

# BUSINESS READY

## UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK SCIENCE PARK

### Pet food e-commerce business continues exceptional growth with Business Ready help



Pictured: Owners Lexi and Adam Taylor and their daughter Ella, warehouse staff and Dirk Schafer, top left

Pet Shop Bowl was founded in 2010 by Adam and Lexi Taylor, who spotted a gap in the market for online sales and delivery of pet foods and committed to providing this service to pet owners.

The business has experienced exceptional growth over the years since and now stocks more than 10,000 products and all major brands of pet foods and supplies.

Thanks to the guidance and support from the University of Warwick Science Park and its Business Ready programme, Pet Shop Bowl is currently in the middle of a period of transitional growth – including a move to new premises.

#### The Company

Pet Shop Bowl was established in London after Adam was made redundant from global financial services firm Lehman Brothers, which collapsed in 2008.

As a result of losing his job, Adam moved back home with his parents, where he began to notice the difficulty his mother faced in collecting large bags of pet food from supermarkets due to her arthritis.

After trying in vain to find an online platform where pet food could be ordered

and home delivered, Adam set up Pet Shop Bowl.

Originally the business, based at Masons Road in Stratford-upon-Avon, was centred on the 'Bottomless Bowl' concept, a subscription service where pet owners would have their essential products delivered every month for a set price.

It has now expanded to include a huge range of pet food, accessories and more.

#### The Challenge

Adam and Lexi had the passion, belief and talent to make their idea a success but found themselves at a crux in the capital.

In the early days, Adam had hand delivered individual orders on the back of a Vespa scooter or tried to sell cold to potential customers in the street.

They worked their way up to having their own premises and eventually outgrowing that, but it was moving on to the next stage of their project where they needed help.

The business needed to take the next step forward but there wasn't a plan in place to make that happen and more importantly to anticipate what would come after that.

After hearing about the help on offer to businesses from the University of Warwick Science Park, former Warwick graduate Adam set up a meeting with the Ignite team.

#### The Solution

Initially, the Ignite team at the University of Warwick Science Park helped set Pet Shop Bowl up at the Binley Innovation Centre, where they could handle the e-commerce side of things in a professional environment while being able to call on specialists for advice when needed.

Pet Shop Bowl really started to take off at this point and Adam and Lexi were later referred to the Business Ready Programme to continue their work with University of Warwick Science Park business mentor Dirk Schafer, who has helped the company access funding and provide input into the strategic direction it should take.

Adam said: "The help from the University of Warwick Science Park throughout has been a god send, it has really helped us so much.

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This project is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, forming part of the Coventry & Warwickshire Business Support Programme



"I would recommend the Business Ready programme to any business because it can take you to that next level.

"You have to put in a lot of work but if you take the advice given to you, you will see the results."

## The Results

Pet Shop Bowl has recently relocated to 40,000 square feet premises at Masons Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, something which has been on the cards for a long time.

They now stock over 10,000 products from all major pet food companies and had outgrown their warehouse at Hatton Rock as their popularity continues to increase.

After approaching the University of Warwick Science Park for assistance at a relatively early stage Adam and Lexi have benefitted from both the Ignite programme and Business Ready.

This has come in the shape of flexible premises to work from before they could afford commercial space, advice from Dirk Schafer and help with grant applications.

Through Business Ready, the team are currently working on securing a rural development grant to help improve their new facilities.

Adam said: "Things are progressing perfectly for us at the moment and in truth the move was a long time coming, we have been ready to expand for a while.

"As we get bigger, we want to be able to maintain that personal customer service touch that we pride ourselves on and continue to provide the best possible service to our customers. This involves knowing what our customers want and when. With this deep knowledge about our customers we have a distinct advantage of our competitors and this underpins everything we do at Pet Shop Bowl.

"With our big customer base and more than 150,000 likes on Facebook we have a lot of data to crunch which we use to continuously improve our services."

From their most recent baseline turnover of £5 million, Adam and Lexi are estimating that Pet Shop Bowl will have a £10 million turnover by 2020, while the recent relocation has seen warehouse

staff numbers double from 7 to 14 and the office team has grown from 7 to 10.

Dirk Schafer said: "This is a business I have believed in from the start and it has been a pleasure to help transform their idea into a thriving business.

"There are more things to come from Pet Shop Bowl which we are working on with them at the moment through the rural development grant. We never stand still in terms of the business support we are providing to businesses and the same applies to a business like Pet Shop Bowl. You can't rest on your laurels for too long otherwise the competition closes in and does things better than you.

"The recent move to new premises was a positive decision and the plans in place for the future will see greater efficiency and productivity, which can then lead to greater profit and better customer service.

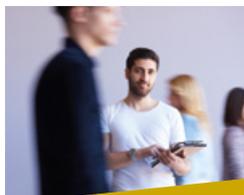
"The passion that Adam and Lexi have comes across to customers and that is part of the reason why they have such a large following on social media.

"As a team they have always had the right priorities in place."

## 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 20 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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