

Knowledge to Action  
Case Study



# KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

## Knowledge, action, success.



**KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION**  
Skills For A Richer Life

By James West, based on an interview with Greg Secker



**T**he story of how **Knowledge to Action** became a respected member of the finance industry and **National Business Awards** finalist in just seven years is punctuated by decisions that contradict perceived business wisdom. From its founder's desire for a fulfilling career above pure financial gain, through to focusing on failures as intently as triumphs, and putting the needs of its community before traditional staff outings, this case study shows how success is defined not by a methodology, but by the journey and the end-result.

Seven years ago, Knowledge to Action (<http://www.knowledgetoaction.co.uk>) founder Greg Secker was in his front room teaching friends how to make money from the stock market. Three years ago, despite operating in a market space negatively tarred by tawdry 'get rich' schemes, Knowledge to Action was growing in stature and employing ten staff. Now, the 80 plus workers located in a purpose built facility in Chelsea are not only helping to grow the business at a furious rate, they have helped redefine the way in which stock market trading education is delivered forever.

Greg explains the conditions that have allowed Knowledge to Action to build a reputation unlike any of its competitors. "If you visit a typical seminar, you'll be given a series of presentations showing

how shares can make you rich, followed by a questions and answers session, and then sent on your way with a manual in your hands. I don't believe this offers attendees anything other than an introduction to trading. For me, the only way to learn this skill is to observe, and then practice."

Understanding the distinction between a traditional seminar company, as described by Greg, and a hands-on training partner which forges long-term relationships with customers not only helps explain why Knowledge to Action has become an organisation worthy of mention in the highly regarded National Business Awards, it also tells the story of how the business was born.

A former asset management specialist, Greg traded across the globe and

graduated to managing teams who built trading systems. "I was never a big fan of the pure IT aspect of my job, but I did enjoy training people." His role afforded him spare time at home, and the feelings of boredom and loneliness meant that Greg was soon inviting people over for company, and he taught his guests how to make money from trading. "We often had 20 people over, in my small west London house, and we were all making money." Greg's wife Sara, who was his girlfriend during this period, noticed how naturally he could train people to become successful traders. Keen to encourage her partner's interests and skills (and get some normality back to the home), Sara helped set up the original seminar business. It was at this point that Greg realised how poor the competition was and how difficult it was to escape from the negative associations created by the 'cowboy' trainers.

Greg explains how a chance encounter pushed the project forward at pace. "Through a friend of mine, I got invited to meet with a group of people who met on a Wednesday night to discuss their exploits in the stock market. I was a bit grumpy that night, and was listening them talking-the-talk, so I started to ask the group how well trading was



I hate the big boss corporate statement.

We created three guiding rules:

**1) Do the right thing.**

**2) Do the best you can.**

**3) Show everyone that you care.**

We found that if people stick to these principles and care about one another, they don't want to leave at 5:30. **Sara Secker**

going for them. Everyone went quiet, so I asked who had trained them. The group admitted they had paid a few grand each to attend a seminar, but none of them felt confident enough to make an actual trade. They hadn't even seen the trainer make a trade. To me, that's like a driving instructor turning up in a taxi."

His proactive instincts kicked in, and Greg took the group over to his house in a people carrier. "I'm a doer not a talker, and after they all crammed into my house I started trading and quickly made £8k. I learnt that if you don't hold hands with people, they won't trade, and my trading floor grew from there."

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The next step was to video Greg in action and distribute this to trainees. This morphed into training via Skype and eventually led to the creation of the dedicated trading floor where



students can learn to trade in a live environment. This level of realism is key to the business model's success because, Greg insists, it helps build the all important belief. "There are no guarantees of success, we make that clear to our students. However, unlike traditional seminar training, once you've paid your fees with us, you can return as many times as you like - you could come every week for a year if you wanted to, until you have the confidence to go alone."

The trading floor is part of the Knowledge to Action facility which overlooks Chelsea Harbour. Greg describes it as a fantastic environment, but credits the people for creating the positive attitude. "I believe in hiring people who are motivated, you shouldn't have to spend time encouraging people to do a good job. All of our staff are this way; the marketeers want to be the best at what they do, it's the same with the traders, the sales staff, everyone."

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The group is predominantly young, high energy and rarely leaves before seven in the evening.

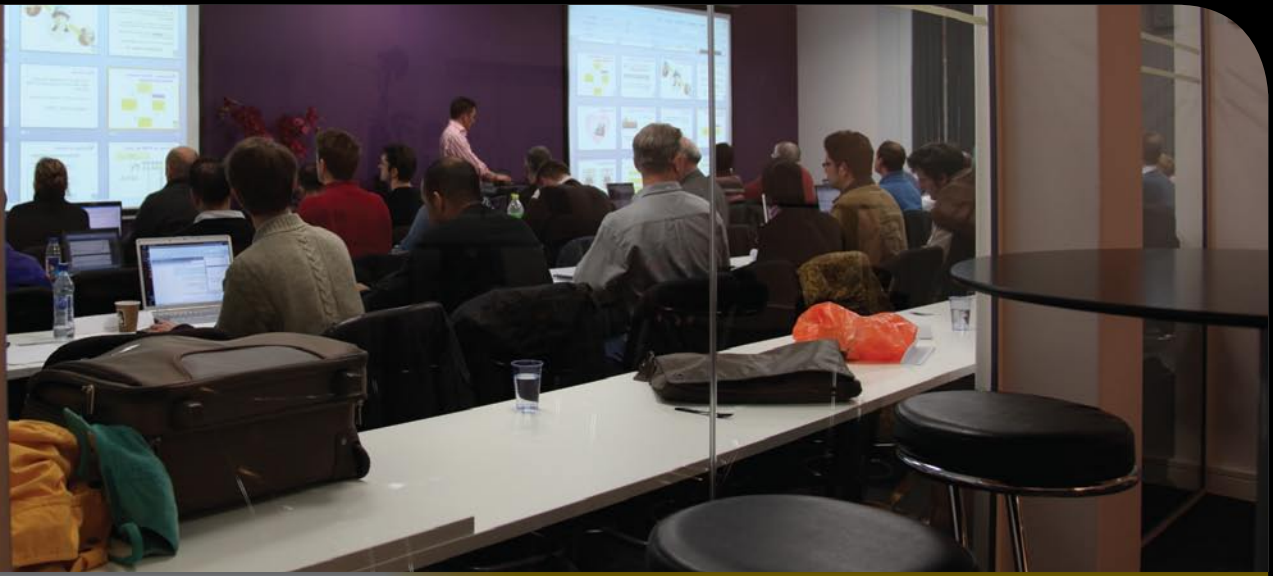
To support the staff, Greg says that every element of the business has been systematised, even the mistakes, and the information gathered has been used to create proven processes. "We've made mistakes, such as setting up an event in Dubai expecting to enjoy great success, but quickly realising that apart from the select group of mega rich, most people there don't have any money, having their economy turned on a dime before we got there."

Greg says that huge contribution made by Sara has been instrumental in avoiding problems such as the one encountered in Dubai. "Sara has helped forge over 300 global alliance partners, we realise now you are foolish not to take advantage of local knowledge already in place."

Sara has also been instrumental in helping define the culture that pervades Knowledge to Action. "I hate the big boss corporate statement. We created three guiding rules.



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Taking an almost spiritual view of the staff has helped elevate the business to a level all but invisible to most corporations. "Most businesses arrange big Christmas parties. We view things quite differently, we feel it is important to remember there are different levels of necessity." Exercises such as making Christmas parcels for the less fortunate members of the local community, and sending the staff out to make the deliveries, is a very powerful and memorable experience for staff. Counterintuitive it may sound, but Greg insists that the less the business focuses on gain and the more puts its success into perspective, the quicker the business grows.

Being honoured as finalist at the regional National Business Awards for the Growth Strategy of the Year category was further endorsement to the quality and validity of what Greg and the team have achieved in a short space of time. "A National Business Award is unheard of in our industry." The world is slowly changing their view on investing – and taking the power back from the investment managers who have let so many down over the past few years. We are excited to be a catalyst for that change for a good number of those people."



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