

How a Seacoast-based Company Regained Control, Increased Alignment, and Accelerated Growth With a Two-Day Strategic Planning Session

Executive Snapshot

The Company

A fast-growing outdoor living products manufacturer serving customers across the lower 48 states. Strong demand, happy customers, impressive revenue growth. On paper, everything looked good.

Behind the scenes, it was a different story.

The Breaking Point

Revenue was strong. Demand was steady. But internally, the business felt unstable.

- A marketing experiment had **drained** more than **\$1 million in free cash flow** with little to show for it.
- As a result, priorities were evolving, and leadership wasn't fully aligned on the direction.
- Manufacturing errors were causing customer challenges and internal stress.
- Sales and marketing weren't coordinated. Operational systems were overwhelmed.
- Founders were seriously considering outside capital, not because they wanted to, but because they felt they had to.

This is the "**messy middle**." Successful on the surface. Broken underneath.

The Intervention

A guided, two-day strategic planning session with John St.Pierre.

Results Within 12 Months

Metric	Result
Manufacturing errors	70% reduction
Lead times (peak season)	Under 4 weeks
Outside capital needed	\$0—plan to grow organically
Leadership alignment	100%—shared 3-year vision
Founder confidence	Fully back in control

Testimonial:

“In two days, we gained more clarity than we had in two years. Our team aligned, our priorities stabilized, and our operations transformed. This session changed the trajectory of our company.”

— Company Founder

Before the Session: Growth With Growing Pains

The Story

The Company's demand exploded between 2020 and 2023. The business was winning. But growth had outpaced their systems, and the leadership team could feel the strain everywhere.

The Real Challenges

- **Growth outpaced systems.** What worked at a few million didn't scale at tens of millions. Processes broke. Errors multiplied.
- **A \$1M cash drain.** A marketing test sounded good in theory. In practice, it created a hole in the business that felt impossible to recover from.

- **Leadership misalignment.** Founders and partners were moving in different directions. Priorities conflicted. Decisions got slow.
- **Manufacturing chaos.** Errors that should have been rare became routine. Each one damaged customer relationships and eroded margins.
- **Sales and marketing are disconnected.** Both teams were working hard, but not in sync. One was promising what the other couldn't reliably deliver.
- **The capital question is looming.** Founders were convinced they needed outside money just to stabilize the business and fund growth. But that meant giving up equity and control.

The Messy Middle Reality

The Company had hit the wall that traps many growth-stage companies: successful yet unstable, talented yet not fully aligned, committed yet stretched thin. Founders felt pulled between "raise capital" and "fix this ourselves."

They chose a different path: clarity first.

What Happened in Two Focused Days

The session wasn't theoretical. It was a structured, intense process to reset vision, priorities, capital strategy, and execution so the entire leadership and management team was aligned and rowing in the same direction.

1. A Shared Three-Year Vision

The problem: Founders entered the session thinking they were aligned. When they left, they realized they had been misaligned.

The co-founders had different mental models of what success looked like. One was thinking of cash and stability, the other, about market share, and growth. Those differences weren't small; they were creating friction every single day.

What changed: The team defined a clear, written three-year vision and the path to get there. They aligned on non-negotiables: profit targets, cash requirements, owner lifestyle expectations, and risk tolerance. No more ambiguity. No more second-guessing. Months of potential friction were eliminated in two days.

2. Priorities That Drove the Business Forward

The problem: Priorities shifted based on whatever crisis or opportunity appeared that month. The team was reactive, not strategic.

What changed: The leadership team moved from reactive to a focused, measurable, realistic set of 12-month initiatives aligned with the three-year vision. They stopped reacting and started executing in the right order with renewed

confidence. Everything got clearer when everyone agreed on what actually mattered.

3. A Capital Strategy That Protected Equity

The problem: The thinking was "we need capital to stabilize," but capital comes with dilution, reporting requirements, and loss of control.

What changed: Instead of accepting outside capital, The Company built a clear cash and profit plan to grow internally. The founders kept control. They avoided unnecessary dilution. And they realized they had more leverage and more options than they thought.

4. Alignment Across the Leadership Team

The problem: Meeting structure, communication gaps and decision-making bottlenecks created friction, slowed execution, and made every decision harder.

What changed: The leadership team surfaced the hidden conflicts and resolved them. Once aligned on vision and priorities, everything moved faster. Noise decreased. Decisions sped up. Accountability increased across the company.

5. A Fix for a Long-Standing Operational Weakness

The problem: Manufacturing errors had been a source of stress and customer challenges for years. Root causes had never been isolated or fixed.

What changed: The session unpacked these issues to their root causes. An actionable plan was built and implemented. The result: a 70% drop in manufacturing errors and lead times under four weeks, even in peak season.

Testimonial:

"We were growing fast, but operationally not keeping up. The strategic planning session gave us the clarity and structure we desperately needed. It fixed long-standing issues and put us back in the driver's seat."

— Company Founder

One Year Later: A Stronger, Calmer Business

The Transformation

- The foundation is stronger than it has ever been.
 - Leadership is aligned, focused, and moving in the same direction.
 - The company is no longer considering outside capital and is executing a clear cash strategy.
 - Sales and marketing operate with shared clarity and purpose.
 - Operations are stable, predictable, and high-performing.
 - **Most importantly, the founders feel in control again.**
-

What This Means for You as a Founder

Growth Does Not Create Clarity; Clarity Creates Growth

Many founders in the messy middle think the answer is a new hire, a capital raise, or a consulting firm. But what they truly need is alignment, structure, and a clear plan.

You do not need fractional help yet. You need a clear strategic foundation. You need your leadership team rowing in the same direction. You need a capital strategy that protects your equity. You need a decision-making system that scales rather than adds chaos.

A Focused Strategic Planning Session Does All of That

Two focused days with your leadership team can give you:

- A shared, written three-year vision and path
- 3–5 company priorities that everyone understands and executes against
- A capital and cash strategy that lets you grow without unnecessary dilution
- Alignment across your leadership team so decisions happen faster and accountability increases
- A clear diagnosis of your operational weaknesses and an actionable plan to fix them

The Company did it in two days. So can you.

Ready to Move From Chaos to Control?

If this sounds familiar, you are in the messy middle.

Revenue is growing. Demand is strong. But everything feels harder than it should. You are stretched thin. Your team is pulling in slightly different directions. You feel pulled toward "just raise capital" or "just hire another executive" because you do not have a clear plan.

A two-day strategic planning session can change that. In 48 hours, you can gain more clarity about your business than you have had in the last two years. You can align your leadership team. You can stabilize operations. You can build a capital strategy that protects your ownership.

Your Next Step

Book a strategic planning session with John St.Pierre.

Bring your leadership team. Expect to spend two focused days doing the hard work of alignment, strategy, and planning.

Walk away with:

- A clear three-year vision and path
- 3–5 focused company priorities
- A capital strategy that protects your equity
- A decision-making system that scales
- An actionable plan for your biggest operational weakness

Because clarity, alignment, and profitability are not accidents. They are choices.

Be Real. Be Ready. Be Relentless.

References

Case study and founder interviews conducted in December 2025.