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Accelerator Case Study



Blue Stamp Travel



Sector: Travel

Size: Micro

Location: Gedling

Turnover: £1.2m

About the business

Blue Stamp Travel specialises in tailor-made cultural tours, language courses and work experience abroad. Since its inception in 2018, it has grown to employ ten staff which has led to a recent move to new premises in Daybrook, Nottingham.

Challenges faced

Working in international markets means this Chamber member business is highly exposed to the volatility of the exchange rate. A single political event or decision on the other side of the world can have an impact on its transactions and requires the business to be continually fleet footed in how it manages its operations. At the same time, it seeks to achieve its ambition to become a more sustainable business and to develop a growing portfolio of destinations and organising more trips that inevitably require an increase in staffing capacity. Choosing when to scale up and managing staff and workload through this change takes some consideration, not least against a backdrop of global uncertainty.

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Solution – Support Given

Under the first round of the Accelerator project, the business took advantage of a premises energy audit which supported its successful application for a £10,000 decarbonisation grant from Gedling Borough Council, contributing to the purchase and installation of a solar battery and two replacement energy efficient external doors. Staff knowledge was boosted by attending the Accelerator workshops on HR Essentials and Marketing Made Easy for Tourism Businesses, and its Managing Director Steve Manderson boosted his personal network by regularly attending the Gedling Business Support Network meetings.

Most recently, the business has benefitted from an £8,000 High Growth Accelerator grant to develop a trip planning portal to efficiently manage enquiries, quotes, bookings and trip delivery. Since first implementing this platform with the support of a £2,500 Business Growth Grant from Gedling Borough Council, the business has increased capacity for delivering more packages. The High Growth Accelerator grant will develop the platform further to support work with the increased number of students and schools.

Impact – The Difference it's Made

As a result of enhancing its Group Trip web pages and refining the way it quotes, as well as the presentation of its quotes, the business expects Accelerator support to increase the number of enquiries for group travel. The business's success rate of converting enquiries to sales is already very good so it anticipates this will directly lead to increased sales. In anticipation of this, it has appointed a new member of staff.

A word from the business:

"Maintaining and developing the bespoke technology that sits behind so many of the company systems and operations is an ongoing labour of love.

The support we have received with this through the Accelerator programme has allowed us to grow and enhance our offer at a much faster rate than would otherwise be possible."

Steve Manderson, Managing Director

Accelerator has provided:

- 1-to-1 Advice
- Energy Audit
- Grants
- Workshops
- High Growth Accelerator

Impact to business:

- Upskilling workforce
- Job creation and safeguarding
- Cost savings
- Increased turnover