

CASE STUDY: ARMITAGE PET CARE



Armitage Pet Care: A 'good boy' indeed!

Armitage is the largest independent supplier of pet treats and accessories in the UK. The business has a number of brands with the most significant being "Good Boy", a leading premium dog treats brand.

Identifying the opportunity

Good Boy is focussed on premium natural dog treats. This niche has benefitted from a culture of humanisation, a willingness to purchase higher quality products for our pets and growth in the number of smaller dogs owned.

However, whilst the business was growing strongly, it was not prepared for sale and required significant investment in the team, systems and operations to sustain its growth. It was so under-invested that it was struggling to service its customers properly.

The resilient market together with the need to invest in operations provided a strong fit with Rutland's investment criteria.

Operational enhancements

Investing in the business and improving operations was a priority from the outset. Armitage had sales of £40m and an infrastructure appropriate for a business half its size! Rutland started by investing in the senior management team to better equip the business to address the operational deficiencies and access material market opportunities.

Investment was then made in operations including staff hires across the business, a new ERP system and a move to a new warehouse provided by a third-party logistics specialist. Armitage is now able to drive and support future growth.

Driving product demand

Armitage has been viewed as a challenger brand and Rutland has driven growth by supporting the company's ability to remain agile, in particular through innovation and rapid new product development, picking up on human trends like superfoods and putting them into pet products.

In parallel with product development, growth has been fuelled by the company's approach to category management. Armitage takes EPOS data from its key grocery customers and, using powerful data analytics tools, it helps them maximise the revenue from shelf, making sure that the right SKUs are stocked and those with poor rates of sale are not.

The use of data has justified increased product distribution, facilitating growth, with the best-selling products then actively pushed across all channels, including online, convenience stores and independent pet trade

Transformation of the business

This strategy has seen a transformation of the business and allowed Armitage to maintain a 15% compound annual growth rate, without the need for high levels of promotional support.

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