



STREAMLION
CONSULTING

Streamlion helps female entrepreneur secure successive loan funding for her rapidly expanding portfolio

CLIENT: Hafsah Jamil

Entrepreneur Hafsah Jamil had a clear business vision but found the demands of bank loan applications for funding a challenge. Helen Steel from Streamlion Consulting provided the ongoing financial advice, guidance, and practical support enabling her to secure the funding she needed to expand her portfolio.

Securing funding for an entrepreneurial business is often more complex than people expect.

When Hafsah Jamil set out to invest in a workwear embroidery business opportunity in October 2018 her first stop was her high street bank.

Hafsah was an experienced business owner, but she found she wasn't fully prepared with all the information she would need to apply for an Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) Loan. She explained *"I already owned Janz Tailoring, which consists of two local tailoring businesses I purchased about five years ago. When I asked my bank about funding my next purchase, they referred me to Helen. I needed a quality business plan and financial forecast to make an EFG loan application through NatWest."*

Helen provided both plan and forecast, but also conducted an Operational Due Diligence report on the workwear company.

Hafsah decided not to proceed with the purchase as a result.

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Hafsah Jamil
Managing Director

Laying foundations for a successful purchase

The introduction was to prove a turning point, giving Hafsah support and a relationship that she would rely on again and again. She soon identified an even better business opportunity as her third acquisition target. Her uncle and aunt wanted to exit their successful newsagent and convenience store business in Witney, Oxfordshire.

She recalled "I turned my eye to this purchase because I have many years of experience in this type of business. Helen valued the business for me based on my uncle's financials, and we agreed a purchase price. Helen then did the detailed business plan and financial forecast for an EFG loan, and it was approved by NatWest."

Although she knows what she wants and has a clear determination to succeed, having Helen to turn to for advice and help gave Hafsah the extra financial confidence and capability she needed. She said: *"Helen is such an expert in this area she took all the concerns and issues away from me, by working closely with the lenders for a successful result."*



Building a business portfolio step by step

Hafsah was glad to receive the funding to buy the convenience store, but she was already looking towards the future. She said *"I also needed more capital for the business, which I had renamed Newzlink, in order to expand further. Helen helped secure this funding through the Start Up Loan Scheme."*

Hafsah used these funds to purchase a similar store nearby which she could incorporate neatly into her operation. She had already worked with Helen to explore whether Newzlink could offer Post Office services, but this wasn't possible because a sub-Post Office was already operating in the Maham's store nearby. Her response was direct: *"I approached Maham's and asked if they were open to selling their business to me - and they said yes. It was a quick sale."* She purchased Maham's from the McColl's store chain, marking her fourth acquisition.

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The secret of success lies in preparation...

In addition to clear business plans and detailed financials, strong and sustainable cashflow is one of the strongest assets in demonstrating fitness for further funding.

In preparation for the Start Up Loan application, Hafsa knew that Newzlink needed to get in the best possible financial shape. She said that *"One reason I bought Newzlink originally was its really strong news distribution and local delivery base. When I first bought it, too many customers were in arrears of 3 months or more. Helen had owned and managed a newspaper distribution business in South Africa. She knew exactly what to do to turn our cashflow positive. News distribution is still growing – though there's a growing challenge from online news, so every part of the business needs to pull its weight."*

... and never being deterred from goals

With no personal assets or access to family funding, working with banks and financial service providers is often the only route to goal for aspiring entrepreneurs. It can seem particularly overwhelming to female and ethnically diverse entrepreneurs who have ideas and determination but are a little uncertain of their financial ground or the barriers they may encounter.

Hafsa certainly didn't always find this an easy process. *"I could easily have been knocked back many times, dealing with various organisations and individuals. A female business owner has to work twice as hard at business relationships and arguments to get the outcomes they want. Helen helped me learn that anything is possible if you have the right advice and are backed up with the detailed, accurate, quality information and documents you need."*

With the experience of multiple funding cycles, Hafsa now has all the financial confidence she needs *"I don't need to be scared of the 'red tape' and prospect of complicated documents and numbers, because Helen handles it easily and efficiently."*

Her advice to other entrepreneurs who may experience similar feelings is very simple: *"Don't waste time – pick up the phone and call Helen. She'll help if she can, but even if she can't help, she'll say so and suggest other avenues. It's so worth having that conversation with her."*

On the team and part of the family

As Hafsa's small empire has consolidated and grown she has continued to turn to Helen to support her efforts to invest in and expand her operations, treating her as part of her senior team. *"Helen has become my 'go to' for all sorts of business and funding advice during the pandemic. If I needed any documents completed for CBILS or Recovery Loans, she was always there to help, and she also helped me get a Bounce Back loan for Newzlink."*

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As she continues her entrepreneurial journey Hafsa truly values having such deep financial knowledge and advice to call on. She stated: *"I knew early on that Helen was a valuable advisor on finance and funding – but I did not expect her to become my friend. She is really now part of the family, highly respected and completely trustworthy."*

This family feeling was only reinforced when Helen was able to help Hafsa's uncle find his own next step, after selling Newzlink to his niece. She helped him to apply for and gain his own Start Up Loan to purchase a takeaway business in Birmingham, which is now doing extremely well.



Paving the way for future success

Hafsa's original convenience store is now not only serving customers and delivering strong profits but has become the foundation for a small chain within an expanding entrepreneurial business portfolio. She recognised the instrumental role that Helen has played: *"I really don't think I could have done all this without Helen – she has become my expert in this area, and we work very well together. I've learned that you don't need to be an expert in every area to be successful."*

Asked about her biggest learning in creating entrepreneurial success, she said: *"Above all, you must be determined and persevere. I have succeeded because I trusted my gut instincts and believed in my own feel about different entrepreneurial situations – and I was never derailed by other people's opinions."*

Hafsa's clear business vision and sheer determination to succeed, along with having the right business backup, means that the future looks bright indeed. She hasn't finished yet: *"I am now looking to expand my tailoring business, so of course I have approached Helen for help with that too. And I am looking for my next business purchase!"*

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