

E-commerce drives UK exporter's healthy snack revolution

A swift switch to e-commerce has saved healthy snack start-up OLLY'S during the Coronavirus pandemic after 40% of its monthly revenue disappeared due to grounded airlines and cancelled rail services.

Founded in his parents' kitchen three years ago, a love of olives inspired Olly Hiscocks to create the world's first unpasteurised olive snack pouch. He quickly went from selling them at Richmond's Duck Pond Market to supplying major airlines and over 8,000 global stocking points.

Due to growing demand for nutritional snacks, Olly had just decided to expand his company's portfolio to include nuts and pretzels when the pandemic hit.

Forced to furlough staff in order to stay afloat, OLLY'S sought advice from the Department for International Trade about sourcing new exporting opportunities to compensate for the loss of business. This resulted in the company pivoting its effort towards e-commerce with impressive results.

Olly Hiscocks, Founder & Director at OLLY'S said:

With no airlines, trains, or pubs to supply our products to, we had a large amount of leftover stock at the start of lockdown.

We knew that we had to find a way to sell this stock in order to stay afloat, so we decided to ramp up our online store and launch our new range of bulk nut mixes on Amazon. The response was incredible – our monthly online sales are up 800%.

We are now focusing on the launch of OLLY'S PRETZEL Thins and continuing to work with the Department for International Trade as we look to maximise our online sales and tap into new markets.

OLLY'S currently exports to 9 countries, with overseas sales accounting for 20% of the company's annual turnover.

In July OLLY'S secured a contract with a distributor for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and signed a deal with Middle Eastern supermarket retailer Spinneys. The company is currently expanding into Australia, as well as Wholefoods in the US.

In ongoing negotiations with Australia and the US, the Department for International Trade aims to strike comprehensive free trade deals that make it easier for SMEs, such as OLLY'S, to trade with these key markets.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart, said:

The fantastic success that OLLY'S have enjoyed is a great example of the power of e-commerce and what can be achieved by overcoming barriers and exporting to new markets.

More trade is essential to our economic recovery from Coronavirus and that's why we are negotiating a number of free trade agreements that provide exporters with greater opportunities overseas.

In June 2020, the proportion of retail sales made online in Britain reduced slightly to 31.8%, following the record 33.3% seen in May, up considerably from the 20.0% reported in February.

Olly discusses his story in more detail [here](#).