




THINCATS



SUCCESS STORIES





ACQUISITION - Employee Ownership Trust



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

"We had a beauty parade and narrowed down potential funding sources to two - ThinCats and a conventional high street bank," explains Sean Elliott, founder. "While the bank's business development people were keen to construct a loan that was viable for us, when it was referred to the credit committee we were presented with more draconian covenants, such as a shorter repayment term and taking all our business to the bank, which made the deal a lot less attractive."

And, while ThinCats made the process "easy and straightforward", says Sean, "we never got to meet anyone from the bank's credit committee - it was like dealing with a third party we never saw."

LOAN AMOUNT: £1 million

REGION: Scotland

SECTOR: IT services



SUCCESS FROM
SUCCESSION

Founded in 2003; a leading Scottish provider of IT support and connectivity services

"The loan has allowed us to transition to full employee ownership, facilitating my succession. When we complete the second five-year phase, we may well look to ThinCats to refinance that."

Sean Elliott, Managing Director

 **Reason for facility**
Sean was looking to the next stage: "I was coming up to 50, and we began to look at an exit strategy and a business plan to support that. I considered the usual options such as a trade sale, but came across the concept of employee ownership."

The company needed £1m to finance the transition.

ACQUISITION - Management Buy Out



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

At more than 50 years old, Riley is a long-standing operation with a well-established process and structure - the borrowers, Mick Sturgess and Andy Hooley, are hugely knowledgeable about the business, having been with it for 25 years each and having working in virtually every stage of the process at some point in their careers.

The pair hold all the key relationships with suppliers and customers, and were well placed to head up an MBO.

LOAN AMOUNT: £1 million

REGION: East Midlands

SECTOR: Manufacturing



SUPPORTING A STRONG MANUFACTURING LINE

"It all went to plan, we got the funding we needed, when we needed it. It's a good option for companies trying to raise cash."

Mick Sturgess, Director

Design and manufacture of a diverse range of linear vibratory and parts handling systems, used in a wide variety of food, pharmaceutical, confectionery, packaging, electrical, electronics, and other manufacturing and process industries.



Reason for facility

The funding enabled a Management Buy Out; Mick Sturgess, Director, wants to build on the already established businesses, drawing in new customers and driving growth over the next 10 years. "We're also working with people in the robotics industry who require presentation of components to the robot cell. With years of experience building parts handling systems, we can offer a solution to suit their application."



ACQUISITION FUNDING



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Dynamic is a privately-owned business with its main headquarters in Michigan, USA. Hydrum is the group's first acquisition outside the U.S.

Hydrum is a leading supplier of sheet metal components, assemblies and light fabrications to customers throughout the UK. The company provides the full range of subcontract engineering services, and supplies components and sheet metal fabrications to market-leading companies across many sectors.

Don Nystrom, the President of the Dynamic Group said: "The acquisition of Hydrum provides a strong platform for expansion into the UK and wider European market."

LOAN AMOUNT: £1 million

REGION: North East

SECTOR: Manufacturing



MONUMENTAL
£10M ACQUISITION

Leading supplier of sheet metal components, assemblies and light fabrications to customers throughout the UK.

"ThinCats worked hard to understand both businesses and showed total commitment to conclude this transaction at pace."

Don Nystrom
President of the Dynamic Group



Reason for facility

Acquisition of a UK based business, including an injection of working capital to fuel further growth.



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

After eight years in the merchant navy, and running his own business overseeing oil and gas rig movements for international clients, Martin White found it hard to believe that the Scottish Marine sector sent their staff to the south of England for regulatory training; in terms of both time and money, it made no sense.

In the early stages of the business, funding was largely provided through equity and mezzanine debt. This enabled the company to develop a firefighting facility, small pool for basic in-water training, survival craft training centre and classroom. However, they were unable to continue to fund the expansion of the business to meet increasing demand.

LOAN AMOUNT: £850k

REGION: Scotland

SECTOR: Specialist training services


FUNDING AMBITIOUS PLANS
FOR DEVELOPMENT

Maritime training business covering: sea survival, fire training, medical, survival craft and technical courses.

"We were in a position to grow very rapidly, and provide services that are desperately needed by a range of industry sectors, but needed the right funding to enable us to take advantage of the opportunities. Alderburn Finance and ThinCats together fulfilled that role extremely well."

Martin White
Managing Director

 **Reason for facility**
To develop a new training site within Glasgow International Airport comprising of an 18,000 sq/ft building with a large pool, classrooms, technical training suite, management offices and canteen.



GROWTH FINANCE



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

DHR has signed up to 10-year leases at locations in Colmore Gate in Birmingham and City Tower in Manchester. Their customer 'license agreement' periods are predominantly 12 months.

Taking on new office space typically involves an outlay of one year's rental deposit in advance, in addition to substantial capital expenditure and working capital requirements spanning a 10-12 week fit out period. To grow the business in line with its projections involved building a close relationship with an entrepreneurial funder.

LOAN AMOUNT: £1.2 million

REGION: North West

SECTOR: Serviced offices



FUNDING AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Reason for facility

Growth funding necessary to compete in a very capital-intensive business, predicated on the ability to make large rental deposit payments in addition to considerable up-front investment in respect of fit out and staffing costs.

"The traditional banks were completely unable to get their heads around our business model...That is why we wanted to work with ThinCats. They are truly a next generation lender, with the ability to understand the dynamics of a business that's right at the heart of the 'shared economy' phenomenon."

Rico Wong
Founder and CEO

Founded in 2015, DHR Business Solutions, trading as iHub Office, is a managed serviced office solutions company that specialises in providing private office space and co-working/hot desking solutions to established and start-up businesses across two flagship office sites.

GROWTH FINANCE



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Carpeo Estate Planning is a division of award-winning customer services outsourcing business Carpeo. The new business has the aim of demystifying the wills and funeral planning process by making more affordable solutions available to people across the UK.

David Williams, Director, explained: "Our mission is to make available more accessible, affordable and effective estate planning solutions through our membership scheme. It is therefore our intention to disrupt the market and having the support of an entrepreneurial alternative finance provider is aligned perfectly with that vision."

LOAN AMOUNT: £526k

REGION: South West

SECTOR: Communications



EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS

Specialist in front and back office sales and service activities, launching an estate management business.

"In a world of banks saying 'No', ThinCats said 'Yes'. ThinCats is a relationship-driven business and their team took the time to get to know us and what we wanted to achieve and shaped the facility to meet our needs. The short lines of decision-making made the process easy and straightforward."

David Williams
Director



Reason for facility

To fund the costs associated with the expansion in new business (mainly IT hardware and software), plus working capital.



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Diminished bank lending made traditional borrowing difficult, so 3DD began searching for alternative avenues and found ThinCats through F & P Sponsors Limited, in early 2014. 3DD has received a total of 16 loans through the platform since. 3DD's CEO, Dominic Saville, describes how the loans have helped drive the business forward: "They enabled us to maintain our capital expenditure on new production strands, as well as rely less on outside post production services at their higher rates."

"Our catalogue of programmes has grown by 300%... and this has allowed the business to widen its buyer base."

LOAN AMOUNT: £2.2 million

REGION: South East

SECTOR: Television licensing and production



REALISING THE BENEFITS OF FUNDING

"ThinCats and F&P understood our business, and the strength of these business relationships, and have been able to see a successful initial four years of working together." Dominic Saville, CEO

With 20 years of international licensing and 10 years building its production strands, 3DD continues its programming expansion from live music television and documentaries on stars of film and music into history and factual genres.



Reason for facility
Their global business, dealing with such names as Sky and Netflix, needs a particular contract style with extended payment terms and long-term commitments, necessitating an ongoing funding requirement that ThinCats have been able to support.

REFINANCE & WORKING CAPITAL



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Laura Green, Finance Director at Cubico (UK) Ltd explains: "When the business started, it was funded through equity and, as the business has grown, we have been able to take advantage of the opportunity to bring the shares back into company ownership with the management team. With ambitions to expand our number of showrooms significantly, we sought to refinance the debt on our balance sheet and were introduced to ThinCats via Credit Square in London.

"The facility offers us an additional level of headroom that will allow us to capitalise on the growth that we are experiencing and accelerate our rate of expansion through our new showroom openings."

LOAN AMOUNT: £2 million

REGION: North East

SECTOR: Retail and wholesale bathroom product sales



SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING FACILITY
GIVING FREEDOM TO GROW

"ThinCats got to grips with what we were trying to achieve very early on, adapting their product to suit our requirements within a bespoke funding package."

Laura Green, Finance Director

Cubico is a one-stop-shop for bathrooms and ancillary products, selling to both trade and retail customers via its 15 showrooms as well as a trade counter at their distribution centre.

It was setup and is run by the majority shareholder, Craig Waddington, who has been in the industry since 1999.



Reason for facility

The tailored repayment profile was structured to enable the business to drive increasing organic growth, whilst investing in 10 new showroom openings throughout the year, creating 40 new jobs in-store as well as 10 additional roles at Head Office.

REFINANCE, CAPITAL EXPENDITURE & WORKING CAPITAL



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

ACM had invested considerable sums into its infrastructure, focused on the delivery of world class market leading courses from sites at London and Guildford. This led to an increase in student numbers, and the desire to open a third campus in Brighton to offer the courses to even more students.

The growth in the business led to them approaching financial consultants, RSM, whose SME Debt Advisory Team compared a number of different lenders to assist in securing a funding partner who could help capitalise on ACM's expansion plans.

LOAN AMOUNT: £3.4 million

REGION: South East

SECTOR: Education



IN TUNE WITH THE BUSINESS

"The ability to speak to real people who can respond quickly was a real factor in choosing ThinCats ahead of other lenders."

Damian Webb, Partner, RSM

The Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) was founded in 1997 to provide higher education courses for students in the contemporary music and arts arena. It has done this with considerable success, with Ed Sheeran, Newton Faulkner and Kate Nash being amongst its former students. Kainne Clements is the sole shareholder, as well as the owner of Metropolis Studios, Europe's largest independent studio.



Reason for facility

Increasing student numbers led to a need to open a third campus, to offer opportunities to more students and develop the full range of facilities.

WORKING CAPITAL



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Abokado had announced record profits, and was planning for continued ambitious growth. Abokado's Founder and CEO Mark Lilley said: "We are excited to have embarked on a new partnership with ThinCats.

"Everything we do revolves around bringing Londoners the freshest and healthiest options for breakfast and lunch, and it's great to get the thumbs up from our customers. It's also worth noting that our staff retention has improved over this period, as our investment in the Abokado family continues to pay dividends."

LOAN AMOUNT: £3 million

REGION: London

SECTOR: Food services



FEEL GOOD
GROWTH

Leading healthy grab-and-go chain, well known across the city for its fresh sushi, salads, bagel breakfasts and award-winning coffee.

"Working with ThinCats has been a great experience. The timing from pressing the button to delivery was very fast and ThinCats delivered commercially exactly what was agreed. The ability to have an open and informal dialogue with credit and the senior decision-makers early on was excellent."

Mark Lilley
Founder and CEO



Reason for facility

The funding is enabling the company's next phase of growth; to expand the store footprint by capitalising on a weakening commercial property market, investing further in senior management and in the brand.



WORKING CAPITAL



INVESTMENT JOURNEY

The owners were looking for more finance to complete the major upgrade to the pier's girder structure and replace and finish the railings and walkways.

However, financing this important work was proving tricky, as the firm's managing director, Fred Bollom, son of John, explains: "We had surpassed all targets with our existing bank loan and were keen to keep improving our visitor facilities. Our bank wanted to see more cash left in the business and seemed to be fighting the old battles from 2007-8. We're an unusual, asset-heavy business, and found not many banks wanted to lend to rebuild a Victorian pier."

LOAN AMOUNT: £1.6 million

REGION: Wales

SECTOR: Tourism & attractions



RESTORING A 19TH CENTURY ICON

The Mumbles Pier near Swansea was built in 1898 and has been owned by the same family business, now run by John Bollom, since the 1930s.

"A total sea-change: much better than dealing with high street lenders, as ThinCats appraise the whole business and make a decision based on that, not just on what you can put on a loan application form."

Fred Bollom
Managing Director



Reason for facility

ThinCats provided £1.6m to both refinance the existing bank loan and carry forward the renovation; complete the pier stem works and planning permission for the development sites. After this, the plan is to create a 150-seater function suite in the current bowling alley room and further develop the retail offering on the pier.