



*"I'd been pushing a rock up hill for 14 years. When I looked down I realized how far I had climbed and then looked up and couldn't see the summit, I felt a bit overwhelmed. The CRT gave me the insights and strategic growth model – my hook and rope – to continue the climb with confidence."*

- Brent Wiest, CEO  
Rudi Wiest Selections

#### Company Profile

Rudi Wiest Selections (RWS) is a leading importer of fine German wines in the United States market. Since 1978 its sole focus has been rebuilding the image of legendary Germany wine estates through education of consumers and persons in the wine trade alike. The company is committed to giving the best service and information regarding the selection of fine German wine. Visiting Germany two to three times a year, RWS personally maintain relationships with every estate and exhaustively involves itself with the selection process. This commitment assures only the finest wines earn the Rudi Wiest Selections quality seal.



*Rudi Wiest*  
SELECTIONS

[www.rudiwiest.com](http://www.rudiwiest.com)

## MENTORING SERVICES CASE STUDIES

### **Rudi Wiest Selections**

#### ***Aging to Perfection***

Rudi Wiest Selections (RWS) is a leading importer of fine German wines in the United States market. Since 1978 its sole focus has been rebuilding the image of legendary Germany wine estates through education of both consumers and the wine trade. Rising from a side business to a company boasting \$7+ million in sales, the management team realized it was time to bring in the professionals.

#### ***Growing Complexity***

Brent Wiest, CEO of RWS, was beginning to feel overwhelmed. He had successfully managed the growth of the company his father had founded, but he knew there was still more untapped potential. He just wasn't sure how to proceed. So he put in a call to his alma mater, Cal State San Marcos, to see what they would recommend. They put Wiest in touch with the Chairman's RoundTable (CRT), a diverse group of seasoned executives who offer free strategic counsel to growing San Diego area businesses. "After we passed the \$6 million mark, it became a very different business. While we had made many changes to the operations over the years, I knew the current infrastructure wasn't going to take us to the next level. We needed experienced advice to help us analyze our business and lay a plan for the future."

#### ***The Flavor of Change***

The issues facing RWS were traditional organizational hurdles that growing companies face. "Our CRT mentors said I needed to stop flying at 500 feet and get to 30,000 feet," said Wiest. "That's hard to do when you are fighting so many issues every day at the 500-foot level. They started making recommendations immediately to help us backfill our infrastructure and that in turn freed up time for me to focus on more strategic issues."

One of the first recommendations implemented was to outsource human resources. Along with more professional management of important employee issues, the HR consultant helped RWS recruit key new employees. "Going into the mentoring process we thought marketing and sales were our primary issues," said Wiest. "While those

# Strengthening SAN DIEGO, One Company at a Time

## About Chairmen's RoundTable

The Chairmen's RoundTable is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised of successful Chief Executive Officers with diverse industry backgrounds who provide businesses in San Diego County advice on how to manage and grow their businesses through a well-defined mentoring program. CRT members provide this service free of charge to qualified area businesses as a way of giving back to the community.

For more information, please visit [www.chairmensroundtable.com](http://www.chairmensroundtable.com)

remain critical to our success, the CRT pointed out that we had no HR policies and procedures, no protection of our knowledge and relationships through formal confidentiality, non-compete and distribution agreements – needless to say we got on top of those issues right away.”

## The Aroma of Success

The CRT also recognized that stepping up marketing and sales was going to be the key to RWS' growth and continued success. “The CRT came to our business from the outside giving them the ability to look at things with a fresh perspective,” said Wiest. “I was so impressed at how our mentors could so clearly see marketing opportunities that were not so obvious to me. They also pointed out that we were not actively reaching out to our sales force. We bought software and cameras and implemented internet-based video conferencing for frequent face-to-face sales meetings and individual meetings.”

Additional recommendations included fine tuning certain operational issues, expanding financial planning, and taking a more strategic marketing approach. “The CRT has given us valuable insights into our business and a strategic growth model to take our company to the next level,” said Wiest. “I can't thank them enough.”

Key Challenges:	Recommendations:	Results:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending more time looking at the big picture and developing a long range plan</li> <li>• Fine tuning operations – backfill infrastructure to meet current and future demands</li> <li>• Protecting the companies intellectual property – knowledge, employees and strategic relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement HR policies and procedures</li> <li>• Create incentives for key employees</li> <li>• Communicate with sales force more frequently</li> <li>• Secure confidentiality, non-compete and distribution agreements</li> <li>• Obtain trademark protection of in-house brands</li> <li>• Put additional financial controls in place</li> <li>• Develop a marketing communications plan and take a more formal approach to sales and marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outsourced HR which has resulted in more professional management of key employee issues</li> <li>• Implemented internet-based video conferencing for frequent face-to-face sales meetings and individual meetings</li> <li>• Hired new outside company attorney and secured legal agreements from employees and partners</li> <li>• Developed a marketing communications plan and working on a long range plan</li> <li>• Revenue has grown from \$6 million in 2005 to projected sales of \$8.5- 9.0 million in 2007</li> </ul>