



Getting ahead

Fast facts

Company: MyHairDressers.com

Industry: Creative

Target Market: Australia

UKTI Service: Export Marketing
Research Scheme

www.MyHairDressers.com



Since enlisting the help of UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) and its Export Marketing Research Scheme, SME MyHairDressers.com has cracked the Australian market.

MyHairDressers.com is a subscription-based service providing online training for hairdressers. It gives its members around the world quick and easy access to the world's best hairdressers, enabling them to gain the relevant skills and accreditation they need to stay ahead in their profession.

Entrepreneur Mark Butcher took control of the business in August 2010, but soon realised that his approach to exporting was not working as he had hoped. On the recommendation of an acquaintance, he joined Passport to Export, the UKTI programme that gives exporting companies the tools they need to grow their business internationally.

"I'm an experienced entrepreneur and at first I was very sceptical about what support UKTI could offer me and my business," says Mark. "I'd assumed that

there would be a load of red tape to get through before anything concrete was achieved. But this wasn't the case and I couldn't believe how much support they had to offer."

Taking a different approach

A UKTI International Trade Adviser (ITA) worked with Mark and helped him see that many of the business decisions for MyHairDressers.com had been based on rather vague information. The ITA recommended that Mark join the Export Marketing Research Scheme (EMRS), through which UKTI provides funding and free advice to help organisations to research overseas markets and develop a market entry strategy.

Mark had already identified Australia as a strong potential market for MyHairDressers.com. A UKTI Research Adviser in Essex met with him to discuss how to get the crucial information that would enable him to make the best strategic decisions for how to enter this market. The first step was a research trip to Australia, to understand local market conditions.

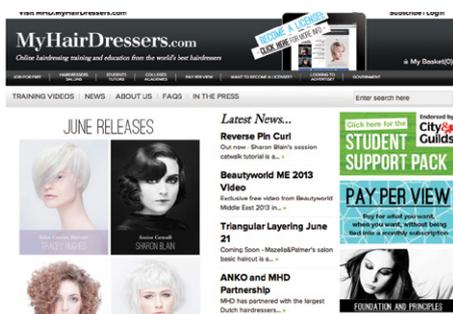
"Initially, I thought it was ridiculous to go all the way to Australia and not sell my products," says Mark. "But, working with my Research Adviser, I was able to identify the key decisions I would need to make before launching in Australia: how to adapt the product for the Australian market; what accreditation would be required; what would be the optimum pricing strategy; and what would be the best route to market. She helped me to work out how to find the information I needed to make these decisions, and who I'd need to talk to along the way. This was a transparent approach that I hadn't used before, but it made sense."

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Getting the right information

Mark went to Australia in November 2011 with a busy itinerary. By the end of his seven-day trip, he had met with salon owners, representatives of the various hairdresser accreditation bodies, education institutes and private training providers, and students.

Thanks to this thorough research, Mark realised that his offering simply would not have worked. He wrote his findings into a comprehensive report, creating a robust business plan for the future success of MyHairDressers.com.

“Having visited Australia and spoken to people in the know there, our business totally changed,” says Mark. “I saw the value of following the EMRS principles and realised that not having had the right information was the cause of every business failure I’d had. Following my market visit, we were able to get the Australian hairdressing governing bodies on board, by restructuring our product offering to align with their curriculum. We totally revamped the pricing structure so that it’s in tune with the way students and salons there prefer to pay. This new approach has enabled us to partner with both the governing body and a leading chain of salons to make the strongest market impact.”

Looking to the future

Now, 18 months after taking over the business, Mark is delighted at the company’s success. MyHairDressers.com now employs 20 people, with a

growing network of over 70 people on the books worldwide. The company’s annual turnover has increased from around £200,000 to a forecasted £1.4 million in 2013 and the business has been totally restructured around producing products and services which address the needs of MyHairDressers.com’s target market.

“The Australia trip was a key changing point in our business,” says Mark. “Without UKTI’s support, we would not be in the position we are in today. We have now built a solid business, ready to face the future.”

The UK and Australia

Australia was the UK’s 20th largest export market for goods in 2010, the destination for £3.175 billion worth of exports, representing a 14 per cent increase on the previous year. As one of very few developed countries not to have entered recession after the global financial crisis of 2009, Australia offers opportunities to UK businesses in all sectors, in particular environmental technologies, science and innovation, financial services, oil and gas, ICT and biotechnology. There are currently over 1000 large UK companies with an Australian base, including RBS, Virgin and Rio Tinto.

Australia will also be investing in billions of pounds worth of infrastructure projects over the next decade, in fields as diverse as natural gas, mining, railways, ports and a national broadband network. Australia also has a number of free trade agreements (FTA) with Singapore, Thailand, US, Chile, various South East Asian nations and New Zealand. It is therefore a gateway to these markets as well.

For further information about business opportunities in Australia, please go to www.ukti.gov.uk/australia

Helping you to do business abroad

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

Through our Passport to Export programme we offer new and inexperienced exporters:

- free capability assessments
- support in visiting potential markets
- mentoring from a local export professional
- free action plans
- customised and subsidised training
- ongoing support once you’re up and running.

UKTI was delighted to support MyHairDressers.com in its investment overseas.



To find a sales advisor in your chosen market and begin your own success story now, scan this code with your smart phone www.ukti.gov.uk +44(0)20 7215 5000

UK Trade & Investment is the Government Department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high-quality investment to the UK’s dynamic economy. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.