Further reading

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Case exercise

Golden Star

Golden Star is a manufacturer of prams (baby/child carriages) and has been in business for over 100 years. They are a family run firm and are proud of their traditional products, which have been used and trusted by many generations of parents. Endorsed by royalty and many famous people, they are the by-word for security for the child. They currently sell over 80 per cent of their output to the large retailers in Europe. The brand 'Golden Star' is universally recognised; however, their newer models have not been as successful as their traditional ones. There is one big problem: their turnover is £10 million per annum but they are making a £2 million loss. The directors are all family members, and shareholders. They want to capitalise their assets and sell the company to a venture capitalist. However, they need to improve the performance of the company in the short term to make the company more attractive and secure a higher price. They have a loyal, highly skilled workforce that is willing to work flexibly to secure the future of the business.

Mr X, the managing director and majority shareholder, has called you to a meeting, as a good friend of his has recommended you. He believes that the loss is a short-term issue associated with not producing enough stock to sell (the products are still largely handmade) and being forced to accept lower margins by the large retailers. He therefore wants you to look at his production to find ways of making it more efficient and also look for alternative channels for selling, for example selling direct to the public via the web.

Q1 What are the questions you would ask Mr X to challenge some of his assumptions and uncover his 'explicit needs'?

Q2 Based on the evidence above, what other issues do you think Golden Star faces and what type of consulting project (from Chapter 2) might be used?

Q3 Assuming that Mr X is correct in his assumption that they need to look for alternative sales channels, prepare a proposal on how you might help him as a consultant.