

## Scenario and projection planning *before* major move helps thrust local business into new growth phase

**Wade Kent, Blue Sky Outdoor's owner and recent BCCI awards winner, is thrilled that he finally got to stretch his wings and operate from larger premises. The business had out-grown its previous location which prompted the move to a larger retail site. Now recently relocated, the new shop places his business at the gateway to Ballina.**

In the eight years of owning Blue Sky Outdoor, the business had grown substantially prompting Wade to look at his options. Collins Hume's Shane Bartrim offered our business optimisation service to help show the financial impact of the decision to move before doing so. For Wade this included working on some projections and looking at some 'what-if' scenarios.

Initially Wade said to Shane, "I want to go to the next level looking at new premises and other options". Shane was a little surprised given the current climate, but Wade's gut feeling together with the slowing of his business growth (termed as 'just treading water') only added weight to Shane's approach, "Shane understood that I was feeling restricted, so his scenario planning really helped," Wade says. "He knew where I was coming from and it was extremely useful to throw in 12-month and 3-year outlooks."

Wade said he found it beneficial to 'what-if', "We had a rough idea, but Collins Hume definitely helped by having the strategy and finances plotted out in advance."

"Once we fine-tuned the scenarios, I could approach the relocation with my eyes wide open. We started planning 12 months ago and finalised our plan of attack last May to then re-open the doors on 1 July. Our advance planning was key to optimising the opportunity."

Shane added, "The scenario planning and projections we did for Wade were specifically devised around the viability of the move. In the short time they have been at their new premises, they have gone from strength to strength." Wade agrees; new premises have allowed him to expand product lines, offer more hours to staff plus take on a specialist employee to focus on e-commerce with the space to do it properly, "Collins Hume provided the framework and we are running with it."

Blue Sky Outdoor Ballina's recent BCCI awards win as Best Retail Business only reinforces Wade's original gut feeling, "Many local businesses are closing or downsizing but we moved in spite of that. I think we stood out as a finalist because of our bold business strategy to go against the grain."



"Entering the awards was a useful process allowing us to reflect on how far we've come," he says. "To write it all down, it's amazing to think how much has happened in 12 months. Winning was really an acknowledgement of our hard work which has got us to where we are. We're now looking forward to some fine tuning and 30 June to see how accurate our business planning was."

Wade also attributes his success to having confidence in his knowledgeable and professional retail team. In a sector where employees regularly turn over every 15-18 months, Wade invests in his team by offering subsidised management training to give them a career path, allowing them to step up and take on more responsibility.

The future outlook for Wade is running the business more on his own terms, with much-needed work / life balance and the flexibility to choose work hours. We congratulate Wade and Blue Sky Outdoor and look forward to supporting them through their next major business milestones.

