



SMARTER GROWTH CONSULTING

From From Struggle to Sustainability with The Hive Foundations

Within seven months of applying The Hive Foundations, a family-owned pub group turned a loss-making situation into breaking even across all three sites. Rising costs had threatened closure, but by streamlining menus, reducing waste, renegotiating suppliers and finding new revenue streams, the business saw profits begin to climb again and secured a more sustainable future.

The Challenge They Faced

A family-owned pub chain with three locations was battling:

- Rising costs – utilities, supplier prices, NI and minimum wage increases
- Reduced opening hours and days just to cut losses
- Menus too broad, driving up ingredient costs and food waste
- Inconsistent operating models across sites creating inefficiency
- The looming fear of closures if things didn't change fast

Our Solution

We provided a clear, practical roadmap for survival and smarter growth. Together, we:

- Mapped processes across all three sites to identify inefficiencies and differences
- Analysed cost drivers and found opportunities to renegotiate supplier and utility contracts
- Simplified the menu and introduced rotating specials to reduce waste while keeping variety
- Standardised menus and operating models across all pubs for consistency and control
- Advised on portion sizes to reduce waste and improve margins
- Introduced new revenue opportunities:
 - Renting out space for local groups and networking events
 - Registering on co-working apps to attract daytime use
 - Partnering with local breweries to add differentiation and negotiate better deals

Hurdles We Worked Through

- The fear of cutting menu choice leading to customer dissatisfaction
- Nervousness about changing long-standing supplier relationships
- Skepticism from staff about opening up sites for new uses like co-working and events

By showing the numbers behind waste and costs and highlighting quick wins alongside longer-term opportunities, we built confidence that change could work.

The Difference It Made

- Break-even achieved across all three sites within seven months
- Food waste reduced, thanks to a simplified menu, portion adjustments and specials using surplus ingredients.
- Overheads lowered by renegotiating with suppliers and switching utility providers
- New revenue streams created, with co-working and events bringing in daytime and off-peak trade
- Positive press and word of mouth, with networking events driving repeat bookings and enquiries.
- Staff more engaged with a clear, consistent operating model across all pubs

Keeping the Momentum

The Hive Foundations gave the group both stability and direction. With leaner operations, stronger supplier deals, and new income streams, the pubs are no longer firefighting but building a foundation for long-term sustainability. Green shoots of growth are emerging, and the business is now positioned to thrive, not just survive.

Client Details - Family-owned UK pub group, 3 sites, c.£40m turnover.