

From Hesitation to Structured Growth:

Supporting an Industrial SME through Governance, Management and Digital Transformation

Real life use case by Paul Schergen, Sven Mertes, Tom Hermes; February 2026



Client context

Between 2024 and 2025, TrAxxion supported a metal manufacturing SME operating in the Greater Region. The company had a solid commercial presence and a turnover of approximately €3 million, but its performance remained unstable. Despite strong technical expertise explaining a healthy order inflow, profitability fluctuated significantly from month to month and cash flow was frequently under pressure.

Like many industrial SMEs, the company did not suffer from a lack of activity — it suffered from a lack of structure.

Production planning was informal, key performance indicators were not monitored, administrative processes were largely manual and responsibilities across functions were not clearly defined. During certain periods, unproductive time exceeded 30%, while the break-even point was not clearly understood. Management decisions were therefore mainly reactive rather than based on measurable data.

The challenge was not to change the company's technical know-how, which was strong, but to professionalize the way the organization was governed and managed.

TrAxxion's approach

TrAxxion intervened through an integrated mission combining governance advisory, operational management support and targeted digitalization. Rather than applying a generic transformation program, the work focused on aligning management practices with the company's industrial reality and culture.

1. Structuring governance and management

The first step was clarifying how the company was led.

Roles and responsibilities were redefined, missing key functions were identified and management routines were introduced. The preparation of a pro-

duction manager recruitment was structured and decision processes were formalized. This created managerial ownership inside the company instead of dependency on a few individuals.

The objective was simple: transform a founder-centric organization into a managed organization while preserving its entrepreneurial DNA.

2. Introducing performance steering

A structured financial and operational steering system was implemented.

Monthly dashboards were introduced, allowing management to monitor operating result, margins and workload visibility. For the first time, the company could clearly understand its break-even point and anticipate financial tensions instead of discovering them after the fact.

This changed the nature of management discussions: opinions were progressively replaced by facts.

3. Optimizing operational processes

TrAxxion then worked directly with operational teams.

The full "order-to-cash" process — from quotation to study, manufacturing, installation and invoicing — was formalized. A weekly workshop planning process was introduced, productive and non-productive hours were tracked per employee and quality control checkpoints were implemented in both fabrication and installation.

Project managers were progressively empowered and made accountable for their projects' performance.

The result was not only improved productivity, but improved collaboration between workshop, project management and administration.

4. Strengthening commercial visibility

Commercial steering was reinforced through systematic monitoring of quotations, conversion rates and order backlog. The company began managing its activity pipeline proactively and targeted a stable backlog equivalent to three months of activity.

This brought predictability to an activity that had previously been highly volatile.

5. Digitalizing administrative processes

Digitalization focused on concrete operational pain points rather than technology for its own sake.

Bank interfaces were automated, accounting imports structured, electronic invoicing (XML) implemented and client follow-ups optimized. Administrative workload was reduced by approximately 20 hours per month, allowing staff to focus on value-creating activities.

Importantly, digitalization only followed once processes were clarified — ensuring tools supported the organization instead of complicating it.

Results and impact

Within a year, the company's performance stabilized significantly.

Operational planning improved, management gained clear visibility on monthly profitability and the operating result returned to positive levels. Financial transparency increased and strategic decisions became data-driven. The order pipeline exceeded €12 million in annual quotations and activity became predictable.

The reduction of unproductive time and the improved coordination between teams strengthened both efficiency and working conditions.

But the most meaningful change was cultural.

The company moved from a reactive organization to a structured, accountable and collaborative management model. Middle managers became involved in decision-making, employees understood how their work contributed to performance and management discussions became constructive rather than urgent.

Impact beyond the company

For an industrial SME, stabilizing operations has broader consequences.

By securing its profitability and improving organization, the company reinforced employment stability, improved working conditions and strengthened its capacity to invest locally. Reliable planning also reduced operational stress on teams and subcontractors. This is where governance and operational consulting create regional impact: sustainable companies create sustainable jobs.



Key lessons

This mission confirmed several recurring realities in industrial SMEs:

- Performance issues are rarely technical — they are organizational.
- Profitability depends more on steering than on turnover.
- Digitalization only works when processes are first clarified.
- Governance directly influences operational efficiency.

Conclusion

This project illustrates TrAxxion's conviction: transformation does not require disrupting a company's identity. It requires structuring how it is led and how decisions are taken.

By combining governance expertise, operational management support and pragmatic digitalization, TrAxxion helped this industrial SME regain stability, visibility and growth capacity.

Consulting is not about theoretical recommendations. It is about equipping organizations with practical tools, measurable improvements and lasting management capabilities.

For companies in the Greater Region facing growth pains or performance volatility, structured governance and hands-on operational support can become a decisive strategic lever.

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