

*A digital teaching platform which helps to get schools active was looking to secure new investment, boost their sales and marketing strategy as well as source new networking opportunities in order to grow.*

The Sheffield-based imoves business started in 2010, after its founders observed a rise in demand for physical education resources from primary school teachers. Now, thanks to the support of Business Sheffield Key Account Manager, James Wilson, imoves has grown by 25% in the past year alone.

Eight years ago, co-founder Imogen Pickles, then working as a dance and PE specialist in schools, set about creating DVDs for teachers to help keep their pupils physically active in lessons.

Co-founder Ian said: “My background is in pharmaceuticals and with Imogen being a trained teacher, neither of us had any experience of running a small business. But with more than 200 lessons for primary schools in our portfolio and featuring 60 styles of dance, we managed to get imoves off the ground as an online resource for teachers.”

In 2017, imoves won ActiveLab, a UK Active initiative to find the most innovative small tech company getting the UK active. This pointed the business in the direction of the business support on offer from the Sheffield City Region Growth Hub [Enhancement Project](#).

Key Account Manager, James Wilson, from the Enhancement Project worked together with Ian and Imogen to look at their current business strategy and developed a bespoke plan to assist with its growth. The Enhancement Project offers a range of support aimed at high growth companies and is financed by the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

The support offered to imoves by the Project included advising the business on how to access financial support through angel investment and bank loans.

Ian said: “Angel investors are people with high net worth who are looking to invest some of their finances in start ups and small businesses. Our Key Account Manager, James, advised us on how best to network with and approach angel investors and how to negotiate and agree a deal of benefit to both parties.”

The Enhancement Project also helped imoves with its sales strategy, including its social media marketing and telesales techniques.

Some of the imoves team attended a social media Masterclass delivered by the Project meaning they now have a better understanding of Facebook and Twitter, enabling them to make their campaigns much more effective.

In addition, the team employed an agency to help with their marketing, refined their Hints and Tips customer newsletter and improved their telesales scripts, thanks to the advice they received.

imoves has developed fresh networking opportunities too thanks to the Enhancement Project, having been introduced to Sheffield Hallam University and the Sheffield Innovation Programme, which is designed to stimulate business growth.

Ian said: “We have worked on two projects with Sheffield Hallam University, including one around active literacy. James also put us in touch with the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine and they have independently evaluated our resources with four schools in Sheffield, showing we do what we say on the tin”.

“Overall I would say James did an excellent job to help us. imoves has grown by 25% since accessing support from the Enhancement Project and I would certainly recommend that any small business with ambition to grow approaches them for support – the Growth Hub Enhancement Project has really helped imoves to grow.”

The Enhancement Project offers free, impartial, expert business advice and support to small to medium enterprise businesses in the Sheffield City Region who are experiencing or planning for growth.

With over 540 businesses across the region having already received support, the Enhancement Project can provide your business with intensive one-to-one support from a Key Account Manager, and access to free Masterclasses delivered by private sector experts.

*The Sheffield City Region Growth Hub Enhancement Project is receiving up to £2.7m of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for the European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.*