

Case study: Digital Boost



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Online Digital Mentoring for Cultural and Creative Organisations

Digital Boost is a free, not-for-profit online learning platform for small businesses and charities. We help people learn about and use digital to grow their businesses by connecting them with volunteer digital and business experts for 1:1 advice and guidance, as well as workshops and learning recommendations.

Through our partnership with the Culture and Commerce Taskforce, personalised support is available to all creative organisations.

Creative organisations can get help in any of our 55 learning topics – from building a website to using social media to managing your finances digitally. All our services are highly personalised and ‘on demand’ – we aim to help most people within 72 hours.

There is no limit to the number of sessions an organisation can have – allowing them to connect with a wide range of experts and go on a journey of digital maturity.

As part of this partnership, we are working together to support organisations holistically – helping them through the digital acceleration journey. We help them identify where their biggest challenges and opportunities lie, find the right support, and get them help to implement.

Why are you doing it?

We are a community of digital and business professionals who love small businesses and the creative sector.

As the Covid-19 crisis started to unfold, we were amazed by the numbers of volunteers who joined the NHS. We realised that thousands of smaller organisations also needed their own small army of volunteers.

According to recent research from NatWest, small businesses represent a powerful engine of economic growth, with the potential to deliver as much as £140bn in gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy by 2030 – and to create 3.2m jobs over the same period. But on average, they are significantly less productive than larger firms and need new digital ways of working to overcome this gap.

From launching digital advertising to implementing the right software, many could do with a hand from experts who've done this all before. That's why we launched digital boost.

We believe we have a duty to help smaller organisations across all sectors, and that many professionals with digital skills feel the same way.

What is happening?

To date, we've made thousands of connections between small businesses and digital experts. More than 2200 digital experts have generously offered their time for free, from organisations including Google, BT, Bloomberg, NatWest Group and many others. The experts meet with small businesses for 60 minute 1:1 online conversations tailored to the businesses needs.

Feedback from small businesses has been fantastic, for example:

"I can't believe all my hard work is finally paying off. I'm my harshest critic but am finally beginning to believe in myself. Digital Boost is fantastic. I'm so grateful the experts there are willing to give up their time free of charge."

RACHEL AKERS
AKERS OF ART

"Digital Boost has been brilliant. No-one around me has experience of building a business but now I want to help others to do it too. I will be back to learn about branding and product development. If I become very successful, perhaps one day I can also be a mentor for Digital Boost!"

KRISHNA MISTRY
MISTRY LIGHTING

"I feel I'm winging it, but I've had amazing help. The mentor at Digital Boost helped me short-cut to finding my audience and making my brand visible online. I'm so grateful to Digital Boost and am lining up some more experts to help me explore more ways to grow the business."

RACHEL CONLISK
CREATIVE ACTIVE LIVES

"There are so many links and tips and resources online it can be hard to choose what to focus on, which is why this session was so useful. "

CHARLOTTE BORGER
CHARTERHOUSE



For more information

www.digitalboost.org.uk/stories

What's the *change* taking place as a result of what you are doing?

Individuals are getting answers to their specific questions about how to use digital to grow their businesses. They're building confidence, applying what they've learned, and growing revenues.

How do you do it?

Digital Boost is run by a small team owned by the education charity Founders4Schools. This includes people with experience in software development, product management, customer success, partnerships, learning and marketing. We could not operate without the support of our corporate partners or local and central government. For example, we work closely with the Growth Hubs and local councils to help small businesses learn about our free service.

Our all services are delivered through our proprietary online platform, which the team is continually evolving and improving.

What is the learning so far?

Don't be afraid to ask for help! There are so many people out there with the right expertise ready and willing to help.

A simple 60 minute conversation can be very powerful

– it can unlock new ideas and ways of looking at things, as well as validate the ideas you already had.

Start small – don't feel like you have to solve everything at once. Take the first step, learn and evolve!

Awareness is critical – many individuals and organisations in the creative sector don't realise this support is available to them and it is! We are now targeting our communications to that specific audience (amongst others) and working with partners to help spread the word across their networks and communities.

Working with an organisation holistically can be really useful for that organisation to understand the many facets of where digital support is needed and how they interconnect. An initial meeting between staff and a digital expert **can identify some quick wins** and longer-term strategic goals. It doesn't need to be overwhelming, but can start small and grow.



For more information

Visit www.digitalboost.org.uk to learn more, sign up for free guidance and support, or volunteer!

Culture & Commerce Taskforce

