



## Case Study – The Nerderly

**Industry:** Web and mobile development partners behind the engineering and implementation of interactive projects nationwide

**Pain Points:** fast-track growth, loss of president, transition to organizational mastery

### The Challenge:

In November 2010, The Bailey Group’s Martha Carlson started attending Thursday executive committee meetings at The Nerderly. She had provided executive coaching for the company’s leadership team over the previous four years, helping them navigate three separate growth phases and the transition of technical leaders to managerial masters.

While The Nerderly’s success created new opportunities, success also created new challenges for company leaders who care as much about maintaining company culture as they care about making money. With its growth, the company needed to effectively match capacity to sales.

Through individual and team coaching, The Bailey Group helped The Nerderly set a reasonable pace for growth and continue its image as one of the best places to work in Minnesota. Policies and procedures that used to fit on the back of a napkin were formalized for a larger company. Their roster of nerds grew as well as profits.

Then the unthinkable happened. The founding partner/president was killed in a plane crash.

### The Solution:

Carlson immediately contacted the executive team and let them know that she was available however they needed her. A few weeks later, CFO Mike Derheim called Carlson and said, “We need you. I don’t know how, but we need you.”

For eight or nine weeks, Carlson attended executive committee meetings to “hold the space” vacated by president Luke Bucklin. She observed interactions during the meetings and took notes, then followed up with the executives one-on-one to coach them on a common vision and new process for decision-making. She helped them pursue their vision as “the happiest place for nerds to work” and the best possible interactive development partner for its clients.

Moving into 2011, Leigh Bailey came to The Nerderly to support additional team coaching. He conducted a team diagnostic to assess what was working and not working and to set goals for the team.

Coaching moved to the next tier of leaders to help them discover their purpose within the company vision, allowing the executive team to evolve from production-focused managers to full-time organizational leaders.

## The Results:

During a challenging time when many companies might fall apart, The Nerdery sustained growth. They are facilitating cross-departmental cooperation, maintaining productivity and developing a new crop of high potential leaders. In 2011, The Nerdery ranked #1 for the second consecutive year on the Best Places to Work list published by Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal and received the Emerging Business of the Year Award through The Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The Nerdery has continued to focus on what it does best — developing and implementing state-of-the-art interactive media projects — while partnering with hundreds of ad agencies and other industry leaders to support clients as diverse as 3M to Calvin Klein.

## Final Thoughts:

“As nerds, we make data-driven decisions, but we also stick to our founding belief that if we do the right thing, things will work out – a simple truth not always so simple,” said Nerdery CEO Mike Derheim. “The Bailey Group has been instrumental in guiding our distributed leadership model of empowering emerging leaders to make decisions that keep The Nerdery moving forward – even after the loss of an irreplaceable friend and leader like Luke. The Bailey Group helped us through the hardest times our company will ever go through. Before his tragic death, Luke challenged all of his colleagues to be his Co-Presidents, and today our strength in numbers counts a few hundred living legacies who personify what Co-President means to us.”

The Nerdery utilized the following services lines The Bailey Group offers:

- Results-Based Leadership Development
- Roadmaps to Build and Retain Great People
- Align and Engage People to Execute Strategy