

Accelerator Case Study

Mount Cook Adventure Centre



Sector: Education & Activity Centre | **Size:** Small | **Location:** Derbyshire Dales | **Turnover:** £1.4m

About the business

Mount Cook Adventure Centre is based near Wirksworth on the south edge of the Peak District National Park. The not-for-profit organisation began in the summer of 2016, it now employs 18 full-time staff growing to 47 through seasonal workers in peak season.

Its role is to facilitate outdoor experiences, especially for young people and those who might not normally have the opportunity. The business engages with a variety of clients from junior and secondary schools, families, adults, universities and youth groups to corporate organisations.

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The variety and breadth of reach is important to Mount Cook's team as they want to promote the benefits of the outdoors to as wide an audience as possible. This is achieved through a range of experiential activities that are both adventurous and educational.

Challenges faced

As a new business, it has grown steadily year-on-year (apart from the Covid disruption). As it begins to plateau in natural growth its challenge is to overcome the seasonality of the business and diversify the offer to appeal to different audiences, alongside reducing the length of its low season.

The solution and impact

Last year Chief Executive Officer, Steve Turner and some of his team attended several Accelerator workshops including Negotiating with your Customers: Hints, Tips and Tools, Getting Started with HR Essentials and Elevating your Team's Performance through Effective Leadership Communication.

Steve also attended the Derbyshire Dales Accelerator Information Session and after completing an Expression of Interest form was put in touch with Business Adviser, Andy Bunn. Accelerator is delivered by East Midlands Chamber, in partnership with Derbyshire Dales District Council and funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Steve comments: "Andy was a great help. Initially, he made me aware of the Help to Grow: Management programme which I did but funded directly by us. We also received specialist consultancy support from Qinesis via the Growth Voucher.

"The consultancy was a useful, external view of our operation and it challenged us to look at our business differently. We identified the need to invest further in staffing to help us target and capture new client groups. We also identified the need to invest in further capital development to expand our physical resources."

Andy has also provided advice to the business on other potential grant funding available which Steve has followed up on.

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A word from the business

“We were delighted to receive support via the Growth Voucher. It is a simple but meaningful way for us to access specialist consultancy support to help us maximise our business potential.”

**Steve Turner,
Chief Executive Officer**

Accelerator has provided:

- 1-2-1 advice
- Specialist consultancy via a Growth Voucher
- Workshops

Impact to business:

- Challenged to look at business in a different way
- Identified need to invest in people and facilities to grow
- Upskilling workforce