



Enhanced Business Support

A programme of coaching, mentoring and support to help businesses recover and grow after the Covid-19 pandemic



Funded by
Kent County Council's
Helping Hands Scheme

Businesses & Self-Employed



INTRODUCTION

The Enhanced Business Support (EBS) Programme has been made possible through funding from the Kent County Council “Helping Hands” scheme.

Its aim was to support businesses negatively impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic to remodel, pivot and recover, leading to strong sustainable growth.

Post-pandemic, whilst many businesses have demonstrated tremendous resilience, the economic landscape around them continues to change and strategic assistance to diversify, pivot operations or seek new markets, was identified as being the most effective intervention.

Past programme experience has demonstrated that intensive support over a longer period of time has created the most impactful economic outcomes. This approach has again been reinforced through this programme’s outputs below.

The core programme provided 36 hours of 1-2-1 support per business over a 12-month period and sought to achieve the following measurable growth outcomes:

- > **Increase in employment**
- > **Growth in revenue**
- > **Capital investment in the business**

The programme was delivered in partnership with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce with local high growth coaching support provided by expert contractors including: New Level Results, Smart Business Support, UK Business Mentoring and Insight Interim & Coaching.

Each company was given one-to-one intensive business coaching every month which was mapped and tracked through a mix of coaching software and templated business plans.

The business owners were supported by a wider team of experts from across the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce network and given help with access to grant funding and business networks to promote their business.

Working with the business owners to ensure their aims, expectations and ambitions were aligned was a critical element to the programme’s success.

This alignment provides a legacy of resilience, shared vision, and collective ambition, all of which makes a meaningful contribution to the wider Kent economy.

83

local supply chains
strengthened

50%

of businesses
secured capital
investment

2443
hours
of coaching
delivered

101

businesses
supported across
Kent & Medway

£9
million

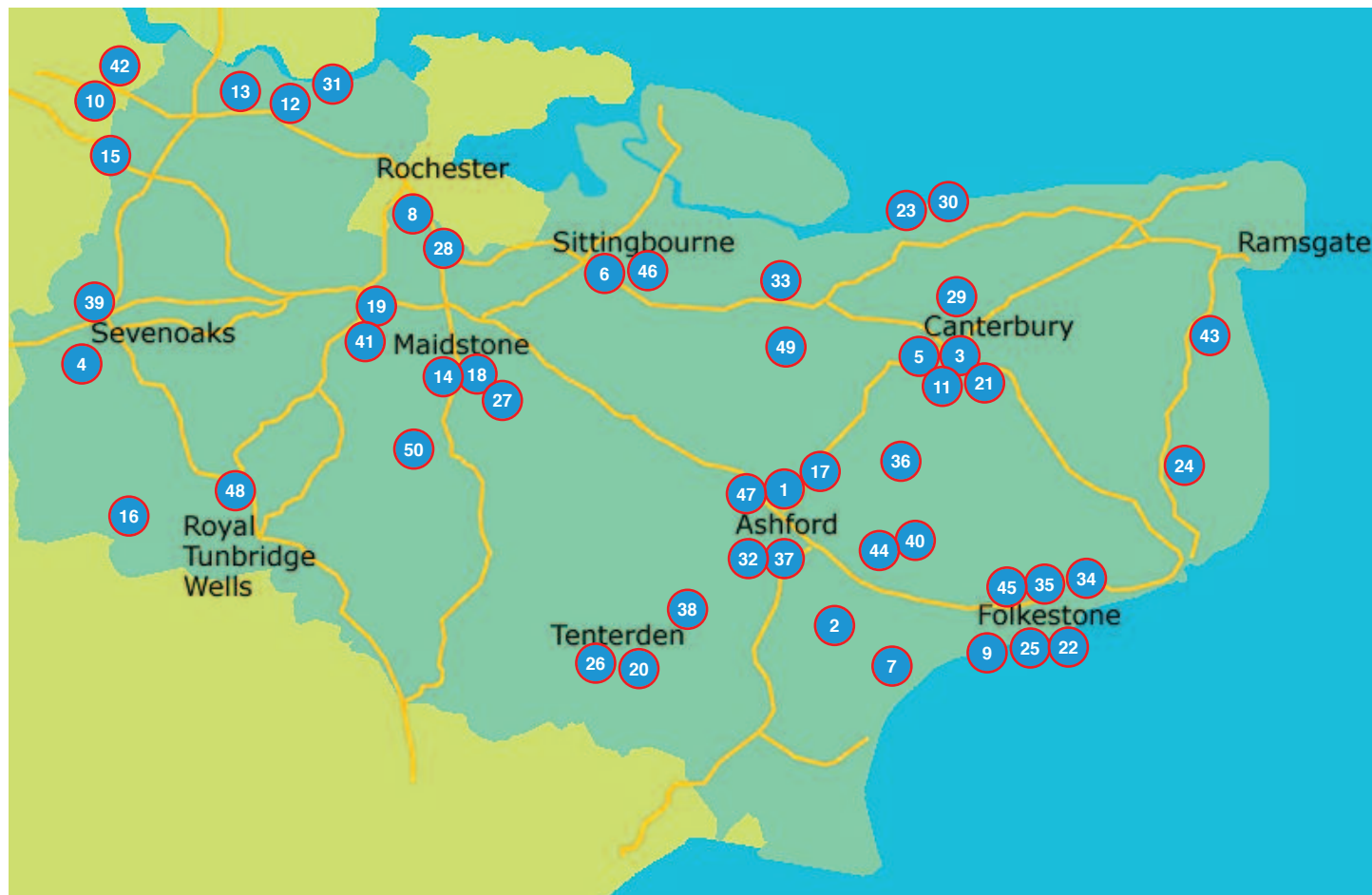
business
> revenue
growth

capital
investment <
secured

£2
million

218
JOBS
CREATED

LOCATION MAP



- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Warp Design | 18. Evans & Langford | 35. Boiler Healthcare |
| 2. Simply Ice Cream | 19. East Malling Centre | 36. The Wooden Spoon Preserving Co. |
| 3. The Foundry | 20. Nightingale Cider | 37. Centrobed |
| 4. Collier Pickard | 21. Garage Roasted | 38. Woodchurch Wines |
| 5. All Health Matters | 22. Kent Occupational Therapy | 39. Spatial Dimensions |
| 6. 3Nvision | 23. Nomad Pizza | 40. Dialogue Matters |
| 7. Romney Marsh Wools | 24. Dirtbusters | 41. Epic Media Group |
| 8. ASF Fit Out | 25. Foothouse | 42. Perfect Protect |
| 9. Sprinks Construction | 26. Potters Home Digital | 43. eXroid Technology |
| 10. TCS Computer Services | 27. Rap Interiors | 44. Lifeboat Lettings |
| 11. Lee Evans Partnership | 28. Innovation Software | 45. Everest Cash & Carry |
| 12. Leisure King | 29. Brandspace | 46. Oast Osteopathy |
| 13. Cognitas Global | 30. Margo Selby | 47. Victory Cleaning |
| 14. Wonderful Creative Agency | 31. Sambhana Care | 48. Kent Cricket Direct |
| 15. Ming Foods | 32. Squiggle Consult | 49. Style Brands |
| 16. Snelsky | 33. Kesson Physiotherapy | 50. The Imaging Centre |
| 17. Podplus | 34. Fresh Start in Education | |

warp design

Founded in 2011 by Jonathan Goodwin, Warp Design is a full-service digital design agency based at Ashford's Highpoint Business Village.

The agency's team of experienced web developers, creatives and marketing experts produce high-quality, results-driven websites, apps, email marketing campaigns and graphic design for clients across the UK and Europe.

www.warp-design.co.uk



With much of the agency's work traditionally coming from repeat business, Warp Design joined the Enhanced Business Support programme, having identified the need to secure new business.

Jonathan explained: "Our coach quickly identified a situation that is not uncommon for small businesses, which he called 'key person dependency'. Essentially, too much of the responsibility for running the business and delivering client work was falling on my shoulders. We needed to make more time available for me to concentrate on client acquisition in order to grow the business.

"Much of our early work focused on setting goals which have laid the foundations for growth and profitability. By helping us to work on our time management and prioritisation, we've improved our productivity and internal

processes, which has really started to bear fruit.

"For example, we've developed a range of new SEO and web maintenance products which we're currently market testing, together with a new client customer service portal which has streamlined our communications and really boosted efficiency.

"While the Covid-19 pandemic was initially a shock to the system, we weathered the storm well and we've picked up business in new sectors such as education, where we've delivered more than 30 websites for schools and educational trusts."

With Jonathan's father and fellow Director Paul preparing to retire soon, the scheme has also helped Warp Design to develop a comprehensive succession plan. A key development has been the appointment of two new permanent staff members, including a new Content Editor and a Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) specialist, an area of the business that Paul previously headed-up.

Paul said: "As well as freeing Jonathan from lots of the production work, the processes we've put in place have really helped us think about efficient resource planning, and to identify the sort of roles we need to create within the agency."

"The programme has been particularly valuable in helping us to set goals for the business and giving us the tools to break tasks down into manageable, achievable chunks."

“
As a result of working with our coach, we have developed a far more strategic approach to planning for the future, we know the trajectory that the agency needs to be on and we are already implementing changes to achieve our goals.”



simply ice cream

Founded by Sally Newall in 2005, Simply Ice Cream has earned its reputation as one of the UK's leading artisan ice cream producers.

The company's award-winning range of more than 30 delicious flavours of ice creams and sorbets is handmade in small batches using natural, locally sourced ingredients. From humble origins in Sally's kitchen, the range is now available at over 400 outlets across the south of England.

www.simplyicecream.co.uk



When the Covid-19 pandemic hit UK shores, Simply Ice Cream suffered a dramatic fall in its sales. With 70% of its business traditionally coming from the hospitality sector, the company quickly suffered a drop in revenue as restaurants, cafes and hotels closed during lockdown.

Sally said: "Our involvement in the Enhanced Business Support programme came at a critical time for the business. The support we have received has been invaluable in helping the company to navigate through a series of challenges, starting with the Covid pandemic, and followed by supply chain issues and rising energy costs as a result of Brexit and the war in Ukraine.

"Getting a firm handle on budgets, pricing and projections has been crucial; with costs increasing and sales falling, having a coach with a financial background was especially beneficial. During our early meetings, we set a number of objectives for the business; initially the focus was very much on survival but over time we have implemented changes which have helped us to recover, and invested in areas of the business with the potential to grow."

A key development during the programme was moving to a new 5,300 sq ft production site in Hinxhill, Ashford, which houses all production, storage and packing facilities on one site. Having outgrown the original HQ at Sally's home, the new space gives Simply Ice Cream the potential to triple production capacity, and with the launch of franchise distribution partnerships and the e-commerce platform, the company will now be able to fulfil nationwide deliveries for the first time.

Sally continued: "Our coach helped us to use the quieter moments during the pandemic to good effect, including overhauling the website and e-commerce platform to make it more customer-friendly, launching a franchise partnership scheme, re-locating to a new production site and developing several new product lines, including a vegan range of ice creams and our Simply Pawfection frozen dog treats.

"I firmly believe in the benefits of consultancy and I would encourage other businesses to explore the support that is available to them."

"The Enhanced Business Support programme has been tremendously beneficial; our coach has provided mentoring, advice and support through an incredibly difficult period, offering a vital sounding board to ask questions, bounce ideas around and test theories.

"Since the UK emerged from lockdown, we have seen some recovery in hospitality sales, while our sales to retailers and directly to consumers have helped to keep us afloat."

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I am confident that we have put firm foundations in place to support our growth, and the future for Simply Ice Cream looks bright once we have weathered this storm.

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Opened by restaurateur Jon Mills and his then business partner in 2011, The Foundry is a multi-award-winning craft brewery, distillery, restaurant and bar, located in the heart of Canterbury's historic city centre.

Jon and his team handcraft more than a dozen ales, lagers, ciders and nine spirits on-site making The Foundry one of only a handful of distilleries in the country to make all its beverages from scratch.

www.canterburybrewers-distillers.co.uk



Having relocated to newly renovated premises in 2018, Jon set about re-building the business and recouping his brewing and distillery licences, which were attached to the previous site. The advent of Covid-19 had a dramatic effect, forcing Jon to re-structure the business in order to survive.

Jon said: "My business partner retired due to ill health and my wife Jodie came into the business. Covid was terrifying as we really feared for our survival, but we got through as best we could and with hindsight the changes we've made have actually put us on the path to real, significant growth. Re-structuring the leadership has enabled us to go in new directions and try new things quickly, as our decision making is far more streamlined and responsive."

With advice and support from his coach, Jon identified areas of the business where profitability could be significantly enhanced.

Jon continued: "Having discovered that tour groups from the US were visiting Canterbury specifically to tour The Foundry, we have really focussed on our experiential offering – including tours of the brewery and distillery for tourist groups, corporate and networking events and tasting sessions. We now welcome around 25 tourists from the US every week.

"We have also invested in our systems and processes. A new back-of-house computer system gives me access to real time sales data, which has helped to identify our most popular and profitable product lines, such as our whisky tasting trays, and tweak our production accordingly.

"In addition, we have launched a new website and e-commerce platform, enabling us to sell direct to the consumer for the first time, and we're busy preparing seasonal products for the busy Christmas period. We anticipate that e-commerce will contribute significant capital to support our next phase of growth.

"Our involvement with the Enhanced Business Support scheme could not have come at a better time. When I started, my mind was very much in survival mode, so I didn't have the headspace to consider growth, but our coach has been vital in helping me to develop a growth mindset."

"We've made numerous investments and innovations within the business and these changes are now bearing fruit. In 2022, our profits were 20% higher than pre-Covid figures, and 2023 is also looking to be a very profitable year, as we're up 5% on last year."

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I really see the benefits of the support and coaching we've received. Our coach has really helped us to take a strategic look at the business, with a keen focus on profitability and efficiency.

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Collier Pickard is an independent customer relationship management (CRM) firm founded by Mike Collier and Simon Pickard in 2004.

The company specialises in helping organisations make a success of their investment in CRM. Having worked with over 500 CRM implementations globally, the team has an outstanding knowledge of how to adapt CRM systems to suit every industry sector.

www.collierpickard.co.uk



During lockdown, many of Collier Pickard's clients were no longer working at usual capacity which had a huge impact on the company's business. However, since starting the Enhanced Business Support scheme, revenue has increased and Collier Pickard has made a full recovery.

Simon Pickard, co-owner and Managing Director of Collier Pickard said: "I originally joined the Enhanced Business Support Scheme to get confirmation that our current business approach was the correct way, but also to gain reinforcement in areas that my coach and I both agree could be improved.

"Our EBS coach allowed me to take an objective view of our business, looking broadly at our methodologies ensuring that we put our knowledge and ideas into practice.

I enjoyed working with my coach and networking within the peer groups, and I felt encouraged and supported throughout the whole process, which made the meetings really enjoyable and productive.

The structure and idea provoking nature of the scheme was really useful in keeping on track.

"The networking peer groups were also really effective as they allowed me to mix with a real variety of different people managing different businesses to my own, from which I took away intriguing ideas, comments and experiences.

"Our coach was completely empathetic and ensured that the support was entirely tailored to my situation, in my business, which I was not expecting from the programme. He offered a holistic view on the business structures and encouraged growth, both in terms of revenue and personal development, by setting us monthly goals that we created together which he would monitor and ensure we completed."



Founded by Gill Monk in 2010, All Health Matters (AHM) provides occupational health medical services predominantly to clients across London and the south-east.

The company's client portfolio features major firms including FTSE100 companies and international household names, as well as many SMEs and micro-businesses.

www.allhealthmatters.co.uk



Having begun to contemplate eventually retiring from the business, Gill took the decision to move to an employee ownership model in 2021.

As such, four members of the team were promoted to the Board of Directors, but the change in leadership dynamic had caused a few teething problems. Following an approach to the Chamber requesting support to facilitate a Board 'away day', AHM was subsequently enrolled onto the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

Alice Monk, Board member and Director of Communications at AHM, said: "As Managing Director, Gill has put her heart and soul into the business since it was founded but, as she started to consider retirement, she couldn't countenance selling the company if it risked the ethos and values that have made AHM a success. Employee ownership offered a great opportunity to ensure the company could continue with the same people and culture, while rewarding staff for their hard work.

"However, with the change in structure, we seemed to be finding it difficult to make decisions in a timely manner; signing off actions and tasks had become slower and harder to navigate with more people involved in the process."

AHM's coach attended the Board away day, and subsequently met with staff on both a group and one-to-one basis to gain a thorough understanding of the challenges that the business was facing.

Alice continued: "Since we started on the Enhanced Business Support scheme in September 2022, we have already seen the benefits of our coach's methods and advice. The support we have received has been very valuable and has helped us to really define what is most important to AHM, ensuring everyone has a clear idea of our collective priorities.

"Coaching has given the Board a shared language and a goal-orientated mindset and the scheme has renewed our focus on the business's priorities. With our coach's help we have clarified each Director's areas of responsibility and we have agreed a number of goals for the coming financial year."

"Ultimately the Board is now agreed on the objectives for the business and the way forward to achieve them. We're still at an early stage of our journey on the programme and at times it can look like we have a mountain to climb, but looking to the future I am cautiously optimistic that we will reach the summit!"

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It is exciting to see the progress that we have made in just a few short months, and having taken the first steps, and seen the results, we now have the trust and motivation to keep moving forward.

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3nvision is an independent electrical company working mostly in the commercial sector focused on restaurants, pubs and care homes.

With a workforce of highly experienced engineers and tradespeople they cover every aspect of electrical installations, servicing, and maintenance needs.

www.3nvision.com



During the 12 months 3nvision has been involved in the Enhanced Business Support scheme, the company has increased its revenue by 300%.

Holby Dunn, one of 3nvision's Directors said: "During our time on the Enhanced Business Support scheme our advisor has helped us with accountability in the business. We created targets and goals for each month and made sure we allocated the time to achieve each of them.

"This certainly helped to keep us on track and increase growth in the business where before, while our business was first becoming established, we were often too busy to be able to focus on the bigger picture.

"We have built a brilliant relationship with our coach over the monthly meetings; something we will now be looking to continue outside of

the scheme as it has been invaluable to us. He introduced us to a few new clients; reinforcing connections for our business to continue this momentum well after the programme is over.

"Our coach taught us how to keep track of the business's finances, put us in contact with bodies to line up our accreditations, set our own targets and hold ourselves accountable for completing them.

"With three of us as directors in the business sometimes it's easy to overlook certain areas that need attention and our coach has allowed us to step back and be able to achieve this.

"We now have two apprentices on board and we hope to employ an extra qualified electrician to keep up with increasing demand.

"As an up-and-coming company we also wanted to focus on becoming as eco-friendly as possible; we have changed all of our paper certificates and documents into electronic copies, carrying tablets on-site and we have now started offering installation of electric vehicle charging points.

"Not only did the EBS scheme support our business to grow physically and financially, our advisor really took the time to consider our personal growth alongside the business. He advised us to visit Business Vision Live, Kent's biggest business exhibition, which is something I'd never considered before; but by attending I gained so much confidence and made many connections in the area."

The main objective from the programme was to be able to take myself off site and work remotely full-time to allow me to focus on the business side of things; this is something that we have already achieved in such a short space of time.



Romney Marsh Wools was founded in 2008 by a sixth-generation family of Kent farmers.

Through collaboration with wool mills based in the UK, this local family has created a business using natural material producing many wonderful products.

Romney Marsh Wools sells an extensive range of high-quality products, from traditional yarn to a range of lanolin-based toiletries, and even clothing and homeware.

www.romneymarshwools.co.uk



Romney Marsh Wools process and sell over 80% of the wool they obtain using their online shop and through local events and fayres. However, the recent Covid-19 pandemic brought face-to-face sales to an abrupt stop; now, the Enhanced Business Support programme is helping the company to upgrade their business.

Kristina Boulden, co-founder of Romney Marsh Wools said: "When the pandemic hit, we had to drive sales onto our website due to the lack of events available, meaning we were unable to showcase our products at fayres or through our usual stockists who also had to close. We had to update our website to manage the extra online traffic; we were extremely lucky that our customers were remarkably loyal and switched to using our website for purchases.

"The networking opportunities really helped us engage with a diverse range of businesses that were facing a wide range of issues. The peer support group really gave us a safe space to discuss our challenges with like-minded individuals and the business advisors to create new ideas around recruitment, sales platforms, and collaborations.

"The loss of interaction with customers face-to-face contributed to the sense of isolation during the pandemic; having the chance to reflect on business opportunities with our mentor and with other businesses was really key in being able to step back and overview our business to scale it up with expert advice.

"Our advisor helped us come up with a customer target demographic and focused product range, which allowed room for investment in other areas to boost growth."

"This has enabled us to invest in sustainability and develop the business in other areas. We already pride ourselves on being a sustainable business but we are now developing biodegradable labels and recyclable packaging for our products.

"This year we have invested in scaling up; we have employed a staff member for the office and we have plans for a second member as a sales manager. We also have aspirations to present our products to The National Trust and John Lewis."

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The networking opportunities really helped us engage with a diverse range of businesses that were facing a wide range of issues.

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Founded over 25 years ago, Rochester-based ASF Fit-Out is an award-winning fit-out company that delivers commercial fit-outs and refurbishments to support new and growing businesses.

From bespoke one-off projects to fit-outs for supermarkets, franchised multi-location businesses and restaurants, the company has vast experience in the commercial design industry.

www.asfcommercial.co.uk



With the outbreak of Covid the demand for commercial fit-outs fell dramatically. Driven by HR Manager Caron Colling, the company joined the Enhanced Business Support programme with a view to implementing new processes and structures to help deliver growth, despite the challenging economic climate.

Caron said: "We found ourselves in a very difficult situation as a result of the pandemic. ASF has always had plenty of experience in the construction sector, but we identified that a lack of appropriate business structures and processes were holding us back.

"Essentially, we had no established mechanisms for communicating effectively within the company; we needed to work on developing our procedures and aligning our values and culture to help the company weather the storm and hopefully put the foundations in place for growth.

"The EBS was a perfect fit and came at a crucial time for the business. It was important to get buy-in from the decision makers, so our monthly meetings with our coach were attended by the Directors and Senior Management Team. We didn't previously have meetings on a regular basis, so it was very useful to be able to discuss the business, set goals and provide individual members of the team with tasks and responsibilities."

As a result, ASF now holds monthly Board Meetings to discuss business strategy, alongside regular operations meetings to discuss workloads and priorities. With a view

to securing new clients, the company has also invested considerable time and energy in developing a new sales and marketing strategy.

Caron continued: "Previously, things were discussed in the business, but they weren't being effectively communicated or reported upon, which meant important information was being missed."

"The key outcome of the EBS scheme has been to actually get people together to talk about the business, and ensuring that time is set aside to work on the business itself."

"By implementing new processes to share information, communicate with colleagues across different teams and systematically track progress, we now have a far better structure in place."

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Changing the culture and getting buy-in from everyone across the business takes time, but with a renewed focus on communication we are better able to share information, plan effectively and pull together in the same direction.

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Established in 1908, Hythe-based Sprinks Construction is one of the oldest family-owned construction companies in Kent, with clients across the domestic, education, commercial and new build sectors.
www.sprinksconstruction.co.uk



Managing Director Stuart Sprinks is the fourth generation of the family to lead the business. He said: "Having benefitted enormously from personal coaching in the past, the Enhanced Business Support scheme seemed like an ideal opportunity to get expert advice as we started to build the business back up after Covid. We had also worked with our coach before, so it was great to be able to continue with someone we already knew and trusted.

"Prior to the pandemic, we had begun to re-appraise our business model and operational strategies, so when it hit, we had already covered some ground, which was helpful in what turned out to be a very difficult time. Thanks to Covid we lost a few members of staff and our turnover dropped for a time, but with this support the company was able to weather the storm.

"Since embarking on the Enhanced Business Support Scheme, we're ready to start growing the business once more. Our coach has been helping to identify where we can add new clients and make better margins, and we have been looking at improvements to the management structure and decision-making moving forward, after running a more streamlined operation during Covid.

"As a result, we have employed a new Contracts Manager to take responsibility for overseeing additional projects and winning new business, which has already led to an improvement in our revenue. Our coach provided very useful input as we were considering our requirements, helping to define the role and support us during the recruitment process.

"Coaching is a great chance to test new ideas and discuss potential opportunities, while providing valuable professional mentoring, and personal support too."

The biggest benefit of the coaching was having the opportunity to have an open discussion about the business with someone independent.





Originally launched as a document binding business in 1936, TCS Computer Services made the switch to the IT sector in 1967.

The company is now a managed services provider, supplying IT engineering solutions and network infrastructure support to businesses, organisations and the public sector.

www.tscs.co.uk



Managing Director Gareth Phillips and his business partner launched a successful management buyout in early 2020, becoming sole owners of the business. With extensive experience in IT engineering, but no previous experience of owning and running a business, Gareth enrolled on the Enhanced Business Support scheme to get a clearer understanding of how to run a successful business.

Gareth said: "The previous owner of the business had not been particularly pro-active, so I felt like there were some areas where I was missing some key skills, or needed some coaching and advice on best practice techniques. The scheme really gave me the business knowledge I needed, covering a wide range of areas like finance, budgeting, HR and recruitment, sales and marketing.

"Learning how to read the financial data has been eye opening, and has helped us to get a handle on the company's finances and stabilise

the books. We now have a more solid foundation from which to grow and we have set a number of key performance indicators to help us achieve our objectives and measure our progress.

"The coach also helped me to identify areas of the business where we were spending time but not making sufficient returns, and helped us to adopt a more targeted approach to our operations.

"A key thing I have learned is to appreciate the quality of the service we provide and value it appropriately; sometimes that means saying no and turning down work is actually in the company's best interest."

"We have spent time on understanding the value of our service and how we best support our clients, and from this we have developed a marketing strategy to guide the business development activity over the coming years. We've made a start producing new marketing collateral, including building our own contact lists, writing telesales scripts and email marketing communications and upgrading to our website.

"We have also delineated the respective roles within the business and divided responsibilities between the directors. As a result, we now have a more equitable distribution of tasks, and we both have a clear understanding of all aspects of the business's operations."

Our involvement on the EBS came at a very useful time for TCS and as a result we have now turned a corner and are seeing sustained, consistent profitability.

Lee Evans is a multi-disciplinary company offering architecture, planning services and heritage consultancy.

The company was founded almost fifty years ago and has been based in Canterbury from the beginning, working with domestic, commercial and education-based clients. Darren James started at Lee Evans 24 years ago as a junior architect technician and is now a partner in the company.

www.lee-evans.co.uk

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Lee Evans' in-house IT team created a remote access solution tailored to the business to ensure that everyone could continue working; this has resulted in the business being able to employ people nationwide and even allow the flexibility of their employees to work abroad for parts of the year, creating a broad team of specialists in a range of fields.

Darren said: "With Lee Evans having seven partners, our Enhanced Business Support (EBS) coach did a great job of gathering our ideas together and producing a step-by-step plan to achieve our overall goals; he did this by making us all write down our future targets for the company, forecasting a few years ahead, which revealed that our ideas for the business were very similar.

"We decided to divide the business into sectors and gave each partner a department to focus on with their own individual responsibilities, using each monthly EBS scheme meeting to report back to one another.

"We decided with the coach that we should focus on marketing, sales, operations, HR and finance; by looking at each area separately we were able to discover the key elements that can contribute to the company's growth and work on them.

"As architects we are designers and creative people. We all seem to have similar tendencies of wanting to find a solution to a problem ourselves, when in practice we should be delegating actions to the team and allowing

ourselves to take an objective view to managing the business, with a focus on growth and structure.

"Although we have all been working in business for years, to be offered free training from a business expert was truly invaluable.

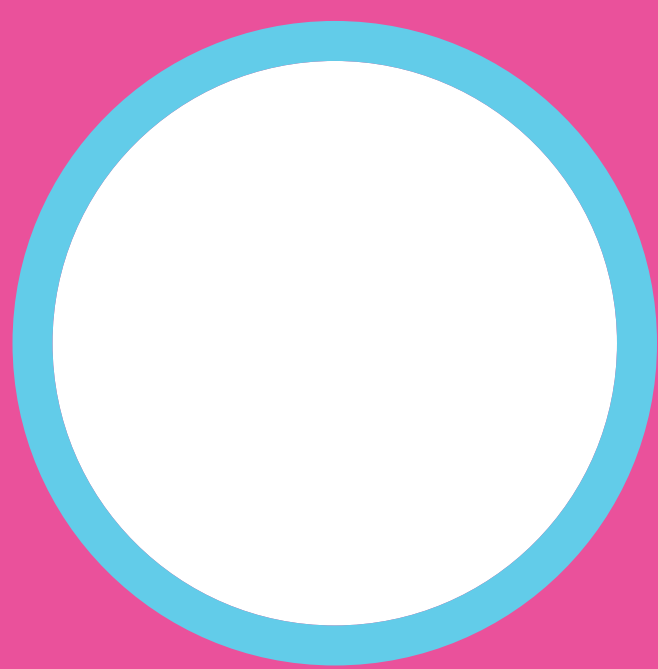
"Our coach encouraged us to make our own business decisions and gave us clarity on how to execute them correctly."

"We have since employed a number of team members in junior positions to help establish a more balanced business structure; we have also set a budget for next year to ensure we stay on top of our finances and have produced a plan for targeted marketing to increase sales."

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We are so pleased that we have been involved with the EBS scheme; our coach made sure we all stayed on track and that each decision was a step towards the larger goals which we will continue to reflect on and work towards.

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Leisure King supplies events equipment including activities, entertainments and catering for a wide range of functions including private parties, weddings, and corporate occasions.

The company's Director Steve Redpath first started working with the business coach a decade ago and accepted a place on the Enhanced Business Support scheme so they could continue to work together.

www.leisureking.co.uk



Director Steve Redpath said: "Covid was obviously horrendous for our business and our turnover dropped by more than 90%. We effectively took the decision to mothball the business and furloughed our staff for nearly two years before things started to get back to normal and we were able to start things up again.

"We'd been working with our coach throughout this difficult period, so it was fantastic to be able to enrol on the EBS scheme and continue our work together.

"For me, the peer group sessions have been the key benefit of the scheme. With all the isolation during the lockdowns, it was lovely to be able to talk to people from other businesses in different sectors. With no competition between us, we were all able to be very supportive, and the sessions were very free flowing providing plenty of opportunities to share experiences and discuss solutions to common problems.

"Our coach always let the group select the topic for the next session, which was great as we could always discuss something pertinent to our businesses and gain bespoke, tailored advice and support on specific issues.

"The scheme has also helped us to develop a new mindset within the business and we've come to really believe in the value and quality of the service we provide.

"Our coach is a vital sounding board, enabling me to test and question ideas and, ultimately, avoid potentially costly mistakes.

"Mentoring has helped me to grow in confidence and supported my decision making. As such, we've taken some important investment decisions which will help us to innovate our offer and grow the business."

"For example, we recently attended the IAAPA Expo in Florida and made a deal for new escape room designs, which has saved us around two years of development time and will enable us to bring a fantastic new product to market much more quickly than we'd planned.

"We've also increased our staff by 20% as demand is really picking up and we're seeing new, larger corporate clients engage our services for events."

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Changing the culture and getting buy-in from everyone across the business takes time, but with a renewed focus on communication we are better able to share information, plan effectively and pull together in the same direction.

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Cognitas Global began trading in 2019 establishing itself as a learning and development consultancy, and the owner of the experiential learning view360global platform.

This platform delivers a holistic approach to learning by providing access to supporting materials and an ability to train remotely and collaboratively in their native language.

www.cognitasglobal.co.uk



The view360global platform has been used to support in-person training in 24 countries and online training to over 40 countries for organisations including the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Nations and Interpol.

Lawrie Day, the founder and CEO of Cognitas Global, has used the platform to improve the standard of learning delivered to people in countries emerging from conflict, political transition and endemic corruption.

By using technology more effectively, the aim was to secure better returns on investment for tax payer-funded government initiatives delivered through international aid and donor networks. In addition, it has been used to deliver crisis management exercises and other training for the private and public sectors

Lawrie began the Enhanced Business Support scheme at the beginning of 2022 and has high praise for the coaching he received during the programme.

Lawrie said "My main objective when signing up to the EBS scheme was to extract myself from the hands-on running of the company to be able to focus on the business more strategically.

"Discussing ideas with my coach was the most valuable experience for me. I am already confident in my business decisions; however it was great to have that additional knowledge to help confirm my processes; in business you never stop learning.

"My coach allowed me to take a strategic overview of the business and plot a path to growth using budget projections.

"The support was completely tailored to my company's needs, as I didn't need the same advice as compared to when we were starting up; the coach fully understood this and he got completely involved, living and breathing the business, and we have built an excellent working relationship."

I have really enjoyed my time on this scheme, it has allowed me to step back whilst my business steps up, freeing me from some of the operational day-to-day issues and allowing me to completely focus my time on strategic growth.

Founded in 2005 by Dan Maudhub, Wonderful Creative Agency specialises in digital marketing, web design, software development and data analytics.

Based in Maidstone, Wonderful's 14-strong team serves clients across the UK, using technology to help clients turn their problems into competitive advantages and game-changing products.

www.bewonderful.co.uk



With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Wonderful benefitted from increased demand for its services, as many businesses and organisations were forced to quickly improve or establish their online presence in order to continue operations during lockdown.

Dan said: "The first six months of Covid were especially busy, as numerous clients needed to rapidly adjust their operations and implement digital marketing, communications and e-commerce platforms, in some cases literally overnight. However, while we experienced high demand for our services, we saw a drop in budgets as clients tightened their belts; a trend which looks set to continue due to the challenges the economy is facing.

"Staff retention was difficult during Covid, so a major KPI has been set to retain our staff. This year we've managed to retain all our staff, and we've added a couple of new members to the team to strengthen our capabilities.

"A key goal for the Directors during our time on the Enhanced Business Support programme has been to devise a strategy to scale up the business while delivering improved, sustainable profitability."

"We decided to bring two of our team members into management roles, so establishing clear areas of responsibility and accountability has been an important aspect of our time on the scheme. Our new directors did not have formal management experience, so working with our coach we have developed our procedures and management systems so they are fully aligned with our values and able to contribute towards

achieving our growth targets.

"As a result, we have improved communication lines within the business, and we regularly share our goals and progress with the wider team, ensuring we are pulling together with a shared purpose. We have also initiated monthly review meetings and quarterly team days to ensure we are consistently reflecting on and appraising our progress towards our goals and planning for the future.

"Aware of the squeeze on clients' budgets, we've also focused attention on identifying areas within the business where we can save time or improve efficiency.

"We now spend more time at the outset of a project mapping out the time allocations and setting strict project delivery targets, which ensures we are pricing our work appropriately, and we now routinely incorporate a contingency within budgets to provide clients with reassurance and flexibility. We have also benchmarked our pricing against key competitors, which helped to reaffirm that we offer our clients great value for a fantastic service."

“

By making practical and well-considered changes to our procedures we have already seen significant results. Our revenue in 2021/22 increased by 15% and we are on track to grow by a similar amount this year.

”

Ming Foods is Britain's leading Chinese pastry specialist serving wholesalers, food manufacturers and restaurant owners with hand-made, pre-prepared pastry products manufactured at its purpose-built facility in Swanley.

Having weathered significant disruption to its exports in the wake of Brexit, Ming Foods faced subsequent challenges with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and rising energy costs.

www.mingfoods.co.uk



As Ming Foods' CEO, Sam Duong, explains: "We are now veterans at survival and as a business we have had to make sacrifices to ensure we are still able to operate. We've also had to be nimble to adapt to challenges and quickly take advantage of opportunities; for example, while we saw a reduction in our sales to restaurants during lockdown, we were able to capitalise on increased demand for takeaways and cooking at home via other product lines.

"Like many businesses we were required to do what was necessary to survive, but the business and our staff have great resilience. The pandemic was of course a stressful and difficult time, so being able to access top quality peer support, coaching and mentoring through the Enhanced Business Support scheme has proved invaluable in helping us through this challenging period.

"Our coach has excellent knowledge of the sector, but also wider experience of business and best practice which we have been able to draw upon. Having the opportunity to bounce

ideas around and get a fresh perspective has been extremely beneficial, not to mention providing an outlet to relieve stress which has been really cathartic. We've had the opportunity to talk through decisions with the advisor which have gone on to yield significant financial benefits for the company to the tune of several hundred thousand pounds."

Sam used the extra time Covid afforded to really drill down and decide the direction and focus for the business over the coming months and years. Pre-pandemic, Ming Food's ambition was to scale up quickly, but rapid growth brings its own pains and challenges; as a result of the coaching, Sam and his team now understand that growth needs to be broken down into manageable, achievable steps.

Sam concluded: "The coaching really helped to set realistic goals, develop manageable steps and then measure our performance to keep us on track. It has also helped to share the burden, given greater visibility to our commercial goals, and provided a renewed focus on the business' values."

"Despite the challenges we've faced, the key thing is that we've been able to keep our heads above water. By tightening our belts and working more efficiently we now have much firmer foundations on which to build for the future, and a new perspective not just on how to grow effectively, but also how to manage that growth sensibly."

“

I've certainly learnt a lot during the scheme and we are now taking steps to apply these new concepts and learnings across the business.

”



James Snell and William Tschaikowsky founded Snelsky Ltd in 2018 after meeting at university. Snelsky Ltd is a media content creation company specialising in social media videos.

The company has worked on a huge range of projects, working with high-profile brands and celebrities like Heineken, Mo Farah and Rio Ferdinand to charities such as Age UK and Camp Simcha.

www.snelsky.com



Having made it through the pandemic, the nascent business subsequently faced new challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis, which created uncertainty about the future.

Since embarking on the Enhanced Business Support programme, Snelsky Ltd has increased revenues by 300% and the company is now well on the way to achieving an additional 150% growth for this coming year.

William Tschaikowsky, co-founder of Snelsky Ltd said: "Our advisor has helped us immensely by setting us monthly objectives to adhere to.

"For example, we were tasked with employing an extra member of our team in the shape of a video editor/production assistant, re-investing into our equipment, and also marketing ourselves by upgrading our website.

"I feel as though we achieved more than we had hoped to from the beginning and our revenue figures have smashed our expectations.

"Our advisor has really given us a sense of accountability to ensure that our monthly targets and goals for our business are met. Having to feedback to a third-party has made us progress consistently which has been invaluable for us, especially during such challenging times.

"On top of this he has provided us with some fantastic advice and put us in the right direction for success, taking us from best friends to serious business partners, with our

clients buying into not just the services we provide but our relationship and the personalities behind the business."

James Snell, co-founder of Snelsky Ltd said:

"The EBS programme has helped fill the gaps in our knowledge, such as how to run a growing business efficiently. The programme has effectively taught us how to scale up and increase the growth of our business both in revenue and in size.

"The programme introduced us to other business owners at an initial networking event which helped us gain knowledge from other perspectives of business. We were the youngest in the room, which was daunting and now we can say we are confident going forwards on our own."



We have already agreed that we will be keeping in touch with our coach as we have created a really good relationship with him throughout our time on the course.





Podplus is a sports shop and injury clinic founded by siblings Kate and Tom Austen in 2005 with the aim of providing top quality products for walkers and runners, and an outstanding face-to-face fitting service to ensure customer satisfaction.

Based at the Julie Rose Stadium in Ashford, Podplus also operates several satellite clinics in the surrounding villages and opened a second store in Cranbrook in early 2021.

www.podplus.co.uk



Kate Austin said: "We heard about the Enhanced Business Support scheme as a result of opening our second store, which was launched using loans from several business support schemes in the county. The investment required us to meet certain employment targets, which resulted in our workforce doubling.

"However, the increased workload managing HR was proving challenging, so we asked Kent County Council for support and were introduced to the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

"Working with our coach has been an enlightening experience and I can really see the value in external mentoring and support."

"During our sessions we took time to drill down into the company's goals, principles and culture and really consider what we wanted for the business and what targets we needed to set to get there.

"The support has been very valuable during what was a difficult time for the business and helped to give me the confidence to trust my instincts and make the most of opportunities to grow the business.

"The process has also made me far more appreciative of the need to focus on the future and keep an eye on things like HR and cash flow. The Cranbrook store is now operating well with an excellent team in place and there's plenty of potential for further growth."





Founded in Maidstone in 1963, Evans & Langford LLP is an engineering consultancy that combines modern methods with traditional values to provide clients with quality engineering solutions.

Evans & Langford works hand in glove with architects, designing buildings and infrastructure across a wide range of sectors, with clients including the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

www.evanslangford.co.uk



With the onset of Covid, the company saw its well of prospective design projects dry up, as planning for new-build developments and refurbishments came to a grinding halt.

Simon Robertson, Owner of Evans & Langford, said: "Covid led to a big downward curve in our work and subsequently our cashflow, akin to the impact of a major recession, as the impact on materials costs and supply chains led to many projects being shelved. Shifting to a remote working model was also difficult, as our company thrives off creativity and ideas-sharing, which is more challenging over digital communications like Zoom.

"Part of our focus on the Enhanced Business Support scheme was to improve the structure of our systems and procedures to ensure we could work as efficiently as possible.

"For example, our IT systems were not really optimised as they were just a digital version of our old filing systems. Our coach also impressed the need to focus on cashflow, by implementing improved reporting on finances and projects.

"However, the main aim of the sessions was to put a clear succession plan in place for the business. Covid certainly concentrated our minds on where the business is going and what sort of ownership model will be appropriate going forward.

"At present, Evans & Langford is a Limited Liability Partnership, but with fewer engineers, particularly younger members of the profession, looking to take on partnerships, we were keen to explore other models that might offer a more appropriate structure for the future.

"Our coach had an excellent understanding of our industry which was vital, as he was able to relate to the construction process and appreciate the challenges and demands we face.

"However, he also brought ideas and solutions from other industries, so we were able to take advantage of best practice from other sectors.

"The peer groups were also very useful and, although I'm used to working collaboratively, it was interesting to mix with people from other industries to hear new angles and perspectives. Covid was a trying time for many businesses, and I think we all valued having the peer groups as a sort of support group."

Our coach had an excellent understanding of our industry which was vital, as he was able to relate to the construction process and appreciate the challenges and demands we face.



The East Malling Centre is a community charity incorporating a hall, café, community supermarket and foodbank, which provides much needed space for community groups, events and activities.

Based in one of Tonbridge's most deprived wards, the Centre rents space to local groups and organisations, and runs projects that benefit community wellbeing, offering opportunities for both training and social development.



Having started with Lottery funding over a decade ago, the Centre has grown to provide more services and support, as financial and other pressures on local residents have increased over the years.

Liz Simpson, Chair of the Trustees, said: "Over the years the Centre has grown organically to provide more support to local people, many of whom are facing real hardship. Growth has brought its fair share of challenges, including the need for a more formal HR structure as our headcount has increased, and the imperative to find new sources of income in order to continue and enhance the vital services we provide.

"Now that I've retired, I am looking to step back from some of my commitments and take on a more strategic, hands-off role. As an organisation, we've never had the headspace to plan for the future, but the Enhanced Business Support we have received has been incredibly helpful in developing a roadmap for the Centre over the coming years.

"Our coach took the time to really get to know the charity, meet with the Trustees and understand the challenges that the organisation was facing. The sessions provided plenty of opportunity for free-flowing discussions to bounce ideas around, not to mention a little welcome counselling and moral support!"

Succession planning was a key element of the discussions. With Liz traditionally picking up much of the day-to-day management of the Centre, the coach helped to identify new roles for the other Trustees, with each taking responsibility for managing and reporting on different areas.

As a result, a clear plan is now in place for Liz to step back from active management by April 2023.

Financial planning has also been a major focus of the support the Centre has received. Figures are now presented regularly at the monthly Trustee meetings, where adjustments to budgets, spending and priorities can now be clearly identified and actioned. The Centre has devised a five-year forward plan, providing clarity on the future and highlighting areas where additional fundraising is required.

Liz continued: "We now have a much clearer view of the Centre's finances which is essential as it has enabled us to make investments that will deliver efficiency improvements and cost savings."

"We have also made several appointments, including a Marketing Consultant, who is delivering on our fundraising strategy.

"As a result of our involvement on the Enhanced Business Support scheme, the Centre is now on a far more sustainable and secure footing, our staff are more self-reliant and there is a clear management structure in place."

“

Looking ahead, I am confident that when I step back, the East Malling Centre will have the resources to continue to provide vital community services.

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Sam Nightingale is a third-generation family fruit farmer, who started making cider from his parents' produce in Tenterden in 2009 as a hobby.

In 2015 he founded Nightingale Cider, using Kent-grown fruit to produce small batch craft cider and perry.

www.nightingalecider.com



Sam Nightingale, Founder of Nightingale Cider, said: "I found out about the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme through Produced in Kent.

"The scheme began with peer networking groups which were so useful at providing a safe and confidential environment for businesses to share ideas and concerns, which we'd help solve together. Discussing common problems and finding solutions has been very beneficial, and I have been able to apply a lot of what I have learnt to my own business.

"The one-to-one mentoring sessions with my coach were also incredibly valuable, so much so I've taken the decision to continue with our coach once the EBS scheme comes to an end. We have mostly focused on key performance indicators to help me keep on track of overall goals and to concentrate on those factors which are most important to delivering growth.

"It's clear to me that the world has changed from where it was before the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore it's important for my business to change with it.

"Being part of this scheme, to be able to rely on my coach as a sounding board and to be held accountable for each idea I want to put into practice has been incredibly beneficial.

"As a small business owner it can be easy to get caught up with the daily tasks whilst postponing important business decisions. The EBS programme has contributed to creating clarity within my business, particularly in terms of finances and cash flow."

"With my coach's experience and knowledge, we have now turned our attention to the marketing strategy and our plans for future growth. Increasing the team will allow me to focus wholly on the business strategy and procedures.

"Our team has been working at full capacity, especially over the harvesting period. Now, with a clear plan and intent to increase employee numbers, we can also escalate production to help grow our revenue even further than we already have in the last twelve months.

"The coach's encouragement alongside their knowledge helped me to build a plan to accomplish my business goals, with added confidence and a reliable sounding board to ensure that I was making the right decisions at the right time."

It has been extremely beneficial to be a part of the EBS scheme as it has filled in the gaps of my knowledge, drawing on my coach's extensive experience, which is now enabling me to progress with my business aspirations.

”



Founded in 2015, Garage Coffee is a speciality coffee roaster based outside Canterbury which owns three coffee shops in Kent and is currently in the process of opening a fourth.

The company's USP is to only supply high-grade sustainably sourced coffee which is roasted in-house and sold through Garage Coffee shops and wholesale distributors.

www.garageroasted.co.uk

Luke Underdown, Founder and Managing Director of Garage Roasted, said: "I joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme initially to gain perspective on our business structure.

"Our coach has a vast knowledge and experience within the realms of business and helped me take an objective view of my company; they ensured that I held myself accountable for each decision that was made which is something that I found most valuable within the EBS scheme.

"During the Covid-19 lockdowns the majority of our wholesale customers had closed their coffee shops along with us. We made the decision to open the Margate branch in the summer of 2020 despite the pandemic, as we predicted an increase in footfall in UK holiday destinations and considered this branch to be a gap in the market, which was a huge success.



"Going forward we are all now faced with the energy price hikes so we have had no option but to increase our prices to ensure we are continuing the support to our coffee farmers to keep the coffee ethically and sustainably sourced, as we will not compromise on our ethics and product quality.

"The most obvious benefit of the EBS programme was how bespoke the coach made the course to me and my business; due to the frequent meetings I would be able to work through issues that cropped up in real-time and receive great advice on how to deal with them as we went."

"My coach made sure I reflected on every decision to ensure that I had considered how it would impact the business, whether it was properly costed, and to analyse each step taken to ensure we remained focused on achieving our growth.

"Learning about other businesses during the peer group sessions was incredibly inciteful to grasp a real understanding of issues that can occur and how they were solved which helped me apply some of those same solutions to my own company.

"For the future we are looking into increasing our roastery output above the 20% increase we've seen this year, by upgrading our equipment; this should then lead to an increase in our wholesale revenue."

“My coach made sure I reflected on every decision to ensure that I had considered how it would impact the business, whether it was properly costed, and to analyse each step taken to ensure we remained focused on achieving our growth.”



Kent Occupational Therapy, founded by Sophie Jopling and Sarah Mousley, provides assessment and therapy programmes to those with physical, sensory, or cognitive problems to enable them to live as independently as possible.

www.kentot.co.uk



Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the business was thriving; for over eight years Sophie and Sarah carried out work in care homes providing multisensory reminiscence groups for the residents, alongside writing and publishing their own book discussing their work.

Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit the work came to a complete stop, and the business could no longer carry on its work in the care homes. Relationships that had been carefully built with many of the residents were lost, along with the primary source of the company's revenue.

Kent OT decided to re-focus the business. With help from the Kent Chamber of Commerce's Enhanced Business Support scheme; Kent Occupational Therapy has become an entirely new business with 16 appointed therapists offering a range of therapies. As well as growth in associate numbers, Kent OT has grown by 17% in revenue over the last six months whilst on the EBS programme.

Sophie Jopling, co-founder of Kent Occupational Therapy said: "We are therapists, and have not had any training in the business side of things, so this programme has been of real value to us and has helped us to understand the structures and procedures required to run a successful business.

"Our advisor has given us so much confidence during our 1:1 sessions, which were totally fitted to us and our needs. As a business in the care industry, it's important to us to be as fair and as accessible as possible while still keeping our business afloat."

Co-founder Sarah Mousley said: "Our coach has given us the information and confidence to boost our company in such a short amount of time. He's given us the courage to be hopeful and feel proud of our business. We were one of the first businesses to be stepped down due to the pandemic and we have had to completely switch around our company plan which is now even better than before.

"Because we have taken on more associates, we can now cover a larger geographical area as well as broadening the spectrum of services we are able to offer; before we predominantly worked with older adults and now, thanks to the range of specialisms within our OT team, we work with clients across the age range."

“

We have taken on more associates and also increased our offering to include physiotherapy and music therapy giving us plenty of opportunities for further growth across various revenue streams.

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Nomad Pizza is an independent pizza takeaway based in the seaside town of Whitstable using local ingredients to produce high-quality pizzas 'to go'.

Jon and Vicki Crwys-Williams opened their Whitstable shop in August 2020 after owning a previous pizza company in Cornwall for five years from 2012, which they then sold before moving to Kent.

www.nomadpizzawhitstable.co.uk



Both businesses have won a number of awards including the Best Independent Pizza Delivery at the prestigious Pizza & Pasta Association (PAPA) Industry Awards just months after opening.

Jon Crwys-Williams, founder of Nomad said: "I initially joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme in hopes that I could get some advice in franchising as I was in a position to perhaps purchase another shop that could have potentially been a franchise opportunity.

"That opportunity fell through, so my coach helped me focus on the company's weaknesses, particularly being more organised with our finances and maintaining the sustainability of the business.

"I have refined my approach to financial organisation from using time-consuming

manual spreadsheets to accounting software, which will help me manage finances in a more organised and analytical way. My coach helped me navigate me through the new software and utilise it to better understand the businesses' finances.

"The EBS scheme helped me apply focus on practices that give me a better understanding of the figures behind the business and look at ways to stimulate growth.

"I am building a business manual to ensure that external bodies could pick up the business, within my plans to extend or franchise, meaning that franchisees could understand the values and practices of the business and replicate it at each shop.

"The EBS scheme was fantastic to help me improve my business from being a sustainable, single outlet to having the potential and capacity for active growth. I suspect many small business owners don't have a background in business management and could use some guidance.

"I would recommend this programme to any small business owner who is keen to learn how to run their business in an efficient and responsible manner, and to transform it into a better organised company with prospects to expand."

The programme provided me with the tools to create a clear and structured strategy to be able to manage and expand the business, plus focus on the areas we can control as business owners to optimise the performance of our business.



Dirtbusters was established in 1986 by Gavin Finch when he was just 19-years-old; as a professional oven and carpet cleaner, Gavin became unhappy about using caustic cleaning chemicals for so much of his work.

Working alongside chemistry experts, Gavin launched Dirtbusters' first line of non-caustic cleaning products for professional cleaners.

www.dirtbusters.co.uk



Dirtbusters is a family run business and with Gavin now looking towards retirement, he was keen to develop a strategy to hand over the business to his children. Gavin's main objective upon joining the Enhanced Business Support scheme was to be able to begin to reduce the amount of time he dedicates to running the business and to pass the responsibilities on to his children as the new directors.

Iceni Finch, Gavin's daughter and now one of the directors of Dirtbusters said: "I studied Business and Economics at university, so I felt I had the necessary knowledge to take on the role of director of my family business.

"With the advice from the Enhanced Business Support scheme, my dad now also feels much more at ease with stepping back from the company, as we have a clear plan to help him

gradually scale back his involvement. It's also been very helpful for me personally, as I have found my confidence in my new role has really grown as a result of the mentoring I have received from our coach.

"We were pleased with our growth during the Covid-19 pandemic; as a cleaning company, our products were in high demand and our revenue has been consistently positive ever since.

"As such, we weren't focused on growing our revenue during our time on the programme, and we were able to really have time to discuss personal growth and our goals for the business.

"We particularly focused on team roles, responsibilities and morale; our advisor helped my brother and I to find a balance between juggling the business side of things whilst also keeping engaged with our employees."

"With this new business confidence and drawing on the experience and knowledge we have gleaned from our advisor, Dirtbusters is now expanding.

"We have started to supply top high street retailers and we are even in the early stages of setting up a second company. In the future we are hoping to be able to expand the team and create a larger presence in the cleaning product industry."

With this new business confidence and drawing on the experience and knowledge we have gleaned from our advisor, Dirtbusters is now expanding.



Established more than 20 years ago, FootHouse Ltd is a modern podiatry clinic based in Folkestone which provides chiropody, nail surgery and biomechanics services.

With FootHouse’s owner planning for his retirement, the Enhanced Business Support scheme provided a perfect opportunity to obtain some expert advice on how to prepare the business for his eventual departure.

www.foothouse.co.uk



David Smith, owner of FootHouse, explained: “One of the primary aims during our time on the scheme was to work out an effective means of systematising the business to make any eventual handover simpler.

“I’ve been the owner for a long time, so many of the details about how the business works were only in my head, and it became clear that others needed to be involved in management and operations moving forward.

“We’ve worked hard to make everyone’s responsibilities clear so they know exactly where to focus, and we’ve promoted a Clinic Manager, who has taken on new responsibilities (including IT) alongside her role as a clinician.

“We used our time with the coach to really think about how the business operates, and looked at where we needed to share knowledge or make improvements to processes. One area we identified was the customer journey and we have invested in a new clinic management system which now enables our customers to make online bookings, while our team can access digital records, make updates directly and schedule touchpoints and follow-ups with clients automatically.

“We’ve also looked at areas where we can improve revenue. We have focused our marketing on our ideal customers, particularly those who require higher value services like biomechanics, and we’ve invested in a new laser to expand into treatments for fungal nail

infections, where there is massive demand.

“Our coach took the time to really listen to our aims and then help us work out a strategy to get there. We had plenty of work to do to keep up, but the process has been very beneficial and the effort has been worth it.

***“The coaching has given me the courage to follow my instincts and encouraged me to make some important changes to the business that will set us on a good trajectory.*”**

“While we’re focused on growth and incorporating technology to make the business more efficient, we’re also mindful of the need to maintain our values of honesty and integrity by keeping the patient relationship at the core of our service.”



We used our time with the coach to really think about how the business operates, and looked at where we needed to share knowledge or make improvements to processes.



Potters Home Digital was established in 1913 and has remained on Tenterden High Street ever since.

One of the first Sony stockists in the UK, Potters Home Digital provides smart home and AV entertainment solutions for the 21st century including home cinemas, lighting control and multi-room audio systems. The team is led by directors Lance Hopley and Alex Jones.

www.home-digital.com



During the Covid-19 lockdowns, the business was forced to temporarily close its showroom; however, the pandemic also highlighted the importance of technology within the home and how so many people rely on their entertainment systems and AV products.

Alex said: "The Enhanced Business Support scheme was really helpful in terms of fine-tuning our processes to improve the business.

"Our monthly meetings with our coach allowed us to easily map out our targets and approach to meet objectives and it was very useful to be held accountable for the completion of each task set. We set out a growth target with our coach which we are on target to reach.

"We have just launched a new concept within our business called The Smart Home Garden, which is an industry first within Europe.

"The EBS scheme contributed to our plans for developing this innovative new concept.

The project, which is a smart show garden working with a Chelsea award-winning designer, aims to create a true collaboration between the smart technology industry and the landscape industry, which we have now successfully launched.

"The principal benefit of the EBS scheme has been the involvement of an external coach; with their great business experience and knowledge, our coach was a valuable guide and helped us to establish a growth plan for the business which we are now delivering."

With their great business experience and knowledge, our coach was a valuable guide and helped us to establish a growth plan for the business which we are now delivering.





Rap Interiors design and build commercial interiors for all kinds of sectors, from schools and offices to a whole plethora of different businesses.

The business was established over 30 years ago. Martyn Pilcher and Parry Anderson used to work on-site delivering installation for the company's projects, but five years ago the pair took over as directors and more recently co-owners of Rap Interiors.

www.rapinteriors.co.uk



During the Covid-19 lockdowns, a lot of businesses were not in a position to invest in their physical appearances, so the company reacted quickly to provide support for the roll-out of protective acrylic screens for businesses to be able to continue work whilst adhering to the government restrictions.

With the end of the pandemic, Rap Interiors has seen its traditional business pick up again as many companies make alterations to create a more modern, spacious workspace as an incentive to entice employees to return from remote working. Seeking to gain valuable advice on business management following a management buyout in, Martyn and Parry enrolled on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

Martyn said: "The peer groups as part of the Enhanced Business Support scheme provided a great opportunity for networking, but the one-

to-one online coaching was where I gained the most as our coach really tailored the advice to what we needed at the time.

"Our coach didn't lecture us, but instead gave us thought-provoking questions and tasks to complete which was really valuable in terms of teaching us to think outside of the box and produce our own results-driven targets."

"The EBS programme came exactly at the right time for us as we were in the process of the MBO transaction so it was great to have the ongoing advice and support from our coach to guide us through the intricacies of buying and owning a business.

"We were directed through updating our one-page marketing plan, along with general good business practice. We have recently employed a new project manager and a designer, and we are also in the process of hiring an extra team member on our coach's advice. This has allowed both Parry and me to be able to concentrate wholly on business operations.

"We have exceeded our estimated turnover goal for the coming year and we are becoming increasingly busy with additional client projects, so the future is looking positive for Rap Interiors."

The EBS programme came exactly at the right time for us...

...it was great to have the ongoing advice and support from our coach to guide us through the intricacies of buying and owning a business.



Founded by Russell Lyons in 1982, Innovation Software began life as a software reseller, before evolving into a leading provider of collections management systems and business intelligence tools, offering trusted solutions to global enterprises.

Innovation Software is a family run business and Russell's daughter, Caroline Lyons was appointed director six years ago alongside long-standing director Paul Staniforth.

www.creditforceglobal.com



Caroline Lyons, Director of Client Services for Innovation Software, said: "I first joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) programme with hopes of revealing the best methods of increasing our revenue and structuring a marketing plan with the aim of increasing our Kent-based clients through networking.

"Our coach set us monthly goals and held us accountable to ensure they were completed. We have increased our turnover and certainly increased our focus on the areas that need improving. I will be continuing to use the protocols with my team long after the programme is finished.

"The EBS programme has guided Innovation Software to improve our marketing strategy by using current affairs and events to demonstrate to our clients that we are a modern, forward-thinking tech company."

"We have established a regular email marketing newsletter which is sent to our registered clients to keep them informed.

"We also frequently update our website with articles and interesting blogs on how to manage businesses more effectively using our services. The coach also encouraged us to engage a SEO expert to ensure we are visible to potential clients online.

"All members of the management team that cover the different departments within the company joined in on the meetings with the EBS coach which allowed us to be more open

with our targets, which in turn increased our own accountability to ensure our set tasks were met.

"Innovation Software has always been steady in terms of workload and revenue, but I feel that we have used the EBS scheme to help develop a growth mind set within the business, ensuring that the management considers the growth of the business in each decision we make and to interrogate how we will achieve each goal.

"As our revenue has started to increase, we also have plans to hire a new developer who will be tasked with contributing to enhancing our product offer.

"We have taken all of the advice from our EBS coach on board and it has created great foundations to build from; our team would look forward to the monthly meetings and fully bought into the process, welcoming the additional focus and accountability."

“

These meetings have delivered great results for us including increased revenue, a more structured marketing plan and a greater sense of team alignment which will all contribute to our continued success

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Brandspace Media is a print and digital agency based in Canterbury, covering all aspects of marketing including, branding, advertising, graphic design, website development, public relations and social media management and digital marketing.

www.brandspacemedia.co.uk



Paul Duckworth originally trained as a graphic designer, and founded Brandspace Media in 2019. Today the agency is made up of experts in all aspects of marketing to bring their clients a powerful end-to-end solution.

Paul, Founder and Creative Director of Brandspace Media, said: "During the Covid-19 outbreak our turnover pretty much halved, our employees had to work from home and some of our clients dramatically reduced their marketing activities.

"The Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme arrived just at the right time for me, and the advice and tools I have received from the scheme have been invaluable.

"The peer groups in particular were enjoyable; they allowed me to think more objectively about my own business by helping other businesses with their own challenges.

"It was especially interesting to hear outside views of my own business, giving me the opportunity to tweak my own marketing strategy to better suit my clientele.

"The peer group also offered the opportunity for networking which was productive at the time, having come straight out of national lockdowns and not having had the freedom to connect with others.

"I originally joined the EBS scheme to re-evaluate our business model to fit the rapidly changing landscape of our industry.

"I also wanted to decipher the type of clients Brandspace Media would ideally like to have onboard and how to obtain them.

"During the programme Brandspace Media has utilised a better CRM system to organise our approach to building databases, helping us to create follow-up tasks and email campaigns for our clients.

"It was beneficial to have my coach as a sounding board for my ideas; with our combined knowledge and experience, this gave me the confidence to put my ideas into practice.

"My coach also helped with accountability within the business; the majority of the time I used to defer working on my own business' structure to support others, whereas the EBS scheme taught me to prioritise this for the growth of my company."

It was beneficial to have my coach as a sounding board for my ideas; with our combined knowledge and experience, this gave me the confidence to put my ideas into practice.

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MARGO SELBY

Margo Selby is a British artist and designer working in woven textiles. Her work is renowned for its geometric patterns and bold colours.

Alongside her handwoven artistry, Margo oversees the work of the Margo Selby Studio, producing a wide range of textiles and designing for a host of industry partners including Hillarys, John Lewis and The Tate.

www.margoselby.com



Having started in 2003 Margo was already a well-established artist and business woman, but the outbreak of Covid-19 forced a big change in the business and how it was run.

The pandemic prompted Margo to move all sales to a new e-commerce platform and reduce her staff to a skeleton workforce. With lower overheads and online sales picking up, Margo was keen to explore opportunities to increase revenue for the company during her time on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

Margo said: "I've absolutely loved working with my coach during the Enhanced Business Support scheme. I almost feel worried not to have him anymore! Thankfully we have built an amazing business relationship and I'm hoping to keep in touch.

"Every month I would discuss the business' figures with my coach, and from there we would make a plan of action. He would help keep me on track and ensure I stayed focused on tasks. His support was invaluable in giving me the confidence to make decisions which have helped to continue the success of the business.

"I started this business almost immediately after leaving education, at a time when I did not have knowledge of how to run a company, let alone what had grown into a fairly large enterprise.

"My coach has brought his vast understanding of how to structure a larger business and helped me apply it to my own."

"Initially, I was aiming to reduce overheads so we could improve our margins. During the twelve months on the EBS programme my business has grown around 10% and I'm on a trajectory to hopefully increase this even more.

"We've also spent time identifying the highest selling products to ensure we're making the most of demand. Rug making is one area where there is significant profit potential, and we're currently exploring whether to move to new premises as we need additional storage space.

"I have obtained a whole wealth of knowledge and my coach also put me in touch with other businesses on the scheme who I have since collaborated with. I am hoping to add these new products to my ranges with top UK retailers very soon."

The advice I received on the EBS scheme was practical and tailored completely to me and my business. I'd come to my coach with real-time issues and he would give me the right tools and teach me the skills to overcome them.

Tony Rana founded Sambhana Care when, from his personal experiences, he felt that there was a real gap in the market for a bespoke home care provision for older people and for respite care for adults with learning disabilities.

The name Sambhana means “to care” in the Sikh language. With Mr Rana being a British-born Sikh, he was passionate about Sambhana Care portraying this message.

www.sambhanacareltd.com



Just weeks after launching the business in early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic struck and Tony was forced to re-think his business strategy.

The Enhanced Business Support from The Kent Chamber of Commerce came at just the right time, spring boarding Sambhana Care into the popular care company it is today and also contributing to the beginnings of its sister company, Take Care Ltd.

Tony Rana, Founder of Sambhana Care Ltd said: “The advice from our Enhanced Business Support coach has been extremely helpful when it came to getting my business back on its feet after Covid. Our advisor became really invested in our success and I felt as though we developed a great relationship from the scheme.

“He allowed me to get invaluable business advice not just at our monthly meetings but he was always on hand throughout the month to provide additional support as and when I needed it.

“My coach helped me consider areas where I could cut costs within my company so that I could invest these funds into other areas that needed extra attention, which has really helped to increase revenues for Sambhana.

“The Enhanced Business Support programme increased my confidence in business so much that I also set up a sister company, Take Care Ltd.

“My coach also advised me on how to set up the business alongside the work we were doing to establish Sambhana Care.

“The wealth of knowledge and experience from my advisor, along with the networking opportunities at the peer groups, allowed me to apply the ideas of a larger business to my small business to help it grow to what it is today.

“I am confident that with the new insights I’ve learned during my experiences on the Enhanced Business Support scheme, Sambhana Care will continue to go from strength to strength!”

**The advice from our Enhanced Business Support coach has been extremely helpful when it came to getting my business back on its feet after Covid...
...he was always on hand to provide additional support when I needed it**





Squiggle Consult specialises in providing estate planning services including wills, trusts, and powers of attorney. Kieran Osborne started the business in 2017 and the consultancy has grown consistently ever since.

www.squiggleconsult.co.uk



Kieran Osborne, CEO at Squiggle Consult, said: "I went into the Enhanced Business Support programme with an open mind but also the thought that nobody knew my business more than myself and that I was already doing everything possible to ensure its success. However, I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of mentoring I received from my coach.

"Our EBS coach helped us to focus on aligning the business to ensure that my attention was on the areas that most needed it. Our main focal point was on recruitment, as they understood just how important this aspect was for my business.

"Since beginning the programme Squiggle Consult has almost doubled its employees, in the form of additional consultants and administration assistants. Partly, this has helped to free me from some duties, to allow me to focus more on business operations and strategy.

"The additional team members have contributed to the business' growth, meaning that we have managed to also double our turnover and onboard some much larger clients than we previously had.

"In the future, I have plans for Squiggle Consult to become nationwide; I have already started plans on the Squiggle Academy to add another aspect to the business of training consultants to our high standards.

"I have also been working on creating an app to contribute to the streamlining of our services. This development will help cut costs where we can operate in-house, for instance our app will be used to replace expensive CRM systems which will also be perfectly tailored to the business's needs.

"The prioritising of recruitment of staff leading to the doubling of turnover has helped me create the cash used to inject into these future projects to help me scale up the business.

"The confirmation of my own knowledge along with the encouragement I received from the EBS scheme has confirmed that my aspirations can be made possible."

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Our EBS coach helped us to focus on aligning the business to ensure that my attention was on the areas that most needed it. Our main focal point was on recruitment, as they understood just how important this aspect was for my business.

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Kesson Physiotherapy is a leading physiotherapy clinic in Faversham, which has treated thousands of patients for physical ailments and sporting injuries over the past three decades. Denise Kesson took over as Managing Director and owner of the family business in 2007.

www.kessonphysio.co.uk



Denise said: "I was initially looking to hire a financial director, but from some research I discovered the Kent Chamber, I joined the Enhanced Business Support scheme with the objective of prioritising our finance strategy.

"We have internal coaching for all of our team members but when it came to myself, I didn't have anything in place to challenge my thought processes, so having my EBS coach on hand was a great resource for me. My key aim was to extricate myself from some of the day-to-day operations of business so that I could become more useful to the business whilst challenging myself to not be drawn back in to the comforts of day-to-day operations.

"The most challenging aspect of the scheme was following my coach's advice to step away from trying to solve all of the commonplace issues in the business, and instead to delegate to a member of the team, thereby freeing me up to concentrate on business strategy.

"My coach taught me to become much more disciplined with regards to taking an objective view when it comes to troubleshooting and allowing my team to grow in their own positions.

"I have been focussing on how I can expand the business by working with two London boroughs and local councils to be able to positively engage communities to use the facilities available to them.

"I feel as though physiotherapy as a practice is particularly personal and relies heavily on trust in the therapists for our patients; so being able to build the business as an independent entity rather than as an extension of myself, but still keeping that personal and trustworthy feel, has been difficult but very rewarding."

Kesson Physiotherapy has recently partnered with local authorities utilising the outdoor gyms across Kent to provide vulnerable and at-risk communities with access to physiotherapy-led exercise, while fostering a sense of shared community and belonging in their area.

"Since the EBS scheme I have increased my team by 25% to allow more senior members of the team to step up and fulfil my previous obligations so I can concentrate on my new aims; I am also on track to increase my turnover this year by around 10%."

“ It was so helpful to have my coach as an external sounding board. The support I received really helped to keep me on track and stay focused on the bigger goal of growing the business. ”

Fresh Start in Education trains and recruits education specialists matching them with children who have special educational requirements, and have been referred by local authorities or schools nationally.

Since Covid-19, Fresh Start has seen an increasing number of clients requiring support for over a year, due to a lack of places available in specialist educational settings.

www.freshstartineducation.co.uk



Ed Robbins, Managing Director of Fresh Start in Education, said: "We originally signed up for the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme to gain an external, third-party perspective of our business, to be able to take an objective view of the structure, work on how we can optimise it and develop procedures to hold ourselves accountable to the goals and targets that we are aiming for.

"We developed a year-long plan which we broke down into monthly activity lists to create manageable steps to achieve the overall outcome.

"The most valuable decision we made was to involve our team in the monthly meetings with our coach to ensure everyone was involved; this was a huge boost for us and enabled us to get the most out of the EBS scheme.

"We have developed in multiple areas during the EBS programme. We mapped out our company's procedures within each department using flowcharts to help secure the business structure.

"We also upgraded our marketing plan which had developed rather organically. Having now emerged from the pandemic we realised we needed to become more strategic and focus more on how we use marketing tools, which has enormously helped our development team.

"My coach and I discussed some fairly big changes across a few key departments including recruitment, referrals and finance

making them all more efficient in the way they are run.

"Since the EBS scheme we have had more referrals than we could manage, resulting in us taking on twelve permanent educational specialists."

"We are constantly evolving our offer in line with the changing requirements of the education sector. As a result, we are now relaunching a programme for 16-25 year olds to cover employability skills.

"Overall, the EBS programme has been extremely worthwhile as it has enabled us to take an objective overview of the business, making improvements in smaller steps to ensure we achieve our overall goals; creating a manageable approach whilst also involving team leaders, employees and stakeholders to all see the vision fulfilled."

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The EBS programme has been extremely worthwhile as it has enabled us to take an objective overview of the business, making improvements in smaller steps to ensure we achieve our overall goals.

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Established by Mark North in 1989, Boiler Healthcare has been providing boiler services and maintenance, emergency boiler breakdown assistance, and many other gas engineering services to customers across east Kent for more than 30 years.

Coach Simon Teague outlines Folkestone-based Boiler Healthcare's experiences on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.boilerhealthcare.co.uk



With the onset of Covid, many people were forced to work from home during lockdown, while others adopted flexible working patterns after the pandemic, which meant they were using their home heating systems more intensively.

However, while Mark saw demand for his services go through the roof, he also lost a number of key plumbers during the period which impacted on the company's ability to deliver reliably for its customers.

Having successfully extricated himself from day-to-day plumbing work prior to the pandemic, Mark – a highly experienced plumber – was forced to come back into the business to relieve pressure on his teams.

With the situation becoming unsustainable and profitability suffering, Mark joined the Enhanced Business Support scheme to help restore the health of the business.

The key focus was to create a plan to help Boiler Healthcare grow sufficiently to meet all the demand for its services.

This was achieved by setting goals for turnover and staff growth, and by reviewing pricing across the business and identifying opportunities to develop additional income streams.

This included overhauling the company's approach to marketing its service contracts packages.

Furthermore, Mark introduced new technology and procedures to systematise the business, with the aim of improving efficiency to deliver additional savings.

As a result, Boiler Healthcare is on track to meet its employment and turnover targets, while the company has achieved a 40% increase in the number of customers on monthly service contracts, providing a vital new revenue stream.

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The Wooden Spoon Preserving Company, created over 40 years ago, is a family-run business operating from a converted oast house in Kent.

Coach Damien Tree outlines Ashford-based company The Wooden Spoon Preserving Co's experiences on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.thewoodenspoon.co.uk



The company's premises consist of a small factory shop with a viewing gallery overlooking the production area where a range of unique preserves, condiments and bottled fruits are produced using only the finest quality ingredients.



The company wholesales its artisan products to a vast number of local shops, restaurants and larger retailers including Waitrose and Dobbies.

When initially joining the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme, Jeff Higgins, owner of The Wooden Spoon Preserving Co., wanted to sharpen up business practice in many different areas of the company including communication, production, financial understanding and sales & marketing.

Jeff also wanted to turn his attention to streamlining product lines to focus on their best-selling products.

Together, Jeff and his coach also took the time to review and understand the business' finances, ensuring that costs were reported and analysed to keep on track.

The Wooden Spoon Preserving Co. was already an established and successful business, so the EBS scheme predominantly helped refine the business processes to ensure that each of the company's targets were aligned towards growing the business.

Since being involved in the EBS scheme, The Wooden Spoon Preserving Company has increased its team by 27%, boosted turnover by 12% and is also looking to expand the company by investing in additional production and storage capacity to facilitate growth in the future.

“ The company has increased its team by 27%, boosted turnover by 12% and is also looking to expand by investing in additional production and storage capacity to facilitate growth in the future. ”

Founded over 30 years ago, Centrobed is the UK's leading manufacturer of bespoke specialist beds and cots for disabled adults and children.

Coach Simon Teague outlines the experiences of Ashford-based company Centrobed while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.centrobed.com



Centrobed's unique range of products have been developed to solve very complex needs and help some of the most physically disadvantaged members of society regain their independence and quality of life.

Based at its 16,000ft² headquarters on Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, Centrobed sells nationwide to private customers and the NHS, and is exploring opportunities to export to North America following numerous enquiries from Canada.

With the outbreak of Covid, the company quickly found that demand for its products increased significantly, resulting in a 25% increase in turnover.

However, the increase in demand was also putting production lines under immense

pressure, to the extent that Centrobed could not take advantage of all the sales opportunities available to the company.

Working with her Enhanced Business Support coach, Managing Director Cheryll Hollis was keen to systematise the customer journey, to ensure all orders were tracked from initial enquiry through to delivery.

Developing a digital system to map the end-to-end production process has ensured that data and reports are easily accessible, allowing the management team to track progress and ensure project delivery timeframes are maintained.

Alongside the new tracking system, Cheryll has introduced more structure to the monthly management meetings, with all departments now represented.

The meetings are used as an opportunity to discuss progress towards targets, set new goals and responsibilities within the different departments, and hold key staff accountable for delivery.

These innovations have led to improvements in productivity, speeding up the production process and reducing pressure on the production team, enabling the company to take advantage of more sales opportunities.

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Woodchurch Wine is a family-run vineyard producing sparkling and still wines made from grapes grown on the family estate. The vineyard was planted in 2010 with the first wines being released in 2016.

www.woodchurchwine.co.uk



Graham and Donna Barbour, founders of Woodchurch Wine, have also developed a vineyard shop and tasting room, offering their wine by the glass along with food platters and snacks. Unfortunately, the tasting activities had to close during the Covid-19 pandemic which, along with reduced demand from clients in hospitality, dramatically affected the business.

Graham said: "The Covid-19 lockdowns did impact us negatively but at the same time it peaked the nation's interest in local produce so our online sales increased to reflect this – this interest has continued with many people still avidly supporting local businesses and many consumers still buying our wines.

"I first joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme with the goal of enhancing the business structure and strategy to improve the daily running of the business.

"As a hands-on small business owner, it can sometimes be challenging to take an objective view of the business and bring my attention to the overall growth when I am regularly focused on day-to-day tasks and liaising with clients.

"Our coach helped enormously with everything I had set out to review, helping us clarify our processes, and providing a great sounding board to discuss ideas, as he has such a vast wealth of business experience.

"He ensured Donna and I were focussed on defining our individual roles within the business and supporting each other to meet our overall goals."

"Our coach made us feel at ease whilst discussing both the business's successes and areas that we needed to work on; he helped us clarify these areas and make a rigorous and analytical plan to reach our targets and stabilise the structure of the company.

"Part of our progress plan was to increase our staffing numbers, and we reached our goal, almost doubling the team during the year. We also focused on our marketing strategy, producing clear targets and methods of measuring our progress, which really helped our sales and turnover, while also increasing our confidence in the business."

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Our coach made us feel at ease while discussing both the business's successes and areas that we needed to work on.

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Spatial Dimensions is a land and measured building surveying business that has been established for over 10 years.

It provides accurate measurement information for people in the construction sector including property developers, architects and project managers, working for both local authorities as well as within the private sector.

www.spatial-dimensions.co.uk

Peter Fenwick, Owner and Director of Spatial Dimensions, said: "The Covid-19 lockdowns brought unexpected challenges, as our work previously focused on office, leisure and hospitality.

"As construction was one of the first industries back to work, we turned our attention to projects within healthcare and education; broadening our scope helped us to pick up work and recover quickly, and we have continued to explore new sectors ever since.

"I first joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme with an open mind when it came to what I wanted to achieve. I felt that the programme gave me a great opportunity to take an objective view of the business to work on its structure and growth, which is often difficult when you're a hands-on business owner.



"Our coach helped me focus more on the figures and how to analyse and apply them to support the business' growth.

"We had monthly meetings which were extremely beneficial, allowing me to set goals for the coming month, but also providing the opportunity to reflect on the previous month to get an understanding of what went well and where further improvement was needed.

"Our coach has vast experience but was also very calm and analytical when it came to guiding us through best practices.

"Since working with him, we have opened an additional branch in Nottingham and seen our headcount rise by over 22%, including a Ukrainian refugee who had the right skills that we were looking for at the time and is a great member of our team."

"This new branch has helped bring extra work to our current offices and we are looking for other opportunities to expand in the near future.

"We are currently developing a range of services which will be rolled out across our three regional offices and we will be investing even more time in developing innovative ideas to ensure that our clients are getting the best quality service."

Our coach has vast experience but was also very calm and analytical when it came to guiding us through best practices.

Dialogue Matters, founded over 20 years ago by Diana Pound, is an environmental consultancy specialising in participatory processes, bringing together stakeholders to produce positive outcomes for the environment, community and climate.

www.dialoguematters.co.uk



The company has designed and facilitated over 100 Stakeholder Dialogue processes in environmental management cases and trained over 2,000 people in how to run their own effective participation processes.

Ross Freeman, Senior Consultant, and Climate and Nature Lead said: "The Covid-19 lockdowns meant that we had to adapt a lot of our processes to working remotely, moving the consultancy predominantly online, which we have continued still to this day. This has enabled us to expand our offering of services.

"We initially joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme to create an opportunity for us to take an objective look at the business to discover the aspects that can produce the most growth. We also wanted to add structure to our new digital way of working.

"One of the most beneficial aspects of the EBS programme was that we set aside time each month to focus on the bigger picture of the business, taking the time to outline goals and what the process was to achieve them.

"Our coach was approachable and built a rapport with us almost immediately which helped enormously with putting us at ease, allowing him to prompt us into thinking deeply about what areas needed work and on the other hand, what we were already doing well.

"Our coach also went above this by providing us with suggestions of networking opportunities and grant schemes for businesses which has hugely contributed to our business strategies.

"Over the course of the EBS scheme we focussed on the overall structure of the business, with our attention mostly around our team, focusing on our individual roles within the company."

"Additionally, we analysed our finances, deciphering which previous projects gave us the best turnover and how to drive our new ideas forward. These ideas are our online subscription training course and a new innovative technique to bring people together.

"These concepts are what we are going to turn our time and attention to over the next few months to provide organisations with the benefits of dialogue within environmental management."

We increased our staff head-count by 50% meaning that we can better meet increased client demand carried over from the previous year. This also contributed a further 10% increase in revenue.

Founded almost 20 years ago, EPIC Media Group is an experienced vehicle livery company that works for clients with commercial fleets, local authorities and waste contractors.

Coach Damien Tree outlines the experiences of East Malling-based company Epic Media Group while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.epicmediagroup.co.uk



Upon starting on the Enhanced Business Support scheme, EPIC's coach analysed the business structure along with the business owner, focusing on both its strengths and weaknesses.

EPIC Media Group had a strong business strategy already in place so the coach helped dissect the structure, processes and operations, to discover where EPIC could make further improvements to benefit the business and deliver growth.

By focusing on financial understanding and sales statistics, the company has been able to dig deeper into their figures to see where best practice could be applied and work out areas that could be improved, this has also helped advance their marketing strategy.

EPIC Media Group has also focused on researching possible future sustainable materials that will provide a more environmentally-friendly way of wrapping graphics onto their clients' vehicles, using recyclable, PVC-free vinyl.

Staff levels have been increased to help the company scale up its operations, while the sales and marketing approach has been repositioned to help target ideal clients in order to boost turnover.

Next year, will be the 20th anniversary year for Epic Media and it should be a great one.

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Staff levels have been increased to help the company scale up its operations, while the sales and marketing approach has been repositioned to help target ideal clients in order to boost turnover.

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Established in 2017, Perfect Protect provides mortgage, insurance and financial planning advice to clients across the south-east to protect, support and develop their wealth.

Coach Mark Billage outlines the experiences of Dartford-based financial advisors Perfect Protect while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.perfectprotect.co.uk



A first step was to conduct a root and branch review of the business, which identified a need to establish clearer guiding values and to help the Directors define what successful growth would look like. The firm's original set of nine values was distilled into five new core values, with the acronym I-CARE; Integrity, Consistency, Approachability, Responsibility, Excellence.

Michael Margai, Practice Principal and Senior Financial Planner at Perfect Protect, said: "One of the biggest impacts of the Enhanced Business Support scheme has been the work we have done to clearly define our values, which has had a transformative effect on the practice. Viewing our decision making through this lens has been incredibly helpful and has given us a clearer sense of who we are and what we stand for, which is vital when we are explaining our services and approach to our clients."

Working with their coach, the Directors also spent time identifying their strengths and working out their areas of expertise, in order to utilise their respective skills to the fullest. Following a review of the firm's revenue and workstreams, the decision has been made to prioritise protection services (i.e. insurance) which offer the prospect of greater returns.

During the EBS scheme, Perfect Protect conducted a recruitment campaign to grow the number of financial advisers in the business, which will enable the firm to take on additional clients and win new business. As such, four additional self-employed advisers are currently being onboarded, nearly doubling the company's headcount, whilst one existing team member has moved to a full-time role as Practice Manager.

Michael concluded: "I highly recommend the coaching and support we have received, which has had a massive impact on our business."

"It is easy to get lost working in the business, but the EBS scheme has ensured we regularly set aside time to work on the business. The monthly interaction with our coach has been a tremendous help, supporting us to set goals, break tasks down into manageable chunks, and stay on track.

"We have done valuable work putting firm foundations in place for the future – we now have the right people and culture in place and we know where we all need to focus our efforts to achieve growth and success."

The work we have done with our coach to define our values has been very impactful and provided clarity on what we stand for, how we want to move forward and what we need to do to get us there.

Headquartered at Discovery Park in Sandwich, eXroid Technology is a medical device company that offers pioneering electrotherapy treatments for haemorrhoids to patients at its clinics across the UK.

Coach Dr Nick Pope outlines the experiences of Sandwich-based med-tech company eXroid Technology while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.exroid.com



Having brought in a new CEO and Financial Director, and with plans to grow the business significantly over the next three years, the eXroid directors joined the Enhanced Business Support scheme to gain insights on how best to increase the company's value.

The coaching sessions focused on helping the directors create a detailed three-year plan, with monthly tasks aligned to the goal of growing the company's share price.

The strategy included a range of objectives, such as improving profitability, exploring opportunities to acquire or partner with other organisations, recruitment, and investing in research and development.

A key component of the company's growth plan was to achieve regulatory compliance to provide its services via the NHS, a complex process which is still ongoing.

The monthly meetings with the coach provided a forum for discussion between the directors, where they could talk about the business and address any issues.

One board member described the sessions as an 'executive safe space' which was invaluable to the directors' understanding of the steps that needed to be taken to achieve growth.

With multiple views and opinions being aired and worked through, eXroid valued the coach's facilitation skills which kept the debate on track, while ensuring the group stayed focused on topics and priorities.

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The monthly meetings with the coach provided a forum for discussion between the directors, where they could talk about the business and address any issues.

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Lifeboat Lettings is a property management service primarily working with clients that own residential properties spanning from traditional buy-to-let properties to blocks of flats specialising in housing for multiple occupants.

Lifeboat Lettings was started by Rick Walton and his business partner Richard Poynter ten years ago. The company operates predominantly online, using digital software to liaise with clients.

www.lifeboatlettings.co.uk



Rick Walton said: "During the Covid-19 lockdowns, along with many other businesses, we had to adapt quickly to the situation. Fortunately for us being a digital business we had many systems in place for our team to adjust to remote working with just a week of preparation.

"I first joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) programme as during this remote working period we focused on sustaining the business rather than growing, like we were previously and we wanted to get back to how we were before the pandemic, and we began to rapidly grow again – so much so that we needed some guidance on how to put in place systemised strategies to keep up with the workload.

"Currently we are also facing challenges in regards to cost increases, interest rate hikes and less mortgage products availability; even being impacted with our multiple occupancy housing where we are liable for paying the now hugely inflated utility bills.

"However, with our combined, 50+ years of experience we are able to offer our landlord clients great management services and advice in these financially difficult times.

"The EBS scheme gave us a regular point of contact with our coach who helped us reflect on what was important to our business and what we wanted to achieve with it, giving us accountability for the plans we put in place whilst ensuring we were heading in the right direction to achieve our business goals.

"In the last twelve months we have taken on a full-time member of office staff from the DWP Kickstart Scheme, which has helped us immensely.

"We also decided to employ a qualified plumber as our in-house maintenance man. This helps us cut costs on hiring third-party companies to help us but also cuts the time down that our tenants would have to wait for issues to be mended. As well as always having trustworthy repairs to our properties, we can now advertise maintenance services to external clients.

"We are also working on a company handbook to ensure that the procedures and processes of our business are written down to add value to the company if ever there was a time that we could sell or franchise the business.

"Another focus for the coming months is to perhaps further business development by building on additional services, including training workshops and support groups for landlords to share best practices to optimise their businesses."



The EBS scheme gave us a regular point of contact with our coach who helped us reflect on what was important to our business and what we wanted to achieve with it



Everest Cash & Carry

Everest Cash and Carry is a world foods store, providing a huge range of predominantly Asian food products to customers from its shop in Folkestone, as well as delivering bulk items to local restaurants.

Coach Damien Tree outlines the experiences of Folkestone-based Everest Cash and Carry while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

Tirtharaj Gurung, the Owner of Everest Cash and Carry, runs the family business from a large shop-front store in Cheriton, Folkestone, but has found that being a hands-on business owner often meant that he was not able to allocate enough time to work on business strategy.

The Enhanced Business Support scheme helped Tirtharaj focus more on the overall business structure using his EBS coaching sessions as a business mentoring opportunity.

Working with his coach, Tirtharaj focussed on financial understanding of his business along with managing staff (many members of his family) and developing sales and marketing strategies that are now being put fully in place.

Over the course of the EBS scheme, Everest Cash and Carry invested in renovations to its store whilst also increasing staffing numbers by over 12% and its turnover by over a third.

The company is now considering expansion by opening an additional branch that will focus more on wholesale clientele.

In the future Tirtharaj also has plans to explore digital marketing and is considering venturing into e-commerce to further grow his business, an area he would not have even thought about approaching before the scheme.

THE OAST

With clinics in Sittingbourne and on the Isle of Sheppey, Oast Osteopathy is a multi-disciplinary wellness practice that delivers hands-on treatment to help people manage their pain and improve their physical wellbeing.

Coach Seonaid Macdonald outlines the experiences of Sittingbourne-based Oast Osteopathy while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme.

www.oastosteopathy.co.uk

Having recently opened a second clinic in Sheppey, and with a baby on the way, owner Claire Lloyd was keen to take a more strategic approach to managing the business to improve processes and acquire more clients, to enable her to step back from many day-to-day tasks.

The monthly coaching sessions provided a structure and systematic approach to thinking about the business, helping Claire to put the necessary steps in place to plan for the future.

The meetings were an ideal opportunity for Claire to take time out of the business to consider Oast Osteopathy's goals, values and growth trajectory, while holding her accountable for making progress towards the agreed monthly targets.

During the time on the Enhanced Business Support scheme, Oast Osteopathy has exceeded its financial targets and now has clear processes in place which will enable Claire to manage operations more efficiently.



Victory Cleaning has more than 30 years' experience in providing professional residential and commercial cleaning services to clients across central and east Kent.

Coach Seonaid Macdonald outlines the experiences of Ashford-based Victory Cleaning while on the Enhanced Business Support scheme

www.commercialdomesticcleaners.co.uk



Having grown rapidly in recent years, and with plans to double in size, Victory Cleaning joined the Enhanced Business Support scheme with a view to putting new practices and procedures in place to help streamline operations and provide firm foundations for further expansion.

Working with the EBS coach, Victory Cleaning identified a number of areas across the business where processes needed to be improved.

With no HR department, the company engaged the services of an external consultant to deliver HR functions, including training, Continuing Professional Development and dealing with staffing issues.

The directors also took the decision to switch accountants to improve its financial reporting.

The company has also turned to technology to improve efficiency and monitor staff, with a new online app to track staff movements and ensure reliable service levels.

Victory Cleaning is on track to meet its financial targets this year, which will stand the company in good stead as it aims for further growth.

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Kent Cricket Direct is one of the only remaining, family run, specialist cricket shops in the south-east, selling a wide range of cricket equipment, clothing and accessories.

Owners Dominic and Linda Bowen have heavily invested in other areas to keep the business fresh; they now offer team wear, coaching equipment and cricket bat refurbishment.

www.kentcricketdirect.co.uk



Linda said: "Covid was a difficult time for everyone, but luckily our local clubs realised our importance in the cricket community and still put in large orders with us even though they weren't using the equipment during the lockdowns, which helped enormously in our survival through the pandemic.

"All members of our team are cricket experts or coaches themselves so can provide a fantastic customer service for our cricket loving customers. We offer a vast range of stock and services but we also see our business as a cricket networking hub for members of the wider community who are passionate about all things cricket; often introducing people to local clubs and coaches.

"Having a small business can feel isolating at times and that was a real benefit of the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme, having a coach to rely on for external advice and to keep us on track with our growth.

"We have now employed a new full-time member of staff who we have trained with help from our coach. This new team member also helps us with our social media marketing which is important for us now that we have expanded our online shopping experience. We have taken time to align our profit margins on our products and we are seeing an increase in turnover now that we have begun a marketing strategy."

Dominic said: "We have also purchased the premises that the shop is located in, meaning that we have been able to make physical changes to the shop layout allowing us to stock more products; we have plans to source extra storage facilities to ensure we can keep up with our ever-increasing online sales, and we may look to employ additional staff to support our e-commerce activities.

"Running a family business, where we are all so passionate about what we sell, it's often difficult to focus on what the business needs when our attention is always on the customer's shopping experience.

"The EBS scheme has helped enormously by providing the time to consider the bigger picture, and the advice to help us improve our business overall, which will ultimately improve the service to our customers."

The scheme has given structure to the business, ensuring that we view it objectively by creating and meeting smaller, achievable monthly targets, which has helped to keep us on track.



Style Brands is a promotional products and branded clothing company producing an extensive range of items which enhance brand and business image.

The company has expertise in sourcing, offers competitive pricing, and has successfully launched its new eco-friendly range including reusable travel cups and bottles.

www.stylebrands.co.uk



Daryl Carter, Co-owner and Director of Style Brands said: "I first joined the Enhanced Business Support (EBS) scheme with the objective of focusing on business growth through marketing strategies and putting business procedures in place to help achieve our goals.

"During the unprecedented times of the Covid-19 pandemic we had created plans and targets which had to be re-thought along the way. It was a challenge while businesses, our clients included, all struggled to get through the lockdowns.

"Understandably, marketing was no longer an immediate priority for many of our customers, so we had to work quickly to adapt by widening our product range.

"The EBS peer groups were a fantastic networking opportunity and provided a vital avenue for discussion and support during a very difficult time.

"With such a variety of businesses and sectors represented, we were all able to benefit from sharing our experiences and hearing fresh perspectives which we could apply to our own businesses.

"During the mentoring sessions, we set tasks and reviewed progress towards our targets with our coach. We took the decision to streamline some of our services and produced targeted activities to drive sales that have proven extremely beneficial and have had a real impact on our bottom line.

"As a business owner it is easy to put goals into place and then not prioritise achieving those goals; our coach highlighted the key points to focus on within the business and honed in on what was working well, and highlighted areas where we needed to redirect our attention to boost the growth of the company.

"I would recommend the EBS scheme because it helped us enormously to have our business strategy analysed by a coach with such knowledge and experience.

"As well as offering guidance and support about the processes we needed to work on, our coaching also confirmed the areas in which we were already excelling, which helped to reaffirm our confidence in the company and its longer-term viability."

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The Imaging Centre is a family run digital printing company based in Kent, specialising in greeting cards for UK and international publishers.

Founded over 35 years ago, The Imaging Centre initially produced artwork for print using electronic imaging; now it prints high-quality small batch greeting cards for over 700 publishers.

www.theimagingcentre.co.uk



Adam Short, Managing Director of The Imaging Centre, said: "We initially embarked on the Enhanced Business Support scheme to obtain guidance on the handing over of the business from my father to myself and my sister, Jessica. Our coach helped enormously with this but also added value in many other ways.

"Covid-19 lockdowns caused many challenges, in that the pandemic coincided with the time Jessica and I took over, meaning we were thrown in at the deep-end, managing the biggest disruption the company had ever faced, with no guide on how to overcome a world-wide pandemic whilst running a business.

"This forced us to come up with our own solutions and procedures to keep the business stable, increasing ours and our father's confidence in our abilities; although the real

challenges came after the main lockdowns, in regard to supply issues and huge cost increases.

"Our coach was a great source of impartial management advice, offering an objective perspective on the business; he also made us aware of many great schemes to gain financial aid and support.

"We've grown our turnover by around 20% every year so far, and we have tripled our turnover since working with our coach."

"In the last twelve months we have increased our team by over 15% to maintain our growth, and we've even had to move premises for a second time to keep up with demand.

"In the future I want to broaden our international clientele and invest heavily in automated systems to help speed-up the process for our customers and ensure we can continue to meet demand while providing excellent quality."

In the last twelve months we have increased our team by over 15% to maintain our growth, and we've even had to move premises for a second time to keep up with demand.

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Enhanced Business Support

For more information about the Enhanced
Business Support scheme, please contact:

01233 503838

www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk



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