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Accelerator Case Study

Pawstrading Ltd T/A Paws Trading

Sector: Retail & Manufacture **Location:** North East Derbyshire **Size:** Micro **Turnover:** £100k

About the business

Paws Trading is a family run business, spanning two generations, which originally started on eBay in 2004. The business specialises in high quality dog products including professional veterinary bedding (Vet Bed), training toys and natural dog treats. It focuses heavily on products for working dogs, training, agility, and active pet owners, with an emphasis on quality, functionality and value.

Paws Trading is based in Clay Cross, North East Derbyshire, selling products both online and at dog shows/events across the UK. The team of six employees, led by Managing Directors Paul and Paula Wilkinson, is supported by family and additional staff at busy times.

Challenges faced

As a small family-run business, Paw Trading faced several barriers to scaling:

- Despite there being demand for its products, it had limited visibility in new and international markets which made it difficult to reach customers outside of the UK.

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- The business was facing increased competition, particularly from lower-cost overseas alternatives, making it even harder to stand out without stronger brand visibility.
- There was also a lack of in-house skills particularly around SEO and pursuing the opportunities of international market development. The team were stuck with a variety of manual and time-intensive processes which limited capacity to focus on such growth activities.
- Finally, rising operational costs including materials, shipping and wages meant additional pressures for the senior team and cashflow.

However, breaking into new markets, such as France, and improving online discoverability, were identified as the most critical challenges that could unlock the next growth stage for Paws Trading.

Solution - Support Given

Paws Trading has been supported by East Midlands Chamber Business Adviser, Richard Crowden and the Accelerator programme. Richard has provided dedicated support to identify priority growth areas for the business including international expansion and digital visibility. The support focused on strategic planning, market development and improving productivity.

Richard also provided advice and guidance with two funding applications. Firstly a £1,600 Accelerator Growth Voucher to invest in SEO consultancy, improving its online visibility, keyword performance and search rankings. This increased organic traffic and helped Paws Trading compete more effectively in a crowded online marketplace.

The business also successfully applied for an Export Accelerator grant of £2,000 which has supported its entry into new international markets, specifically France, helping Paws Trading develop the systems, knowledge and confidence needed to sell cross-border and reach new customers.

Attendance at Accelerator workshops and access to wider Growth Hub support has also strengthened understanding of digital growth, international trade considerations and long-term scalability.

Impact - The Difference it's Made

The support has played a key role in helping Paws Trading overcome long-standing barriers to growth, delivering both immediate and long-term impact. This includes:

- **Successful entry into new markets** with France now an active and growing sales channel for Paws Trading.
- **Improved online visibility**, resulting in increased organic website traffic and a stronger brand presence.
- **Greater competitiveness,** enabling Paws Trading to compete on quality, trust and expertise, rather than on price alone.

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- **Time savings and improved efficiency,** allowing the team to focus more on product development, customer engagement and market expansion.
- **Increased confidence in scaling,** with clearer processes and a stronger digital foundation to support future growth.

The business report that the SEO work via the specialist consultancy alone has delivered ongoing benefits by improving search performance and reducing reliance on paid advertising, while international market support has opened entirely new revenue streams.

In terms of impact the improvements to internal processes, SEO performance and systems have reduced manual administration and marketing tasks by approximately 5-7 hours a week, equivalent to 260-360 hours a year.

This timesaving has allowed the team to redirect effort into higher value activities such as product development, customer engagement and entering new markets, including France.

Process efficiencies and better planning have also helped reduce unnecessary operational usage, contributing to an estimated £800-£1,200 per year in energy and operational cost savings through more efficient working practices and reduced rework.

Overall, these changes have strengthened productivity, reduced pressure on the team and created a more sustainable platform for growth.

A word from the business:

"The grants and adviser support have been pivotal in helping us overcome barriers we couldn't tackle alone.

From improving our SEO and online visibility to successfully entering the French market, the support has given us the tools, confidence and momentum to grow beyond the UK and build a more resilient business."

Paul and Paula Wilkinson, Managing Directors

Accelerator has provided:

- 1 to 1 Advice
- Export Accelerator Grant
- Growth Voucher
- Workshops

Impact to business:

- Time Savings
- Improved Efficiency
- New Market Entry
- New Processes
- Increased Competitiveness
- Reduced Costs

This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered by East Midlands Chamber.

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