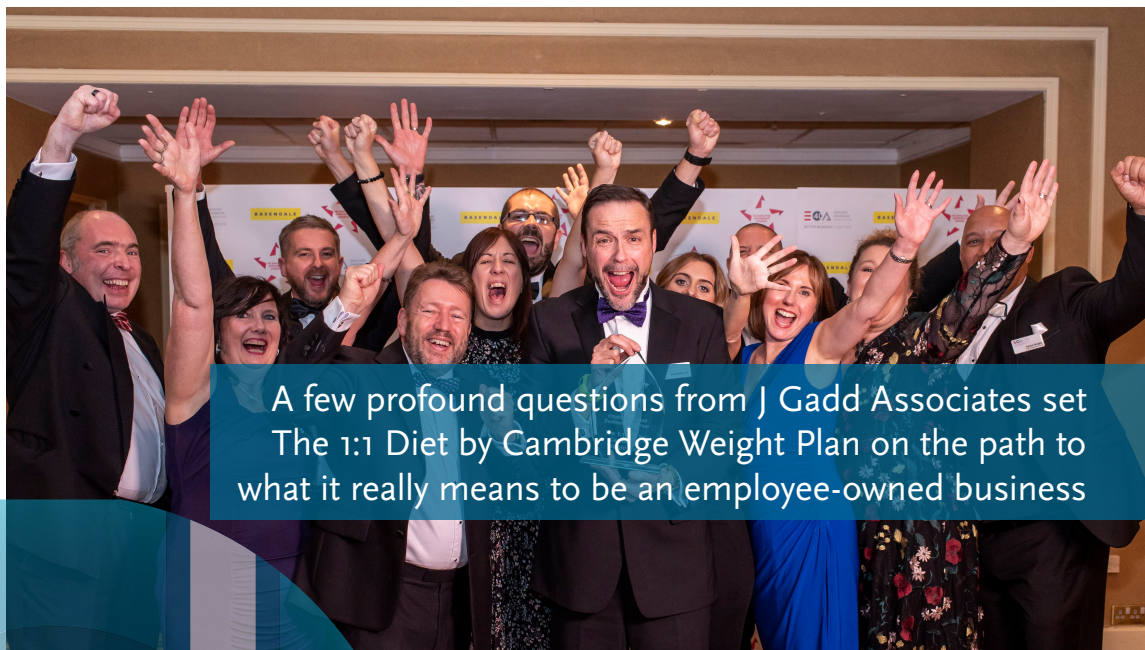




J GADD  
ASSOCIATES



A few profound questions from J Gadd Associates set The 1:1 Diet by Cambridge Weight Plan on the path to what it really means to be an employee-owned business

WORKING TOGETHER

THE 1:1 DIET

by Cambridge Weight Plan®



“I had a worry about employee-ownership being some kind of socialist workers’ Utopian fantasy.”

“I was conscious that I, and the board, needed to be seen to be running the business and making decisions, and J Gadd Associates helped me to see that, actually, this was OK.”

**Chris McDermott, MD of The 1:1 Diet by Cambridge Weight Plan, explains how its relationship with J Gadd Associates set the initial course which culminated in the diet food company being named Employee Ownership Association (EOA) Business of the Year in 2019**

### We need a steer

“The 1:1 Diet became 100% employee-owned at the end of 2014 and at the same time I became Managing Director. We wanted to take a temperature gauge on how people in the business perceived employee-ownership to give us a steer on what we needed to do next – and that led to us working with J Gadd Associates. We were interested in their background at the John Lewis Partnership and how they spoke about employee-ownership.

We liked their candour that no-one had all the answers to employee-ownership; we were not in a unique position by grappling with this – but they had ideas about how we could move forward. The perception study was the main piece of work they did for us through a series of workshops. The fact they spoke to every single employee – which was around 200 people in 2015, from directors through to the 2am night shift – was testament to how good it was.”

### Talking about feelings

“The workshops asked questions I had never been asked before about ownership and value; why we value certain things and the link to owning them. J Gadd Associates’ skill was in creating and fostering an environment in which we were happy to talk about our feelings. Overlaying that with the business and employee-ownership, and how we felt about it, built a picture that was fascinating. It got us thinking and there were some extraordinary answers that, to this day, we still talk about.”

“It was challenging, though, to expose feelings and it was really quite a profound moment. The perception workshops were crafted to have no operational impact, which was important, and they raised expectations about employee-ownership, just because we were talking about it.”

### The catalyst for change

“The perception study was the catalyst to a load of stuff we have done since. A number of things were built into our strategy and J Gadd Associates helped us to determine our rights, roles and responsibilities, which in time would become what we call our Core Values. We take every opportunity now to talk about ownership in the real sense and the study gave us permission to change the way we communicate.”

“We needed to unlearn habits that had grown and developed, and that continues to this day. It took us a while to get going but, for example, we created our Voice Groups because we recognised that we needed the ability for everyone to have a voice in the business.”

### They nailed it

“J Gadd Associates are practical, reassuring people. They were good at taking the temperature of the business and were the beginning of the formalisation part of us becoming truly employee-owned. Philippa, who I had the most contact with, has a great style and approach. She was thoughtful and insightful. Communication was done smartly, so we got it. There was no ambiguity. They nailed succinctly the challenges and provided recommendations on how to move forward.”

“It was the first time we had done anything around employee-ownership with people from outside the business and the external critique was just what we needed. It gave us the roadmap for where we needed to go and that journey eventually led us to being named EOA Business of the Year in 2019.”

### JGA roles



**Improve communication & collaboration**



**Engagement: supporting internal and external comms**



**Transition Support**

**THE 1:1 DIET**  
by Cambridge Weight Plan®

## Summary

J Gadd Associates (JGA) began working with The 1:1 Diet by Cambridge Weight Plan in 2015 after the business had become 100% employee-owned.

A series of perception study workshops were held to help every employee to have a shared understanding of employee-ownership, and then a set of recommendations was developed to support and help the business to embrace employee-ownership and its benefits.

### About The 1:1 Diet by Cambridge Weight Plan

The 1:1 Diet, originally known as The Cambridge Diet, is a diet food manufacturing business that was launched in the UK in 1984 and has helped thousands of people worldwide to lose weight and live healthier, happier lives. It became employee-owned in 2009, 100% employee owned in 2014 and was named EOA Business of the Year in 2019 for its commitment to empowering employees. It is based in Corby, Northamptonshire.

Contact us to explore how J Gadd Associates can help you:

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