



Client Case Study:

Fenergo

Crafting a growth transformation strategy

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Fenergo, Marc Murphy CEO

Fenergo develops client lifecycle relationship software for banks and financial institutions. Accounts for the 12 months ending March 2018 show turnover rose to in excess of \$80 million, up from \$30 million the year previously.

The company was established in 2007, and now employs 500 people in Dublin, London, Sydney, Boston, New York, Tokyo, Abu Dhabi, Wroclaw, Singapore, Toronto and Hong Kong.

What was your goal at the start?

When we launched the business in 2007, our mission was to help banks open accounts - essentially, we were helping them to lend. Then as we all know, the world changed in 2008 with the crash.

We had to pivot, and pivot fast. We went into the regulatory space, supporting the environment of regulation of most bank operations. Regulatory compliance is one of the most important things on a bank CEO's desk, after all. We got great traction from this, and signed our first three North American clients in 2012. This gave us a strong platform to accelerate business growth - in 2015, we got funding of \$75 million from Insight Ventures.

Today we're the market leader in client lifecycle tech. We solve regulation issues as a community. Regulatory analysts design a solution to potential issues and then we get sign-off from all the big banks, such as UBS, BNP Paribas, Santander, the list goes on.

What was holding you back?

When you're scaling like us, as fast as we are, you see issues every day. We're at the end of the financial year now, and we've just recorded our fourth consecutive triple-digit growth year. That's a lot of change.

There are plenty of challenges of scale, like how to plan sales and strategy, and knowing what markets to enter. What's really important is to surround yourself with good people so, when these issues arise - and they will arise - you'll be in good shape to deal with them and move on.

What did the process entail?

It's about getting to the point quickly and getting alignment on what we need to do. It's a collaborative process - we analyse what's happening with our team and then we can craft an agenda. We run working sessions, prepare examples and materials, and document outcomes. Essentially what we do, with the help of Select Strategies, is lay out a compass for future growth so we always know where we are.

I wouldn't say there was one silver bullet in terms of our growth, but more like 12 or more lead bullets. What you're gaining is experience, and having that experience means that everything you offer can be of value.

With every challenge there are parameters and boundaries, and experience means you can overcome them as they arise. At the moment, we're working on going from being a \$100 million company to a \$250 million company. It's important that we're able to identify the right people and tech to make that happen.

What were the results ?

There's a great book on scaling tech business called Crossing the Chasm by Geoffrey Moore, about winning markets and what a bell curve for tech markets looks like.

We see ourselves as innovators, early adopters. We are Moore's typical bell curve, the early majority. Banks buy based on what their peers do, and we've really benefited from that. Our strategy and methodology, the blueprint for winning markets, was introduced by Select Strategies. We're just following a theory and it's served us well.

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I see change all the time - both in terms of what we do as a business and my own role. My job has changed every year. Five years ago, I was doing all the sales, four years ago I was working on major projects, three years ago I was driving entry to markets and product strategy.

What was different about Select Strategies?

Know-how - that's the main difference. Select Strategies have helped many companies; they've traveled this ground. We're first-time entrepreneurs, and we have to remember that we can't invent everything. It's important to take guidance from people who've done it before and done it well.

In conversations with the team in Select Strategies, often they'll come up with a derivative to something that I've thought of, and then that becomes our prime focus. It's happened plenty of times - I'll have the bones of an idea, then their experience crafts it into what it needs to be. That's the key.

I mean you go in to one of the Big Four firms and they'll listen and basically dress up your idea for you without telling you where you need to go. We need more than that. Like I said, it's all about know-how and expertise.

What advice would you give to the leaders of a growing business?

The number one thing is to find clients in the early days that classify as pillar clients and who will build out the product with you. There should be at least three of them and it's okay to give them favourable terms. If you can find them, your product will be significantly better in real-time.

Also, surround yourself with people who are better than you are. You don't have to invent everything. Finally, take care of your clients. We have zero client attrition because when they want something, we turn it around for them. Some companies feel that they can handle client attrition, and maybe they can. But it doesn't have to be that way.