

# READY TO TAKE ON THE NEXT CURVE AFTER 30 YEARS OF AN AMAZING RIDE

How does a company that has enjoyed a global industry leadership position for close to 30 years remain on top of their game in the face of a shifting global market?

The common denominator to ongoing peak performance is leadership, and more specifically, a leader's willingness to embrace change and innovate their own business.

## SITUATION

For decades, ProSlide has won in the market through the raw energy and passion of its team, and its ability to innovate and develop strong customer relationships. As the industry shifted and came out of the post 2008 slump, there was growing demand in new markets and for new products.

With increasing pressure to keep up, a forward-looking business model was required to understand how they would capture new opportunities and markets.

Owner and CEO Rick Hunter, a consummate innovator of new products and water ride technologies, now turned his attention to innovating internally.



ProSlide Technology is the leader in creating the world's best water parks & attractions. They have won over 70 awards in 29 years, and are consistently seen as the industry leader for water ride innovation, quality, and customer service.

## CATALYSTS TO CHANGE

1. A leader willing to embrace change and reform the organization.
2. Pro-active decision making around leadership, and building strength in critical areas.
3. Investments in internal operational excellence, in both tactical execution and setting direction with strategic vision and operational alignment.
4. Openness and willingness to inject broader perspectives and ideas from external advisors and mentors.
5. Management team with strong alignment around near and long-term goals.
6. An organizational design with a strong product strategy focus to create balance around strategic business decisions.

In 2011, Business Sherpa Group (BSG) was invited to dive into the business to understand how ProSlide could keep up with growing demands.

Throughout a three-week review, which included a deep dive into the financial and operational performance, BSG met with all the key players to understand roles, skill sets, processes and systems. The ProSlide team was excited and motivated by the opportunities, and recognized they needed to further optimize how they worked to keep up with the increased growth.

The team was already laser focused on innovation, customer commitments and delivering complex projects around the world. Now it was time to find the people, the organizational structure, and the processes that would allow ProSlide to successfully tackle the growth curve ahead.

## APPROACH

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ProSlide embarked on a journey to re-engineer the business. Their own exciting ride, you might say. The areas of focus for the organization became the following:



Enhancing Leadership Breadth



Roadmap to Success



Alignment from Top to Bottom



Adding Outside Expertise

“It’s been a four-year journey and partnership,” says Rick. “Not only did BSG support our immediate HR priorities, but they’ve become a trusted business partner to my entire management team.”

The resulting organization is even better positioned to meet the needs of world-class partners like Disney, Six Flags, Wet ‘n Wild and others who trust their success to ProSlide.



### Enhancing Leadership Breadth

Additional leaders were introduced in key areas: Operations, Supply Chain, Sales, Marketing and Project Management.

“It was clear that we needed to pivot in key areas to enhance the overall team.”  
- President & CEO, Rick Hunter

The management team has refined their discipline around monitoring progress against plans, identifying issues early, and bringing forward opportunities and challenges.



### Roadmap to Success

Comprehensive strategic plans, accompanied by complementary operational plans are in place with defined goals that focus on **corporate performance** and **critical success factors** to ensure sustained growth and success.

A workforce roadmap that identifies **critical ‘pillar’ functions** in the organization addresses the

needs that may arise through continued growth and new markets.

An important aspect of aligning the organization was to clearly communicate the strategic plan, corporate goals and critical success factors to the entire team. Performance metrics are tracked regularly and communicated to the team each quarter to show progress and to talk openly about decisions needed to address new developments or unfolding opportunities.



## Alignment from Top to Bottom

To connect the high-level business goals with individual objectives, **new programs** are in place with clear metrics and critical milestones around corporate performance. Business strategy is completely aligned with execution plans and each employee understands how they can contribute to success.

The entire team now has a transparent and understandable program that helps to align the organization and shows each employee their role to play in the success of the business.



## Adding Vision & Expertise

A recent development in ProSlide's transformation is the addition of an **Advisory Board**. C-level executives were carefully selected to offer a mix of backgrounds and experiences particularly relevant to ProSlide's business needs. This injection of experience has added strength to the management team and has **provided the CEO with a trusted group of business advisors** to provide support with fresh views and business perspectives based on years of experience.

“The Advisory Board has brought even more strategic minds to our table and really confirms what we're doing. They recognized our strengths and opportunities, and have also opened my eyes to the value of being tapped into the local business community.”

Finally, BSG matched experienced Business Mentors with high-potential leaders in specific functions to support these functional leaders. This has provided not only continued professional development and growth, but also access to a broad range of 'business minds' to think through opportunities and challenges.



President & CEO Rick Hunter (front) rides all of ProSlide's rides. His favourite ride? "The next one, it doesn't exist yet!"

## THE IMPACT

ProSlide is riding a growth wave. “Over the past four years we have tripled the size of our team in head office – but more importantly we have really focused on smart hiring by strengthening key functions to support our continued growth,” says Rick.

At the end of the day, Rick finds the most rewarding part of his job is seeing the team enjoy themselves. “If you can find something you love doing, something that challenges you and then you deliver, that’s the greatest thing for me to see as the CEO. We are the technology of fun!”



### OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- People, processes, systems and tools that work as a well-oiled machine towards unified goals.
- Deep bench strength in critical functional areas that support strong innovation, high-quality products, world-class delivery and exceptional care of customers.



### LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

- High-caliber leadership team that can further enhance company performance and build top performing teams around them.
- Sustainable performance with strong focus on developing the talent and an organization structure that scales with the business.



### MARKET PERFORMANCE

- Strong entry into new emerging markets.
- A new Shanghai office, opened in Spring 2015.
- Continued product innovation – and reputation for delivering high quality product with customer-centric focus – that is unmatched in the industry.

“Rick’s wide-open embrace of change and a willingness to explore new directions is at the center of ProSlide’s success. Creating room for other good ideas from different people is often at odds with leaders who’ve built successful companies with their bare hands and deep passion – but it’s critical for continued growth and success.”

- Margo Crawford, President and CEO, Business Sherpa Group

## Business Sherpa Group

Formed in 2008, the Business Sherpa Group is a management consulting firm specializing in providing in-house or virtual embedded business services to small and mid-sized enterprises (SME's) across North America. We bring 150+ years of collective experience and have operated in over 80 organizations at all sizes and stages. We have been on this business journey many times before - now let us guide you to peak business performance.

Human Resources

Finance & Administration

Strategy & Governance