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Digital Enterprise

£10,000 digital funding delivers new jobs for Leeds marketing business



A direct marketing business that began life at the Leeds Beckett University business incubator has won contracts and created new jobs with the help of a £10,000 funding voucher enabling the firm to upgrade its in-house digital technology.

Launched in 2006, £1m turnover Blueberry Marketing now employs 28 people at its Leeds city centre offices where it delivers data-driven marketing projects to a client list that includes the exam board AQA, insurance group Zurich Municipal, the Department of Trade and Industry and London South Bank University.

Fareesh Maisuria, Blueberry Marketing founder and managing director, said the £10,000 funding, which came via the Government and European-backed Digital Enterprise programme, had been transformational for the business. “As a small business reliant on the data handling ability of our systems to be productive and efficient and to deliver for clients, we were struggling with outdated technology.

“We needed to make several improvements to our IT and telephone systems. When we heard about digital funding available for the Leeds City Region through Digital Enterprise that was a game changer for us.

The Digital Growth Voucher scheme for SMEs provides funding of between £2,000 and £10,000 towards new hardware and software, or to upgrade broadband connectivity. Vouchers can fund at least 50 per cent of the cost of an investment project and sometimes more.

Mr Maisuria successfully applied for a £10,000 Digital Growth Voucher, which the business used to part fund an upgraded IT infrastructure including a super-fast internet connection and VoIP telephone system. “We haven’t looked back since we upgraded our technology. We were very clear that this was

what we would need for the business to be successful and grow but it always seemed to be beyond our reach,” he said.

“The new infrastructure means we have been able to expand our client base as well as being much more flexible, which has triggered some major client wins. We’ve also been able to improve our quality process and improve compliancy, as well as reinvigorating our online presence and adding new services.

“One of the best results from our Digital Growth Voucher funding is that we have been able to recruit six rather than four new members of staff as well as a new apprentice. Staff retention is also much improved as the new IT systems mean it’s a far less stressful environment to work in.”

Digital Enterprise programme manager, Muz Mumtaz, said: “Blueberry Marketing is another fantastic example of a small business that has seen a really positive impact from Digital Growth Voucher funding. The scheme enables businesses to transform their digital dreams into reality. It’s a simple and quick process to apply and we are urging eligible businesses to sign up before the current phase of funding closes on 15 June.”

To be eligible for Digital Growth Voucher funding firms must trade in a business-to-business environment, rather than direct to consumers, employ between two and 250 people and generate less than €50m (approximately £43m) turnover. They must also be based in one of the nine Leeds city region areas of Leeds, Bradford, York, Wakefield, Harrogate, Calderdale, Selby, Kirklees and Craven.

Businesses can check their eligibility for the new Digital Growth Vouchers, as well as for Connectivity Vouchers, which offer a £1,000 one-off payment towards upgrading a business broadband connection, at www.digitalenterprise.co.uk