CASE STUDY 01 | EXECUTIVE PROOF

Creating a Market Before the Market Was Ready

GreenWorks Sustainable Solutions | Saint-Gobain Building Distribution | 2011–2016

Marcus built a national sustainable-construction proposition that made new technology easier to understand, specify, sell and install—turning a knowledge gap into customer confidence and commercial growth.

CREATE CAPABILITY	CONNECT TO DEMAND	SCALE THE MARKET
Practical training and technical advice for colleagues, customers and partners.	Linked learning, product choice, specification confidence and branch fulfilment.	Used national brands and supplier partnerships to accelerate adoption.

The market challenge

Sustainable construction was moving from policy ambition toward commercial reality, but the market was fragmented. Products existed; confidence did not. Builders, installers, merchant colleagues and specifiers faced unfamiliar technologies, changing standards and a shortage of practical knowledge. Simply adding more products to the catalogue would not create dependable demand.

What I saw

- The real constraint was capability: customers needed confidence that a solution would perform, comply and be installed correctly.
- Training had to be practical and commercially connected—not a classroom exercise detached from branches, products and live projects.
- No single brand could solve the whole problem; the opportunity required collaboration across merchant businesses, manufacturers, technical specialists and industry bodies.
- Sustainability would scale only when it became easier for customers to act, not merely more important for them to discuss.

The proposition I built

- Created GreenWorks as Saint-Gobain Building Distribution’s customer-facing sustainable-construction proposition, bringing together renewable, energy-efficiency and low-carbon solutions.
- Developed the GreenWorks Training Academy as a hands-on environment where customers, colleagues and partners could see, compare and work with technologies before committing to them.
- Connected technical learning to commercial action: advice, product selection, supplier expertise, branch availability and project support.
- Built supplier and industry relationships that widened the proposition beyond any one product category and created a credible national learning platform.
- Positioned the academy as a capability-building asset for the wider sector as well as a route to growth for Saint-Gobain’s merchant brands.

Delivered evidence

Evidence	What it demonstrates
35% growth	Increase in renewable and sustainable product sales during Marcus's GreenWorks leadership.
10,000+ people developed	Colleagues and industry partners supported through training and technical capability building.
£500k academy investment	A 15,000 sq ft practical training facility launched with backing from multiple Saint-Gobain merchant brands.
50,000+ training hours	Publicly reported delivery by 2012, demonstrating early scale and market appetite.
National platform	A proposition spanning Jewson, Graham, Gibbs & Dandy, Minster and supplier partners.

How the commercial model worked

Barrier	GreenWorks response and commercial effect
Customer uncertainty	Practical demonstrations and impartial technical learning reduced fear around unfamiliar solutions.
Capability gap	Structured training equipped colleagues, installers and partners to recommend and apply solutions with confidence.
Fragmented supply	Multi-brand and supplier collaboration connected learning to a credible product and fulfilment route.
Commercial adoption	Better-informed customers could move from interest to specification, purchase and successful installation.

Leadership reach demonstrated

- **Venture and brand creation —** moved from market insight to proposition, investment case, launch and national operation.
- **Commercial education —** translated regulation and technology into practical customer decisions and product demand.
- **Ecosystem leadership —** aligned competing priorities across brands, suppliers, training partners and customers.
- **Capability building —** left colleagues and customers better equipped to make decisions without dependence on one individual.

Why it matters

GreenWorks established a repeatable Marcus principle: when a market is changing, growth comes from reducing the customer's uncertainty. Build capability first, connect it to a commercial route to market and demand follows with greater confidence.

The connection to Build Aviator

GreenWorks proved that advisory capability could change customer behaviour. Build Aviator took that learning further—moving from education around individual solutions to ownership of the complete project journey, from design and compliance through estimating and materials procurement.

Evidence boundary: delivered commercial outcomes are drawn from Marcus Jefford's retained leadership records and approved CV. Public reporting corroborates the 2011 academy launch, multi-brand sponsorship, practical 15,000 sq ft facility, £500k investment and 50,000+ training hours by 2012.

CASE STUDY 02 | EXECUTIVE PROOF

Turning Customer Friction into a Scalable Venture

Build Aviator | Saint-Gobain / Jewson | Conceived 2016, scaled nationally from 2018

Marcus conceived and scaled Build Aviator to connect design, compliance, quantity surveying, estimating and materials procurement—helping customers manage projects more confidently while giving Jewson a stronger share of the complete project basket.

SOLVE THE WHOLE PROBLEM	SERVICE + SOFTWARE	CONVERT PROJECT VALUE
Moved beyond product supply to the decisions that determine an entire project.	Combined professional estimators, digital tools, compliance and merchant fulfilment.	Used project visibility to improve customer value and materials conversion.

The customer problem

Small builders and self-build customers often entered projects with incomplete drawings, uncertain quantities, fragmented compliance requirements and limited time for estimating. Merchants saw the resulting material orders, but not enough of the project decisions that shaped them. Quoting individual products did little to reduce the customer's wider risk.

What I saw

- An accurate estimate was more than a document: it was the commercial blueprint for the complete project and its future materials demand.
- Customers would spend more with the merchant that made the project easier to understand and execute—not necessarily the one that offered the lowest price on one item.
- Design, compliance, quantity surveying, estimating and procurement were being treated as separate services even though the customer experienced them as one journey.
- A digital tool alone would not be enough; scalable value required software, expert people, process discipline and a national fulfilment route.

The venture I created

- Conceived Build Aviator in 2016, secured corporate backing and led its development and national launch within Saint-Gobain.
- Built an integrated service covering drawings, compliance support, quantity surveying, estimating, bills of quantities, live merchant pricing and procurement coordination.
- Unified GreenWorks and Build Aviator in 2018, connecting sustainable-construction expertise to a broader end-to-end project proposition.
- Acquired and integrated Easy Price Pro and Professional Estimating Services, combining estimating software with an experienced team of professional estimators.
- Created national operating, CRM and project-pipeline discipline so estimates could become managed commercial opportunities rather than isolated transactions.

Delivered evidence

Evidence	What it demonstrates
£1bn project pipeline	Customer-project value represented by estimates and associated opportunities managed through the proposition.
27% project-value conversion	Average share of estimated project value subsequently purchased through Jewson by Build Aviator customers.
15%+ conversion uplift	Build Aviator customers converted more project value than comparable standard trading customers.
Two acquisitions integrated	Easy Price Pro and Professional Estimating Services combined into one service-and-software operating model.
National proposition	A repeatable customer journey connecting advisory services, estimating and a major merchant route to market.

How the value chain worked

Customer journey	Build Aviator value
1. Define the project	Drawings and project information established scope before individual products were discussed.
2. Reduce compliance risk	Supporting services clarified regulatory, energy, acoustic and technical requirements.
3. Quantify the work	Professional estimating converted the project into quantities, labour assumptions and a bill of materials.
4. Connect live pricing	Merchant-linked product data turned the estimate into a commercially relevant customer decision.
5. Manage conversion	CRM and project-stage visibility gave teams a disciplined route from estimate to materials basket.

Leadership reach demonstrated

- **Founder mentality inside a major corporate —** challenged the traditional merchant model and built backing for a new venture.
- **Acquisition integration —** combined people, software, process and proposition rather than leaving acquired capability as separate silos.
- **Data-led commercial management —** connected estimate value, customer behaviour, project stages and materials conversion.
- **Customer-journey design —** created value before the order, not only at the point of transaction.

Why it matters

Build Aviator shows Marcus's ability to identify an industry-wide customer problem, create a differentiated commercial model, secure corporate backing, integrate acquisitions and scale the proposition through an established national channel.

The Marcus growth toolbox

Start with the customer's complete problem. Build the capability that removes friction. Connect that capability to a disciplined commercial system. Measure the value created for both customer and business. Then scale without losing control.

Evidence boundary: £1bn is customer-project pipeline value, not Build Aviator revenue. The 27% figure is the share of total estimated project value converted through Jewson; it was more than 15% above the comparable standard-customer conversion rate. The wider £430m commercial scope related to Jewson and Build Aviator together, not a standalone Build Aviator P&L.

CASE STUDY 03 | EXECUTIVE PROOF

Scaling an Owner-Led Industrial Distributor

An anonymised board-level growth blueprint | c.£7m baseline to £12m ambition

Marcus developed a commercially integrated scale-up architecture for a recently separated industrial distributor—aligning revenue growth, margin, digital trading, working capital and execution discipline so ambition did not outrun cash or operational capacity.

GROW WITH MARGIN	RELEASE CAPACITY	DIGITAL ✦ HUMAN
Segmented acquisition and a deliberate shift toward higher-value proprietary products.	SKU discipline, faster stock turn and reduced debtor days to protect cash.	Simplified SME trading while preserving expert support for complex accounts.

The business challenge

Following a corporate separation, the distributor was operating at approximately £7m revenue with a cost base, inventory position and management structure inherited from a larger organisation. The Board wanted to reach £12m, but the existing model was too reactive: administrative costs absorbed 29% of sales, stock turned only 3.0 times a year and customer acquisition depended too heavily on inbound demand and legacy relationships.

What I saw

- Revenue growth on its own could make the business weaker if additional sales consumed working capital, warehouse capacity and management attention faster than they created cash.
- The business had two different buying journeys—large, compliance-led accounts and fragmented SMEs—but was trying to serve both through broadly the same process.
- A strong proprietary-product opportunity existed, but product mix, sales incentives and inventory decisions were not yet aligned around margin quality.
- Digital trading was treated as a website project rather than a redesign of account opening, payment, personalisation, compliance documentation and fulfilment.
- The strategy needed a practical execution engine: clear workstreams, owners, measures, decision rights and a regular Board rhythm.

The strategy I developed

- Separated the route to market into strategic-account acquisition and a lower-friction, card-first SME journey, each with different propositions and economics.
- Designed a product-and-margin plan to increase proprietary-product participation while retaining selected third-party ranges where they completed the customer solution.
- Connected SKU rationalisation, stock policy, debtor discipline and cash governance to the growth plan so expansion could be funded more safely.
- Specified the digital trading architecture: e-commerce and ERP integration, simplified onboarding, artwork/logo automation and accessible compliance documentation.
- Reframed compliance and sustainability as customer value—reducing tender risk and administrative burden—rather than using regulation as fear-based sales language.

Modelled value-creation targets

Modelled measure	Strategic target—not a reported result
Revenue	c.£7.0m baseline ⟶ £9.5m Year 1 ⟶ £12.0m Year 2.
Gross margin	38.4% baseline ⟶ 40.0% Year 1 ⟶ 42.5% Year 2.
Proprietary-product mix	40% baseline ⟶ 55% Year 1 ⟶ 70% Year 2.
Stock turn	3.0x / 124 days ⟶ 5.0x / 73 days, designed to prevent growth trapping disproportionate cash in inventory.
Debtor days	66 days ⟶ 45 days through clearer credit policy, faster payment routes and active account discipline.

Execution architecture

Execution layer	What it controls
Months 1–3: foundation	Validate baselines; rationalise priority SKUs; define segments; establish governance; begin ERP/e-commerce integration.
Months 4–6: commercial launch	Deploy account-acquisition plays, SME proposition, margin discipline and customer-facing compliance tools.
Months 7–12: controlled scale	Expand partnerships, refine conversion economics, strengthen forecasting and scale only where service and cash measures remain healthy.
Four working groups	Customer & Growth; Product & Margin; Digital & Data; Operations & Cash—with named owners and cross-functional membership.
Board rhythm	Weekly operating review, monthly value-creation review and explicit decisions on growth, cash, capability and risk.

Leadership reach demonstrated

- **Commercial diagnosis —** identified the few interdependent constraints that would determine whether scale created or destroyed value.
- **Board translation —** converted a headline revenue ambition into a measurable growth, margin, cash and capability system.
- **Customer-led redesign —** challenged inward-looking habits and rebuilt the model around distinct buying journeys.
- **Execution discipline —** created a sequence, ownership model and governance cadence rather than a list of disconnected initiatives.

Why this belongs in the portfolio

The work shows how Marcus applies experience built at scale inside Saint-Gobain to an owner-led business: quickly diagnose the commercial system, challenge legacy assumptions, connect customer value to operational reality and give the team a route to become self-sufficient.

Assignment status and evidence boundary: this is an anonymised strategy case developed by Marcus Jefford from supplied financial information, management context and public market research. Company, ownership, location, customer and product-brand details have been removed. The £12m ambition and every future-state number shown above are modelled recommendations, not implemented or realised results.