No Straight Lines

FIVE YEARS OF DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

#TransmitIsFive
“Transmit and Enterprise Nation share a common belief that businesses who access support grow faster than those that don’t. Together we are working to ensure as many founders as possible gain the fundamentals of starting and growing a successful venture - funding plus support is the ideal combination!”

EMMA JONES, FOUNDER OF ENTERPRISE NATION
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**A Desire to do Things Differently**

It’s five years since three entrepreneurs came together with a shared ambition to shake up the UK’s business support landscape. There’d be no talking down to customers. No jargon. No negativity or apathy. And definitely no suits.

Damian Baetens, Richard Myers and Ian Straker all had personal experience of what they considered to be archaic services offered by providers and were excited by the opportunity to do things differently.

Their chance to do this came in 2013 when they landed the contract to deliver the Government-backed Start Up Loans Scheme, an initiative designed to help nurture a new wave of entrepreneurs with an alternative to the traditional bank loan, coupled with high-impact mentoring.

They wasted no time in getting their own business, Transmit Start-Ups, off the ground.

Five years, £35 million and 3,611 loans later, they thought it was about time to take a step back to reflect on what’s been achieved so far and to set some challenges for the future. Most importantly, is the chance to celebrate the amazing businesses they’ve backed along the way and acknowledge the vital role they play in keeping our economy buoyant.

**An Alternative Way**

We’re glad to report much has changed for entrepreneurs since we embarked on our journey. Back then the country was still reeling in the wake of the financial crisis. Lenders weren’t lending, banks were seriously risk averse and almost all grants had dried up.

An alternative source of finance and mentoring was desperately needed to keep the UK’s famously entrepreneurial spirit alive and that’s where the Start Up Loans scheme came in. Of the 650,000 businesses that set up each year, 10,000 of them now get off the ground with a Start Up Loan and we’re really proud to contribute to that national picture. For every pound invested in the scheme, £3.30 of value is delivered back into the UK economy.

The shift in financial support from government handouts to repayable loans has led to a change of mindset in start-ups. Today’s emphasis on borrowing money is instilling a new breed of committed, driven and responsible entrepreneur. The world seems to better understand the challenges of being in business now too. Even the language around enterprise has become commonplace with words such as start-up and entrepreneur having become well embedded in popular culture and vocabulary. We’ve learned a lot from Silicon Valley. We’ve learned that failure is not a dirty word, we’ve welcomed American-style accelerator projects and we’ve adopted agile methodologies for getting businesses off the ground faster.
Exciting Times Ahead

All of this makes it an exciting time to be a start-up and even more exciting to be a start-up helping other start-ups, as we are. Our ambition is to have backed 5,000 entrepreneurs with a Start Up Loan by end of the 2019/2020 financial year. It’s important to be able to demonstrate our own growth to those businesses we want to inspire and we’re delighted to report our latest figures do just that. We’ve already hit our £1million revenue milestone (two months ahead of schedule) and expect 28% growth on last year.

What’s more, we have now expanded our range of services in response to demand from the market. With the launch of the Transmit Group of companies we can support our customers throughout their entire journey as they grow their businesses. We’d love to tell you more so please read on...

Cheers, Damian, Richard and Ian
Transmit Group: Our Own Start-Up Story

After decades of running their own businesses in the music and creative industries Rich, Ian and Damian made the move into the rock and roll world of business support.

Keen to share their experience with others just starting out, they knew they could deliver the enthusiasm, energy and empathy entrepreneurs need and deserve.

They launched Transmit Start-Ups in 2013 to deliver the Start Ups Loans programme. Since then the team has grown to 20 employees operating out of offices in Gateshead and Glasgow.

An extended team of freelancers across the UK takes their numbers to 30+.

Rising demand has led to the creation of a range of Transmit Group companies, meaning entrepreneurs can now access finance and support throughout their long-term journey.

Richard Myers
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

After dropping out of art college to be the next Kurt Cobain, Richard set up a music promotion company at the tender age of 19. He then went on to run two web development companies, a record label (with artists such as Gay For Johnny Depp and Hell Is For Heroes) and a tech blog before realising he actually enjoyed helping other businesses more than running his own.

Ian Straker
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

After studying a first degree in Transport Management & Planning then a Ph.D in Airport Surface Access (yes, really), Dr. Straker realised that his talents would be better spent opening an independent record shop in Middlesbrough and a ‘deep house’ record label. Eventually retiring from the music industry, he naturally fell into the role of operations director through his love of people and process management.

Damian Baetens
BUSINESS SUPPORT DIRECTOR

After 10 years spent as a music manager in London, and signing some of his artists to major labels, Damian thought there must be an easier way to make money. After a number of years as a creative industries consultant, and now as business support director, Damian seems to have come full circle, only replacing up-and-coming musicians with talented entrepreneurs.

“When we started it was just the three of us operating remotely using our mobile phones and a £60 WordPress site so we’ve certainly been through a growth journey ourselves. That’s one of our USPs. We’ve been at the sharp end and know what it’s like.”

DAMIAN BAETENS, BUSINESS SUPPORT DIRECTOR
The Transmit Family

In addition to our ‘white label’ services, we also operate a number of businesses in the finance, consulting and social enterprise sectors.

**Transmit Start-Ups**
Transmit Start-Ups was established in 2013 to deliver the Government-backed Start Up Loan scheme. Over the past five years, Transmit Start-Ups has grown to deliver over 3,000 Start Up Loans to businesses based across the UK.

**Transmit Consulting**
Transmit Consulting offers straight-talking consulting and coaching to high-growth businesses across the UK. We help entrepreneurs, businesses and non-profit organisations strengthen, commercialise and innovate.

**Transmit Enterprise CIC**
We set up Transmit Enterprise with Robert Webb, an expert in the social economy, to deliver consultancy to the social enterprise sector. Clients include The Skill Mill, Food Nation and YMCA.

**Teal**
Teal is a free, no-nonsense, finance-finding service for growth-stage businesses looking for funding to take their venture to the next level.
Meet the Team

BUSINESS SUPPORT TEAM

Damian Baetens
BUSINESS SUPPORT DIRECTOR

Tony Cawson
BUSINESS ADVISOR

Brenda Wilson
BUSINESS ADVISOR

Michelle Doherty
BUSINESS ADVISOR (GLASGOW)

Morag Kelly
BUSINESS ADVISOR (GLASGOW)

Jill Stewart
ADVISOR & MENTORING CO-ORDINATOR

Allison Lister
ADVISOR & ASSESSMENT CO-ORDINATOR

Carole Aitken
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Sharon Richardson
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Julie Skevington
FUNDING ADVISOR

Julie Colling
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Hina Joshi
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Ralph Savage
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Andrew Wattsford
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Victoria Milne
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR

Ian Thompson
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR
“When I reflect on how far Transmit has come since 2013, my proudest achievement is the team we’ve built and I have great confidence that they’ll continue to propel us towards an exciting future.”

IAN STRAKER, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
Bagels to Bamboo Bras: Backing the UK’s Business Dreams

We reckon we’ve funded an entire alphabet of amazing ideas. Here we talk bagels and bamboo bras with two of our brilliant loan recipients from Scotland.

Bonnie Bra Company

BONNIE LAWSON-BROWN, FOUNDER

Glasgow’s Bonnie Lawson-Brown is developing a bra that is as smart and ethical as it is elegant and comfortable.

She is harnessing the natural smart properties of bamboo to create a range of underwear that is strong, dry, soft and adjusts to the body temperature of the wearer. Her Start Up Loan has enabled the The Bonnie Bra Company to manufacture and soft launch the first 50 sets of its Bonbon range, as well as secure the first round of patent application and trademark design for the product.

Bonnie said “It’s been a fantastic experience working with various members of the Transmit team, receiving validation of my business plan and support for me as a business owner. It’s a really exciting time for my business and I’m looking forward to what the next chapter holds.”

Bross Bagels

LARAH BROSS, FOUNDER

Larah Bross is originally from Montreal – a city she describes as the real bagel capital of the world (forget New York people!) Instead of complaining about the lack of decent bagels on offer when she moved to Edinburgh she decided to do something about it. It’s a year after her Start Up Loan from Transmit and business is booming. She has shops already in Leith and Portobello, she’s launched an ice cream bagel with Ben & Jerry, and plans to open new branches – possibly even franchising the business.

Larah said: “Transmit gave us the funding to make that first jump, so nothing would have been possible without them. They’ve been great. They made me think things through clearly and fully prepared me to run our own business.”
Mega Milestones

To celebrate the achievements of the start-ups we have funded, we started a blog series called Mega Milestones. Here are just a few businesses that have reached important milestones of their own:

September 2017
CREATELONDON REACH £1M MILESTONE

CreateLondon is a full-service event production house founded by Tom Scott in 2014 after receiving a £6,000 loan from Transmit. The agency reached its £1m turnover milestone in September 2017 and works with industry-leading brands to create original, engaging productions that cross digital and physical worlds – bringing social media to life through real-world events and in-store campaigns.

January 2018
TOURLIFE GOES FULL-TIME

Headquartered in Somerset, TourLife is the go-to name in the music business for European tour videography, photography, merchandising, brand partnerships and tour management. Founded by Harry Parslow, TourLife works closely with some of the world’s leading acts (read our blog to find out how he got to know rapper Xzibit!) and his Mega Milestone was reached when he was able to take the business full-time and employ two of his closest friends.

February 2018
GETFILM DOUBLES ITS TEAM OF FILMMAKERS

GetFilm is a full-service media production company based in Newcastle upon Tyne, with a large production team spread right across the UK. Specialising in event, wedding, corporate and promotional video, GetFilm works hard to create superb videos, that deliver amazing results for the customer. By Feb 2018, GetFilm had doubled its number of filmmakers and, subsequently, also strengthened its marketing and sales team, with four new members of staff.

April 2018
SOGUD SECURES SECOND ROUND OF FUNDING

SoGud is a highly-nutritious, on-the-go baked snack brand founded by family team Terri and Neil Petrie and daughter Rosie Pillinger. Frustrated with the lack of wholesome sweet snacks on the market that aren’t stuffed with additives, processed sugar and preservatives, the family team have created a range of tasty products that are made by hand and with only natural, nutritious ingredients. In March this year they raised £182k via CrowdCube in just two weeks.
Our Franchise Businesses

The franchise sector has been one of our key areas of growth in recent years. The Start Up Loans programme means we can partner with franchise businesses by providing a support and finance package for new franchisees.

ARTventurers
FIONA SIMPSON, FOUNDER, FRANCHISOR AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

ARTventurers runs colourful, creative art and creative play classes for babies, toddlers and children and has over 30 franchise branches across the UK. Fiona first approached Transmit when her business started to scale up to help organise finance for entrepreneurs wanting to buy an ARTventurers franchise. She came back to us a year later when the company entered its next phase of growth for help to fund a marketing and national advertising campaign. Fiona was recently voted Woman Franchisor of the Year 2018 by the Natwest EWIF awards.

Fiona said: “The whole process was really quick and easy, as I knew it would be from the help Transmit provided to my franchisees. The extra help and support that Transmit have provided me with through my business journey has also been brilliant. They put me in touch with various contacts and organisations to help ARTventurers grow, including a marketing coach whose input into the ARTventurers brand has been invaluable.”

Kalma Baby and Kalma Mamas
REBECCA RILEY, FOUNDER AND FRANCHISOR

Kalma Baby and Kalma Mamas offer children’s yoga and pre and postnatal relaxation classes. Founder Rebecca Riley got in touch with Transmit when she realised that by franchising her company she could offer other parents the opportunity to run their own business while fitting working life around their family life. She wanted to find a simple solution for potential franchisees to fund their business if they didn’t have the cash to invest upfront. To date we’ve supported and financed five franchisees and we hope our Kalma family will continue to grow.

Rebecca said: “I first heard about Transmit Start-Ups through a colleague. I took the time to meet with others who had worked with Transmit to hear their experiences. They had a great reputation. Processes with Transmit are simple and straightforward with a short timeframe and turn around. For Kalma Baby as a franchisor it’s meant we have been able to grow a number of franchises. It’s also given women the opportunity to be able to work flexibly and spend more time with their family whilst not worrying about the upfront costs of a business.”
Our Mentors

Having a great business mentor is as important, if not more important, than securing funding when starting a business.

That’s why we provide all our Start Up Loans recipients with access to our free mentoring service. Whether they need a quick call for some advice or they’re looking for somebody to run an idea past, we are here for them. Once we understand their requirements we match them up with a suitable experienced mentor from our network of over 40 mentors.

Joy Chopp
INDEPENDENT BUSINESS ADVISOR

Joy decided to dedicate some of her time to mentoring because she is keenly aware of the need that fledgling businesses have after raising finance.

She said: “Ongoing support is incredibly important. Each mentee comes with ideas and lots of enthusiasm which is very inspiring to work with. As a business advisor by profession, I have to remind myself that to be a mentor is a different role; more supportive and less directional. With mentees, I find myself in more of a friendship role rather than an advisory role. The overriding piece of advice I consistently give to budding entrepreneurs is do the research, then do it again and never forget that customer is king.”

Our Referral Partners

Our nationwide network of 278 referral partners are our eyes and ears in the business community.

They spread the word about what we do, providing a vital link to the people with the next big ideas we want to support. We are always on the lookout for people and organisations to partner with us to promote the work we do - give us a shout if you’d like to get involved.

Ian Thompson
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR, TRANSMIT START-UPS

Ian started working with Transmit in 2017 after working for a high street bank for 37 years after hearing good things about us.

He said: “I felt that the human touch had gone out of banking and customer service was a secondary priority. Everyone spoke highly of Transmit’s customer-centric, ‘can do’ attitude, together with a friendly but professional service. I now work remotely, but feel able to deliver excellent customer service in the knowledge that the support team and my colleagues have a shared passion to get the job done in an efficient, timely way that gives budding entrepreneurs the help and advice that they need and deserve.”

Helen Steel
ASSOCIATE BUSINESS ADVISOR, EMPIRIC PARTNERS

Helen is part of a team of business support professionals based in Basingstoke who direct clients to us when they are looking for start-up finance.

She said: “Starting up and running your own business is great fun but also hard work. There’s loads of advice online and in start-up workshops but having a trusted mentor to guide you makes all the difference. Having the support of Transmit behind us means we can secure funding for our entrepreneurs that helps them realise their own financial and strategic dreams.”
Transmit Consulting

Transmit Consulting offers straight-talking consulting and coaching to high-growth businesses across the UK.

We help entrepreneurs, businesses and non-profit organisations strengthen, commercialise and innovate. Start Up Loans recipients often become clients of Transmit Consulting as their businesses continue to grow and thrive. It’s great to continue working together and incredibly satisfying for us to see their achievements.

Lucy Ridley
REFERRALS COORDINATOR, TALKWORKS

Talk Works offers psychological services across the North East of England. Counsellors, CBT therapists and psychologists offer one-to-one talking therapies to individuals. The Learning and Development Team works directly with employers and staff to improve employee well-being, reduce absenteeism and enhance productivity via lunchtime seminars and training workshops. Transmit Consulting has provided the team with coaching covering everything from GDPR and software to policies and procedures.

Lucy said: “Working with Transmit Consulting has been an absolute delight. Not only have they provided us with ongoing support but they have taken into consideration the work we currently do and provided us with useful advice to help us streamline and enhance some of our current processes to help us work more efficiently.”

Simon Clayton
MARKETING COACH, MARKETING SKILLS ACADEMY

Having spent over 25 years in the communications industry, more recently running his own consultancy, Simon was pleased to accept Transmit’s offer to join the team as marketing coach.

He said: “I am more than aware of the challenges small businesses face, and how effective the work of the Transmit team has been in delivering enterprise solutions across the UK. Working with Transmit has helped develop some excellent relationships with clients, watching them learn, take action and grow in confidence with their marketing.”

Our Innovation Team

In May 2017 four of us set up the Innovation Team with the purpose of exploring new ideas.

Starting with a blank canvas, the team’s remit was wide open - they could explore absolutely anything even if it was completely unrelated to business support and finance.

One of the team’s earliest ideas was to develop a chatbot using Artificial Intelligence to quickly answer simple customer enquiries coming in via our website. A considerable amount of research led to a partnership with, and subsequent investment in, Generic AI Applications Ltd, a specialist in Artificial General Intelligence. A chatbot has been built and is currently going through thorough testing, before rolling it out across our companies and licensing it out as a white label solution.

Transmit Group is now creating a new brand transmitx to take into corporates, universities and public sector organisations to teach about ideas generation, business innovation and intrapreneurship.
Giving Back

Here are a few good causes Transmit Group is proud to support:

MACMILLAN
Transmit Group host an annual coffee morning in support of Macmillan Cancer Support. It’s a fantastic event every year and is a great opportunity to catch up with all the other businesses based in Gateshead International Business Centre, whilst enjoying some great cakes and raising money for a very worthwhile cause.

TRUSSELL TRUST
Being headquartered in Gateshead it is important to us to support the local community so, every Christmas, Transmit Group collects food donations for Gateshead Foodbank so that people who need a little support can enjoy special food parcels over the Christmas period.

GUIDE DOGS
As a joke the Transmit directors promised the staff puppies if they hit 100 loan approvals in one month. When it happened the staff were kind enough not to hold them to their word so, instead, they decided to sponsor a Guide Dog puppy. Buddy is now a valued member of the team at Transmit Towers with an entire notice board dedicated to him!

HOLOCAUST EDUCATIONAL TRUST
Transmit employees took part in an enrichment day in which they heard the testimony of Holocaust survivor, Janine Webber BEM. Janine’s remarkable story of survival highlighted the importance of values such as tolerance, respect, and understanding which are central to Transmit’s ethos.
So, What’s Next?

Completing our fifth year in business has made us stop and reflect on what we’ve achieved over the last five years but, more importantly, also what we can do in the next five years.

While Transmit Group is the umbrella brand for our group of companies, our aim is to establish it as a forward-thinking business outsourcing company, providing services to organisations that outsource delivery in the enterprise and finance sector.

We hope to strengthen Transmit Start-Ups’ position as the UK’s number one delivery partner, in terms of lending volume, conversion rates and customer feedback, and deliver loans to 5,000 entrepreneurs by April 2020.

Transmit Consulting and Teal will acquire further market share to become prominent names in business consulting/coaching and finance brokerage.

We are also exploring many new exciting opportunities in commercialising the AI chatbot, setting up a lead generation business and online channel TransmitTV.

Ultimately though, our aim is to continue learning as entrepreneurs so that we can provide customer-focused, value for money products and services to more amazing entrepreneurs.

“We have learnt so much over the last five years, and we continue to learn every day. Supporting over 3,000 entrepreneurs has allowed us to deepen our knowledge of the SME sector, from pre-starts to high growth companies, and we continue to introduce new products to help them achieve their goals.”

RICHARD MYERS, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
No Straight Lines

Wondering why this document is called No Straight Lines?

When setting off on your business journey you hope, and expect, your path from A to B to be a straight and easy one. But it rarely is. In fact, don’t expect to arrive at point B at all. Expect to arrive at point C.

WHAT YOU EXPECT TO HAPPEN

A _____________ B

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

A ________ B

WHAT IS MOST LIKELY TO HAPPEN

A ________ B ________ C
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