



**Customer**

Underground Archives

**Industry**

Information Management  
& Storage

**Location**

Brady's Bend, Pennsylvania

**Engagement**

Management Skills Alignment

**About This Engagement**

As companies grow and change, key personnel are often moved to different areas of the company to expeditiously fill new and changing business requirements. However, after a number of changes and iterations, it can be difficult to recognize the employee's original skill set, strengths, and interests. From breakdowns in operations to frustrations at the individual level, a misalignment of key personnel can undermine the success of the organization, and is widely believed to be a main contributor to staff turnover. If you suspect that your organization is suffering the ill-effects of a management skills misalignment, contact Step 1 to find out how they can help.

## **Underground Archives Strengthens Its Management Team with Step1**

Underground Archives has built an impressive information management business by combining logistics and storage expertise with exceptional customer service and attention. With two underground storage facilities located in the Greater Pittsburgh region, the company offers a broad array of services to help its clients reduce their risk and costs by securely storing critical items and information off-site. Underground Archives has clients across a diverse set of industries; all of which share the common goal of securing their valuable business assets.

Today Underground Archives is experiencing significant growth. To ensure that the company is well positioned to meet the demands of its growing business, the owners brought in Step 1 Management Services to help maximize the performance of the company's operational management team.

### **Getting Started**

Underground Archives enlisted Step 1 to provide its management training services to the company's management team with the aim of strengthening the leadership and decision-making skills of the company's new and veteran managers. As Step 1 became more familiar with Underground Archives, and vice-versa, the decision was made to expand the scope of the service engagement to include a Management Skills Alignment project, which would ultimately identify opportunities for improving the company's overall operations by ensuring that the right people were performing the right functions for this growing business.

"What started out as a training and strengthening exercise quickly grew into something much more strategic and imperative," said Daniel Bruce president and owner of Underground Archives. "The Step 1 training courses helped us to realize that we were not leveraging all of the unique strengths of our key people, and consequently we were experiencing frustrations at the both the individual and organizational level. But recognizing that we weren't firing at 100% on all cylinders, and knowing how to get to 100% are two very different things. Fortunately Step 1 was able to seamlessly transition the focus of its services to help us address the more fundamental issue of how best to align our management team in order to improve the overall performance of the company."

### **The Service Engagement**

Senior leadership at Underground Archives suspected that their potential management alignment issues were the result of the company's rapid growth rate, during which time experienced and results-oriented people were moved into new positions in order to quickly meet the company's changing requirements.

*“The best way for me to describe the value of this engagement is that by making just a few - but critical - personnel changes, we were able to achieve a marked improvement in our already-strong operations. With Step 1’s help, I feel confident that we now have the right management team in place to successfully pursue our next phase of growth.”*

**Daniel Bruce**  
Owner & President  
Underground Archives

### About Step 1

Step 1 Management Services helps companies to grow by reconnecting them with their core competencies and by training and mentoring their new managers for success. Step 1 has expertise in strategic business planning, management training and mentoring, business operations analysis and strategic technology planning. Jeff Canter, President of Step 1, has over 25 years of experience in enabling businesses to realize more of their full potential. Jeff applies pragmatic, real world experience to solve tough business problems.



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The Step 1 Management Skills Alignment service was delivered to Underground Archives to determine if a realignment of skills and responsibilities would produce improved results. The scope of the service comprised of four main components:

- ◆ Management Aptitude Profiling
- ◆ Job Functions and Skills Requirements Review
- ◆ Function & Aptitude Matrix Development
- ◆ Realignment Consulting & Coaching

Step 1 first developed a management aptitude profile for key members of the management team in order to identify their strengths, weaknesses, interests, likes, and dislikes. Next was a review of the departmental structures, objectives, job functions and the skills required to fulfill each management function. The results of the aptitude profiles were subsequently overlaid onto the functional matrix to determine whether or not these skills were in fact possessed by the person currently leading that functional area. This detailed skills alignment review identified opportunities for improvement across Underground Archive’s management team by moving targeted managers to different function areas in order to leverage their unique strengths. Additionally, Step 1 provided realignment consulting services to Underground Archives to assist the company in implementing the necessary personnel and organizational changes, along with management coaching to help the realigned managers more easily transition into their new roles.

### The Results

“It’s only been a few months since the completion of the management realignment project with Step 1 and we’re already experiencing very promising improvements,” said Bruce. “The best way for me to describe the value of this engagement is that by making just a few - but critical - organizational changes, we were able to achieve a marked improvement in our already-strong operations. With Step 1’s help, I feel confident that we now have the right management team in place to successfully pursue our next phase of growth.”

In addition to helping the organization to achieve improved results, Step 1’s realignment services also provided improved job satisfaction to several of the company’s valuable managers. Retaining valued and proven employees, particularly managers, is important to all businesses, but particularly for service-oriented businesses like Underground Archives. By making the structural changes necessary to support the company’s continued growth, the owners also created a positive change for the managers that were moved to areas better suited to their strengths and interests. The shift was a positive move for the company, its managers, and its customers.

“We absolutely could not have done this without the help of Step 1,” added Bruce. “Although we instinctively knew things weren’t exactly as we wanted them, it was difficult to evaluate the environment that we lived in day-in-day-out.

“It was essential to bring in an outside and objective perspective to help us see how we could better leverage the strengths of our management team, and in the process, help our managers to realize greater satisfaction in the new roles that are better suited to their skills. The changes weren’t necessarily easy, but they were necessary. Step 1’s transition coaching was an important contributor to the project’s success; it helped us to embrace the changes. We look forward to our ongoing relationship with Step 1 to help us stay on track as we continue to grow the business and expand the ranks of our management team,” concluded Bruce.