takes time to get back on track. It’s amazing how fast I now can switch programs. It’s not unusual for me to be running four or five programs simultaneously and this computer can handle it with ease,” he says.

Mobile Management

When it comes to helping clients, mobility has been a real benefit. Folch’s clients struggle with time management, since they are trying to do everything themselves, while managing team and money issues. By breaking the business issues into clearly defined challenges and working through each one individually, Folch helps the business owner apply a systematic approach to their business. Ultimately, the business owner learns to make more money while working less than he did before. From a local coffee shop or the customer’s office, Folch can sit down with his customer, log into Action’s or other databases, access spreadsheets and marketing materials, as well as the internet.



"When we mentor them on how to address each of the issues, the business owner eventually sees improved income and profits, and because the proper business systems are put in place, they have more time," explains Folch, who admits that having wireless Internet access has often been a key component to an effective client meeting.

"For one client, our meetings start out with a competitive review. Since they are successfully taking market share from their competitors, we need to monitor the competitive response and make sure our marketing efforts continue to yield the results we want," he says, noting that they find a quiet corner with internet access and are instantly online.

"I can't imagine doing my business without this Intel technology," says Folch. "I have the speed, power and reliability I need to achieve positive results for my clients."

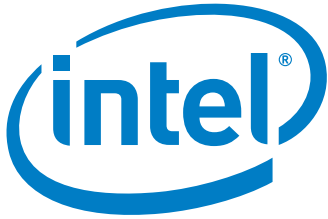
Connecting For Queries

As an independent franchisee, networking and making presentations to increase visibility and brand awareness is a must to future business growth. Folch attends many events and courses, as well as being a presenter at numerous conferences.

"Networking and presenting are very active parts of my business. All of my presentations leverage PowerPoint and the internet to illustrate issues I am discussing," he says.

At a recent conference, an attendee asked a question that Folch knew was answered on Action International's online forum. Since the hotel where the presentation was being held had wireless access, he simply logged into the intranet with his Dell* laptop with Intel® Centrino® Duo® mobile technology, found the information and was instantly able to answer the question.

"It makes us more responsive and allows us to leverage the expertise of other coaches around the world," says Folch. "As an international franchise, we have coaches with expertise in all areas of business. With wireless, we can tap into that knowledge base from anywhere within seconds."



Future Uses

Business is picking up for Folch, he recently signed a contract with a national franchise that wants Folch to train their members across the country, but from his office. "Much of coaching is about body language and reading a person's expressions. Telephone coaching removes you from that," he says, noting he initially struggled with how to effectively support this client. "I am now looking into web conferencing as an option so I can see the business owner and they can see me while we are training."

Although already using Voice over IP (VOIP) technology, Folch sees opportunities to increase his use of wireless access. By pairing VOIP and digital web cameras he can further enhance communications with his clients and improve their business results.

Folch also sees a great deal of opportunity to enhance his use of technology as his business grows. Video conferencing using the web, greater mobility as more and more hotspots are available, and instant access to information are all valuable commodities for Folch and his business.

Links

Action International
<http://www.actioncoaching.com/juanfolch/>



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