



Wirtz Beverage Group Partners with McKinney Rogers® to Achieve Leadership Vision, Performance and Growth despite Downturn

Wirtz Beverage Group (Wirtz Beverage), a division of Chicago-based Wirtz Corporation, is one of the leading alcohol beverage distributors in the country. Comprised of a staff of more than 3,000 employees, Wirtz Beverage is a multi-state distributor of wine, beer and spirits and ranks in the top tier of distributors nationwide.

Customer Challenge

Wirtz Beverage had grown through multiple acquisitions over the past several decades and had reached a size of nine distributors spread across five states, each with multi-location operations. The Company's leadership recognized that in order to increase performance and grow faster than their competitors, they would have to combine the separate distributors into a high performing team that would function as a single entity.

Solution

Previously, members of the executive team had worked with McKinney Rogers and established an innovative approach to working with their suppliers based on alignment and mission planning to achieve success. During this period Wirtz Beverage recognized that the McKinney Rogers' approach of turning strategy into action was critical to their success and it became a catalyst to align and transform the Company. "McKinney Rogers is not a team of consultants who take what you give them, recommend a strategy and leave. Their approach to business execution is based on building a holistic philosophy they call 'Mission Leadership' so that an organization's members are aligned, focused on the strategy, and can move forward under any conditions," Wirtz Beverage Group President Rocky Wirtz explained.


Despite the economic climate that Wirtz Beverage confronted in late-2008, the McKinney Rogers team challenged them to raise their level of expectations. Confident that their partnership could transform Wirtz Beverage, McKinney Rogers encouraged the company to set forth and achieve an ambitious vision statement: to be the leading Total Beverage Alcohol (TBA) distributor in the US by December 31st, 2012.

During the course of the relationship McKinney Rogers:

- Leveraged *Mission Planning™* to identify the strategic approach toward achieving the vision;
- Utilized *Mission Alignment™* to build an agile and flexible strategic narrative from the top of the organization down to the business units and functions;
- Activated the mindset and behavior change needed to accomplish the vision with *High Performing Team* sessions among the top 300 leaders in the organization; and
- Established a *McKinney Rogers Mission Leadership Dashboard™* to track and measure accomplishments in real-time, providing a continuous window into progress, gaps and opportunities.

Working in partnership, Wirtz Beverage and McKinney Rogers developed a series of missions for each leader and operational function, directed by high-performing teams that would align and streamline the Company's nationwide operations. McKinney Rogers has emerged as a long-term trusted advisor when it comes to strategy execution. As a result of this successful collaboration, Wirtz Beverage again turned to McKinney Rogers to manage the planning, shaping and successful implementation of a 115-person standalone business unit, the Alliance Division, in less than 90 days.





Together the organizations identified a number of critical investments for taking the company to the next level. At a time when competitors were hunkering down to weather the storm, Wirtz Beverage built the framework to achieve long-term success and deliver on their vision by:

- Expanding their national training platform from a single trainer in Illinois to a national training platform with dedicated trainers, coherent modules, and enabling technology by August of 2011;
- Implementing a sophisticated enterprise resource planning system for completion by July 1st, 2012;
- Investing millions of dollars in facilities improvements by July 1st, 2012; and
- Expanding their national trade marketing model by July 1st, 2012.

Results

Today, Wirtz Beverage is recognized by global suppliers for leading the industry, and is ahead of schedule for achieving its vision and objectives. As a unified team, Wirtz Beverage was able to outperform competitors, win such high-stakes accounts as Bacardi, and was recently named “Wholesaler of the Year” by *Beverage Industry* magazine—the beverage industry’s most widely distributed publication.

Unlike their competitors, Wirtz Beverage stuck to a winning strategy and made competitive investments to deliver on their long-term vision without sacrificing near-term results. In so doing they have unseated the #1 national competitor in Illinois, forcing them into a reactive position.

Perhaps the result that speaks loudest of all is their growth during the past six years. Amidst global recession, while competitors assumed a bunker-like mentality, Wirtz Beverage executed market-leading initiatives that resulted in a 55 percent increase in revenues. According to Wirtz Beverage Group VP of Sales and Marketing Danny Wirtz, “McKinney Rogers inspired us to achieve the extraordinary and helped us develop and execute the processes to make that possible. They bring to bear the combination of a deep understanding of our business together with a best practices perspective from other industries. From HR, to lead integration strategy, to operations, we worked together with the McKinney Rogers team to define vision, develop strategy, mitigate risk, and execute. They helped us roll-out new programs and innovate processes, without ever missing a beat in our day-to-day operations.”

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