

D2N2 UpScaler Case Studies

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D2N2 | **GROWTH
HUB
SCALEUP**

The
UpScaler
Project



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

*UpScaler is delivered
in partnership with*



NBS Nottingham
Business School
Nottingham Trent University



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Introduction

Inspiring growth

About the project

D2N2 UpScaler is a programme of specific, tailored high-growth business support for small and medium-sized businesses in the D2N2 area that are growing rapidly or have the potential to do so.

It is a project for established successful businesses that are scaling up, have high growth potential, or aspire to grow with a proven market and management team in place.

Through the UpScaler project, selected businesses have access to a coordinated range of free or heavily subsidised business support activities, including an intense diagnostic, a grant for coaching support, a graduate talent grant, peer network activity and a comprehensive events programme covering topics specifically designed to upskill the business.

It aims to create an active and dynamic support community that helps to develop the businesses taking part to realise their high growth potential.

About our partners

The D2N2 UpScaler project is delivered in partnership by Nottingham Business School at Nottingham Trent University and East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire). It is supported by the European Regional Development Fund.

Nottingham Business School provides research and education that combines academic excellence with a positive impact on people, business and society.

It has an unrivalled level of engagement with local and regional business, public and voluntary organisations.

East Midlands Chamber is the leading business representation organisation in the East Midlands region. With a growing membership of more than 4,300 businesses - start-up to scale up, local to global - it aims to enhance Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire businesses and communities with a diverse programme of support services.

“D2N2 UpScaler has given me the tools to grow my business and grow as a person too.”

- Lynn Johnson, Managing Director, FSG Tableware



Devtank

Thinking out of the box for business growth

Sector	<i>Electrical engineering</i>
District	<i>Derbyshire Dales</i>
Number of Employees	<i>8</i>
Support received	<i>Grant funding, one-to-one coaching, workshops</i>

The Client

Devtank is an opensource hardware and software company which develops test and measurement equipment, automation systems and design solutions for a host of business sectors.

Founded in 2014, the business is split into four core groups – product design, consultancy, training and test facilities. The applications it creates include aerospace support equipment, telemetry applications, engine control systems and laboratory instrumentation for the electronics industry.

Its opensource automated test and measurement hardware platform, called HILTOP, gives faster and more accurate measurements through hardware and software integration.



The barriers to high growth

The company experienced rapid growth since it was founded by its three directors, by launching new products and applications into different sectors and increasing its staff headcount.

It moved into its own premises in January 2019 and with plans to recruit more staff and launch more products, was looking for support to manage that growth more effectively, explore funding opportunities and standardise its operating processes and procedures as it gears up for its next phase of expansion.

The UpScaler solution

Several key members of staff attended UpScaler workshops on a host of subjects including user experience, strategic marketing, branding and leadership.

The programme also provided one-to-one coaching and mentoring, as well as helping the company to grow its network of potential customers. And the company also accessed a graduate talent grant, which provided financial support to enable it to have a graduate placement, along with funding to purchase new technology to develop its products further and introduce new innovations.

The impact

UpScaler subsidised Devtank's ISO mentoring to help it prepare for the accreditation process for ISO9001 for its quality management systems which is leading to new roles being created to support its next phase of growth.

It's also in the process of developing 10 new products which it hopes to bring to market in 2021. And it is exploring the possibility of investing in a new ecommerce website, which will give customers the ability to specify their product requirements online, prior to ordering.

"The support we've received from the D2N2 UpScaler project has been really beneficial. It has enabled us to refine some of our internal processes and focus our future growth strategy, to get us ready for our next phase of expansion."

- Darren Millington



FSG Tableware

Opening a Pandora's Box of growth

Sector	<i>Foodservice equipment distributor</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>6</i>
Support received	<i>Business diagnostic, one-to-one coaching, workshops</i>

The Client

FSG Tableware is the exclusive UK importer for some of the world's leading food display and tableware manufacturers. It supplies public sector and commercial catering operations with innovative, eco-friendly foodservice products, via a network of catering equipment distributors across the UK, Ireland and Europe.

The business was founded in 2009 and represents manufacturers from the USA and China.

Its product portfolio includes healthcare adapted dinnerware to improve nutrition and hydration, eye-catching buffet displays and sustainable, reusable alternatives to single-use food and drink containers.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

FSG Tableware had experienced solid organic growth since it was established, but its founder and managing director, Lynn Johnson, was keen to take it to the next level.

Her biggest issue was time. As head of a small team, she played a hands-on role working in the business, so wasn't able to take a step back from the day-to-day operations to look at the bigger picture and work out a strategic plan to grow her company.

The UpScaler solution

Lynn was introduced to UpScaler through Nottingham Trent University's Leading to Grow programme, which funded an initial business diagnostic and 'helicopter' business plan and identified the biggest opportunities for growth.

She also attended UpScaler workshops covering a range of subjects, including business finance and marketing. UpScaler connected Lynn with RDS Global, who she is developing a new digital solution with, and signposted her to funding opportunities through the Business Investment Fund, for help with new product development.

The impact

The company is currently carrying out product development for a new modular bin system for catering establishments.

It is also piloting a new digital system, at the University of Chester, to help improve its recycling processes.

It plans to recruit additional sales staff in 2021 to service its projected growth and hopes to bring the manufacturing of some of its products back to the UK.

"Joining the D2N2 UpScaler programme was a bit like opening a Pandora's Box. The amount of support I've received has been overwhelming and has really helped me to focus my efforts on the future of the business and what I need to do to get there. Thanks to the programme, I feel that we have grown as a business, but I have also grown as a person too."

- Lynn Johnson





Ignys

Engineering a growth solution



Sector	<i>Electronics design and software engineering</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>10</i>
Support received	<i>Mentoring, workshops</i>

The Client

Ignys is an electronics design and software development consultancy that helps clients from a range of sectors turn their product ideas into fully working prototypes. It works with clients at every stage of the product development journey, from idea conception and prototyping to testing, validation and compliance and into volume manufacturing and beyond.

Its small team has decades of experience in software and electronics and its main areas of work include telecommunications, Internet of Things (IoT), fire systems, control and measurement, medical, remote monitoring, renewable energy and more.



The barriers to high growth

The business was founded in 2017 by managing director Richard Fletcher and was based at his home address. It has grown steadily and now has ten employees. Earlier this year, to accommodate its growth and give it further capacity, it moved into leased office space on the Nottingham Science Park.

It was looking for support to establish the structure and processes required to stabilise the foundations of the business and give it a platform for further growth.

The UpScaler solution

Richard was introduced to UpScaler business adviser Paul Humphreys and was initially looking for project funding and diagnostic support to help move the business forward.

He attended several workshops on various business management topics such as finance, HR and growth planning.

The support he received enabled him to take a step back from the day to day running of the business and take a more holistic view of where future opportunities lie and what the business needs to do to get there.

The impact

Following the workshops and mentoring support, Richard has been able to refine the processes for all areas of the business, including finance, cashflow and performance management. He has also been signposted to a host of other support initiatives and opportunities.

Richard is currently in the process of establishing a senior management team which will be responsible for the everyday running of the business, allowing him to focus more on its strategy and future direction.

“The support we’ve received from UpScaler has been invaluable in terms of helping us to form our ideas and look at our business from a different perspective. As a small but growing company, it’s sometimes hard to press pause and take a more strategic view, but the mentoring has really helped me to focus on how I can scale the business and achieve growth in a more sustainable way.”

- Richard Fletcher



ITP

Gearing up for sustainable growth

Sector	<i>Sustainable transport consultancy</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>40</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, mentoring, graduate talent grant</i>

The Client

Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) is a sustainable transport planning and research consultancy. It employs a team of skilled professionals who share a passion for well-designed mobility schemes that meet people's needs and match local contexts.

ITP's multi-disciplinary team researches, designs, implements, monitors and evaluates transport initiatives for public and private sector clients. In October 2020, it joined forces with Royal HaskoningDHV, an independently owned Dutch engineering company, to further its transport planning offer in the UK and around the world.



The barriers to high growth

ITP had achieved steady growth since it was founded in 1998 and at the start of the first coronavirus lockdown, in March, had the opportunity to learn more about how to continue to develop and grow.

It wanted to reassess its position in the market and its offering to customers and was also looking for some structured guidance and support to help it take the next step and gear up for further growth.

The UpScaler solution

Key ITP staff, including managing director Jon Parker, attended several UpScaler events including strategic HR, scale-up performance, supplier development, customer needs, employer brand and strategic marketing, to help it become a more vision-led business.

The one-to-one support and mentoring from UpScaler business coaches helped signpost ITP to further local support initiatives. It also received a graduate talent grant from Nottingham Trent University which enabled it to recruit and support a new member of staff.

The impact

On the back of its merger with Royal HaskoningDHV, ITP continues to grow as part of a bigger group.

The support it received from UpScaler contributed to its growing confidence in the way it was structured for growth, and helped it identify where it needed to invest.

The events also gave Jon and his team the opportunity to share best practice with other delegates and test their ideas with peers.

"All the events were really well organised and the business advisers we dealt with were invaluable. They enabled us to think about things in a different way, that we hadn't really thought about before, to get a new perspective on where we stand as a business. They were also convenient and didn't demand a lot of time out of the office, which is good, because it didn't focus too much of our attention away from running the business."

- Jon Parker



“The support I’ve received from UpScaler has enabled me to think bigger. I now have the confidence to think about things from a different perspective.”

- Mathew Done, Founder, Slō Drinks



Jupiter Play & Leisure

Taking a new direction



Sector	<i>Outdoor leisure design consultancy</i>
District	<i>Rushcliffe</i>
Number of Employees	<i>17</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, one-to-one coaching, graduate talent grant</i>

The Client

Jupiter Play & Leisure is one of the UK's leading independent play and sports design consultancies.

It designs and creates inclusive leisure spaces which utilise some of the world's most unique and innovative outdoor equipment brands. The firm creates solutions for landscape architects, local authorities, education, leisure and tourism providers, housing developers, community groups and the healthcare sector.

The play spaces Jupiter creates are designed to inspire children, their parents and communities, and boost engagement and participation in physical activities.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

The business has a history stretching back almost 20 years but switched its main base of operations from Scotland to Nottingham in 2015. Although Jupiter had achieved solid organic growth, it was looking for support as it was in the process of restructuring the business and wanted to refocus its offering to appeal to a UK-wide customer base.

The firm was also looking to rebrand to enable it to move into different market sectors and work with specifiers, landscape architects and developers on a more strategic level.

The UpScaler solution

Jupiter Play & Leisure received an in-depth business diagnostic from an UpScaler adviser to help it develop and refine its strategic objectives and short, medium and long-term goals.

Its team attended several Growth Forums and UpScaler strategic leader workshops on a host of different subjects, including finance, business planning, supplier development and marketing. The latter was of particular use in helping the firm to take stock of its current activity and redefine its brand message.

The impact

An UpScaler business adviser worked with the company to develop a strategic business plan aimed at identifying and targeting connections in the space it is looking to move into.

Jupiter has recently recruited two new members of staff to extend its design team and add an aftersales and contracts coordinator to its ranks. It has also created an in-house installation team, rather than sub-contracting this aspect of the business out.

"The support we received from UpScaler enabled us to take a step away from the business and refocus our efforts on developing our strategic vision and working out what we need to do to get us there. As a business in transition, it's often hard to take time away from the day to day to do that strategic thinking."

- Catherine Hoenigmann



Lemon and Lime Interiors

Getting ready for the next stage of growth



Sector	<i>Property staging business</i>
District	<i>South Derbyshire</i>
Number of Employees	<i>8</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, one-to-one coaching</i>

The Client

Lemon and Lime Interiors is a home staging business which provides professional property presentation services to clients looking to sell their homes.

Research has found that properties which have been professionally presented sell, on average, for eight per cent more than comparable properties. Lemon and Lime works with clients to help them achieve the best possible purchase price.

Its service covers everything from decluttering a lived-in home to fully furnishing empty properties, to create a better first impression for potential buyers.



The barriers to high growth

Lemon and Lime Interiors was set up in 2015 and rapidly established itself in its local marketplace, and then across the Midlands.

At that point, with no real competitors or blueprint for this type of business in the UK, founder Elaine Penhaul set about growing the company organically and recruiting staff to support this growth.

However, with big plans to expand the offering across the UK and internationally, it was looking for help in planning the right strategy to take its growth to the next level.

The UpScaler solution

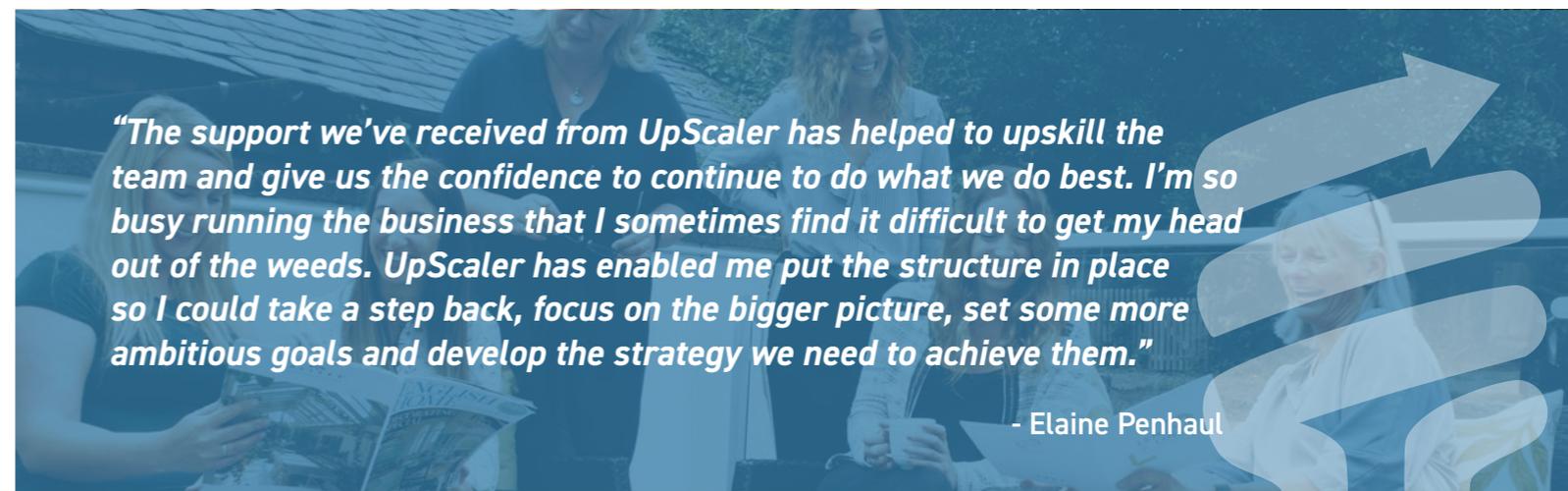
Elaine worked closely with an UpScaler business coach to focus on developing a future growth strategy, and access graduate talent funding via Nottingham Trent University, to help bring more expertise into the business.

Elaine and her team attended several UpScaler workshops, covering a wide range of topics, to build the skillsets within the business, as well as develop project manager Kirsty Fisher and enable her to take a more central role in managing day to day operations.

The impact

UpScaler helped the company double the size of its workforce, from four to eight employees, as well as create a strategy to launch into global markets including Hong Kong.

On the back of this, Elaine has just published her second book. The company has also introduced a smartphone app which provides estate agents, property developers and home sellers with data collection and reporting tools to evidence the benefits of home staging a property before the sale.



"The support we've received from UpScaler has helped to upskill the team and give us the confidence to continue to do what we do best. I'm so busy running the business that I sometimes find it difficult to get my head out of the weeds. UpScaler has enabled me put the structure in place so I could take a step back, focus on the bigger picture, set some more ambitious goals and develop the strategy we need to achieve them."

- Elaine Penhaul



Paintman

A new era of growth for a family business

Sector	<i>Specialist paint supplier</i>
District	<i>Bassetlaw</i>
Number of Employees	<i>6</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, mentoring</i>

The Client

Paintman Paint Ltd is a multi award-winning family business that specialises in the sourcing and supply of heritage paint for vehicle restorations and other projects.

It is the UK's leading supplier of premium quality enamel paint for projects which require an aesthetically beautiful finish, as well as a wide range of coatings, thinners, primers, undercoats and other accessories.

It is predominantly an ecommerce business, but prides itself on providing a personal service to all its customers to help them bring their restorations to fruition.



The barriers to high growth

Paintman has been in business since the 1980s, but the brand was taken over by current owner David Pickles in 2013.

In 2016, it moved into its own premises and has since achieved 20% year on year growth. In early 2020, David's son, Ali, came into the business with a view to sustaining its growth and implementing a succession plan beyond David's retirement, and he was looking for advice and guidance on the best way to achieve this.

The UpScaler solution

UpScaler has supported both Paintman's original management team, and the succession, where most projects would have refused this. The management team attended several UpScaler workshops, including sessions on strategic finance, which helped stress the importance of credit ratings and filing correctly at Companies House, when looking to acquire more new business.

The events also helped the company to discover new ways of working to become more efficient, as it gears up for future global distribution.

The impact

Following the workshops, the company has developed a strategic five-year business plan to help stabilise its foundations as it gears up for further growth. It has been working with a Finance Director to improve its credit rating, which has helped it to reach a more corporate client base.

It has also implemented a new customer service process and is in the process of redeveloping its ecommerce website.

"We absorbed a lot of what we learned at the UpScaler events, and implemented some of it into the business straight away. It helped us to refocus on where we are currently and where we need to be. There was a lot of information that I was already aware of, but it was good to both get a refresher and also get confirmation that we were doing the right things."

- Ali Pickles



PDS

Engineering an integrated growth solution

Sector	<i>Transport & infrastructure engineering</i>
District	<i>Derby City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>44</i>
Support received	<i>Business diagnostic, workshops, graduate talent grant</i>

The Client

P. Ducker Systems (PDS) is a Derby-based engineering firm which creates bespoke, technology-driven systems integration solutions. Most of its work is on capital projects or service work for major UK infrastructure schemes in transportation, road tunnels, airports and HV power systems.

Founded in 1988, it started life creating control and monitoring systems and continues to deliver successful projects in that area.

However, as it has grown, it has evolved to support all aspects of projects in infrastructure systems integration.



The barriers to high growth

PDS was one of the first businesses to engage with UpScaler when it launched in 2019.

It has ambitiously been trying to grow in recent years. Although it was buffeted by austerity and Brexit, and then COVID-19, it turned over £8.5m in the year to March 2020, up 60% up on the previous year. It engaged with UpScaler as it was seeking advice and support to help it continue on its growth trajectory in a more planned and sustainable way.

The UpScaler solution

PDS has benefitted from grant funding to help it recruit graduates, a professional review of the business by an UpScaler adviser, and extensive workshops on a whole range of subjects.

Strategic Leader Workshops have enabled a key member of staff to take on a more senior role within the business. In addition, Lockdown Support workshops helped the firm to quickly adapt to the challenges posed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The impact

UpScaler's support has provided PDS with a platform of advice and knowledge that has informed its thinking and guided its actions.

The firm's graduate talent funding has enabled it to strengthen its team and bring new and relevant skills into the business.

The workshop support has enabled its leadership team to ensure all the decisions it takes are made to maintain service while being safe and sustainable.

"I have enjoyed the programme and always come away with some takeaways. It is 'on-trend', gives a heads up of what is coming and is delivered by experts who are real people and are friendly, professional and supportive. As a result, we are more aware, more planned, more resilient and, ultimately, more successful. Having taken the right decisions for the right reasons we found ourselves prepared when the current crisis arrived and have worked through it pretty much unaffected."

- Mike Rose



“It was also good to meet other like-minded businesspeople in the UpScaler network, to share our experiences, test our ideas and encourage each other.”

- Catherine Hoenigmann, Director, Jupiter Play & Leisure



PNE Controls

Taking control of future growth

Sector *Design & manufacturing of electrical control systems*

District *Mansfield*

Number of Employees *14*

Support received *Workshops, mentoring*

The Client

PNE Controls is a dynamic and modern electrical control company that provides bespoke design, manufacturing, installation, software and support services for industrial automated systems.

Founded in 2015, its team has more than 25 years' experience in the industry and has developed relationships with all the key manufacturers and suppliers.

It is a registered member of the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) and has achieved the highest industry standards and certification across all aspects of electrical and electrotechnical design, installation, inspection, testing and monitoring.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

The business had achieved steady growth since starting in 2015 and as its team grew bigger, it needed to move into new premises to accommodate this and give it further capacity to grow.

As a business, it also needed upskilling in management, finance, marketing and HR so it could create the structure and processes required to continue to develop and take on bigger projects and take a more strategic approach to business planning and growth.

The UpScaler solution

Neil Cockings, the firm's managing director, attended several UpScaler workshops looking at various aspects of business management and planning, to bring more knowledge into the businesses.

He also received one-to-one support from UpScaler business adviser Paul Humphreys, which enabled him to take a step back from the day to day running of the business, focus on the bigger picture and identify where it needed to invest to bring in the skills needed to grow the business further.

The impact

Following the workshops, the company has implemented the internal paths and processes, and brought in the staff, to enable it to go after bigger clients and take on bigger projects.

It has recruited a new finance manager and a business development manager and has also invested in the services of a marketing agency to help promote its products and services to a wider audience. It is also in the process of going for ISO9001 accreditation.

"The support from UpScaler has been great and made me realise very quickly that I can't look after every area of the business, continuously, on my own. It's enabled me to approach things with a different mindset, be much more strategic with our planning, and bring in the right skills where we needed them, so that the business can run much more efficiently and effectively."

- Neil Cockings



Rebel Recruiters

Creating the foundations for future growth

Sector	<i>Recruitment consultancy</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>11</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, adviser support, graduate talent grant</i>

The Client

Rebel Recruiters is a Nottingham-based recruitment consultancy specialising in the technology sector. It works with a diverse range of clients to source and place highly skilled candidates in a wide range of tech-based roles.

The business is run on clearly defined values and a commitment to CSR, to help clients and staff live happier, healthy and more rewarding work lives. It also aims to make the recruitment experience better and raise the expectations both of customers looking to recruit and candidates looking for a role.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

The company was founded in 2015 and underwent rapid growth between 2016 and 2018, but that growth hit a plateau in 2018.

It was then that founder and managing director Azar Hussain realised that in order to grow further, the business needed the processes and standardisation in place to take things to the next level.

It approached UpScaler for support in business planning and developing and defining the processes it needed to achieve its growth ambitions.

The UpScaler solution

Rebel Recruiters received ongoing support from an UpScaler business adviser, having conducted a diagnostic. Azar and his team also attended workshops on a host of subjects, including people and culture, finance, leadership and management, and business strategy.

UpScaler also provided financial support through the programme's graduate talent grant, as well as signposting to other Nottingham Trent University grant offers, to subsidise three new graduate placements and progress them into permanent members of staff.

The impact

As a result of UpScaler's support, the company has adopted a host of new processes, including payroll, customer service, staff development and standard operating procedures.

It has done a lot of work on defining its values and company culture, to help improve collaboration, teamworking and staff morale.

It has since moved into new offices in Nottingham centre, which gives it the capacity to grow further as it looks to break into new markets and build its recurring revenue streams.

“As a small business owner, it can sometimes be difficult to get your head above water. The support from UpScaler has given me the confidence to take a step back and really focus on the things that will help the business grow and become more resilient. As well as the practical support we have received, it’s been great to be part of a peer-to-peer community where we can talk about the issues we are facing and share tips and ideas.”

- Azar Hussain





Slō Drinks

Gearing up for global growth



Sector	<i>Food & drink manufacturing</i>
District	<i>High Peak</i>
Number of Employees	<i>4</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops, one-to-one coaching</i>

The Client

Slō Drinks develops and manufactures a wide range of nutritional products for people with Dysphagia, a medical condition which causes swallowing difficulties. Its products change the consistency of drinks to make them safer to swallow.

Slō Drinks works with healthcare providers and dieticians, supplying products which help to thicken drinks for patients. Its range includes sachets to thicken cold, hot or fizzy drinks; nutritional milkshakes; alcoholic beverages including beer, cider and wine; and drinks which make it easier to swallow tablets and pills.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

Slō Drinks was founded by Mathew Done, its managing director, in 2005.

The company has achieved steady organic growth since its launch as it has refined its processes and developed a wide range of products for people with varying degrees of Dysphagia.

It is now the UK market leader and is the only manufacturer which can offer products at four different thicknesses. It engaged with UpScaler for support to take its growth to the next level and launch into 11 new markets around the world.

The UpScaler solution

Mathew worked closely with a Nottingham Trent University funded UpScaler mentor to look at several areas of the business and explore different ways of expanding internationally. It is currently gearing up to launch a franchise-based model to license its products for use in other countries, including America, as well as get its full product range approved for use by the NHS.

Mathew also attended a host of UpScaler workshops, looking at subjects including HR, finance and marketing.

The impact

As a result of UpScaler's support, the company has streamlined and simplified many of its processes with a view to future growth. It has implemented a long-term financial strategy and fine-tuned some of its products to strip out unnecessary costs.

It has also introduced a new people strategy and enhanced its marketing and customer service activities to help it further strengthen its market position and its competitive differentiators.

"The support we've received from UpScaler has given us the confidence to think about things from a different perspective, set some bigger goals and then go for them. I was looking for knowledge and skills to take a small company and grow it overseas. If it hadn't been for UpScaler, I would have had to buy this expertise in. The support has been fantastic and has enabled us to take the business in a completely new direction."

- Mathew Dunn



“We were probably at 90% of where I wanted us to be when I started UpScaler, but being able to tweak, refine and fine-tune that final 10% has been invaluable. It stands us in good stead for our next phase of growth.”

- Lee Marshall, Viridis Building Services



TTK Confectionery

Creating the gift of growth



Sector	<i>Confectionery gifting</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>25</i>
Support received	<i>Peer forums, workshops, graduate talent grant</i>

The Client

TTK Confectionery is a family business, based in Nottingham, which specialises in new product development and the design of packaging, confectionery and gifts for high street retailers.

It creates beautifully designed edible gifts based around trending flavours, prints and packaging.

TTK creates products for major retailers worldwide by sourcing the best confectionery and gourmet foods and developing stunning packaging using the latest colour and design inspirations.

It places a significant emphasis on sustainable, reusable packaging and also offers bespoke or private label options.



The barriers to high growth

TTK Confectionery has experienced rapid growth since it was founded in March 2017. Its turnover was £2.5m in 2019/20, and at three years old, the company was growing so fast that it needed help to manage that growth sustainably.

As a start-up with a small team, it was hard to think strategically and plan for the future while growing so fast. It was also looking to broaden its client base and work with bigger retailers, such as supermarkets.

The UpScaler solution

TTK's three directors attended peer forums and workshops organised by UpScaler, which covered subjects including structured growth, strategic leadership, marketing, planning and performance management.

Katie Gilbert, Head of Product Development, benefitted from being signposted to the Women in Leadership programme at the Nottingham Business School. It also received graduate talent funding from Nottingham Trent University, enabling it to recruit two NTU graduates, including for the key role of Head of New Product Development.

The impact

The financial support from the UpScaler project enabled TTK to grow its team and gave it the resources to work with larger customers. It started out working with small, independent retailers but now works with major supermarkets.

Since engaging with UpScaler, TTK has continued growing turnover and building its team. It has employed six NTU graduates in total along with several interns and its engagement with NTU enables it to seek out the talent it needs to continue to grow.

"I was always made to feel welcome, confident and comfortable whenever I dealt with UpScaler. Mixing and networking are encouraged, but it's not a stuffy networking group, it's definitely more for free-flowing ideas and sharing suggestions. It's very much run for the benefit of the participants, not to big up the organisation."

- Jess Barnett





Upperton Pharma Solutions

A scientific approach to growth

Sector	<i>Pharmaceutical development & manufacturing</i>
District	<i>Nottingham City</i>
Number of Employees	<i>30</i>
Support received	<i>Workshops</i>

The Client

Upperton Pharma Solutions is a contract development and manufacturing organisation with more than twenty years' experience in the development of dosage forms to the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

It offers clients an extensive range of services, from early feasibility and dosage form development to clinical trial manufacturing. It provides a complete development package across all dry powder dosage forms, including powders, capsules, tablets and devices for nasal and oral delivery.

Upperton is a world leader in expertise and know-how on pharmaceutical spray drying.



The barriers to high growth

Upperton had achieved steady growth since it was founded, as a consultancy business, in 1999.

Over the past five years it moved into the development and manufacturing of medicines for other companies.

While its team possesses a huge amount of scientific knowledge and technical skill, it needed support to help it get the right business and management structures in place to continue its growth trajectory and exploit new markets and opportunities.

The UpScaler solution

Dr Laura Mason, Upperton's director of business operations, attended several UpScaler workshops, including performance management, HR, and finance, to expand her knowledge of these key areas.

On the back of these, she was able to implement teams, culture and insight training with staff to help build team confidence and morale. The company was also looking for signposting and support for strategic finance and growth funding via Nottingham Trent University, to help support its plans for continuous but sustainable growth.

The impact

The workshops have enabled Dr Mason and her team to implement a number of changes within the business, including putting in place a structure for staff performance reviews, and other team-building initiatives.

It also gave her the opportunity to mix with a community of small business owners and managers to share knowledge and best practice, as well as being signposted to other forms of support beyond UpScaler, including sources of growth funding.

"The UpScaler events were great. As a business, we have a lot of scientific and technical knowledge, which was fine when we were a small team, but as we grew, we needed to improve on the business management and operations side of things. They were ideal for a small business like ours which was growing but needed a better understanding of how to manage that growth in the right way."

- Dr Laura Mason



Viridis Building Services

A sustainable path to future growth



Sector	<i>Environmental buildings consultancy</i>
District	<i>Newark & Sherwood</i>
Number of Employees	<i>9</i>
Support received	<i>Mentoring, workshops</i>

The Client

Viridis Building Services is a design and engineering consultancy which specialises in ensuring that buildings and their mechanical and electrical systems are net zero and as environmentally friendly as possible.

Founded in 2012, it works in partnership with architects, builders, project managers and their clients, providing intelligent, innovative and sustainable building services to projects across a wide range of sectors. From designing core sustainable principles at the earliest stages through to delivering low-carbon, low-cost lighting, water and energy systems, Viridis brings a pragmatic approach to every project.

[→ Watch the video](#)



The barriers to high growth

Lee Marshall, Viridis' managing director, engaged with UpScaler because he was struggling to recruit engineers with the right levels of skills and expertise to help take the business forward. He wanted to ensure that the business was doing everything it could to attract, retain and develop the right people and invest in its team to help it achieve its growth objectives.

Lee also wanted to tweak and refine some of the business' internal processes to ensure it had the right foundations in place on which to build.

The UpScaler solution

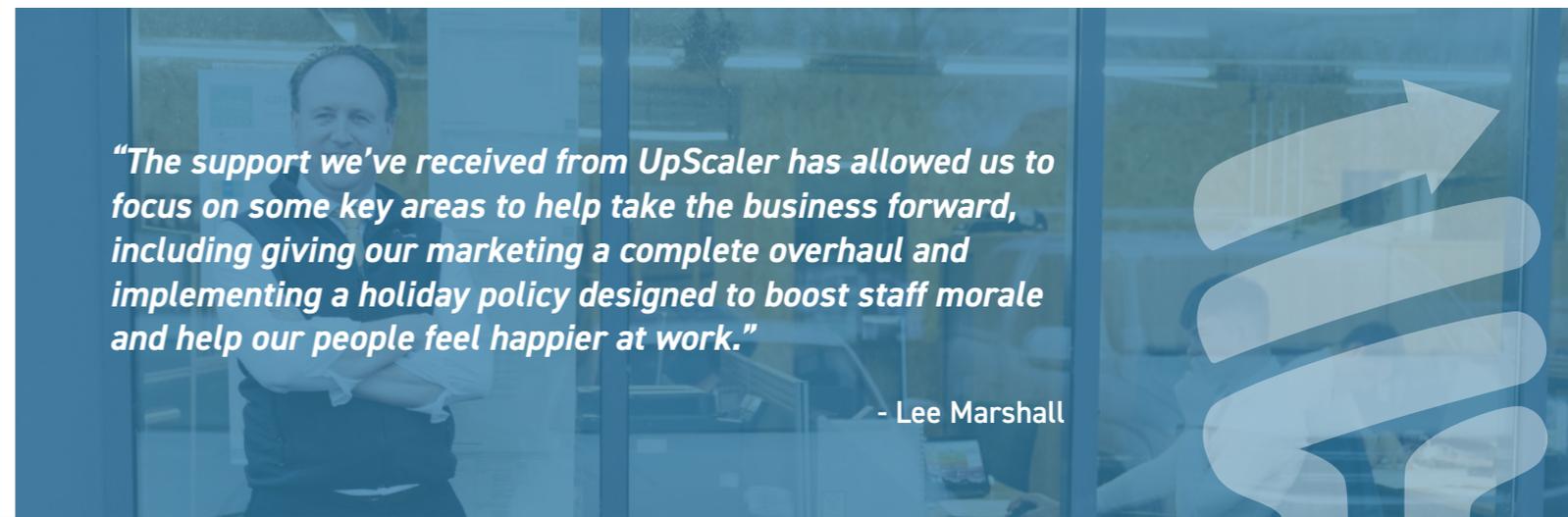
UpScaler and Nottingham Trent University funded a business diagnostic and several hours of one-to-one coaching for Lee, who also attended several workshops on subjects including HR, culture and marketing.

This support enabled the firm to develop closer links with the university, as well as local colleges and apprenticeship providers in Nottinghamshire and also in Falkirk, Scotland, where it has a regional office, with a view to recruiting the next generation of talent.

The impact

Following the workshops and mentoring support, the business has invested in a rebrand and a new website, to better showcase its services, brand and values to potential clients.

It has also refined several internal processes, including its holiday policy, which allows staff to take 42 days of holiday a year, as well as exploring ways of working more closely with local colleges to bring the skills it requires into the business.



"The support we've received from UpScaler has allowed us to focus on some key areas to help take the business forward, including giving our marketing a complete overhaul and implementing a holiday policy designed to boost staff morale and help our people feel happier at work."

- Lee Marshall



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you've grown,
now scale.



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