

MADE SMARTER

Rise in productivity expected at doughnut bakery after Made Smarter support

A doughnut bakery in Shropshire is set to transform its productivity and fuel its future expansion after a Made Smarter grant contributed to an integrated digital system for its admin.

Planet Doughnut was founded by husband-and-wife Duncan and Samantha McGregor in 2017 out of their garage in Shrewsbury, selling a wide range of delicious doughnuts, waffles, milkshakes and more.

They acquired their first shop in the town in 2018, before expanding into nearby Telford after initial success.

Despite the disruption of the pandemic, Planet Doughnut was able to supply a range of retailers and continued to grow the business before acquiring its first commercial bakery in Shrewsbury.

It now has 90 employees across its bakery and nine shops selling direct to the public, and supplies stockists from small corner shops in Shropshire to the likes of Tottenham Hotspur FC.

However, inefficiency when it came to processes such as invoicing and daily planning due to the business's different revenue streams began to hold it back as it grew.

Made Smarter West Midlands was able to recommend an MRP system to digitally bring together all these processes and have a centralised system that all shops can report to.

Duncan said: "I'm confident the new MRP system will enable us to focus more of our energy on selling our products and growing our business, rather than spending time on administrative tasks.

"The help we received from Made Smarter made the process of finding and purchasing the system very straightforward, and we're grateful for their support."

The Challenge

Planet Doughnut had seen impressive growth since it was founded, but it was beginning to notice the impact on its administration.

Activities like invoicing, stock takes, order processing and more were all done separately, and meant a lot of unnecessary time was spent.

Duncan knew this part of the business needed improving, but was unsure of exactly where to start.

He was told about Made Smarter, and how it could help point Planet Doughnut in the right direction, by independent business adviser Roland Ballard.

After Roland's advice, Duncan contacted Barry Jones, digital transformation specialist at Made Smarter West Midlands for The Marches, to see if he could help.

Barry and Roland visited Planet Doughnut along with Nasar Jockey, then of WMG at the University of Warwick, a strategic partner of Made Smarter, to talk through the possible solutions.

Duncan said: "It was clear we needed a way of sorting out our issues with admin if we were

going to improve our productivity and expand even further.

"When you have nine different shops and a whole range of stockists all over the country, it could become messy to process invoices, orders and everything else alongside that.

"As soon as I contacted Barry, he quickly arranged a meeting and we were able to discuss our issues and how we might solve them."

Dave Courteen, small business champion for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, added:

He said: "Made Smarter is just one of the many business support programmes available, and it's great to see it is making such a big difference to Planet Doughnut's operations.

"The programme offers engineering and manufacturing businesses access to expert advice and support from specialists in digital processes and techniques to improve productivity, and many small businesses in in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are reaping the benefit.

"Most business owners can identify the inefficiencies that might hold them back, but input from specialists can make identifying and implementing the solutions so much easier.

"I'm sure Planet Doughnut will continue to go from strength to strength now that the new integrated digital systems have freed up time otherwise spent on admin."

The Solution

The three recommended Planet Doughnut invest in a Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) system to ensure every site the business operated was communicating digitally with each other, and to amalgamate all its administrative processes.

After a discussion around the specific problems Planet Doughnut was facing, Barry, Roland and Nasar recommended a choice of two systems designed for bakeries. Duncan opted for Cybake Bakery Software – a system used by bakeries of all sizes all over the world.

Made Smarter also provided a match funded grant worth £11,000 to help pay for the software.

Duncan said: "Cybake ticked all the boxes for us – it not only integrates all our admin but has extra features such as recipe management which allows us to order ingredients more precisely to produce less waste. It also supports our wholesale and retail operations.

"The match-funded grant from Made Smarter softened the costs of purchasing Cybake, which made the decision to go ahead so much easier."

Barry added: "MRP systems are a common way for many SMEs to improve their productivity, but Planet Doughnut needed a system tailored to their business.

"After discussing Planet Doughnut's current issues and where it hopes to be in the future, it was clear that Cybake was a great option for them.

"We guided Duncan through the application process for the grant and were able to award Planet Doughnut the money in good time."

Finally, WMG created a 'digital roadmap' for Planet Doughnut to understand how Cybake will help it grow over time.

Onur Eren of WMG added: "The digital roadmap we produced for Planet Doughnut will help the business follow clear steps to best utilise its MRP system.

"We hope it helps Planet Doughnut improve its productivity and enables the business to grow even faster."

The Benefits

Planet Doughnut is close to fully integrating Cybake across its shops and commercial bakery and is looking forward to reaping the benefits.

Duncan added: "The demonstrations we've had with Cybake have shown us its massive potential and we can't wait to get started.

"Once fully implemented, Cybake will allow our employees to focus on baking delicious doughnuts and pleasing our customers, rather than spending too much time on admin.

"We'll be able to see data from orders across our stores and stockists at a glance, and we'll be able to make more informed decisions about our business as a result.

"It will also automatically store our invoices and order data, which will make bookkeeping that much easier and will reduce errors."

The Future

Once the MRP system is fully integrated and everyone at Planet Doughnut has got used to it, Duncan is hopeful of opening new stores and winning more stockists.

"Now that Cybake is installed, we've got a few irons in the fire when it comes to expanding our business," Duncan added.

"It's a really exciting time for Planet Doughnut, and we have to thank Made Smarter for helping us get to this position.

"I'd recommend business like ours to get in touch to see if they can help – the support has been incredibly useful for us.

"We hope the success the MRP system generates will be as sweet as our doughnuts!"

“ The help we received from Made Smarter made the process of finding and purchasing the system very straightforward, and we're grateful for their support. ”



Barry Jones, Digital Transformation Specialist at Made Smarter West Midlands (left), with Duncan McGregor, co-founder of Planet Doughnut.

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CASE STUDY