Success Story

Profit Maximisation within the IT sector

Dolphin ICT, based in Doncaster, provide proactive IT support and secure phone systems to cyber protection and CCTV. With a future focused on acquisition, they recognised the need to strengthen their financial strategy, improve profitability, and build for growth.

The challenge

Dolphin ICT was a well-established, high-performing business with growth ambitions, including future acquisitions to expand their offering. To achieve this, they needed to maximise business value, ensuring they could raise funds or give away equity when the time was right.

However, prior to The CFO Centre's involvement, Dolphin had limited management information, received only basic reports from their accountants, and rarely took time out of the day-to-day to analyse numbers in detail. They needed to understand which parts of the business were performing well and which needed attention to build sustainable profitability and value.

What are the numbers that *really* matter?

10% improvement in gross margin

1/2 debtor days, significantly improving working capital

The approach

The CFO Centre's Nicola Horton joined Dolphin ICT in Autumn 2023, and set about embedding financial clarity and strategy without disrupting the team's focus on client delivery.

Nicola focused on practical, high-impact areas:

- Margin analysis by product, service and customer, with action on underperforming areas.
- Focus on cash flow management and working capital, including halving debtor days.
- Supporting the education of quoting and pricing practices, with necessary price increases.
- Exploring funding options for acquisitions, including understanding target valuations and deal structures.
- Supporting and mentoring a new graduate finance team member.

> "Nicola has freed up a lot of time and headspace. She can show us in 5 minutes what would take us hours to unpick.
>
> Rebeca Thompson
> General Manager, Dolphin ICT

Monthly meetings became a cornerstone of this approach, creating space for Dolphin's leadership to step out of daily operations to focus on strategic decision-making and tracking performance.

> Nicola has a great network which has brought us leads, insights and expertise that a small business couldn't normally afford or access.
>
> Rebeca Thompson
> General Manager, Dolphin ICT

The CFO Centre's solutions

Nicola didn't just present numbers but worked as part of the team, mentoring staff, advising on pricing, and introducing Dolphin to new clients, resulting in new business opportunities. By focusing on cash flow, pricing, and margins, she ensured Dolphin was building the value needed for future acquisitions.

Nicola's work has centred on maximising value, with detailed margin analysis by product, service, and customer, identifying underperforming areas and taking action.

She has focused on improving cash flow, reducing debtor days by half, and implementing pricing improvements in partnership with The Marketing Centre.

The partnership with The CFO Centre provided Dolphin with more than financial reporting; it delivered calm, clarity, and actionable insight, ensuring decisions were informed and aligned with future goals. The introduction of detailed management information transformed Dolphin's understanding of their business and provided the leadership with comfort about performance, strengths, and challenges.