

How An Aviation Company Elevated Their Business



Snapshot:

The mantra "**Buy or be bought**" applies to most mid-sized companies. This aerospace engineering and manufacturing firm choose to build a platform designed to take charge and do what was necessary to dominate the market.

Mid-sized and second-generation companies face unique challenges:

a dilution of the original CEO's vision, resistance to the new CEO's vision, a lag in learning a new style and meeting new expectations, and, in the case of company's backed by private equity firms, the need to meet the firm's voracious appetite for growth and cash.

Testek— an aeronautical engineering and manufacturing company which tests in-flight strategies and components—faced those challenges and an even more immediate one. they could not continue as they were, even though they had a successful business. They needed to prepare themselves for sale to a larger company or become a platform company that buys others themselves.

They choose to become a platform company but needed a strategic direction on how to get there. That's when they reached out to Good Leadership and their team of coaches that helped Testek translate that vision into real change.

An ambitious flight plan

A powerful vision starts with a clear statement of what you want to be. The Good Leadership Aspirational Framework helped Testek distill their ambition to six words:

By 2027, nothing flies without Testek.

Their concise statement gave meaning to the work they were doing and rallied employees around the vision.

With this defined vision, Testek charted an impressive new growth and profitability path that would be impossible for the industry to ignore. However operationally, Testek still acted as a small company with a job-shop mentality. They needed to translate their 7-year vision into a big-company mindset that shaped their key decisions and day to day operations.

To do that, they needed to create what Good Leadership calls Operational Assurance. In other words, the Directors needed a clear sense of their duties, and the capacity to fulfill those duties, so the CEO and the Executive team could focus on strategy rather than putting out the daily fires. Because working in the business was their comfort zone, the executive team found it hard to let go of their day-to-day work and focus solely on strategic work.

While the transition to working on the business rather than in it proved challenging, the CEO underlined the urgency:

“We will become a platform company and sell our business to a new owner within 12 months—or we will be broken apart and sold nothing in pieces.”

Tools for Transformation

Fortunately, facilitating the change from “in the business” to working “on the business” is the focus of two of Good Leadership’s most powerful tools.

- **The Good Leadership Team Momentum Survey:** Articulated the business needs and identified deficiencies in Alignment, Commitment, and the Open Accountability required to make their Big Opportunity come true.
- **Team coaching:** The individual development of each executive team member put in the context of full team coaching improved the reliability, consistency, and capabilities of the Directors to run the business, while the Executive Team was working on acquisitions and the sale of the company.

Ready for Take Off

Ultimately, the changes Good Leadership guided them through helped Testek deliver better product quality, prompted more responsive customer management, and enabled the accelerated growth a platform company requires.

“I had no idea how badly we needed the outside-in perspective from our coaches at Good Leadership,” admits CEO Bruce DeWitt, CEO.

“When we committed to transforming our business into a platform company that could proactively buy companies instead of waiting to be bought, there was excitement—but also fear—about how we could pull off this massive transformation. The way Good Leadership guided us through this situation was amazing. It works.” ■