

## Company Profile

Cross Country Vending  
Kankakee, Illinois

Vending services - commercial  
Two employees

## Challenge:

Soon after launching their business, Joe and Bev Johnson recognized the need for strategic planning and infrastructure development.

## Solution:

By using NAVIGATE™, Change Preparation Activity, new business owners, Joe and Bev Johnson, are able to look at the many activities they need to do to run a profitable, well-run business while still working through the day-to-day tasks.

## Results:

*“We knew what to do day to day, but how to roll these activities together with long-term activities and not get overwhelmed was very difficult for us. NAVIGATE made it clear and we were not overwhelmed.”*

Bev Johnson, Co-Owner  
Cross Country Vending

## Start-Up Vending Business Uses Strategic Planning to Improve Customer Service

Joe Johnson started his career in vending services as a driver for a large, multinational vending firm, servicing clients in the Chicago area.

“Unfortunately, I was driving over 100 miles to deliver one case of coffee when it could have gone on the company’s water truck that was headed to the same client site that same day with cases and cases of water,” Joe recalls.

When the opportunity to buy a 10-customer route from a retiring business owner presented itself, Joe and his wife, Bev, jumped at the chance. Their goal was to build a small, profitable vending company that would attract and retain customers by providing superior customer service. The Johnsons also planned to make better route decisions to maximize efficiency and profitability. With these objectives in mind, Cross Country Vending was launched.

Being new business owners, the Johnsons at first approached tasks based on necessity and what they felt made sense in general, but soon they became overwhelmed by all of the things that demanded their attention. “We knew what to do day to day,” Bev says. “But how to roll these actions together with long-term activities and not get overwhelmed was very difficult for us.” As a result, the Johnsons focused on day-to-day priorities and only tackled more strategic initiatives when they became critical to accomplishing their daily objectives.



*Joe Johnson, Co-Owner of Cross Country Vending, stocks his delivery van with a variety of products to meet the varied buying habits of his customers*

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# Business Improvement Case Study

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Soon after this, the Johnsons enlisted the services of Innovative Management Tools to facilitate a strategic planning session that would help them develop a blueprint for success, based on their revenue and profit goals. “It was obvious to us that we needed somebody to help us see the big picture and also recognize how all of the business decisions and activities need to support our goals,” Bev says.

NAVIGATE helped the Johnsons put everything into perspective. After establishing their goals, they were then able to break down their various jobs into “departments.” Next, they applied NAVIGATE’s five key elements for strategic planning success to help them determine what needed to be done to achieve a successful, profitable business.

“Even though we had over 100 items to consider, the way things were categorized using NAVIGATE made it clear and not at all overwhelming,” Joe explains. “The activity broke the mountain of ideas down into chunks that we could manage, creating forward progress and a plan for the future.”

Although Cross Country Vending is still relatively new, Joe and Bev feel their company is no longer in danger of becoming another new business failure statistic. The Johnsons have customers, a vision and a plan, and they are now able to take the numerous tasks that go with running a business and break them up into manageable pieces, which will help contribute to their long-term success.