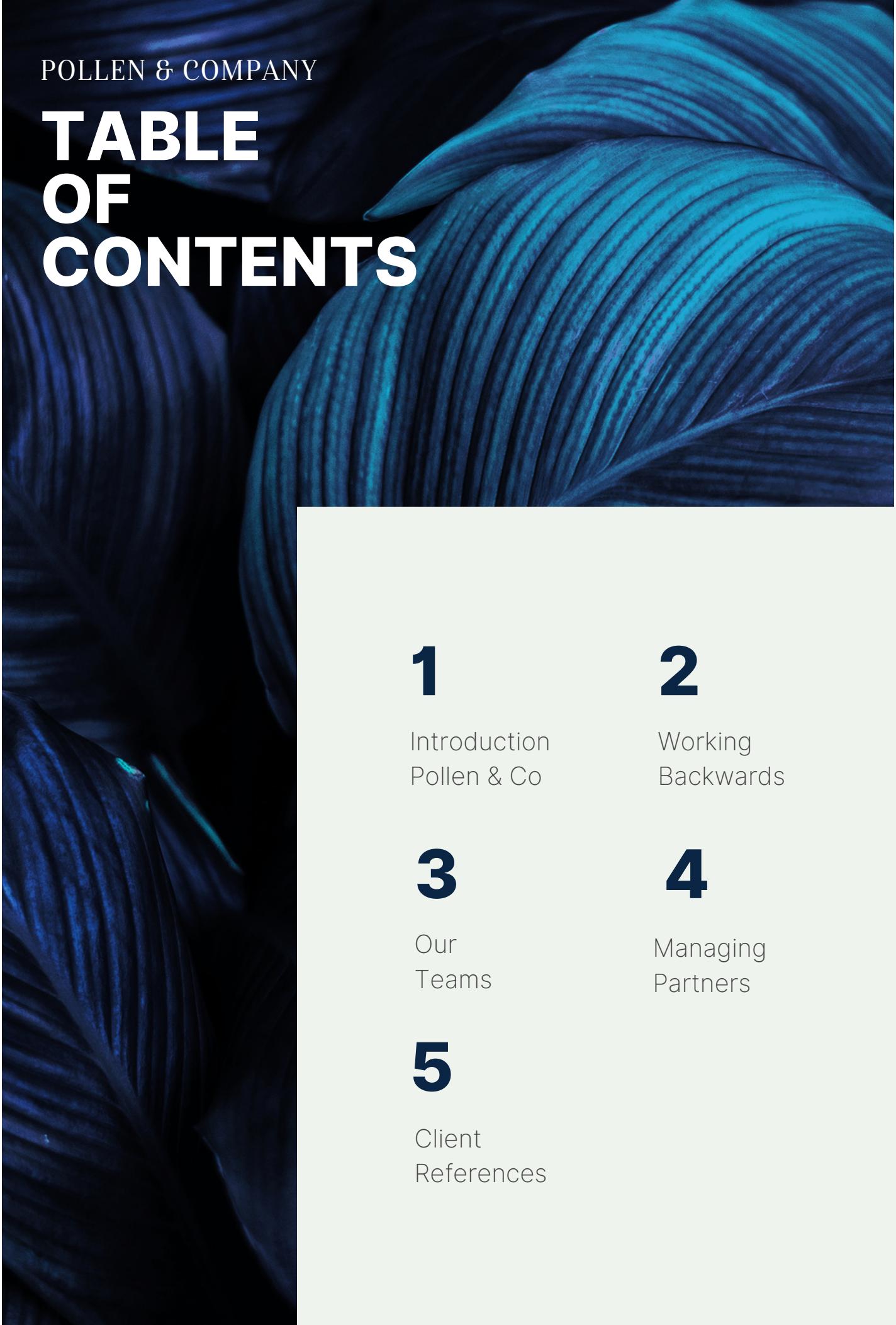


POLLEN & COMPANY

BUILD BEYOND YOURSELF

2022-2023



POLLEN & COMPANY

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Pollen & Company

Value Creation Specialists

Based in Europe, Pollen & Company is a boutique advisory firm servicing the growth of private equity and venture capital portfolios through a combination of strategy, talent and deal origination.

We are quickly building a reputation for working with ambitious growth companies to sharpen strategies, strengthen value propositions, optimise talent and deliver organisational change. Our methodology enables companies to grow faster and with more stability and allows investors to deploy capital with more confidence.

As proven operators ourselves, we adopt a systematic, structured and human approach in our value delivery to investors and companies alike. We work from future equity events to focus the customer narrative, define the employee value proposition and harness an organisation's strengths. With this, we create space and carefully support the reduction of complexity, evaluating the impact of company activities in the context of revenue, ebitda and strategy.

Our proposition to the teams we work with is:

- Work backwards from the future to determine how best to operate (strategy)
- Give your culture and people a clear narrative to follow (talent and employer brand)
- Understand where to focus and what to stop doing (business development)
- Process, reporting and structure will create a business and reduce KPR (operations and finance)

To Pollen, value creation is not a process of writing things on pieces of paper; it is a process of energising management teams to review and articulate how they deliver value to their customers and stakeholders now and in the future. Identifying the tools needed during the different phases of scaling to consistently and continually:

- Pinpoint the company's existing and emerging core value proposition
- Build narratives and communication that captivate and align complex stakeholders
- Establish razor sharp focus on current operational strengths to accelerate growth
- Provide clear line of sight on emerging business models to sustain growth

Ultimately, repeatable value to the markets can be achieved when value, capability and talent are aligned. It is this critical combination activity that cuts through the rhetoric straight to tangible action. We support management teams until a value has been understood and operationalised.

Our team bring a unique combination of experience, skill and integrity to the table - we empower management teams to focus on sustainable growth.





POLLEN & COMPANY

WORKING BACKWARDS

The principal advantage in adopting the working backwards method is that it effectively focuses a leadership team on their company value proposition. The question becomes "why would someone invest in our company or buy our product and services? ... what do they see at the end-game?".

Successful leaders understand that working backwards is a key element of exit preparation as it helps to constantly hone a well-developed, well-articulated, and evidence-backed view of why an asset represents an exciting investment opportunity.

Building a company that focuses on end-state value in this way creates a long term strategic advantage over competitors, one which is not reliant on key individuals or customers. Add to this a repeatable, predictable and differentiated service offering and every leadership team will maximise equity, improve exit multiples and ensure an ease of transition and integration into new ownership or public markets.

Too often, we see companies scrambling to retrofit their decision making to fit a value-add narrative and more often than not they are squeezed during the acquisition process or their deal falls off completely. Conversely where the work has been done, and the strategy correctly detailed and executed on, we see leaders relax, pick and choose who they believe will provide the best partner for the next phase of their growth. In addition, the leadership can be agile without being inconsistent; responding to opportunity or challenge becomes focused and defensible because they are referenced to a clear narrative direction.

Working backwards from the goal is the most powerful way to guarantee the company is thinking effectively and, throughout the time period, staying true to the agreed course.





Value Creation

Our value creation team believe you cannot be everything to everyone. We work with our clients to make choices and trade-offs and we aim to be deliberate about choosing to be different. We develop the organisation and leave the management team up-skilled in prioritisation and execution.

Our team is focused on execution and the ability to mesh strategy with reality, align people with goals, and achieve the promised results.

Origination

We work with our clients to tilt the odds of a successful investment in their favour - long before a deal is on the table.

Even though nearly all leaders and their board members understand that an equity event (M&A or IPO) is the most common destiny of a successful business, they rarely harness the strength of the group in the lead up to that. Instead, they fail to prepare for and acknowledge the level of change needed to operate in the future. As a result, they either miss out on significant strategic opportunities or end up with a suboptimal outcome.



Talent

You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world but it requires people to make the dream a reality. For this reason, our talent teams act as business partners, recruiting people who become the foundations of high-performing management teams.

Our exposure to deal making and value creation gives our talent team a competitive edge and broader network than our competitors.





Pollen & Company

Managing Partners



✉️ omar@wearepollen.com

Omar Habbal

Omar has worked in brand, talent and acquisition strategies for 10 years. He has built and exited the London's #1 Small Company to work for and worked on several FTSE100 transformation projects.

Omar holds an MBA from the University of Cambridge and received the Primavera Prize for Excellence in Operational Management.



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Caroline Birkle

Caroline has worked in content, data and professional media for 20 years. She has worked on multiple M&A projects and integrations including large scale transformations and a successful NYSE float.

Caroline holds an MBA from the University of Cambridge, studied in the USA, UK and France and speaks German, French and English.



Client References

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Our exit
would not
have been
possible
without the
team at
Pollen

PHIN NAUGHTON,
CEO & FOUNDER
AT TOPSCORE



TopScore is a SaaS business who worked with Pollen to develop their investment thesis, crystallise their narrative and secure the right acquisition.

In 2022, Pollen redeveloped the value proposition and sourced a series of buyers, culminating in a 9x EBITDA acquisition in the UK.

Pollen has since been retained to rebuild the commercial function post acquisition.

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Asend is an education and tuition provider in the UK. Pollen has worked with Asend to

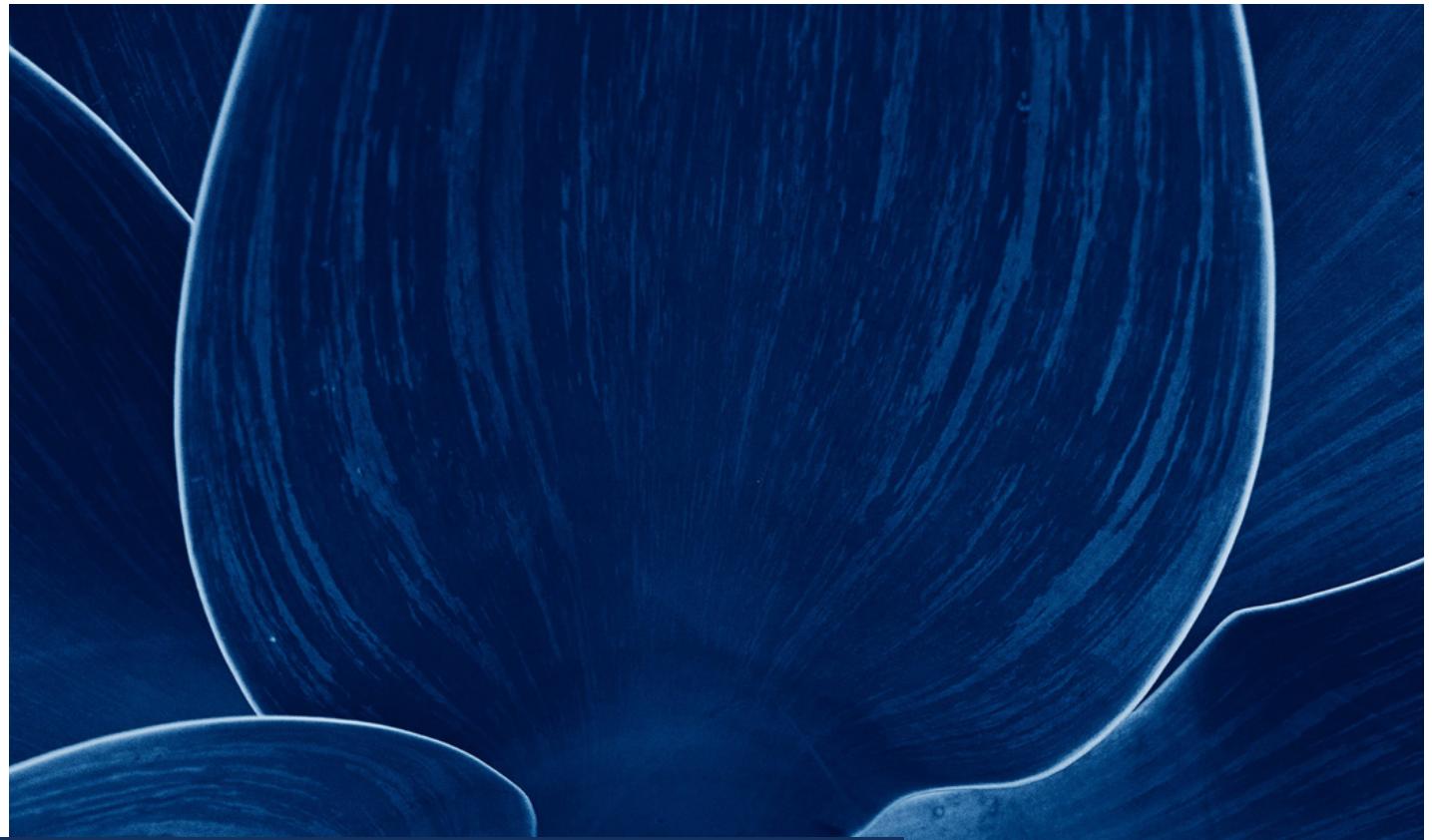
- Recreate the organisational design for scale
- Design a new business strategy
- Write an investment thesis and source a buyer

To date, Asend has seen a rapid increase in new business, created a scalable operating model and received several interested buyer opportunities.

We have the foundations and clarity of narrative to scale rapidly

BARBARA BALL,
CEO AND FOUNDER
AT ASEND





POLLEN & COMPANY

VALUE CREATORS

2022-2023