

## Master Technology Group: Wired for Growth

*Master Technology Group (MTG) designs and installs electrical and low-voltage infrastructure for commercial clients' data, security and high-end audiovisual systems. Ryan Blundell launched the Minneapolis-based company in 2002 and has grown it to 110 employees and \$26 million in revenue. In December 2013 MTG entered the Hennepin-Carver-Anoka-Ramsey-Scott Economic Gardening Program, which enabled Blundell to work with the National Center for Economic Gardening's National Strategic Research Team (NSRT). In addition, Blundell is participating in two other components of the Economic Gardening® program: quarterly CEO forums and a monthly PeerSpectives roundtable.*

“The Economic Gardening opportunity was particularly timely because I’ve been challenged how to take MTG to the next level,” says Blundell.

Although MTG grew quickly during its first 10 years, recent revenue growth had been less dramatic. “We were still growing, but not at the same pace,” he explains. “And because we had gotten so big, so fast, the complexities of the business became more difficult to manage.”

One of Blundell’s key takeaways from participating in a PeerSpectives roundtable has been embracing Traction, Gino Wickman’s entrepreneurial operating system. “It’s changed everything for us,” says Blundell, who is now using the Traction system to restructure MTG. For many years, MTG operated as two divisions: a regional unit that specialized in technology and low-voltage systems, and a national unit with an expanded portfolio that included electrical services. Now Blundell is merging these divisions — a move that will boost both efficiency and quality.

Other roundtable members also use the Traction system. “Hearing their experiences gave me the initial confidence that it works,” Blundell says. “We’re all at different stages of implementation, but sharing our progress on a monthly basis is really powerful.”

Blundell has belonged to other roundtable groups, but says PeerSpectives is more relevant because all members are second-stage entrepreneurs. “I have a lot more in common with this group,” Blundell says. “They’re in the same place I am.”

In addition to solving business challenges, both the roundtable and the quarterly CEO forums provide just-in-time introduction to resources, Blundell says. “If you’re having problems, chances are someone



Ryan Blundell, founder of Master Technology Group in Minneapolis.

## Case study: Master Technology Group

in the group knows someone that can help.” He also appreciates the opportunity to help other business leaders by sharing his successes and setbacks. “At MTG, we don’t see ourselves as a wiring company. That’s what we do, of course, but what really drives us is to help people — both internally and externally.”

On the research side of his Economic Gardening engagement, Blundell began working with the NSRT in December 2013. “I was impressed how quickly the team leader was able to grasp what we did and what our challenges might be,” he says. “She was very efficient with my time.”

The NSRT has been working with Blundell in three key areas:

- Website analysis — including recommendations for how to increase visibility in search-engine rankings.
- Industry trends — providing information on how retailers (a key market for MTG) are budgeting dollars for technology and store updates.
- Customer prospects — delivering a list of more than 150 national retail companies with contact information, along with detailed overviews of companies believed to be the best fit.

Up to now, MTG has been able to grow on referrals and repeat business. “But to get to the next level, we recognize the need to build a sales and marketing effort,” Blundell says.

He believes MTG will generate \$37 million in revenue by 2016 and hit the \$60-million mark by 2020. And even with new efficiencies realized from the company’s restructuring, Blundell expects to add more than a dozen new jobs in the next two years.

“Economic Gardening is a fantastic vehicle for helping companies who are in growth mode,” Blundell says. “It’s one of the best models I’ve seen to stimulate job creation. The forums, roundtables and research team all work together.”



*The National Center for Economic Gardening is a partnership between the Edward Lowe Foundation and Chris Gibbons. NCEG delivers Economic Gardening services and maintains national standards in training and certification for both regional and state networks. For more info, visit [www.edwardlowe.org](http://www.edwardlowe.org).*

*The Edward Lowe Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs, which are delivered through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs).*