



BUSINESS SUPPORT CASE STUDY

Company: Callala

Programme: Starting and Succeeding in Business

Participant name: Andrew Iwanoczko

About Callala

Callala are an environmental consultancy working with companies (predominantly in the tech sector) to develop their understanding and positioning with regards to their environmental responsibilities.

Particularly with regards to bringing products and services to market, Callala ensure that their clients are both legislatively compliant and, also ethically responsible when it comes to the carbon neutral agenda. Andrew and Callala also work with their clients to look at 'adaptation and resilience' so that these companies are able to respond to the challenges that may arise in the future.

"Technology organisations typically find themselves creating products because they can, sometimes less about what the market is looking for, and whilst there might be a conceptual link between what a company is aiming to achieve and what users require. We look to push organisations to look at the impact of their manufacturing/ product creation and their impact on the environment."

The Impact of Covid-19

Like many people during the pandemic, Andrew's challenges main challenges that came as a result of the pandemic, came as the result of the end of his employment (by mutual consent with his

employer). As a result of this, Andrew spent a lot of time reflecting on where he was in his life personally and professionally, with a young family and the options available to him.

It was a stressful period as it has been for so many during Covid-19. But with the support of his family and close network of friends and professional relationships, the green shoots emerged.

Why they signed up to the Starting and Succeeding in Business Programme

With the concept of Callala in mind, Andrew sought out the support needed to mobilise his idea into a fully-fledged start-up enterprise.

“The information was initially provided to me via a colleague who pointed me towards Southend-n-Sea Council’s website with a speculative view of finding opportunities where support might be available. The most appealing form of support came from the Starting and Succeeding in Business Programme offered by South East LEP and WSX Enterprise.”

The Impact of the Programme

Of all the support programmes available (“... there were lots of programmes available...”), it was clear to Andrew that *“the South East LEP’s Starting and Succeeding in Business programme would be the most advantageous giving the kinds of material and understanding of how to start a business that I was going to need”*

From his professional experience, Andrew was confident in many aspects of entrepreneurship, but also recognised that he didn’t know elements and identified the programme as the one most worth pursuing.

“The videos, the group interactions and personal support has been really excellent in helping me identify where there are areas of vulnerability and weakness and start to address those. It’s been very, very good.

I’ve been delighted with the support this programme has provided me – it’s free! It’s also non-trivial and provided in key aspects, key vulnerabilities that I would have had, had I not taken part.”

Andrew also took great comfort from having a dedicated Business Advisor to work with as part of the programme.

“I’ve worked with Tony, my Business Advisor on the programme and it’s been really, really strong. He’s really made a point of trying to understand where I’m coming from, where my mark is and where my thinking was. He challenged me in a number of areas and every time, I’ve taken his advice and run forward with it.

I really feel that the impact that Tony has had on key facets of my business plan, on my pricing and the which I should consider the direction the business should take in terms of cash-flow for example - these are needs for all businesses.

Tony was excellent and reaching in and understanding what I was looking to achieve, what that was going to look like in the future from a pure numbers game, and provide intelligent, supportive and very positive advice.”

The programme has also helped Andrew and Callala on a practical level.

“The programme has inspired my branding which I love, and the grant has allowed me to commission the development of explainer videos with a view to simplifying what our offering looks like.

I hope this will help to create more leads for the business, reduce the sales cycle and demonstrate the competence of the organisation in delivering its ambitions.

The group sessions have helped my build some really great relationships, open doors and develop some great business resilience much quicker than I would have thought possible if I had tried to do it alone.”

Applying for the Business Support Grant

Andrew found the grant process incredibly in depth in how it sought to look at the plans and forecasting in place for the business, but the process was made smooth and as stress free as possible with the support always available both from the support team and Business Advisor.

“Most of the necessary steps in applying for the grant had already been done with the support team and Advisor as part of the programme, the grant application process verified that work and was straightforward. Any elements that hadn’t yet been covered as part of the programme allowed me to identify useful gaps that would be important to the business.

The grant is excellent, it’s enabled me to speed up my sales process, without the need for a loan to support a bumpier journey.

The grant also really delivers the ability to work with other consultants whose services would be useful to the business without having to employ people just yet.”

Recommending the Programme

“Realistically, I would encourage every business owner in Essex, Kent and East-Sussex to take a look at this South East LEP programme, and challenge them to look at themselves to think about whether there are any areas in their business they need to improve upon in their own understanding beyond where it is today. Because these programmes will help with that and help their business to thrive.”

There are three types of support that the programme provides, the online resources are useful for every business, the group sessions inspired me to scope out what my brand should look like, and the Business Advisor contact was just excellent.”