



Funded by
UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

Advanced Textile Solutions



Sector: Manufacturing

Location: Nottingham

Size: Micro

About the business

Sewjackie and Advanced Textile Solutions Ltd are two complementary textile businesses owned and operated by female entrepreneur, Jackie Cunningham. Each is built around the same core skills but serves very different customers (B2C and B2B respectively).

Sewjackie, an enterprise set up during Covid, allowed Jackie to develop a strong understanding of product design, quality, and what customers value in handmade accessories. Advanced Textile Solutions Ltd was born when Jackie was approached to design and make textile components for a first-of-its-kind brain-scanning helmet, positioning her as a leading specialist in this very niche area.

From that initial piece of work, the business has grown organically through equally niche opportunities such as racehorse saddle pads and technical T-shirts for online motor racing.

Challenges faced

One of the main challenges in growing both businesses has been managing capacity while maintaining quality. As a founder-led business, Jackie is responsible for all aspects of the work, from design and making to day-to-day operations. Revenue is not yet at a level to justify employing someone on a permanent basis so filling gaps in Jackie's own knowledge, in areas such as technology and marketing, is essential to maintain growth.



Nottingham
City Council

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS



East Midlands
Combined County
Authority

east
midlands
chamber



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Solution – Support Given

Jackie has taken full advantage of the Accelerator programme's fully-funded workshops and has benefitted from a Growth Voucher for website and marketing consultancy, helping her to refine her website structure, improve clarity of messaging, and think more strategically about marketing and customer journeys, rather than just promotion.

As an active member of the East Midlands Manufacturing Network, run by East Midlands Chamber, Jackie has found the forums invaluable for connecting with other manufacturers, sharing knowledge, and learning from peers facing similar challenges.

The Chamber, together with NBV Enterprise Solutions, also pointed Jackie to investment funding from Innovate UK for advanced and new machinery and support from the University of Nottingham's Create Growth programme which has further built her confidence in strategy, finance and growth planning.

Impact – The Difference it's Made

Access to workshops, mentoring, consultancy and networks has helped Jackie become more confident in running and growing her businesses, while the Innovate UK grant and new machinery have transformed production. The support received has helped reduce costs, open new sales opportunities and streamline processes (halving the time it takes to sew one of Jackie's most popular products), as well as manufacture new, more complex products. Cumulatively, the support received means Jackie is now ready to scale and confidently plan for future staff recruitment.

A word from the business:

"In the early days, I often struggled with imposter syndrome, feeling like I didn't belong or shouldn't be here. The advice, guidance, and support I've had along the way has been life-changing and has given me the confidence to grow both businesses and take them to the next level."

Jackie Cunningham, Owner

Accelerator has provided:

- Growth Voucher
- Workshops
- Referrals to grant funding

Impact to business:

- Upskilling workforce
- Cost savings
- Increased turnover

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

