



## BUSINESS SUPPORT CASE STUDY

**Company:** Pasta Rasta

**Programme:** Adapting with Digital

**Participant name:** Henry Horton

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### About Pasta Rasta

Based in Gillingham, Kent, Pasta Rasta is the creation of business partners, Henry Horton and Licio Vario offering a unique take on authentic Italian cuisine with a fusion twist using Afro-Caribbean and Asian flavours. The innovative twist has proven to be incredibly popular with customers.

*"It's something we're hopeful of being able to develop as we go through the years. Food gives you space for exploration, takes you to different countries and takes you somewhere you can identify with as an individual while enjoying the flavours and the sensation of different tastes."*

*Pasta Rasta gives you the authenticity of Italian food made using real Italian ingredients from Italian wholesalers combined with locally produced ingredients. Italian food by tradition was the food for the people and should work in the context of wherever you are.*

*Our customers have also been part of the drive by making suggestions that we've been highly creative and open to explore new tastes and flavours – by and large, its worked!"*

## The Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 had a massive impact on the entire hospitality industry, and Pasta Rasta was not immune from the negative effects of the pandemic.

*“The biggest impact of the pandemic outside of not being able to trade was staffing. A lot of chefs left the industry, and a lot of Italian chefs went home to be closer to their families in Italy and have not come back. The knock-on effect of that is that we haven’t been able to develop and grow as quickly as we would like without the right skillset in our chefs.*”

*So, what we have decided was to train young people to be pasta chefs and give them the opportunity to build a career. It means we are taking longer to grow, get new business and be more adventurous. But, what has been nice is our customers have endorsed our commitment to training and the results in our food.”*

## Why they signed up to the Adapting with Digital Programme

Pasta Rasta are always trying to find ways of addressing the challenges they face, and the Adapting with Digital Programme has been a way of addressing their need to grow as they train our staff.

*“We’re registered with the Kent Growth Hub newsletter and there are always some great nuggets on there. I saw some items come through, one of which was the Adapting with Digital programme. There were a few others too, but the difference with the Adapting with Digital programme was that from the beginning, it looked like there was more nous with what they were doing.*”

*When you saw the content online, you could sense the support team and Business Advisors knew what they were talking about. They had industry experience and commanded authority with what they were saying. With this subject area, ‘Digital’ you know when someone knows their subject and when someone is just touching on the sides of it. With the business support team and their advisors, it was definitely the former.”*

## The Impact of the Programme

Henry was delighted to benefit from such concise, well-articulated and relevant business support through the resources available on the portal to the live events and the added value of free support from the business team led by Robyn Brookes and the Business Advisor.

*“The sort of content that was available is the sort of content you usually only hope to get to work with. You don’t need all of it, you just need to take what works for you and develop it with your business. And its quick, not heavily bogged down – it was succinct which was really nice.*”

*It helped me really apply some great structures to my business and gave me great guidance in how I should promote Pasta Rasta moving forward.”*

Henry was also delighted with the support provided by the team and Business Advisor.

*“The Business Advisor and other support was great, particularly with the grant application process. The advice helped make sure I maintained the best possible mindset and create structure in the business so that the task was never overwhelming, and I was always able to break things down into chunks, so they were more manageable.”*

### **Applying for the Business Support Grant**

Henry felt that the process for applying for grant was kept as simple as possible which was a massive benefit. With the support of the business team and Business Advisor, applying for the grant was straight-forward quickly putting any preconceived anxieties to rest.

*“There was great support all the way through the grant process. The team did so well to keep everything simple. It wasn’t a tricky form with essay questions needing in depth answers, but you had to show that what you were saying actually related to what you were trying to do. Low and behold, our application was successful which was really good.*

*What was really great, was part of the grant approval process was to use the online content that was available so you were compelled to explore what was there and noticing things that you might not have ordinarily like writing your business plan. These a business-fundamentals that many people shy away from like its not for them, but the way it was presented gave you enough to work with and apply it to your situation.”*

Being successful in applying for the business grant will prove greatly beneficial for Henry, Licio and Pasta Rasta giving them the financial resources to develop their online presence with a new website which will be used to drive their growth.

*“The grant will have direct impact because we’re working on the website now. We’ve had a holding page for over a year and we need to think about growth with all the channels that will drive that. The website will massively enhance the positive experience while giving us a saving with not needing to use the take-away food portals.*

*We can say what we want to say and target our customers and they can start engaging with us more so they can be part of our journey helping us grow. Our website will be a direct tool that will allow us to do that. “*

### **Recommending the Programme**

*“Coming on board and opening dialogue with the programme would be good for anyone looking to start a new business or grow their business. This is a must – you need to talk to somebody and the advice and support available with this programme is great. There’s a lot of good advice from people, mentors who have been where we are.*

*What this programme does is give you little nuggets that will set you on your way to achieving what you want to achieve for your business.”*