

StrataTech Education Group identifies expansion opportunities and establishes a new campus thanks to data from Gray Associates.

Situation



We're looking to aggressively grow the company within the next five years."

Solution



They've done this so many times that they understand how to help you suss out whatever it is you need."

StrataTech Education Group is a holding company for the Tulsa Welding School (TWS) and the Refrigeration School, Inc (RSI). Both TWS and RSI are the largest accredited schools for their respective trades in the United States, with more than three thousand attending students, and StrataTech wants to continue increasing the number of their campuses.

"We're looking to aggressively grow the company within the next five years," said Mary Kelly, StrataTech's Chief Executive Officer. "We open and buy schools—that's our strategy."

Initially, StrataTech tasked two different companies with identifying the largest welding markets in the country. However, the companies didn't provide StrataTech with the level of detail it needed about the markets.

"Both companies primarily focused on a blue-collar trade demographic of a location," said Mary, "but their studies didn't give us anything on social media searches or lead generation. They were fairly simple."

One of StrataTech's employees used to work for a different holding company, which relied on Gray Associates for its data collection needs. At the employee's recommendation, StrataTech contacted Gray Associates about providing a study on welding and HVAC markets.

Gray Associates used its educational market database, demographics, and machine learning models to rank cities by market characteristics and predict the success of StrataTech Education Group campus in new cities. From the start, StrataTech was impressed with Gray Associates' reports and findings, which provided far more detail than the simplistic data and demographics previously provided by competitors.

"Gray Associates looks at what the openings are for these jobs and what schools in the area are offering," said Mary. "They'll also tell you how many graduates are coming out and how many of those marry up to the demand. That kind of detail is amazing."

Gray Associates' subscription service also offers plenty of detailed information on demand. "We can go in and look at certain areas, selecting our own parameters," said Mary. "With the other companies, we had no ability to look at anything other than just whatever they gave us."

StrataTech also enjoys Gray Associates' high level of customer support and expertise.

"They've done this so many times that they understand how to help you suss out whatever it is you need," said Mary. "We generally work with Zach, who's phenomenal. He'll spend however much time we need to go over the data and cut and slice it in different ways, even after we've paid and gotten our product."



"I'd give Gray Associates an A+ — they're a great group."

Mary Kelly
Chief Executive Officer, StrataTech Education Group

Better Decisions with Data



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RESULTS



The new HVAC program has brought in around \$1.5 million in revenue.”

Thanks to Gray Associates’ detailed reports, the company had avoided acquisitions in areas where a new campus would’ve been unsuccessful.

“We’d been eyeing a market that we had thought would be great for us,” said Mary. “Based on talking to employers and other informal indicators, we were pretty sure that was where to go. But we took another look at it using Gray Associates, and it turned out that the market had changed radically in the past five years. There was now way more supply than there was demand.”

StrataTech now relies on Gray Associates whenever it’s considering buying or opening a new school and, thanks to Gray Associates’ help, they’ve already established a new HVAC program in Houston.

“At first, we were only focused on welding at that particular campus, and we knew there was a market there for that, but we weren’t sure about HVAC,” said Mary. “Based on the report Gray Associates gave us, we found where we could diversify. We started the program, and less than a year later, we have almost 100 students enrolled. The new HVAC program also brought in around \$1.5 million in revenue, which is pretty nice.”



Increased revenue



Highly detailed reporting



Viable market identification



Data-informed decision making



Personalized customer support