

MyWorkwear Looking good for the future.

One of the UK's leading suppliers of embroidered and printed clothing is looking good for the future after improving its software systems with assistance from Made Smarter West Midlands.

Under the leadership of Managing Directors Ben Simpson and James Worthington, MyWorkwear, which was started in 1976, produces thousands of garments every week for companies large and small across the UK.

Using state-of-the-art embroidery and print machines, the company adds logos, names and designs onto uniforms, workwear, teamwear, promotional items and other garments.

The business also supplies PPE and non-personalised clothing from its 6,500 sq ft premises to its customers predominantly in the Midlands and nationwide.

MyWorkwear was growing rapidly and needed its internal systems to reflect the upsurge in orders which is where the Made Smarter West Midlands programme came in.

The company received a £20,000 grant to invest in an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and software which they match-funded to improve its digitisation.

Ben Simpson, Co-Managing Director, said: "We re-branded as MyWorkwear in 2000 when we launched the online side of the business and, having made lots of investment in the company over the last few years, we started to grow really quickly.

"Our systems were starting to struggle because we still had processes in place from a long time ago.

"That is why being involved with Made Smarter has helped to transform this side of the business and securing a grant was extremely helpful."

The Challenge

MyWorkwear had been using Sage and some inhouse systems for over a decade but having more than tripled in size, Ben began to research new systems and whether any grant assistance was available.

After finding out about Made Smarter from Telford and Wrekin Council, he contacted Barry Jones, Digital Transformation Specialist for The Marches.

He arranged a visit along with Kieran Batchelor from WMG centre High Value Manufacturing Catapult at the University of Warwick, one of Made Smarter's strategic partners, to devise a 'digital roadmap'.

Ben said: "We were creaking at the seams and our systems were no longer fit for purpose because we are now producing around 5,000 items a week from polo shirts and jackets to t-shirts and fleeces.

"After talking to Barry and Kieran, they suggested we consider an ERP system.

"Barry helped us to understand what funding was available and complete the application process for a grant.

"He brought a wealth of knowledge even though he has worked across different sectors and this help was crucial." Onur Eren, Principal Engineer at WMG, University of Warwick, said: "The comprehensive digital roadmap that we carried out for the business highlighted areas which we felt would definitely improve their productivity.

"We are delighted to have played a part in improving the digitalisation of MyWorkwear which is already leading to efficiencies and they are a great example for other West Midlands businesses to follow."

The Solution

The results of the digital roadmap from WMG at the University of Warwick led to MyWorkwear buying an ERP system and software that involves the embroidery machines – which embroider many garments simultaneously – 'talking' to a central piece of software.

This then enables staff to complete the colourisation and bar code scanning on the garments so time is also being saved.

It has also freed up the time of staff who were dealing with issues over any mistakes that had been made.

With over 40 years' experience as a business, they pride themselves on their knowledge of workwear and uniforms and being able to deal with a query, whether it is large or small.

Ben said: "When we were considering whether to go ahead, there were two factors to consider.

"Firstly, whether it would have a meaningful impact on our day-to-day operations and secondly, whether there was any financial funding available bearing in mind we are a small business."

The Benefits

The ERP system and software has been operational for five months and the advantages are already evident. Ben admitted: "It has been transformational for the business. We have made a lot of efficiency savings through introducing this new system and we have improved our quality. This is allowing us to quicken our orders which is benefiting our customers.

"In the last couple of months, we have almost doubled our output compared to 18-24 months ago and we can all see the benefits of the new system compared to our old processes.

"Our turnaround time has been reduced significantly and there are fewer mistakes to be corrected which is another bonus."

Barry said: "It is really heartening when we visit a business such as MyWorkwear and provide the assistance to improve their digitisation which has such a major impact on their business.

"The 38 staff are all really busy and this has improved their efficiencies which means the business is feeling more confident about its future."

The Future

MyWorkwear is on target to hit its £5 million annual revenue target next year as well as create additional jobs having grown by 50% for the last two consecutive years.

Ben said: "Our vision is to inspire UK businesses to put their best dressed selves forward every day and being involved in the Made Smarter programme has put us in an even stronger position for 2023 and beyond.

"We have the capability to invest more in our sales and marketing because we know we have the capability of being able to increase volumes.

"We are aiming for massive growth over the next few years and having these new systems in place means we have the peace of mind that operationally we can deliver. "I would encourage other SMEs to contact the Made Smarter programme because it has been a game-changer for us."

Councillor Lee Carter (Lab), Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street, said: "We're thrilled that the business support team was able to signpost MyWorkwear to Made Smarter as we continue to support the company's growth.

"Helping businesses across Telford and Wrekin is a top priority, particularly as it's more important than ever for them to achieve efficiencies and get advice and support when they need it.

"By promoting these grants, it makes businesses aware of vital funding support and ensures they can access the latest advice, guidance and road mapping for digital transformation that really makes a difference.

"We're very proud to have successful companies like MyWorkwear in Telford."

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Barry Jones from Made Smarter West Midlands (left) with Ben Simpson, Co-Managing Director of MyWorkwear