



Nottingham Trent
University

NTU Enterprise Impact Report

21
22

Welcome to the first impact report for NTU Enterprise.
This has been a journey beyond our imagination and expectation.
Having been awarded funding in 2019 to build an outstanding enterprise innovation centre at the heart of NTU and Nottingham City, we have been on a whirlwind journey that was unprecedented.

Our enterprise community has had to deal with the fall out of Brexit, the impact of a pandemic and now international conflict that has impacted businesses and personal costs, that are more than just financial.

But, our journey has been inspiring, positive, impactful and joyful. We were tasked to build our new Dryden Enterprise Centre through the pandemic lockdown when businesses were asked to leave the work environment and stay at home, and we pivoted our programmes in order to continue to support businesses from our (and their) bedrooms and kitchens through online delivery. This of course created a major change in how we developed and delivered what we offered, how we worked, offered support and, how we approached the actual build of the centre.

Overcoming these challenges and working with our community to develop a space and environment that they would thrive in, was much more than just a collaborative process. We created support networks, opportunities and friendships.

We found our mission of Community, Connectivity and Collaboration.

The build came to fruition and the journey continues; this report outlines the impact of our work to date.

Yours sincerely,

Megan Powell Vreeswijk
 Head of Enterprise

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How are we doing?

The numbers speak for themselves – over the past 18 months, we have been busy supporting people and businesses to do amazing things. Here’s a snapshot of our progress between June 2021 and December 2022.

	Supported 115 existing businesses and 1,014 people to develop their ideas.		
Helped to create 48 new businesses and counting.			Ran 163 business events , hosting a total of 2,597 participants .
			
Welcomed 456 new students into our Entrepreneurs Club and delivered 39 events.			

Created 34 podcast episodes driving a total of 1,142 listens .		Filled 79% of our Dryden Enterprise Centre office space.	
	Successfully supported 143 individuals across 13 cohorts of our start-up and business growth programmes.		
£9.6M investment raised by our business community.		Awarded £25k grant funding to our students and graduates.	
	5,431 followers across our social channels (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram).		Inspired and supported over 14,000 individuals across all areas of activity.

Dryden Enterprise Centre

The Dryden Enterprise Centre (DEC) offers modern, spacious office space in the centre of Nottingham, with membership options ranging from flexible coworking space to premium serviced offices.

The DEC offers space for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and businesses to collaborate, connect and grow. Opening its doors to businesses in May 2020, as of December 2022 the space has 51% of desks taken with fee paying commercial memberships and 17% of desks allocated to support student and graduate programmes.

By offering space with our student support programmes, NTU students with an interest in starting their own business can work alongside our commercial tenants, to network and be inspired by those who are already trading and growing. This also creates a community that provides support.

The Dryden Enterprise Centre is built on a vision to grow a business community, support collaboration between businesses and NTU, connecting research, founders, and innovators in a space that is 'best-in-class' in the heart of Nottingham.

Facilitating Growth and Flexibility

The Enterprise team have remained engaged and connected to research within the enterprise and incubation community – understanding and implementing changes in the way people work to ensure the space, and the businesses in it, are able to work in the best possible way to suit their business, their people and their growth.

To meet this need we support members to work on planning their strategy, giving them space to suit their requirements now and in the future, and supporting the freedom to flex up and down depending on their success and the needs of their team.

The end-goal is to give businesses the opportunity to find the best fit for their people and business models, so they can implement the best working practices to enable efficiency. The lasting impact is that businesses within the space are more likely to recruit the right people, keep the right people, be more resilient and have longer-term economic impacts in Nottingham and beyond.

Space for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and businesses to collaborate, connect and grow



Our members

Our members go beyond the walls of the Dryden Enterprise Centre, across the boundaries of the city and county. We class members as our commercial tenants, but also businesses that have been supported through our programmes, organisations that support our work through mentorship and partners that mirror our values.

As a tenant, I cannot fault the beautiful environment of the DEC. It's well equipped, super modern and full of life.

Isaac Twidale - We Do Ads

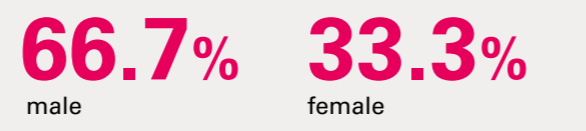
As a sample, across just 25 of the companies that we support, there are:



Current stage of evolution



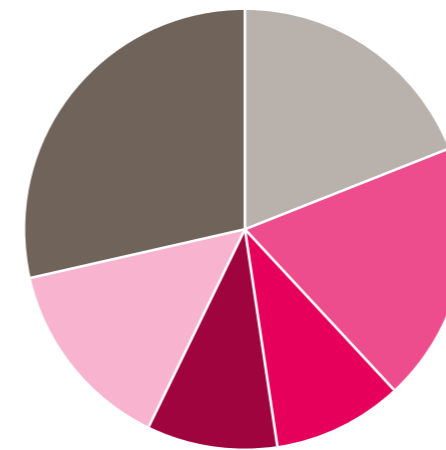
Genders of founders



Gender balance of companies based on founders



Commercial members by sector



- Technology and gaming
- Marketing
- Architecture
- International Trade
- Business Support
- Media and Film

What our members say:

“ Being a part of such a creative, collaborative, and positive community means we’re never at a loss for inspiration.
Ed Morley – Lava Labs ”

“ As a tenant, I cannot fault the beautiful environment of the DEC. It's well equipped, super modern and full of life.
Isaac Twidale – We Do Ads ”

“ Ran an event here earlier this week. Room layout was ideal and technical set-up was both easy and excellent. We'll be back!
Russell Copley – Greenborough Management Ltd ”

“ Exceptional office space and fantastically well run - with special thanks to Katrina and the team for all their help getting us set up. Highly recommended!
Aidian Wilson – Brainbug Design ”

“ All members of DEC are absolutely amazing! The community that they are creating is fostering a network of SMEs that can support and thrive off one another.
Martin Croft – Quartz Barristers ”

Ran an event here earlier this week. Team could not have been more helpful in arranging the event, and were really accommodating on the day. We'll be back!

Russell Copley - Greenborough Management Ltd



Game studio with \$10m backing calls DEC home

Hailed as the 'Pixar of online games' take a look inside the world of Lava Labs

Lava Labs is a games developer currently building their debut title: 'A Far Away Realm'. AFAR hosts a series of fun-first games that roll up as a metaverse. Imagine 'Fall Guys with guns on Web 3.0'. If that sounds like your bag, then you'll want to follow the incredible world being built by Lava Labs. Check it out [here](#).

A small and agile team, Lava Labs are spread across offices in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, with other talent making their contributions remotely. For their UK base Lava Labs chose the Dryden Enterprise Centre as a home for their team, renting one of our premium office spaces in the heart of NTU's city campus.

Chief Technology Officer, Ed Morley, said:

"It's a privilege to work with such an incredible team of game developers, investors, advisors and partners on a game that had me hooked from the moment I saw the first concepts. And being based at the Dryden Enterprise Centre (DEC) has helped us grow and develop the talent in our team.

We picked the Dryden Enterprise Centre because it has everything we need and then some more. We started out renting a 10-person office on the top floor but have since expanded and moved into the larger 16-person office, and having a communal space right outside our offices has been brilliant for meeting with guests.

Being a part of such a creative, collaborative, and positive community means we're never at a loss for inspiration. And working out of the premium office spaces suits us perfectly – we have the flexibility to come and go when we need to, our every need is catered for, and Katrina and the team are always on hand to offer their assistance or a great chat."

A \$10 million injection

Interest from investors has come flooding through for A Far Away Realm. Their most recent celebrations came after the game development studio raised over \$10m to further its development of the AFAR universe.

The funding led by Dialectic saw support from big names in the blockchain gaming space, such as Makers Fund, Animoca Brands, Razer Computer, Weak Simp Cap, Dapper Labs and Maven11.

Being a part of such a creative, collaborative, and positive community means we're never at a loss for inspiration.

Community events



Connecting members to each other, and making them feel part of our community, is an essential part of what we do.

But it is not just about being social – as part of our mission, we encourage our members to share knowledge, ask questions and seek out opportunities and we have found the best discussions are had when people are at ease.

Since we launched the DEC, we have held 52 events, bringing together over 300 people, and really getting to the heart of our values of community, connectivity and collaboration.

Regular events in the space include:



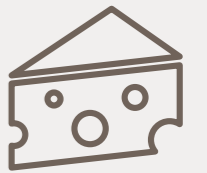
Freitag is Wunderbar!



Ja, it's Friday! Time to enjoy a taste of Bavaria – Freitag ist Wunderbar is a chance for DEC members to meet, mingle and relax before the weekend.



Fromage Friday



Bonjour Friday! It might sound cheesy – but Fromage Fridays are a chance for members to bring along a cheese of choice and win monthly prizes for the tastiest and most unique fromage!



Female focus

Female enterprise and support is front and centre, with networking, advice and speaker sessions that highlights issues of female employees and founders – events are open to all, no matter how you identify.



Lunch Club



On the third Monday of every month, we invite you to take a moment away from your desks and share a conversation and a bite to eat with other members of the DEC community.



Breakfast Club

Join us on the second Wednesday of every month for our Breakfast Club - your early morning call to mingle and get energised for the day ahead!



DEC Connect

An opportunity for DEC members to meet, network and connect with each other.

DEC Connect sessions give members the opportunity to share news and information about themselves and their business and ask for advice or support from their peers.

Meet the member: Sarah Cresswell, Managing Director- Mondrem CIC

Sarah Cresswell, Managing Director (right) and Mike Astbury, Chief Executive (left) with the Mondrem team (middle)

Mondrem CIC is a business consultancy setting out to improve public services. Their mission is to help public services work with lower costs and deliver great services while creating a rewarding working experience for the people who deliver them.

Why the Dryden Enterprise Centre? The future of Mondrem

"I sought out the Dryden Enterprise Centre as I live in Nottingham and my business partner, Mike, lives in Crewe, and we've got an office at Keele University in their innovation park. And it's been really valuable to have that connection with a university and other local businesses. So, I wanted to find something in Nottingham that could replicate a similar model, as it has been beneficial in the growth of our business in getting our name raised in the local area."

Sarah came to the DEC as a flexi member as she wanted to reduce the amount of time she was working from home and explore becoming part of a professional community. She soon realised that this was a space she was comfortable in and saw the benefits of being based with us more regularly, so she upgraded to a dedicated desk. It was not long before Sarah realised that having their own space within the building gave them more flexibility and they chose to take on an office.

Connectivity

Through our conversations with Sarah about her business growth and personal direction, we connected her into the university to explore some of the options available to her. As a result of these discussions, Sarah has begun studying to become a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) with us at NTU to support her professional development and achieve her ambitions.

Sarah is starting to think about how she can take a step back at Mondrem whilst leaving a lasting legacy.

"Our priority at the moment is protecting the culture we've built as we grow. We've built really strong ethics in the business of being kind, inquisitive, and customer-focused, while supporting and challenging each other in a way that is appropriate and considerate. And it's important that anyone we bring into our business has the same values."

Then long term, I want Wayfinder to be a product that is used in services across the NHS and other service providers. And I want both Mondrem and Wayfinder to be able to sustain themselves without me.

I want to be able to say that I grew something from an acorn to something the size of a tree, where I can leave someone the fertiliser, a watering can and a 'how to' guide knowing the tree is going to live."

...it's been really valuable to have that connection with a university and other local businesses.

Growthack

Meet Kevin Kapezi and Leo Worsley, the tech SEO and paid media specialists behind the Growthack Digital brand.

The ethos behind Growthack

Leo and Kevin first met working at a digital marketing agency in Nottingham. They quickly realised that when they worked on projects together, they achieved great results and started working on projects together, building a little side hustle, and honing down on the tech side of digital marketing.

One client quickly turned into two and then three, until it eventually became a full-time job and they both decided to leave their previous roles.

The main reason Growthack came to fruition is because both Leo and Kevin liked the feedback that comes from doing great work - being able to talk directly to the primary stakeholder in a business who really cares about the success of their work and where you can see it actually makes a positive difference to them as an individual.

"We loved working with each other. We loved working with particular types of businesses and projects, so we just made it happen."

Achievements

Growthack advocate for having work and life complement each other. And the enthusiasm they have for delivering top-notch results for their clients has not gone unnoticed. Here are just a few of their accolades:

- Shortlisted for Startups Magazine's #HustleAwards "Founder Of The Year"
- Kevin was guest speaker at the International Search Summit in Barcelona
- Received Cyber Essentials Plus certification after a successful audit from Arcanum Cyber Security & Digital Forensics, a government-backed scheme certifying their cyber readiness
- Delivered a series of student workshops with NTU Enterprise

The role of NTU Enterprise

Both Leo and Kevin studied at Nottingham Trent University, with Kevin studying Business with Law and Leo studying Nuclear Physics.

They were both brought back to NTU when Kevin spotted a LinkedIn post from our Space and Community Manager, Katrina Starkie, promoting our coworking spaces at the Dryden Enterprise Centre.

We loved working with each other.

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

The team said the Dryden Enterprise Centre and NTU Enterprise has helped them in so many ways, but broke it down into three main areas:

"The first is obviously having this physical presence, having the physical capabilities of a furnished office, where we can just come in as and when we please, meet people and build relationships. We actually found a couple of clients within the first two weeks!

This also supported our growth options and we moved from dedicated desks into our own office in the DEC.

The second aspect of it is, of course, the bridge between NTU and the Dryden Enterprise Centre. We have benefited from being connected into employability when we were hiring our first employee, and through one of the support programmes, we have been able to access some funding from the European Regional Development Fund, which really helped us get to the next stage.

Kevin has been invited to be part of some enterprise panels, which has contributed to the growth of our network and the visibility of our business.

Overall, the Enterprise Team have been, and still are, so supportive of us and our business. We were welcomed into the Dryden Enterprise Centre and supported to use the space, expand, put ourselves forward for awards and accreditation and give us the credibility to move forward. We've been linked into projects and programmes that have given us the opportunity to explore new ideas – and link us into other businesses to grow.

We wouldn't hesitate to recommend businesses like us to get involved in the programmes and opportunities that are facilitated by the Enterprise Team at NTU. Our growth and success has always been part of our vision, and the team have helped it come to life."

Challenges and lessons

For the first year, Growthack were on a steady growth track. However, like many small businesses, the recession, civil war, cost of living crisis and current situation has taken its toll.

Their growth plateaued slightly, which was a great reality check for the pair. Although starting up a digital business during lockdown played in their favour, the knocks they received further down the line taught them to be prepared for setbacks and adapt to survive the storm.



Leo said: *'Thankfully, we're on the other side and I feel like we're a much more robust and a better business. Off the back of everything, we had a lot of e-commerce clients that were severely impacted, so now we're branching out to B2B, and diversifying our client portfolio'*

The future of Growthack

The team at Growthack are currently working on improving their website and creating more content to promote their services. They are looking to get an intern in place to help with this project.

Leo and Kevin are creating a business model where they are making the business work for them – enjoying life just as much as work. They plan to keep delivering quality results for their clients, broadening their client base, and enjoying themselves along the way.

Final words of wisdom

When asked what the best piece of advice they've ever received was, the team referred to the motto they carry into their own work, quoting Einstein:

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

Check out Growthack's services at: growthackdigital.com

And if you want to find out more about the event spaces and ready-to-roll desks and offices at the Dryden Enterprise Centre, take a look at www.dec.space

The Octopus of Enterprise podcast



Our podcast was born from our desire to share the great work that we and others are doing in business and enterprise with our community and beyond.

Shining a light on diverse topics from funding and finance through to mental health, mindset and leadership and much more in a format available to listeners across the world.

Since its launch in July 2021, we have released more than 30 episodes, of the Octopus of Enterprise and its sister podcast The Octopus of Enterprise Educators.



Highlights:

000: Let's Get Down to Business!

What does an Octopus have to do with Enterprise?

Join Diana and Megan as they get down to business, talking about all things The Octopus of Enterprise! Revealing the origins of the podcast's name, introducing what it's all about and giving you a sneaky peek of what's to come!

001: Stepping into Business

How do you find funding and finance without facing the Dragons' flames?

Join Diana as she catches up with NTU graduates Sean Ali and Charlotte Bailey (Rheal Superfoods), Phil Clarke (Enterprise Advisor) and Lewis Stringer (British Business Bank), as they discuss the steps to funding and finance, along the way hearing all about Sean and Charlotte's visit to the Dragons' Den!

Sean and Charlotte got support from NTU Enterprise (formerly known as The Hive) when they were students at NTU. If you're looking for help with your business find out more here ntu.ac.uk/ntu-enterprise

022: Have You Heard About Enactus?

Are you looking to get involved in a programme that aims to "create a better, more sustainable world"?

We'll look no further! Join Diana as she speaks to members of NTU's Enactus team Connor Farrell, Yumna Hassan and Devishi Kapoor about their time (so far) taking part in the programme that is Enactus.

Our programmes

NTU Enterprise has been supporting new and growing businesses for more than a decade.

It is what we love doing most.

We have a brilliant range of programmes to support individuals, start-ups and growing/scaling businesses, from ideation through to investment ready and exit. These programmes are delivered throughout the year and many are open to everyone, regardless of where they are situated within the region or if they have a pre-existing connection to NTU or not.

So, through our partnerships with sector bodies and organisations, and financial support from core, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Towns Fund investments, we provide access to support and initiatives to help students, graduates, staff and businesses to start, grow, upskill and scale their businesses.

Our programmes have delivered;



Our participants' testimonials about our programmes:

“ There is so much more to running a business than I realised. I really enjoyed meeting like-minded individuals and all of the sessions were really informative. ”
 HeadStart participant

“ Without support, I would be 6 months further back. Having access to industry professionals and university staff who have been so supportive has given me the skills and confidence to go ahead. ”
 BreakThrough participant

“ In general, we had a hugely positive experience and I really appreciate Amanda's input and that of external contributors. ”
 UpScaler participant

“ The programme was led by people who have a really good sense of different businesses and they were able to use their skills and knowledge to identify and see the overlaps, and draw out common topics that had real value for the people on the programme. ”
 UpScaler participant

This programme really hit the mark – great location, speakers, facilities, people and refreshments.

Digital Deep Dive participant



To find out more about funding and to check whether you are eligible to receive support, visit the [Financial and Funded Support](#) pages on the NTU website.

For information and support for students, graduates and staff, please visit the [NTU Enterprise](#) pages on the NTU website.

You would not believe what effect the DEC has had on our organisation.

Programme case study: Ketchup Marketing

Ketchup Marketing is a full-service marketing agency based in central Nottingham and recently celebrated their 13th birthday, and have seen impressive growth in their businesses over the last three years.

Ketchup became commercial tenants and members of our enterprise community at the Dryden Enterprise Centre when it opened in 2021 and have grown their team from 10 to 15 employees, flexing within the space as the team developed.

Paul Jones, Sales and Operations Director, said:

"We've enjoyed a brilliant 11 months of networking with other businesses and SMEs since we became part of the Dryden Enterprise Community."

As well as being an active part of our NTU Enterprise community, Ketchup also took part in our fully funded UpScaler programme, led by Amanda Stanford.

Paul added: *"It has been great to have a bit of support through this growth period. It's important to know how to grow, bring people on board and get to a culture where everyone's happy."*

You would not believe what effect the DEC has had on our organisation. We have grown from 10 to 15 people, gone through a brand refresh, launched a new website, learned some fantastic things, and met some fabulous people. We hope to keep the ties we have forged with NTU and build on them."

Latest achievements

After celebrating their 13th birthday, the team at Ketchup went through a complete rebrand to reflect the innovation, growth and evolution of the team and their services.

The team generated £1.8 million of web enquiries in just 10 months for a new client, and have worked hard to generate an average return on investment of 600% on all marketing spend for their clients. Plus, Ketchup have seen a 287% increase in sales enquiries within two months of their new website launch. Great work team!

Challenges

Ketchup decided to join our UpScaler programme to take a step back and look at their growth. Beforehand, they were caught up in the business and solving challenges as and when they happened rather than looking forward, forecasting challenges, and preparing for future hurdles in advance.

Some of the growth barriers Ketchup noted were communication-related. With three directors, all with different communication styles, the team wanted to understand how best to communicate with each other.



The UpScaler Programme

When asked what the most valuable learning or experience on the programme was, Paul responded:

"There have been a few."

The Insights Discovery™ tool and personal profiles have helped us understand how we communicate internally. A lot of the time we aren't disagreeing. We are just disagreeing with how we communicate with each other. So, I think this has been a really big lesson for the senior management team, and we know we need to communicate better and be able to take feedback and dial down [or up our colour energies].

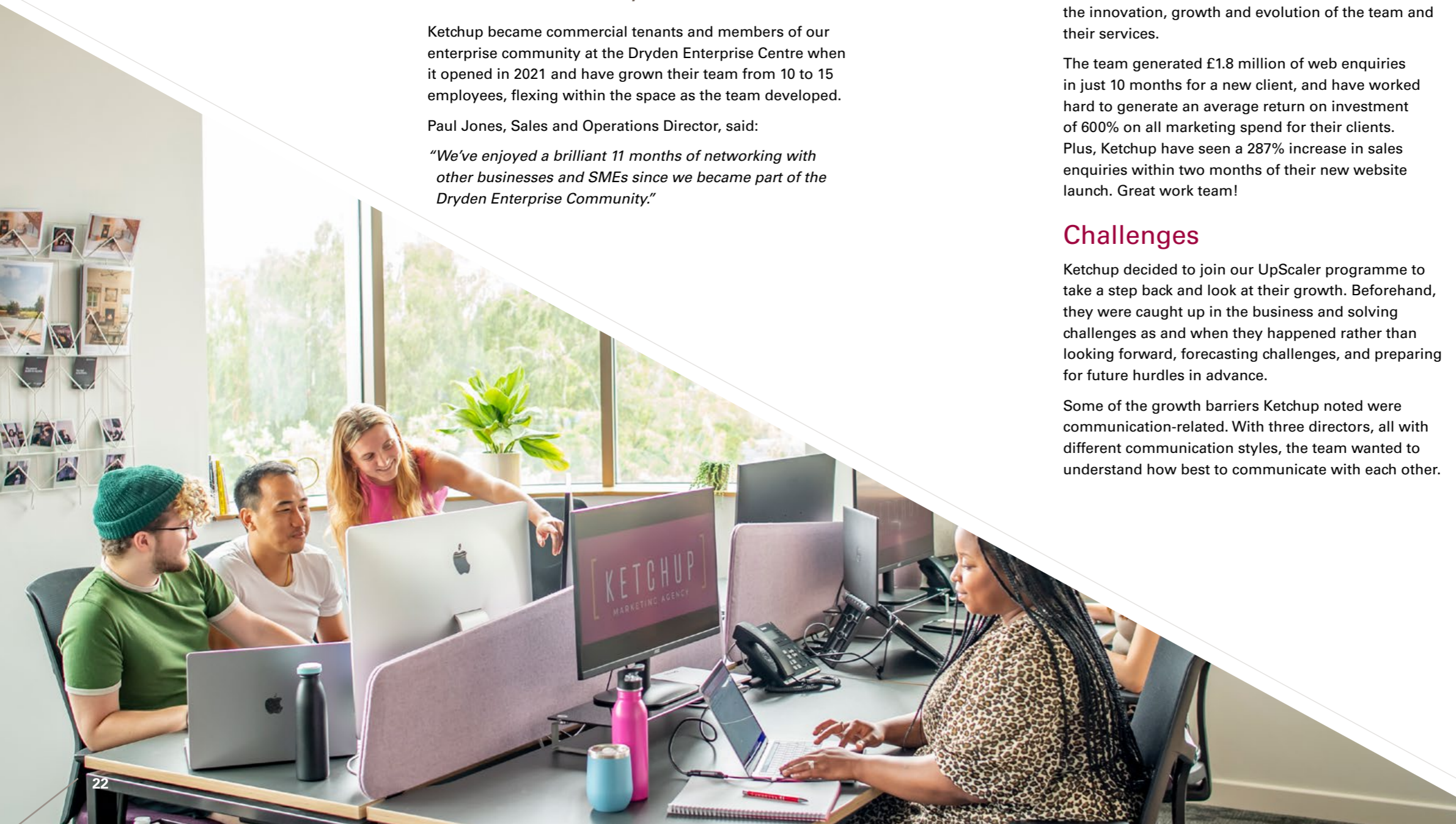
It's having the conversation that counts, knowing someone is there to chat with who is concerned with the outcome. I know Michelle [Managing Director of Ketchup] has already adopted a couple of things that came out of the one-to-ones with Amanda and found that they work, and there's been an instant change, which is brilliant.

The main impact is that we now have three directors more aligned in looking at the future and having better conversations about that. Overall, the programme has really helped with the momentum of change that we are going through and how the people in the organisation experience that change."

Our reflection

With the growth that Ketchup has experienced over this past year, it was time for them to move into larger permanent office space with their name above the front door. This has proved to us that the work we set out to achieve with the Dryden Enterprise Centre, the business support offer and commitment from Nottingham Trent University and the Enterprise Team, really is possible. Ketchup remains a firm part of our community and a prime example of what we plan to do for others.

For more information about Ketchup, please visit: ketchup-marketing.co.uk



Student Enterprise

Our student enterprise community are an amazing bunch, they are eager to learn, engaged in developing themselves and always open to supporting each other.

NTU Enterprise offers a comprehensive package of support for every stage of their start-up journey.

To help them develop their skills and knowledge and to become Enterprising Citizens of the future NTU Enterprise offers a comprehensive package of support for every stage of their start-up journey. Open to all of our undergraduate and postgraduate students, our growing community of student entrepreneurs has access to regular training, mentoring, networking opportunities, and more.

Entrepreneurs Club

456 members

Students come together to attend workshops, networking sessions, listen to experts from industry and meet other entrepreneurial students.

Freelancer Club

219 signups for our online and in person programmes

Expert programme for participants to explore and develop their freelancer practice.

Enterprise Opportunity module

27-30 students supported each year

Credit-bearing module delivered in conjunction with Nottingham Business School.

Year in Enterprise

31 participants across two academic years

Students from any course can choose to establish their business in their placement year, rather than taking on a standard industry placement with an employer.

Graduate Enterprise

After our students have graduated, our support does not stop there. We have different opportunities for them to access our support with two programmes dedicated to our recent alumni.

Graduate Internship Scheme 31 participants

A 9 week Summer School run in conjunction with Employability introducing them to starting self-employment or a business through the guidance and support of an Enterprise Advisor. These graduates can continue to receive support from NTU Enterprise if the business idea progresses.

31 graduates engaged in the Graduate Internship Scheme at NTU. Of these, 5 had an existing business prior to the scheme, and 3 started a new business during or after completion of the Scheme. One of the new businesses is based in Nottingham, East Midlands.

"I found the experience thought provoking and informative. Overall, I found the experience enriching and I would recommend to others who are in a similar position to me."

- 96% agree an internship has positively impacted their business idea/career
- 100% would recommend the internship to a friend.

Graduate Programme

This programme is exclusively for Nottingham Trent University graduates, providing a free 24-month programme of support (subject to progression) including: coaching, workshops and training, office space, funding, networking and exclusive offers.

12 graduates are a part of the graduate programme. Of these 12, 4 have an existing business. Currently, no data is available for new start-ups.

Other opportunities

MasterMind Business Start Up

In 2022, 45 Masters students looking to turn their skills into a business were supported through a two-day weekend development programme.

The programme focuses on operations and introduces students to a modified Business Model Canvas to bring together the various elements of understanding and running a business.

International Start-Up Visa

10 graduates have been endorsed by NTU Enterprise on the Start-Up Visa since June 2021. Of these, 2 participated in our Start-Up programme, including receiving mentoring from the team and access to the NTU Enterprise community. This year's cohort are now part of a pilot cohort of 12 graduates on the Graduate Programme.

Enactus

Enactus is a global organisation enabling students to set up social enterprises to network and gain entrepreneurial experience with other likeminded students from other universities.

Enactus NTU, supported by NTU Enterprise, offer students opportunities to get involved in enterprising projects for social good including award winning projects educating about sustainability through aeroponics, self-image through storytelling and tackling knife crime. The 13 strong Student Executive Team lead a volunteer membership of 78 students.

Since 2021, Enactus NTU have:

- Won 9 awards from corporate partners, including their anti-knife crime project being selected as the sole winner of the SAP Partner Competition and awarded £1,000 to invest in the project and accelerate its impact in addition to SAP Mentorship
- Raised approximately £9,000 for its social enterprises
- Partnered with 13 local organisations
- Delivered pilots of MOSS and Bright Greens at Djanogly Strelley Academy with 40 year 5 students and successfully raised their STEM attainment, English performance, sustainability awareness, aspirations and creative reach
- Developed their Save Reality bleed kit location awareness VR game and worked with 7 schools to develop it further

Spark Test-It and Follow-On grants

Open for applications 1-2 times per year, our Test-It and Follow-On grants offer funding to students with an inspiring business idea. 61 students applied for Test-It and Follow-On grants during the 2021-22 academic year. Of these, 12 had an existing business and 20 intended on starting a new business during or after receiving the grant. 14 out of the 20 new businesses would be based in Nottingham, East Midlands. 17 were awarded grants as part of the Test-It grant scheme, which is funded by Santander Universities and NTU philanthropic donors.

Pitching4pounds

The Pitching4Pounds competition takes place across all five of NTU campuses and gives students an opportunity to win up to £100 worth of vouchers by pitching a quick-fire business idea to our Enterprise Advisors.

In 2021, there were 60 winning ideas which included a cultural box food service, fancy dress service, dental flossing product, drone delivery, teddy bear refurbishment, rabbit breeding, umbrella pen, horsehair holder, coffee subscription and vending machine.

Business Plan Competition

Designed to inspire students into thinking seriously about their business idea, our Business Plan Competition invites students to create a business plan to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize to help them launch their business idea.

15 students entered the Business Plan Competition in 2021. Of these 15, 2 had an existing business, and 5 planned on starting a new business during or after participating in the competition. All 5 of the new businesses were expected to be based in Nottingham/East Midlands. Out of the 15 entries, 3 students were awarded the prize.



For more information visit:
ntu.ac.uk/student-enterprise

Student success story – ChangeXtra

Founded by NTU Masters Student, Claire Mann, ChangeXtra is a platform which aims to support women experiencing menopause, through community, conversation, and care.

About Claire

Claire is a mature student and a mum of 4, who has had a career in health research. After undergoing redundancy at the start of the pandemic, Claire saw an opportunity to try something new and retrain. She went on to win a scholarship from the Office for Students to complete a master's degree in Data Science at NTU.

As a student, Claire was able to access a variety of training and development opportunities, particularly surrounding entrepreneurship. During her time at NTU, Claire developed the ChangeXtra business plan and completed a placement Year in Enterprise to work on the business.

The Enterprise Team were fantastically supportive with advice around my launch and marketing.

Behind the business

After going through the menopause, Claire was left feeling lost. With multiple trips back and forth from the GP, she felt she had not received the help she really needed. She realised that the main things that helped her through were advice from friends who had already experienced menopause, tracking her symptoms, and monitoring the impacts of medication, diet, and exercise.

Claire wanted her friends and daughters to have a smoother experience with menopause. So, she set out to create a community where women can safely share their experiences, access advice from mentors and use smart technology to better help them understand their menopause journey.

“Change is inevitable but can be positive in many ways. So ChangeXtra was born – from the blood, sweat and tears (literally!) of my own experience and a real desire to make the world better for women.”



Change is inevitable but can be positive in many ways.



Achievements

“My proudest and most surprising moment so far has been winning 6 prizes at the Ingenuity Impact national business planning competition (when I didn’t expect to win a thing).”

“But I still feel incredibly proud and humble every time someone lets me know I have helped them in their menopause journey – that’s my main aim! One woman told me that the hour appointment she had with me was the best hour she had in the last 2 years and that really validated why I am doing what I am doing.”

Long-term goals

Claire would like to build ChangeXtra into a national business where every woman can access the support needed throughout menopause. She would ultimately like to build an accessible app that helps woman understand their health and how to best manage symptoms.

Not only this, but Claire also aims to collect big data about the menopause that does not already exist, to inform future policy and practice.

NTU Enterprise’s role

“I attended as many NTU Enterprise events as I could through the year. I also did the Enterprise award and all the online learning which helped me build my idea and business plan. I entered my plan into the NTU Business Plan Competition and won 1st place and £5k funding.”

“The Enterprise Team were fantastically supportive with advice around my launch and marketing. When I needed suppliers, they were able to offer great links and put me in touch with students where possible to save costs and share expertise.”

“I then completed the HeadStart programme and had a supportive mentor. The network was useful to get broad ideas.”

“Without NTU Enterprise I wouldn’t have been able to:

- Fund my app prototype development*
- Build a strong network*
- Participate in added value learning*
- Access students to provide support for ChangeXtra*
- Work in the lovely Dryden Enterprise Centre (DEC) space”*

Student success story – SenSus Design



[We] love all things design and have a passion for sustainability.

What is SenSus Design?

SenSus Design is a Nottingham based sustainable design consultancy, currently designing quality homeware that embodies the guiding principles of the slow design movement.

“As a brand, we aim to encapsulate emotional value and meaning within our work, giving you the opportunity to build long-lasting, sentimental relationships with the products you own.”

Behind the brand

Beth and Sam are both BA Product Design students at NTU, living in Nottingham, who love all things design and have a passion for sustainability!

SenSus Design was launched during Beth and Sam’s Year in Enterprise at the Dryden Enterprise Centre - they took a year out from their studies to take the leap and transform SenSus Design from an idea into reality, with no fear of pushing boundaries.

Their aim was to create a brand that encouraged people to stop buying for their space and start buying for themselves again - designing products that are beautiful, unique, and made to last.

Proudest moment

“Winning the Green Dragon Award from NTU Sustainability and keeping contact with Charmaine Morrell (Head of Sustainability at NTU) and her team has been amazing. Being recognised for what we set out to do was a big boost for us.”

Support received from NTU Enterprise

Sam and Beth have taken full advantage of the support on offer from NTU Enterprise, allowing them to pitch their business for investment, take part in programmes to help grow their business and even a trip to Mexico!

The biggest thing we want is to spread our message and educate on what it is we are creating.

Here’s a snippet of what they have been up to...

- HeadStart programme: *“This 4-day course was intense but amazing – very informative and really gave us all the information / foundation we needed to get started with SenSus.”*
- Mentoring with Diana (Enterprise Advisor): *“She has been so helpful throughout this whole process. Any time we had any issues or achievements, she was always the first person we went to.”*
- Santander funding: *“We were given some funding from the DEC, which really helped us get started, covered costs and gave us the opportunity to get set off on the right foot.”*
- Business Plan Competition: *“This competition is open to any students with a business idea. You can win up to £2,500 for submitting a business plan!”*

Keep an eye out on the NOW learning room for upcoming opportunities like this.

- Santander funded trip: *“We went on a month-long trip to Mexico to work on our businesses at CETYS Universidad. This was an incredible experience and the visits to the universities gave us some amazing insights into international business practices. We were also able to experience some amazing pieces of culture, which ended up influencing one of our projects. We could talk about this trip for hours!”*

What’s next for you?


“Like any small business, we want to be successful, but we want to do so whilst keeping our core values dear – they’re at the heart of everything we do. The biggest thing we want is to spread our message and educate on what it is we are creating.”





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Get in touch

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