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Accelerator Case Study

The Print Tavern

Sector: Manufacturing **Location:** Nottingham **Size:** Micro

About the business

The Print Tavern is a family business and was set up in 2020 by directors Michelle Chapman and Luke Plewinski. It initially began as a side project providing high quality, yet affordable tabletop miniatures and hobby models, including items for model railway enthusiasts. The couple took time off in 2023/4 for the arrival of their son, but today Michelle works on the business full time from their purpose-built garden office, supported by Luke whose day job is working within the games industry.

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Challenges faced

Overseas Competition

For the Print Tavern one of the greatest barriers to growth has been the sustained price pressures from overseas competitors, particularly low-cost market places (such as the likes of Temu). These platforms can offer significantly cheaper products, often at the expense of quality and compliance. The Print Tavern is a business that collaborates with licensed designers and adheres to regulatory requirements and are unable – and unwilling – to compete on price alone. This challenge has intensified as 3D printing technology has become more accessible, leading to an increase in new sellers entering the market without following the necessary legal or safety standards.

Rising Costs

Rising operational costs present an ongoing challenge for the Print Tavern. As a production-based business that relies heavily on electrical equipment, increases in energy prices and raw materials have had a direct impact on profitability. At the same time reduced disposable income and cost of living hikes for customers has limited its ability to pass these costs on, as their products are hobby items, and not essential purchases.

Leaving Europe and tariffs

Brexit has also had a significant impact on the Print Travern. The business was required to suspend sales to Europe and Northern Ireland (NI) - at a time when these markets were beginning to show potential – due to the difficulty of securing an affordable and reputable EU representative. As the business has grown, this has become more manageable and it is currently in the process of re-establishing compliance, with the aim of resuming EU and NI sales this spring. However, ongoing fluctuations of US tariffs have similarly created uncertainty, making it challenging to plan long-term despite consistent demand through its Etsy store.

In-house skills

Finally, the rapid evolution of digital marketing has highlighted gaps in its own in-house skills, particularly in social media marketing and SEO. With these areas changing quickly – especially due to the rise of AI-driven tools and platforms – continuous learning and adaption are essential to remain competitive.

Solution - Support Given

Director Michelle comments: “We have received extensive and highly valuable support from the Accelerator project and East Midlands Chamber, which has played a key role in helping us develop the business in line with our long-term vision. Discovering the breadth

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of support available has been instrumental in enabling us to approach growth in a more structured and informed way."

The Print Tavern successfully applied for an Accelerator Growth Voucher, with guidance from Chamber Business Adviser, Richard Crowden, which has provided access to specialist online consultancy focused on website development and SEO strategy. This support helped to establish clear SEO goals and significantly improve how Print Tavern's website is structured and presented through Shopify.

As part of this process, Michelle and Luke have developed practical skills in using essential digital tools such as Google Analytics and Google Search Console, allowing them to better understand customer behaviour and optimise online presence.

Print Tavern have received one to one adviser support from Lucy Granger at the Chamber, who has provided guidance on international trade and helped navigate the steps required to reopen its European and international markets.

Michelle has also attended Accelerator workshops including Utilising ChatGPT for your Business and is scheduled to attend a further session on the Impact of AI on Search Engine Optimisation soon. These workshops have supported the business's ongoing efforts to build in-house capability in fast-evolving digital and marketing areas.

Impact - The Difference it's Made

Michelle adds: "The support received has had a clear and measurable impact on the business, contributing to increased sales, improved revenue and greater brand awareness."

Increased Visibility
Improvements to its SEO have led to sustained growth in website traffic without the need for paid advertising, strengthening the long-term sustainability of its marketing approach. This increased visibility has also created new commercial opportunities, including collaboration with a television production company.

Improved Confidence and Processes
The support and guidance has enabled the directors to feel more confident in their products and market positioning. It has enabled them to streamline internal processes, particularly around the creation and uploading of new products, by establishing a clear and consistent workflow for product information and content.

New technology
Investment in training has also supported the adoption of new technology and ethical use

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of AI within the business. The workshop on utilising ChatGPT was especially impactful, helping Print Tavern understand how to configure AI tools to reflect the business context and reduce repetitive manual input. In addition, learning how to use advanced research techniques has supported more informed decision-making, allowing them to identify emerging trends and prioritise products with strong growth potential.

Overall, the support has strengthened competitiveness, improved efficiency, and laid the foundations for future growth, including job creation and further skills development as the business continues to scale.

In terms of efficiency gains, through an improved SEO strategy, clearer workflows and the effective use of AI tools, the business estimates a saving of approximately **8 to 12 hours per week**, that would previously have been spent on product research, manual content creation and self-led training. This time has been reallocated to core growth activities such as manufacturing, product development and strategic planning.

Finally, as a result of recent growth, supported by guidance from the Chamber, the business reached a key milestone in January 2026 when Michelle had her first salaried month.

A word from the business:

"The support we've received has been invaluable. Discovering what was available through East Midlands Chamber has genuinely transformed our business, helping us move from a side hustle to a profitable, sustainable operation. It has given us the confidence, structure and knowledge needed to make the business Michelle's primary source of income."

Michelle Chapman & Luke Plewinski, Directors

Accelerator has provided:

- 1 to 1 Business Advice
- Growth Voucher
- Workshops
- Export Advice

Impact to business:

- Increased Sales
- Greater Brand Awareness
- Upskilling
- Time Savings
- New Technology
- New Processes

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

Nottingham City Council | Claire Ward Mayor of the East Midlands | East Midlands Combined County Authority | east midlands chamber