The GREAT way to grow
Small businesses share their advice
Live for the moment, plan for the future

Shaun Pulfrey is the founder and CEO of Tangle Teezer and an ambassador for the Business is GREAT campaign

As any business owner will tell you, your first business idea is rarely your big success. Tangle Teezer wasn’t mine. I’d had others that, for one reason or another, didn’t get off the ground. But this didn’t make me a failure. I instead took the experience and knowledge I gained and applied it to my next project. It’s learning how to bounce back from the knock-backs which puts you on the path to success.

I had the idea for Tangle Teezer some years before I actually launched it but the pace picked up significantly when I did. I couldn’t have made my business into what it is today without the support of the people around me. Other business owners, my mentors, my family and friends all helped to shape the company. It was built by a special team, working together and pulling in the same direction. And it was built on getting good advice - something I guarantee you will get from the other business owners who have helped create this guide.

I knew the Tangle Teezer product had huge potential. The domestic market was never going to be big enough, but the thought of exporting was nerve-wracking. We didn’t have a clue where to start. It’s easy to think of all the reasons not to do something, but I would encourage you to do the opposite – think about why you should try something. Schemes like UK Trade & Investment’s (UKTI) Passport to Export scheme are there to help you to take these first steps, preparing you for the leap overseas. They gave us the market insight and confidence we needed to make the jump.

As an entrepreneur, you are not a singular person. You have to understand that you need other people to grow. These people need to feel your passion, enthusiasm and energy. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing your staff as focused on your business as you are – take them with you on the journey and they’ll reward you with their hard work.

So my advice to other business owners is to be optimistic. I know that’s easier said than done. Enjoy nurturing your business through its different stages of growth. Be prepared for what is around the next corner, but don’t stop your journey when you get there. You have to learn from the past, be in the moment, and look to the future all at the same time.

I hope the advice and insights in this guide will help you to grow your business in 2015 and beyond.
State of the nation
— The small & medium sized business landscape

47% have increased their financial turnover compared to a year ago

59% plan to hire more staff in the next 12 months

These businesses employ 15.2M people

220,000 of them exported in 2013

1 in 5 are first time exporters*

83% of business owners and decision makers feel capable to grow their business

They make up 99.9% of UK businesses

UKTI services earn the average business an extra £100,000 within 18 months

*or have been exporting for less than a year
Building your business can be overwhelming and it can be difficult to know where to start. Every small business has its preferred route, but here are the thoughts of some successful entrepreneurs:

“A hotbed of useful information can be found at The British Library's Business & IP Centre and it's free! Research and knowledge is worth its weight in gold when starting up and growing your business. It can lead to new potential sources of revenue. Continually research; you will learn more about your customer and identify potential new markets for expansion,” says Amelia Rope, founder of Amelia Rope Chocolates, who works closely with UKTI to take her luxury product overseas.

“Plan your growth carefully and remain in control. We always look forward three years and know what we need to do, what machines we’re going to buy and what training our teams need,” says Chris Batty, from Lestercast, which uses the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS), part of the Business Growth Service, on strategy and process improvement for their precision investment castings business.

“Try not get too caught up with all the small things you have to do to get started. Everything can be figured out. Break it all down into simple steps and just get going,” says Cara Sayer, founder of SnoozeShade, an infant sleep shade company from Surrey, which used GrowthAccelerator business development coaching, part of the Business Growth Service.

Jo Hockley is the founder of Toddlebike, a lightweight children's bicycle company.

Her top tip would be:

“It’s not enough to know your own product inside out; you need to understand the market it will sit in, including your customers, competitors, retailers, experts and the media. The ability to position your product as part of a bigger marketplace creates a more compelling proposition when you start engaging retailers, customers and the media.”

Jo used Start Up Britain’s Pitch Up programme to secure a meeting and a partnership with key UK retailer, John Lewis.

To learn more about how Government support can help you to plan your business, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/start
As your business grows, it’s important to take a step back, assess how far you’ve come and decide where to go next. Below a few businesses explain why.

- “Always think five years ahead. Don’t restrict yourself to the next 12 months or you will stunt your own growth,” explains Carla Garey, founder of Derbyshire-based Saffron Catering, who used Growth Vouchers support to serve a wider Midlands market, now extending from Manchester to Milton Keynes.

- “Invest in market research. It was the best thing we did and something I would always recommend to any business looking to expand overseas. You want as much feedback as possible, the good, the bad and the ugly! It gives you invaluable insight into your potential market, helps you focus your efforts ultimately saving you money in the long run,” says Una Driscoll, founder of Belt up Kidz, a child-safety buckle, which uses UKTI support to reach markets from China to Central Europe.

- “Focus on what your target consumer wants, allow them to help shape your products by listening to feedback, and if your product does not get high rating reviews, make a change. By knowing your USP, forming a clear plan and regularly reviewing it, you’ll stay one step ahead,” recommends Rob Law, founder of Trunki, the children’s luggage company, which has benefitted from research and development (R&D) tax credits and UKTI’s Passport to Export scheme.

Amy Cheadle, co-founder of Lancashire based company, The Northern Dough Company, is always planning ahead:

“I wish I’d known how long it would take to feel ‘successful’. Make a list of milestones when you start a business, and make sure you take the time to celebrate them. It’s easy to get caught up in the day to day and forget how far you’ve come. Pick three actions each day that will move your business forward and complete these and essential admin only. It’ll keep you focused and mean you’re always working towards future success. This approach has worked wonders for us - at the start of each year, we set five key objectives that focus on growing or running the business more effectively. Each week there are key tasks associated to these that define our ‘to do list’. If an opportunity arises that doesn’t meet any of the objectives, we discard it. It keeps our small team focused.”

The Northern Dough Company used its GrowthAccelerator coach, a food industry entrepreneur, to bring focus and structure to its priorities and strategy.

To read more about how Carla and her husband rose to success, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/the-proof-is-in-the-dough
“Invest, don’t spend. You need to think about the long term and nurturing a business that can grow,” says Karen Lynch, CEO of Belu Water.

Accessing and managing finance is something small business owners deal with every day. Here’s how some approach this:

- “It’s so easy to get caught up in developing various aspects of the business and forget the most fundamental part. Business is about taking a great product to market at a price which is right for the product and the customer”, says Nancy Johnston, CEO of Fairtrade wool clothing designer, Tengri. It received support from the Business Growth Service to help her develop her business model and give her guidance on how manufacturing works.

- “It is great to have bold aims, but working them out financially will determine how realistic they are. With firm financial foundations, the company and its people can really believe what is possible and be more committed to achieving these goals. Keep track of the actual achievement – evaluation of your work is as valuable as the job itself,” explains Martin Adams, a specialist in growth and development from Routes to Growth.

**Mike Pickles**, founder and CEO of Really Useful Products.

Mike received £4 million of investment from the Regional Growth Fund says:

“Help your bank to understand your business and explain how investment will lead to growth. I have meetings at regular intervals when the business is changing. For my company, this is monthly. I keep them informed of our evolving strategy and ask them for a financial steer. I wouldn’t make an important financial decision without passing it through them for an opinion.”

To read more about how best to access and manage small business finance, visit www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/finance

**Stephen Rapoport**, founder of Pact Coffee, accessed R&D tax credits and the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) to help secure investors’ support:

“When looking for investors, make sure they understand your vision deeply enough to really, truly challenge you on it. If they don’t, you’re just raising money from them and not getting any other insight beyond that. EIS is one of the most valuable things that the Government has done to support early-stage, high-innovation companies. It’s a tax break that encourages successful people to support other aspirant, successful people and something I suggest every business looks into.”
“Surround yourself with wise owls,” says Alissa Koopal, founder of baby bangle producer, Izzy Melody Limited. “I’ve always done this in my career so I can fall back on them for advice and support.”

Support from those around you is invaluable. Using other people as sounding boards can show you what will work for your business and help you avoid what won’t.

“Attend UKTI events. They can really support your growth,” says Emily Brooke, CEO of bicycle light manufacturer Blaze. “I have been to the GREAT Festival of Creativity in Istanbul with Founders Forum, the GREAT Business Exhibition in Liverpool, at which I presented Blaze to the Prime Minister, and on a trade mission to South Africa. Getting out there to events can really help put your business on the map”

“You don’t know what you don’t know, so engage with others who can help and who you can learn from. Equally, your advice might help another GREAT small business grow,” urges Rachel Eade, an automotive specialist adviser for MAS, part of the Business Growth Service.

“Surround yourself with people who have expertise in areas you need help with - people offer you advice because they want you to succeed,” explains Sarah Haywood, a UKTI Catalyst member who owns her own eponymous wedding planning and event company. Sarah lectures across Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, the USA, and Mexico on the art of her business.

“Take advice from others and pass on your knowledge to your peers. In the early days I found listening to the stories of other businesses very helpful. It does not mean that your journey will be exactly the same, but it equips you with a better understanding of how to proceed and what to expect.”

To read more stories of successful growth from small business owners and learn how Government can help you to grow, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk
It all comes down to people. Finding a good team and then getting the best out of them – that's what will make your business fly.

- Stephen Dann, a Growth Coach from Southampton, advises businesses on a daily basis and comments: “Business owners are often frustrated that their teams don’t show the same level of dedication, creativity, energy and motivation as they do. Don’t expect your teams to be like you. If they were, they’d be doing your job. Embrace different talents and skills because it will help the business in the long run.”

- “Involve all staff in your growth plans so your direction and progress are highly visible. Your staff will then feel fully invested in the bigger picture and back you up with the skills you need to get there,” says Stuart Burns, the founder of Dura Composites, which has received MAS support regarding financial advice and help to enter into the offshore wind and rail markets.

Dr Paul Beven, is the co-founder of Healix Group.

Healix Group is Europe’s largest provider of medical evacuation services to the travel industry. Starting in 1992 with a team of three, today, Healix employs more than 200 staff and is rapidly expanding overseas with offices in New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Greece, Singapore, Kenya and the USA. Beven says, “Wherever you can, employ people who are better than you so they can shine as the light of the organisation, and you can lead them.”

Jane Field, who runs a successful mail order business, Jonny’s sister, knows the value of apprentices:

“Our apprentices are open, fresh and they question things. They make a real impact. I have removed products which I was convinced would sell, based on their reactions. They carry zero baggage, have a real ‘can do’ approach to everything, and bring a freshness that money can’t buy.”

To read more about how to develop your management skills, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/building-your-management-skills

To learn more about how apprentices could help your business to grow, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/taking-on-an-apprentice
1. Employ the best

The one invaluable lesson I have learned since taking on the online food industry is to be the best you must employ the best. It might sound obvious, but setting the bar high and placing people above everything else is harder than you might imagine.

At Gousto we strictly employ only amazing talent; offering an environment that nurtures personal growth and career development, and giving our team members bucket loads of responsibility so that everyone is empowered in some way to drive the business forward.

2. Stay passionate

Another motto I live by is to continually draw back to the purpose I first founded the company on; enabling people to eat delicious, quality food with zero food waste. Doing something you really care about and truly value is paramount to building an infallible company, as that passion will trickle through to everything you do. The customers will sense it in the quality of the service and product you deliver, they will feel it in the way we communicate and the efforts we go to for them. If this purpose and passion is integral to your mission, it will naturally infiltrate every aspect of your operations.

3. Take a gamble

Do not limit yourself by fearing failure. Dare to try new things and don’t constrain yourself by what others might think of you if you fail. Think big and bold, paying no heed to nagging fears, concerns or insecurities. Take the long road and be prepared to take a gamble. It’s a cliché, but he who dares really does win! When James and I started Gousto, we took a huge risk. We

4. Trust your team

Try not to micromanage, instead trust the team you have hired and give them space to shine. Hire amazing managers, give them targets and budgets, and cheerlead them on to victory!

5. Live sustainably

Live sustainably - if you live in the UK, you’re better off than the other 99% of people in this world, so do what you can to make the world a little better. It needn’t be anything huge, but ultimately this will also make you a happier, more fulfilled person. This is personal for me as it is something I care deeply about, but I genuinely believe it is important for any business.

At Gousto, we make sure we conserve electricity and recycle as much as possible. If you do good things, good will come back to you, so I really do think this is something worth investing in.
Innovation is all about staying on top of the game and responding to your customers. Hear first hand from successful small businesses on why it is a top priority for them.

“These days, like no other time in history, it is possible to promote your brand to a global audience by embracing e-commerce and social media,” says Richard Sellwood, of the iconic lamp company, Anglepoise. His company received MAS funding, part of the Business Growth Service, to help implement their e-commerce offer and to support on brand guidelines and licensing.

“Innovate in everything that you do while investing in your people, premises and product offering,” recommends Rowan Crozier, Managing Director of C. Brandauer a 150 year-old world-class engineering company that is using Business Growth Service and UKTI to internationalise its website and develop its marketing.

“My business mantra is to make lots of small changes. Try and change something in your business for the better every day. Establish and prioritise what is routine then do it excellently,” says Charles Baughan, founder of Westaways Sausages, which works with UKTI to sell its products to markets from Japan to Barbados.

“The only way Britain can compete on the global stage is through innovation and entrepreneurship,” states Stephen Rapoport, founder of Pact Coffee, which accessed R&D tax credits and the Enterprise Management Incentive (EMI) scheme to develop the fast-growing business.

Dr Jim Shaikh, the founder of Yoomi, a baby bottle product says:

“Maintain investment in research and development, even through the tough times, as this is the source of differentiation for UK engineering and manufacturing. The return will be in the longevity of your product, and brand.”

Yoomi has benefitted from a multitude of Government support. Working with UKTI, the company gained support on agent and distributor agreements export documentation, and attended trade shows. Working with MAS, as part of the Business Growth Service, they were able to move additional packaging capabilities to Liverpool.

Support ranges from tax reliefs and credits, to vouchers and grants – all practical solutions to encourage a new phase for the business.

To read more about the support available to help your business to innovate visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/funding-and-support-to-develop-new-ideas
On average, a business earns £100,000 in additional sales within 18 months of working with UKTI. Hear more from those who have taken their business from strength to strength by selling overseas, to see how you could start your journey today.

Nikolay Piryankov, founder of jewellery business, Rare Pink.
Nikolay has worked with UKTI and GrowthAccelerator (part of Business Growth Service) to help launch in China and get advice on raising finance via crowd funding.

He would advise any small business looking to grow to consider selling overseas:

“The global economy is set up in such a way that players of all sizes can be involved. UKTI can help the smaller guys to get British businesses on the international map. Companies of all sizes need to think global and UKTI is a good place to start.”

Dani Foffa, founder of Foffa Bikes, understands it can be a scary step:

“When going international, there are higher risks and some difficulties, and you can end up learning how to do business the hard way. Use UKTI, they can help you make more informed decisions and meet other businesses who are in the same boat to share ideas.”

Brent Hadfield and Peter Grainger, co-founders of CaféPod, believe that UKTI’s overseas network has been hugely beneficial to them in moving up the commercial ladder:

“We’ve met valuable contacts that have materialised into new lines of business, and have had the opportunity to tap into the international retail chain. Reliable contacts are key when establishing in new markets, and UKTI’s global network is second to none.”

Leanna Williams, founder of lingerie company, Harlow and Fox, said:

“I always planned for my product to be international as it’s a niche item with a very specific customer base. Exhibiting at the biggest lingerie trade show in Paris last year certainly helped and led to approaches from fashion stockists in both Dubai and Australia. Exports have helped me to almost double my target turnover and I am now on track for unprecedented success in my first year.”

To book an appointment with an independent trade advisor and see how you can expand into new markets, visit www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukti
If you are expanding rapidly, you can sometimes forget why you started the business in the first place. Here’s how some founders try to stay on track:

“Remember the passion you had at the beginning, why you’re doing this business, and then try to deliver that every day,” says Marcus Whittington, Director of Bath Boutique Stays, a luxury holiday accommodation rental company. He received Growth Vouchers to help identify new markets and customers.

“Believe in your ability to do what you are passionate about: trust your instincts,” says Catherine Spink, founder of Neon Creations, who used the Innovation Voucher Scheme to fund market research in Manchester, to establish a route to market for their new products.

“Persistence and determination are the two key qualities needed to get your business off the ground,” says Sandy Ruddock, founder of Scarlett & Mustard. They have received many types of Government support including grants from MAS, UKTI’s Passport to Export programme and just taken on an apprentice. As a result, their company grew by 300% in 2013, and in 2014, turnover nearly doubled.

“Remember why you wanted to start your business. What does it mean to you, what are your values and goals and then plan how you intend to reach them,” advises Tina Goldsmith, founder of Snuggle Sacs, an award-winning small business, with products distributed across 12 countries and an exclusive Harry Potter licensing deal.

“Stick to being the best in the world at one thing. Don’t get distracted from one very clear goal. Ours is to become the global brand for children’s travel products. We won’t make toys, or adult luggage or anything that doesn’t fit this one single vision,” says Rob Law, founder of Trunki.

To read more about how Brompton Bicycles used Government support, from creating a business plan to exporting, visit: [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/brompton-bicycles-unfolding-success](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/brompton-bicycles-unfolding-success)
Sometimes, great advice is all about timing. What sounds like a cliché for 364 days can be a brilliant insight on the 365th.

We have all been told to “do what you are passionate about.” But it was only when Stephen Rapoport, the serial entrepreneur and founder-CEO of Pact Coffee, was pondering his fourth business venture that the power of that advice hit home.

“My wife told me to ‘stop thinking like an investor, just do the thing that you love.’ And I have.” explains Rapoport. “This business is driven by a passion and love of coffee, of flavour, of delighting customers. As a result, I have a business many times the size of the others combined.”

Sometimes, you need to have your business in the right place before you can really benefit from great advice.

In the early days of Brompton Bicycle, recalls CEO Will Butler-Adams, “we were charging around like headless chickens, trying to sort this and that out but we were going round and round in circles. We needed to get our head out of the mire and think about where we wanted to go.”

It was only after the team pulled itself out of this busy-ness that Brompton understood the enormous amount of material and advice that was available to support its growth. “There is nothing we are doing that other people haven’t done before,” says Butler-Adams. “There are so many companies who have been where we are going.”

We think of great advice as coming from experienced folk, from mentors, professional advisers and peers who have been there and done it. But that’s only one aspect. For many entrepreneurs, the best advice they receive comes from only one source - their customers.

For Jane Field, owner of successful mail order business Jonny’s Sister, great advice can also come from her apprentices. “They are open, fresh and they question things,” she says. And they make a real impact: “I have removed products which I was convinced would sell, based on their reactions. They carry zero baggage, have a real ‘can do’ approach to everything, and bring a freshness that money can’t buy.”

Whenever and from whomever it comes, get as much good advice as you can. Your task — and your own genius — will then be to turn it into great decisions.

Stuart Rock, Business is GREAT Editor in Chief.
UKTI services and networks

Businesses who choose to sell overseas become 34% more productive in their first year while those already selling overseas achieve 59% faster productivity growth than non-exporters.

UKTI can help you succeed overseas. The figures are compelling: on average businesses earn £100,000 in additional sales within 18 months of working with UKTI. This could be you.

UKTI has a national network of International Trade Advisers with first-hand export expertise to support and advise you on how to grow your business in international markets. Find out what UKTI can do for you, by contacting your nearest ITA today:

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To read what UKTI can do for your business visit: [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukti](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukti)

Other sources of information

- **Foreign & Commonwealth Office country profiles**
  https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

- **For support & advice on access to finance, contact UK Export Finance (UKEF)**
  Email – customer.service@ukef.gsi.gov.uk    Tel – 020 7272 8010
  www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukef
Useful sources of advice

The Business is GREAT website is a one stop shop of advice, full to the brim with useful information, tricks of the trade and honest accounts of how to grow a company from small business owners, just like you.

With information on services and organisations such as the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), UK Export Finance (UKEF), and UKTI to name a few, learn how to take your business to the next level here: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk

Other useful sources include:

Your bank
Your bank can provide a range of help on topics such as financing your next business move, managing foreign transactions, trading overseas in sterling, owning assets abroad and exchange rates. For further financial support, visit: www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/finance

Your lawyer
The Law Society offers a service for small and medium sized businesses: ‘Lawyers For Your Business’ is a network of solicitor firms in England and Wales, offering a 30 minute initial consultation to talk through the issues your business faces. It has been running for over 16 years and advice can be sought on a range of legal issues, both domestic and international. Learn more here: http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/lfyb

Intellectual Property Office
Intellectual property rights allow you to own things you create, in a similar way to owning physical property. You can control the use of your intellectual property and use it to gain reward. Find out how to protect yours overseas by visiting the UK’s Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO) at: www.intellectual-property.gov.uk

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
HMRC provides assistance on topics such as import licences, rates of exchange and export taxes. Read more here: www hmrc.gov.uk
“Our expert Government adviser helped us get a handle on exporting”

Smruti Sriram, CEO of Supreme Creations

Businesses looking to export can work with an expert International Trade Adviser. To discover how Supreme Creations benefited from Government support and how you can too, visit greatbusiness.gov.uk/exporting