



Active advice: *Helping business bloom*

After running a successful florist business for 12 years, **Jodie and Stu McGregor's** finances were in good shape. But when they started working with Godfrey Pembroke adviser Paul Trosti, they discovered that he could offer much more than just super and insurance advice – and help them achieve new levels of business and personal success.



Recently awarded NSW & ACT Florist of the Year, Jodie McGregor Flowers has achieved considerable success since the business was launched in 1999. Owner Jodie McGregor and her husband Stu, along with their three children, have worked hard to get their business to where it is today. They attribute this success to a lifelong passion for flowers, a focus on quality and customers, and partnering with the right people at the right time.



A fortuitous meeting

Jodie and Stu first met Godfrey Pembroke adviser Paul Trosti in 2011 after their accountant sought his assistance with a complex business issue.

Jodie and Stu weren't specifically seeking financial advice at the time, so their initial discussions with Paul centred around two main objectives: to better understand their cash flow, and to split their personal and business income. However, once their initial advice requests had been met, Paul let Jodie and Stu know that there was more he could do for them.

Growing trust

While Jodie was initially apprehensive about whether they needed financial advice, she and Stu decided to see what Paul could do for them. They decided that they could always end the arrangement if it wasn't working out as they'd hoped.

"We took the attitude that as long as Paul could provide value, we'd be happy to engage him and move forward," Jodie says.

It's an approach she recommends to any small business owner who is considering financial advice.

"If you find someone that you relate to well, then you should definitely go for it. If you're not getting value you can always exit, there's no reason not to look into it."

Finding time in their busy lives to collect all the information Paul needed to review their financial position was another obstacle for Jodie and Stu. When they met Paul, it was nearly Valentine's Day, one of the busiest times of year for their business.

"The information that we had to give Paul to get started was a mess," Jodie admitted. "We decided to pull back and look at it later because of the commitment we needed to make to get started. However he encouraged us to get it all done, which we did – so we're happy he gave us a bit of a push."

Peeling back the layers

According to Paul, when a potential client visits a financial adviser they're not always sure what they want to achieve from the process. He likens the initial meetings with clients to peeling an onion.

"Once you explore what's most important to the client, you quickly discover that there's a whole range of underlying problems that they haven't yet shared with you for different reasons. Once the trust and credibility is established, then the client starts to really invite you into their life."

After meeting with Jodie and Stu, it quickly became apparent to Paul that there were multiple ways he could help them. Together, they put together a plan that involved generating more cash from their business, building their balance sheet, finding the finances to renovate their home, and developing a strategy for their commercial property.



The confidence to succeed

Over the five years they've been working together, Paul has become a sounding board for Jodie and Stu.

"We didn't expect him to be so across the business side of what we were doing," Jodie says. "We were expecting that it would be a lot more about setting up a super fund, sorting out estate planning, all that sort of stuff. And what we've found is that he's really helpful for bouncing around business ideas."

"Financially, we're certainly better off for Paul's involvement. And business-wise, we're much better off, because he encouraged us to sell one of our businesses – resulting in our current businesses growing faster since. It brings a lot of confidence having Paul in our corner and getting his perspective on things."

Now Jodie and Stu are looking forward to the future. They're currently pursuing promotional activities on the back of their NSW & ACT Florist of the Year award and they're relaunching their popular flower subscription service, Jodie VIP.

A perfect match

Finding a financial adviser you connect with, both personally and professionally, can take time. But as Jodie and Stu's story shows, it's worth the effort.

Paul describes a successful advice relationship as, "One where both parties, both the client and the adviser, feel like they're getting value from the engagement. One where the adviser's skills and resources are being utilised and at that time, the outcome of that is what the client is looking for."

Jodie adds, "For a small business, the role of a financial adviser isn't just to focus on the finance, how best to achieve your financial goals, and how to get the best out of your super. It's also about being there as a support, and providing business advice. That's been very helpful for us."