



## EUROPEAN SUCCESS FULFILLED



Lincoln based online gifting company restructures its European business model with support from the Department for International Trade (DIT).

The British Hamper Company is a family business which specialises in the worldwide delivery of luxury gift hampers. The company was set up in 2014 to promote artisan British food produce to a global audience. Exports are a significant part of the business as their main customers include expats, anglophiles and worldwide businesses with staff or customers overseas. The USA is their largest market and international sales are also growing in Australia, the Far East, UAE, Canada and the EU.

“We are passionate about the produce that goes into the hampers,” explains co-founder and Managing Director, James Tod. “All the food and drink is produced by small artisan British producers who care about the product that they’re making. It’s all tested by us, we then hand pack all of our luxury hampers at our HQ in Lincoln and offer express delivery to the whole of the UK and over 40 countries worldwide.”

When the ecommerce business started in 2014 the world was a different place. The company was exporting a significant volume of hampers across Europe but when the UK left the customs union, it all stopped. The customs checks and taxes applied in different ways by different member states made it impossible to continue to trade and even their courier banned direct food exports to European consumers. Exports to Europe took a significant hit.

Not wishing to lose a huge number of loyal customers, James needed to find a solution. He approached DIT for support and with a successful application to the Department’s Internationalisation fund was able to access funding to help towards setting up a third-party

fulfilment centre in the Netherlands, in time for Christmas 2021.

“The application for the funding was a very efficient process and having our International Trade Adviser (ITA), Dale Atkins, on board to help us through was very useful. Accessing the funding meant we had the ability to develop our systems so we could process and maintain customer service and retain our relationship with our courier both from the UK, whilst still being able to share information with the fulfilment centre in the Netherlands.”

The company is already seeing brilliant growth. It’s helped get their European business, circa £400k worth of trade, back to where it was pre-Brexit. Third party fulfilment has been an excellent solution for delivering significant customer benefits. They believe they are now the only food gifting company in the UK able to offer delivery to the whole of the EU. All fees and taxes are included so there are no surprise charges or delays with delivery.

“The help we receive from DIT has been invaluable” says James. “We’ve had a relationship with DIT since we started and have had brilliant support over the years, from helping us expand into different export markets, to assisting with our systems so we can process the complex paperwork that’s required for food produce. This has been particularly important when demand is very high as we need to be able to process orders very quickly.”

James also has top tips for anyone thinking of expanding into new markets.



“When we test a new route, we often get in touch with DIT teams overseas to see if there are likely to be any difficulties. If you’re thinking of entering a new market, get in touch with your ITA and you can then have a conversation with the embassies and consulates in your market of interest. They are well placed to let you know what ‘s happening on the ground. They will have a good idea about the level of demand and local complexities about customs for example.”

He continues, “Food can be complex. Invest in systems early on in your international journey to help you process export orders at the same rate as any UK order.”

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**James Tod - Co-founder and Managing Director, The British Hamper Company**

The British Hamper Company is still a young business with a lot of potential. Growing at typically 30% a year their ambition is to continue that trajectory. Plans include looking at new export markets, including the Middle East, and an expansion of their European range. Later this year website developments will allow customers to select the items they want rather than choose a pre-selected hamper.

With a growing gifting market, a winning business model and interest in British food flourishing, the future looks exciting indeed

#### FAST FACTS:

- Company: British Hamper
- Location: Lincoln
- Sector: Food and Drink
- Size of business: Up to 40 during peak periods
- Trading: 8 years
- Exporting: 8 years
- Exporting to: EU, USA, Far East, Canada, Australia, UAE
- DIT services: Internationalisation Fund, ITA support, Overseas introductions

### Contact the Department for International Trade East Midlands

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