

Smarter moves for Intelligent Cashflow

Funding growth through strategic acquisitions

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Jason Southwell, Managing Director, Smarter Services Ltd





About Smarter Services Ltd

Based in Walton on Thames, Smarter Services Ltd is a facilities management company founded in 2006 by Jason Southwell and his wife. With a strong focus on personal customer service, Smarter Services offers a wide range of solutions including high-rise window cleaning, corporate cleaning, estate management, waste management, and more. The company prides itself on its environmental responsibility and operates a fully carbon-free fleet, as well as utilising environmentally friendly products. Serving diverse sectors such as housing associations, offices, retail, hospitals, universities, industrial and M.O.D. facilities, Smarter Services provides tailored programmes, budgeting, cost savings, and dedicated account management to meet each customer's specific needs.



The challenge

"We have a strategic plan to grow our turnover from £10 million to £30 million over the next four years, with a couple of selected acquisitions along the way," explained Jason Southwell, Managing Director of Smarter Services Ltd.

He added, "We've been with our previous lender for 10 years now and we have found them to be very rigid in their approach. We didn't feel that they were truly aligned with us as a business and where we wanted to go from here. We recognised that with the plans that we have, we needed a relationship with a lender that could demonstrate a more robust, commercially focused approach to funding over the longer term."

Smarter Services was determined to break free from the constraints of its previous high street finance provider and find a strong and supportive working capital partner that would be the ideal fit for the future of the business and its growth trajectory. Reflecting on his experience, Jason Southwell stated that they were looking for a lender with the will to gain a deeper understanding of the business and its goals and a flexible, multi-solution approach to enable them to achieve their plans.



Investec's solution

Following in-depth conversations with the management team at Smarter Services, Investec's team expertly structured a flexible working capital facility at a level that would fuel the business's strategic acquisitions and provide additional credit lines to drive its expansion.

When making the decision to move to Investec, Jason Southwell emphasised the importance of choosing the

right partner: "We are a young, technologically driven company focused on delivering quality services. When considering a lending partner, we wanted to work with a team that is the right cultural fit for us and we saw that in Investec. They not only showed us an appetite to support our growth plans but also clearly share our excitement about the journey ahead."

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The new facility is underpinned by Investec's proprietary Intelligent Cash Flow system, providing the management team with vital management information at their fingertips, as Jason Southwell observed: "The user experience and integration with Investec's systems compared to our previous provider is like night and day. It's much more user-friendly and easier to navigate from a customer interface perspective. The management information, particularly in respect of cashflow visibility, is excellent and the feedback I've received from our Financial Controller and Finance Director has been very positive. They find the system interface easy to use and the response from Investec's team in resolving any issues or queries is significantly faster than we've experienced before. We appreciate not only the efficiency of the system but also the responsiveness and support provided by the Investec team in addressing any queries we may have or rectifying any issues that arise."

Outcome

Investec Capital Solutions' funding support has already opened doors to exciting new opportunities for Smarter Services. "Since our initial discussions, Investec Capital Solutions has gone on to fund our first acquisition, Low Cost Cleaning Services, a company specialising in healthcare services, Jason Southwell reported.



"With 108 contracts in a restricted area, the business provides essential support to doctors' and nurses' practices, surgeries, and primary healthcare facilities. To operate in this sector, accreditation from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is crucial, and this opens up a host of new opportunities for us."

Looking ahead, the partnership with Investec will enable Smarter Services to explore new avenues for growth. According to Jason Southwell, the business is currently evaluating further options to expand geographically and diversify its services.

"When we presented our business plan to Investec, they offered multiple products to create a total solution

aligned with our goals and our growth ambitions. In addition to funding our working capital plans, they have also provided asset finance for the purchase of our company vehicles. Investec's funding solutions continue to provide us with the flexibility and agility we need to access cash whenever and wherever we need it. As a business that values agility, we are constantly pivoting and exploring new service areas and Investec has demonstrated an entrepreneurial approach that aligns perfectly with our ethos. Our key partnership with Investec allows us to think and act more expansively in pursuing M&A opportunities while having the ability to adapt to changing market demands with confidence."

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