



BUSINESS SHOWCASE

Business Support
Success Stories

April 2024



ALP Synergy Ltd



Welcome to OxLEP Business

"OxLEP Business is here to support every small and medium sized business in Oxfordshire to overcome challenges and achieve their ambitions. We support sole-traders, not for profits, social enterprises, charities, and limited companies with up to 249 staff. So, if you have a business based and trading in Oxfordshire, then the chances are that we can help you in one way or another."

Helen Brind, Growth Hub Manager at OxLEP Business.



Welcome to the second edition of our 'Business Showcase', a publication that we produce to promote some of the brilliant businesses that we have been supporting.

The first few months of this year have been really busy for OxLEP Business and the clients we have been supporting. We started January off with a new focus on support for the 'C-Suite', the Chief Execs, the Ops Directors, etc. We delivered our Export Support webinars and workshops, workshops on AI, mastering digital sales, Neurodiversity and many more topics to meet the needs of our Oxfordshire businesses.

We have delivered over 100 one to one business advice sessions already this year, helping people to overcome challenges or work towards their ambitions.

We are also excited to have just launched 2 new programmes of support specifically for West Oxfordshire, the Business SPARK and the Business ACCELERATOR. SPARK will support West Oxfordshire residents who want to, or have recently started a new business. The ACCELERATOR will focus on established and trading businesses who want to grow. But don't worry if you aren't in West Oxfordshire, we still have lots of support available for you.

We hope that you enjoy reading about some of the brave and bold businesses that have reached out and engaged with our support over the last year. We want more Oxfordshire Businesses to see these success stories so please do share this Showcase through your networks.

OxLEP Business should not be Oxfordshire's best kept secret!

BUSINESS SHOWCASES



<https://www.wutw.co.uk>

Wake Up To Woodstock (WUTW) is a non-profit business association which has won multiple awards for their dedication to enhancing the visitor experience in Woodstock. The association's committee is made up of passionate volunteers, business owners and partners including our ambassadors Blenheim Palace and founding member The Bear Hotel.

WUTW has been nationally and locally recognised for their contributions to excellence in business support and the visitor experience, winning SME UK Enterprise Awards 'Business Consulting NPO of the Year 2023', Thames Valley Business & Community Awards 'Leisure & Tourism of the year' 2022. Our ultimate goal is to become the leading visitor information site for Woodstock, while also being a top contender for visitors traveling to Oxfordshire and the UK. In order to achieve this, it's crucial that all primary businesses are featured on our platform.

We have utilised the expert travel and tourism consultancy services provided by OxLEP Advisor, Nick White to refine our OxLEP funded website and make it more suitable for our goals.

The training opportunities that our Social Media & PR Consultant has taken have enhanced their ability to assist us, benefiting our marketing and business members. Additionally, we share any relevant opportunities with our members directly to help them gain value from OxLEP. This year, the LinkedIn learnings have been particularly helpful. Collaboration with OxLEP is incredibly beneficial in ensuring that our non-profit organisation is able to succeed in achieving its objectives.

We are taking advantage of our partnerships with Experience Oxfordshire (The Local Visitor Economy Partner of Visit England), Cotswold Tourism, and Blenheim Palace. By utilising their networking opportunities, best practices, tourism insights, and promotional opportunities, we aim to broaden our reach and gain further recognition for our efforts, which equates to endorsement for our non-members and in turn, new sign-ups.

Great Tew

Property Services Ltd

<https://www.greattewbespoke.com>

Jack Drinkwater began Great Tew Property Services Ltd in early 2020 as a multi trade private property renovations business that consisted mostly of; carpentry, tiling, flooring, decorating and general maintenance work. Although we still take on property renovations contracts, our lions share of work is now bespoke cabinetry.

When the full team is operational, we have 6 people working on projects. If you do want to check out what we do you can find us on Facebook, Instagram & our website.

The financial support that OxLEP has provided to help grow the workshop has been incredible. Had someone said just over 6 moths ago that I would be financially supported the way that OxLEP has, I would never have believed it. It's meant that the workshop is now up to a standard that I had envisaged it to be at, in maybe 5 years from now. It means the quality of product that we send out has increased as well as time saved during production because these new machines are so good and efficient.

I also really enjoyed and benefitted from the one and one chats I had with my mentor. She laid out easy to follow business plans that I wouldn't have known how to do myself. This helped me get on top of my cashflow and how to keep that going up to this point now.

With the grant I received I bought a Shaper Origin. The scope for growth in the business is now so much higher than before I had it. It means that we can start producing bespoke furniture alongside the cabinetry.





www.storymuseum.org.uk

The Story Museum is a most unusual museum with a vision to enrich lives, especially young lives, through stories. The Museum collects great stories from around the world and shares them with children and families in fun and interactive ways within its building, in the heart of Oxford, and via its work in schools, the wider community and online.

Immersive gallery spaces include the Whispering Wood, the Enchanted Library and Small Worlds where visitors of all ages are encouraged to lose themselves in their imagination. A studio theatre and a Hogwarts-inspired Learning Studio host a full programme of family shows, author events, clubs and courses. These and other spaces are also available for venue hire, from weddings and children's parties to business meetings and corporate away days, along with a new hot-desking facility.

We have had a consultation with Nick White which has helped us think about new ways to publicise our offer and bring in new business via partnerships with local hotels. We are exploring how to take suggestions forward via our regular in-house Enterprise meeting.

The Visitor Economy grant has enabled us to implement some very practical and immediate benefits e.g. increasing covers in the café courtyard, enabling us to sub-divide one of our rental hire rooms to allow for more flexible hiring options, and improving lighting to support evening hires. At a longer term strategic level, the grant has supported our marketing with support from a Box Office consultant resulting in an analysis of our existing visitor data and a roadmap for ways to use our data to build loyalty and repeat visits.

We've launched a new series of events for adults including a season of writing masterclasses with award-winning authors, in partnership with the University of Oxford, and the first of our Museum-Lates taking place on Halloween offering adults exclusive access to the Museum from 19:00-22:30 with suitably spooky activities including ghost stories in the Whispering Wood and live improv music to classic horror films in the Woodshed Theatre.



Oxford Quins is Oxford's premier and largest rugby club.

Our three men's XV's compete in the RFU England Rugby Championship in the following leagues: National 3 (1st XV), Counties 1 (2nd XV) and Counties 2 (3rd XV).

Our two women's teams compete at Level 4 nationally in the RFU National Challenge 1 and National Challenge 2 leagues. We have Oxfordshire's largest youth rugby section offering boys and girls rugby for children aged from 6 to 16, and an Under 18 Boys Academy staffed by semi-professional coaches.

Our site at Horspath Road is a hub for community sport where in addition to rugby we host year round sport with clubs such as Oxfordshire Softball, Eire Og Gaelic Football, Hurling, La Crosse and organisations such as Oxford Brookes University and City of Oxford College, along with numerous schools, also hosting activities and events at Horspath Road. Annually we host the Oxford 7s, a nationally acclaimed rugby 7s festival, music and food events and the Lord Mayor of Oxford's Festival of Rugby.

Our support base includes many Oxford and South Oxfordshire residents who are senior citizens, many with mobility issues. They expressed the desire to attend fixtures and events at Horspath Road but were sometimes deterred by the inclement weather that occurs from Sept to April and by the lack of pitchside seating. We therefore embarked on a Spectator Experience Project to improve the experience for non-active participants, to encourage all members of the community to engage in community sport, and to benefit from the social and mental health benefits that engagement can afford.

OxLEP's support allowed us to complete phase 1 of our spectator experience project, the creation of a 70-seat pitchside seating area with wheelchair ramp and wheelchair parking. The covered seating area was installed in August 2023 following the award of the OxLEP grant earlier in the year. We have started a new Supporters Club, targeting those members of the community who may experience social isolation, due to age, or mobility issues and have arranged transport to and from the club. This is a very encouraging development and indicative of the impact that the new covered seating area will have in encouraging people to visit the area to attend sporting events.





MYMYND.CO.UK

MYMYND – unlocking the power of wellbeing in the workplace with an innovative mental health assessment online platform. Based in Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, MyMynd is a proprietary digital health workplace mental health and wellbeing platform. They proactively identify issues for early intervention and direct personalised support precisely where it's needed to strengthen resilience and wellbeing.

The MyMynd platform is designed for both employers and their employees. Our technology uniquely starts with a combined assessment of both risk and resilience, to provide a holistic measure of current mental health and wellbeing, kind of like an 'MOT for the mind'. Individual employees then receive support, guidance and activities, based on their results, to help them improve or maintain optimal mental health and wellbeing. Employers get detailed aggregate insights into their workforce and support from MyMynd to inform and drive their wellbeing strategy or activities.

In the early stages we connected with OxLEP Business as part of eScalate. We had some initial one- to-one support sessions which really helped us shape our thinking. We would talk through business ideas and plans as well as the different networks in Oxfordshire, and received guidance on connecting with the community.

Towards the end of last year to further grow our business we set about building on our revenue generation by targeting new enterprise clients and new sectors. We were seeking funding opportunities to employ a team of consultants who could build and develop our sales function and grow our client base. OxLEP Business had contacted us about the Go-Create innovation grants which were part of a different programme, ISfB. We were successful in our application for grant funding and used our Go-Create grant to hire professional consultants to develop our systems and processes and help us create new business opportunities. Some of the funding was also used to create client testimonial and onboarding videos that will be used within MyMynd over the coming months.

The OxLEP team were really helpful both pre and post grant award. They provided constructive feedback on our ideas which helped us refocus our application prior to submission. I've dealt with European projects in the past and they can be challenging, but OxLEP took much of the pain out of the process. The funding from OxLEP provided us with the external insight from the consultants to help us better understand our business needs more quickly and therefore drive our focus to expanding with existing clients.

Our biggest challenge is revenue growth, but with our amazing new team we aim to reach break-even within the next 12 months. Things are looking good for our future and knowing that we're making a real difference to people's lives makes all the hard work worth it."

OXFORD SIGMA

[OXFORDSIGMA.COM](https://oxfordsigma.com)

OXFORD SIGMA – Tackling energy security and climate change by accelerating the commercialisation of fusion energy.

Oxford Sigma were established in 2019 to develop novel material solutions and technology for nuclear fusion energy. The challenge is to find materials that will increase the overall fusion plant availability in order that the energy source can become commercial.

We were seeking people, groups and mentorship locally. When we moved to Harwell we discovered OxLEP Business. We discovered that they had an innovation grant, Go-Create available as part of their Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme, which sounded ideal for us, and talking with the team gave us confidence that some of our research and development ideas would be eligible, and we decided to apply.

Compared to other grants we have applied for, the application process was by far the most straightforward, and we felt we had the most support as well. Working through our ideas with the team really helped us to refine these into our final application. If it hadn't had been for this added layer of help, I don't think we would have submitted anything. Our Go-Create grant was key in enabling us to further deliver our project in fusion blanket designs.

Without OxLEP we would not be where we are today, they have been a key enabler. We would be months behind where we are now without them. We can't say anything negative about working with OxLEP, it's been good to have the local support. Being able to complete the smaller studies with OxLEP's support has enabled us to form much bigger grant applications, for million pound grants.



<https://www.uwatch.co.uk>

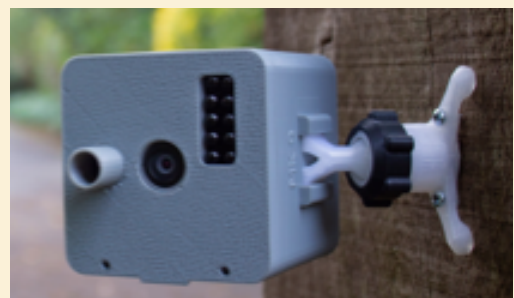
uWatch Ltd, develops, designs and manufactures police approved crime prevention solutions that will alert you within seconds if somebody is on your property. Using the latest technology, uWatch's product 'The Cube' is completely un-jammable, cyber-certified, works with or without mains power and able to be installed in any area that needs monitoring.

I soon realised that thieves and rats are the same technical challenge. So, we started to expand our target market into non-serious crime prevention. By 2021 we had a product which could replace the current 101 police system for reporting non-serious crime. We carried on developing the system and introduced enhancements on the pest control product and relaunched it in the middle of last year, specifically for crime prevention. We have achieved police cyber certification and are now members of the Police Secured by Design Scheme.

uWatch connected with OxLEP Business and gained support from both the eScalate and Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programmes. The OxLEP team informed us about their Go-Create grant. They were great, they really listened to us and understood what we were trying to achieve.

As a scale-up business we also signed up to their eScalate programme and gained valuable advice on funding, investment readiness and pitching. This was a really excellent complement to the support we received from ISfB and helped us with thinking about our financial stability into the future.

The future of uWatch is to hopefully market ourselves to the Police & Government. uWatch will save them tens of millions a year.





THE OXFORD HEALTH
COMPANY

<https://tohc.co.uk>

The Oxford Health Company (TOHC) is located in Bicester, Oxfordshire and is the proud owner of the brands Oxford Vitality and Oxford Contract Manufacturing. They specialise in the manufacture and supply of consumer ready vitamins and food supplements which are distributed worldwide.

They started off making their own branded vitamin supplements, Oxford Vitality, and selling on eBay and other online channels. They did this for about a year and then over time they were gaining interest from sellers asking how they were selling such good products at such competitive prices. This transitioned them into contract manufacturing, so producing other people's products. That continued to grow and TOHC are now an established contract manufacturer for vitamins and supplements for a whole host of brands, large and small, all over the world.

TOHC have received a raft of business support from OxLEP Business. We connected with OxLEP and engaged in the mentoring programmes they were offering. Within this we discussed an array of subjects, things like HR & talent, scaling-up & innovation. The OxLEP advisors came into our business and talked through our plans, general strategy and how we could free up our time to focus on business growth. Alongside the one-to-one mentoring, the team at TOHC engaged with OxLEP's Peer Networks and were also successful in receiving a grant from Cherwell District Council's Business Adaptation Fund (CBAF) delivered by OxLEP Business.

The CBAF grant was a good process to go through as it makes you think what you are trying to achieve and why you are trying to achieve it. We were successful with our application & with this funding we built a new mezzanine floor in the factory & bought new specialist manufacturing equipment.

These grants have enabled us to speed up getting the projects we want and have massively increased the capacity of products we are producing. Plus, we can now do it all in house, under one roof. This speedy growth has allowed us to create more jobs as well which is great. 5 years ago we only had 12 staff and now we are over 60 members of staff.





<https://beautifulvoice.co.uk>

Beautiful Voice - Making speech & language therapy easy & fun.

Beautiful Voice was formed in January 2022 by a group of young and passionate entrepreneurs. Using ground-breaking technology, their aim was to create a fun and effective way for people with neurological conditions to do speech and language therapy. By simplifying and enhancing therapy delivery they are now helping hundreds of people to improve their communication issues with ease.

We created a digital platform with an engaging user experience and an element of gamification to make it more fun for the patients. You can personalise it, based on topics of interest. We also incorporated AI and signal processing to be able to listen to the person when they are doing their exercises and give them live feedback on their progress and suggest therapy materials based on what we heard. The platform is built for therapists, they have access to all the tools so they can monitor their patients.

As a start-up business based in Oxfordshire, Beautiful Voice were eligible for no cost business support from OxLEP Business. We applied for the Go-Create grant quite late in the process. The team at OxLEP were very helpful, they provided us with one to one support and guided us every step of the way. Without their support we probably wouldn't have been able to complete the application in time. But we succeeded and were awarded the funding. We used the funding to work with a digital product designer who helped us refine the design button interactions and overall user journey on the platform, which made it launch ready.

The grant allowed us to get our platform to a professional level for commercialisation. Without this funding we wouldn't have been able to launch the platform when we did. Alongside the grant funding from OxLEP, we also took part in a number of webinars and events. "These were great, you're put in a space with other like minded entrepreneurs & also surrounded by experts who have many years experience".

Since its launch the platform has been going really well. Feedback has been very positive, with people saying the platform is making a difference and it's easy to use, which was the main goal of this project. We have multiple clinics using the platform and hundreds of patients using it too. Soon we're about to start a pilot with a large neuro rehab centre which is very exciting and a great testament to the amazing progress we have made. We've also received a grant from the NHS which will allow us to collaborate with the University of Manchester.

Its with a big thanks to OxLEP business that we are in this strong position. Their organisation is clearly helping & encouraging business growth in the region.

FLASH BUZZ

<https://www.flashbuzz.co.uk>

Flashbuzz is one of Oxfordshires most exciting video production companies.

Since 2018 Flashbuzz has been partnering with ambitious brands to create stunning video content. They have now taken the plunge into writing their own screenplay which is gaining interest from major broadcasters and film festivals around the world.

"I've always loved films and I studied filmmaking and video production in college. It wasn't however, until I won a film bursary and a large innovation competition whilst working in the public sector that I realised I could do this for a living"

We received an email from OxLEP with regards to the Cherwell Business Adaption Fund, which they delivered that we are eligible to apply for. So, I applied for the grant to allow me to purchase a Netflix approved camera and some cinema lenses.

We've entered some film festivals and we're winning awards for the film that was shot on the Netflix approved camera that OxLEP helped us to purchase. It's been shown at film festivals in Amsterdam, California, Los Angeles, Sydney Australia and India, to name a few.

OxLEP played a big part in Rob's success story. The short film really is capturing people's imagination. I've had hundreds of tapes from actors in London wanting to be part of it. One of them was like 'I'm currently filming with Idris Elba at the moment'. How brilliant is that?

This really has kicked off a whole new opportunity for the company on an international scale. We've been able to use industry leading equipment, which we wouldn't have if it wasn't for OxLEP's funding support. They personally reached out to me & highlighted the funding thats available which is amazing. We had one to one support & they were genuinely interested in the short film & wanted to watch the trailer. I would say to anyone with a business in Oxfordshire, get in touch with OxLEP and see what support opportunities there are for you. It might change everything for you. It has for me. I can now say I am an international award winning film director. Wow!





Your Business Showcase could be here...

What would be in your story?

Send your case study or story to Business@oxfordshirelep.com

Engage with OxLEP's Support by completing the Business Support Tool.

You will then receive your fully funded Business Support Action Plan.

Click here: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-support-tool/>

Scan here:



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