



Business Support case study

Oxfordshire based company, Outside ideas, are transforming businesses across the UK with their vibrant and energetic approach to networking, one-to-one coaching and mastermind groups.

Founder Peter Mols, candidly opens up about his personal struggles which prompted the start of Outside Ideas. He speaks of how these experiences bolstered his understanding of the importance of gaining suitable and effective business support. "I've always been fascinated by entrepreneurs and struggled at school. It wasn't until my final year of uni, and a dyslexia diagnosis that I wrote my dissertation on the characteristics of entrepreneurs, which scored the second highest in the uni that year."

Peter goes on to speak about the early mistakes, hardships and mental health struggles he experienced, saying "I started my first business in New Zealand in 2005. I had eight people working with me. I was onto something good. But long story short, I screwed it up. I didn't focus on the things I should've been focusing on. I was writing business plans for other things and getting distracted. Looking back, there's an awful lot that's happened in my life that's starting to make sense. I'm in the process of an ADHD diagnosis, so this and my dyslexia have played a part. Ultimately, my business failed, and I lost it all. It was one of the most painful experiences of my life, and it led to a long 13-year fight with depression."

Peter speaks of a positive turnaround "Fast forward through life's roller coaster, and I married my wife Sarah. She has been my absolute rock ever since. In 2017 we had our boy Max. I was working in commercial property at the time, and I knew that I needed to change. I was offered a role with Action Coach and working with them gave me the tools and strategies I needed to help myself get better. For the first time in 13 years, I had the confidence to release myself from my tablets."

Over time, my long-buried entrepreneur came back and in 2019 I quit my job and decided to set up my own business coaching company, Outside ideas. We primarily support solopreneurs and micro-business owners, offering networking events and one-to-one business coaching.

In 2021, Sarah and I joined forces and set about providing Mastermind groups to our audience. It's the part of our business that we're most excited about and focused on. Mastermind9 brings 9 diverse business owners together, once a month, to support each other with their challenges and opportunities for growth."



Even business mentors need business mentors!

Although Peter is now a successful business mentor, his past experiences have taught him the importance of maintaining a growth mindset and seeking external support. He tells us "At 25 I had the makings of an incredible business. It was potentially game changing. But I didn't do it right. And if my now experienced grown-up self had helped my, then inexperienced, 25-year-old self - I would have crushed it and my life would've been very different."

Peter goes on to speak about the drive behind Outside ideas' unique approach to mentorship "After a period of time building up Outside ideas I was busy. It was getting crazy. I didn't want to be a dad who wasn't around for my son. This is when Sarah came on board and between us, we decided to set up Mastermind groups, rather than just focusing on the coaching side of things. There was no one else providing Masterminds at an affordable price for micros and solos."

OxLEP Business support Outside Ideas scale-up plans

Over the past 2 years, Outside ideas have gained an array of support from OxLEP's Growth Hub and eScalate Programme. Sarah, Peters wife and now business partner, steps in to tell us how valuable their support has been "We knew we had a business that we could grow and eventually sell. That's the dream. And we recognised if we wanted to be successful, we needed to scale-up, and fast. We were looking for external support and discovered OxLEP Business.

We both received one-to-one support, covering subjects like PR and marketing which was really valuable. It helped boil down a lot of ideas, things like our key messaging and customer journey processes. We were also given lots of advice on how to formulate our PR strategy to help with things like SEO, backlinks and our website. I'm also part of a scale-up group which has been excellent. It's made me feel like we're part of something larger in the Oxfordshire business community. They've opened the door to a much wider network for us

Peter's taken part in the peer network groups which were really interesting. As we were already running Mastermind groups, for him to actually be in that environment, helping other business people and sharing ideas was a great experience. It helped him see things from the other side.

I also took part in the Investor Pitching event. It was so fascinating. It was an intense 2 days with other business owners. Over the 2 days, we created a pitch deck and presented it back to the group. We learnt about the different types of investment you can get. And at the end of it I came away with a pitch deck for when we're ready. The support from OxLEP has covered off so many different areas."

Perhaps most valuable has been the prolonged sessions with OxLEP mentors. The one-to-one support really helps us focus in on what's important and keeps us accountable. It's invaluable.



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Scaling-up for an exciting future

Peter concludes by sharing the exciting things lined up for Outside ideas. "We're now in a great position to move forward with our scaling-up plans. OxLEP's help has helped us see things more clearly and define our future strategy. As well as continuing to grow the Mastermind groups, we've also got an amazing opportunity to get some great national exposure with some large corporations in the UK. I really want to impress them. I've arranged a meeting for next week with OxLEP. They have said they're going to help me create a 'knock em out' 15 minute presentation so they can't say no! We're just so grateful for this.

The support OxLEP has given us and continues to give to us is amazing. Our experience with them from the start has been a million percent positive."



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUTSIDE IDEAS PLEASE VISIT THEIR WEBSITE: outside-ideas.com

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