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Accelerator Case Study

Black Swan Cyber Security

Sector: IT **Size:** Micro **Location:** Chesterfield **Turnover:** £40k

About the business

Bitz 'n' PC'z Ltd t/a Black Swan Cyber Security was started in February 2006 by Kevin Walker providing IT support services to schools and other educational organisations in and around Chesterfield. Today the business supports SMEs and not-for-profits with all kinds of cybersecurity solutions.

Challenges faced

The business faced several challenges. The market for IT support/ managed services to schools is shrinking due to government policy changes. By 2030 all independently maintained schools need to join a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Most of these MATs and other education providers (universities/colleges) are large enough to have in-house IT resources so will no longer need independent IT providers.

There's been increased competition in IT support services and a growing demand for competitively priced cyber security solutions.

Finally, like most businesses, rising energy and transport costs are impacting the cost of sales and for Kevin, this impacts regular client site visits.

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Solution and Impact

Kevin heard about support from the Accelerator project via an email from Chesterfield Borough Council.

The Accelerator project is funded by Chesterfield Borough Council's share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and delivered by East Midlands Chamber. Kevin was put in touch with Business Adviser, Peter Lawrence who initially carried out a business diagnostic to see where the business was and where it wanted to be.

Peter discussed new market opportunities and a new subscription-based business model with Kevin as part of a growth plan. Black Swan Cyber Solutions successfully applied for a Growth Voucher to provide specialist consultancy support to help transition to a recurring income-based model based on subscription-licensed products. This has enabled the business to widen its reach into new and growing commercial markets, reduce costs through remote delivery and generate income revenue without employee capacity limitations.

Kevin was also supported by Peter when applying for a grant from the Council. This funding of £8,000 has resulted in the development and launch of a new subscription based eCommerce platform together with branding, messaging and multi-channel promotion to generate awareness, interest and sales.

Kevin commented: "Pete's assistance with the Growth Voucher and grant applications was instrumental in their success. Having run my business for 18 years with minimal marketing, this was a completely new area for me. The support from Pete and LikeMind Media has enabled me to identify and pursue new market niches.

"I'm excited about the launch of my new website, which I'm confident will drive significant traffic and generate the required new business."

The website and marketing development provided by Accelerator and the Council have saved Kevin approximately four weeks of work, enabling him to focus on growing his business. The quality of the website and marketing activities have also been done to a higher standard than would have been possible without support.

Kevin also took advantage of one of the fully funded workshops - 20 Simple Ways to Get your Website Generating more Business - to develop his own knowledge.

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A word from the business

"The support I received from Pete has been invaluable. His guidance throughout the process was exceptional. He truly understood my business challenges and helped me pivot into new sectors.

If you're seeking growth or want to expand your business, I wholeheartedly recommend the Accelerator project."

Kevin Walker, Managing Director

Accelerator has provided:

- 1-2-1 business advice
- Specialist marketing support via Growth Voucher
- Grant Funding and training

Impact to business:

- New income model
- New markets
- New revenue stream
- Reduced costs

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