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SCIENCE PARK

Business Ready helps deliver success for Nuneaton e-cargo company

Eskuta has become the UK's market-leading e-cargo vehicle manufacturer and supplier - working with the likes of Domino's and Just Eat - after receiving help from Business Ready.



Pictured (left to right): Ian McFarlane-Toms, Ian O'Connor, Jake O'Connor

The company, which employs 14 people, chalked up more than 2,500 orders last year and is on course for more after a series of new developments following its work with the Business Ready team.

The Company

Eskuta, which has recently expanded into a second unit at Warwickshire County Council's Bermuda Park Innovation Centre, designs and manufactures electric bikes and scooters which have proved to be a hit with fast-food delivery firms.

It was started by managing director Ian O'Connor in 2015 who had grown tired of his previous career.

He said: "I started the business after becoming disillusioned with the fashion industry and discovered e-bikes and e-scooters when I was over in China and believed there was the potential for a business here."

The Challenge

One of the biggest challenges to growth was financing the purchase of stock to make the Eskuta products in order to be able to fulfil orders quickly.

If customers had to pay up front but then wait months for their product it would make the product less attractive, especially in a fast-moving industry.

The company was introduced to Business Ready, initially, when it was looking for grant-funding but found support from advisor Ian McFarlane-Toms brought much more than a search for grants.

The Solution

The support from Business Ready offered Eskuta a better understanding of how to finance the business and, also, help with some of the other fundamentals of growing a business.

This was not only through advice but also introductions to other people and organisations who could support the company's growth.

"It's been hard work to get to where we are today and Ian and Business Ready have been a huge help," said Ian O'Connor.

"I met him about two years ago and, at that time, I was just looking for grant funding to see if it could support our growth but he's brought much more than that.

"He's supportive of what we are trying to do and understands the direction we are trying to take. If we ever need anything, Ian just opens his contacts book and always knows the right people to speak to.

"He has also got a background as an accountant so has given us great financial advice and guidance."

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The Results

Sales have accelerated with some of the major players in the take-away and food delivery market but also in groceries too.

And, such is the potential for growth for the firm, it's now exploring international opportunities with distributor deals signed in Dubai, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

On top of that, the consumer market is set to take off after an agreement to sell Eskuta products through 24 Apple stores in the UK and Ireland.

"With Ian's help, we've been able to bring in more stock and that means we can offer even better service to our customers," said Ian O'Connor.

"We're growing and the possibilities of where we can go next are huge. We're now the market leader for e-cargo vehicles, working with the likes of Just Eat, Domino's, Papa Johns, Subway and Dixy Chicken.

"Grocery deliveries is another area of the market with huge potential, then there's international and the consumer market too. We believe this has the potential to be a real success story for the area."

McFarlane-Toms said: "Eskuta had a great product and a massive potential marketplace when I first met them.

"The company just needed support on how best to finance its growth and with some of the fundamentals of growing a new business.

"It's been great to be able to help them reach this point and there is so much opportunity for growth in a range of markets. Ian O'Connor has assembled a really great, hardworking team which shares his enthusiasm and passion, and it is an exciting time for the business."

And Cllr Kam Kaur, portfolio holder for economy and place at Warwickshire County Council which runs the business centres, added: "One of the many benefits for companies based in our buildings is that they are at the heart of a fantastically well-connected community.

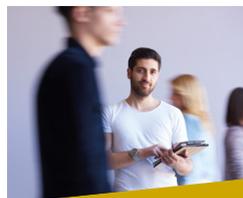
"Our business support offer is delivered through colleagues at Warwickshire County Council and also a range of partner organisations such as Business Ready.

"As the Transforming Nuneaton programme gathers pace, I'm delighted to hear of businesses in that area prospering. Offering high-quality employment opportunities in the area is key to the programme and I hope that Eskuta's is just one of many success stories in the area in the months to come."

Business support for the next level

The Business Ready programme is managed by the business support team at the University of Warwick Science Park. The experienced Business Growth Advisers team have been delivering business growth and support services to technology based businesses for over 30 years.

In addition, the team are supported by a range of specialist mentors who have run their own businesses and have expertise and experience supporting, advising, coaching and mentoring other growth businesses.



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