



CASE STUDY

Innovation Voucher used to refine financial processes and develop an app to track employee activities, leading to increased productivity.

DMN Logistics, a vehicle delivery company, uses individual drivers rather than transporting vehicles using trailers or lorries.

It was founded in 2010 by its three current directors. The business also provides associated logistic services, including driver hire, vehicle storage, valet and repair.

The Head Office is based in Digbeth, Birmingham, where 34 office staff are based. DMN Logistics also employs 85 drivers, and has access to 125 contracted drivers. All drivers are home-based and live across the United Kingdom.

“When we had five employees it was easy, however it became more challenging managing invoicing as the business grew, and we needed support to find a solution.”



Challenge

Nick Chadaway, one of the three company directors, explained that prior to applying to the Innovation Voucher programme, DMN Logistics was expecting to win a large contract which would result in it employing an additional 46 hourly paid staff. The business was already struggling to manage the current workforce, who were paid hourly, in terms of tracking hours worked, tasks undertaken, and location of work. The processes used were not structured; hours worked were recorded on paper, through emails and via fax, and therefore invoicing was resource intensive and inefficient.

The Directors had searched for an app or web-based platform to help facilitate a more structured process but could not find a solution that met their needs. As a result, the Directors were keen to commission a tailored solution.



“ Previously, a paper-based copy of hours was submitted. This was typed into a spreadsheet, passed on to accounts, and accounts would then manually raise 50 invoices. Now it is click, click, approve, and send to customer. It’s a much quicker process.”



Innovation Voucher Solution

DMN Logistics was informed about the Innovation Voucher programme by its Business Growth Hub Advisor, based at the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. Nick had also attended the Aston Small Business Growth Course where the programme was advertised.

DMN Logistics had previously been successful in applying for funding from the Business Innovation programme delivered by Birmingham City Council and therefore Nick had experience in completing similar application forms. He was supported throughout the process by the Aston Team who ensured that Nick inputted the correct information and submitted the application on time. The team was also able to signpost and advise Nick on potential organisations to undertake the work.

“ The Aston Team held my hand all the way through the process.”

The application process was very straightforward, and Nick submitted the application within two to three weeks of first engaging with the programme.

The subsequent grant was used to commission a consultant to review and refine financial processes, and to commission a software company to develop an app to support these processes.

The app enables drivers to record hours worked, location of work and tasks undertaken; this data is then centrally collated.



Impact

The new processes and introduction of the app have resulted in a more streamlined process for managing invoices, leading to enhanced productivity. Originally, DMN Logistics had planned for two members of staff to manage the payroll for the new contract, but the app meant it required only one staff member to do so. It also minimised the risk of error.

Since the beginning of the year, DMN Logistics has employed 52 new employees, has safeguarded existing jobs, and increased turnover and profit. Although Nick felt that DMN Logistics would have taken on additional staff members without the support of the Innovation Voucher programme, he did not think the company would have been as productive or efficient.

As a result of engaging with the programme, Nick felt DMN Logistics would be more likely to seek innovative solutions to challenges faced in the future.

“ We would definitely access support from the Innovation Voucher programme again and would recommend it to other businesses. It was brilliant.”

