

# News story: Loughborough stationery firm secures stateside success

Ohh Deer supplies illustrated greeting cards, stationery, clothes and homeware, designed by handpicked artists and illustrators, recently working with Mr Men and Battersea Dogs and Cats Home to create 2 bespoke product ranges.

The company, which makes as many of its products as possible in the UK, has also collaborated with retail giants ASOS and Urban Outfitters.

From their humble beginnings working from a relative's attic, Ohh Deer have now opened 2 stores in Loughborough and Ipswich – the founders' hometowns and counts the likes of Selfridges and John Lewis amongst its customers.

Ohh Deer's Loughborough store. (c) Ohh Deer

The business' headquarters, has since moved to The Rushes, Loughborough, and employs 22 permanent staff, which doubles during peak seasons.

To make the most of the demand for its products internationally, Ohh Deer turned to the Department for International Trade (DIT) for advice on how to navigate customs regulations and paperwork requirements in countries it was exporting to for the first time.

The company has since seen significant success in the US, with Papyrus, a leading North American stationery and greeting card retailer, increasing its order volume by 500% in the last year. Papyrus operates over 450 stores across the US and Canada.

Mark Callaby, Founder, Ohh Deer, said:

It's vital for our business to continue to diversify and grow, gaining more market share in order to protect against any unpredictable changes in the retail sector. DIT provided us with start-up advice in the very beginning and has since provided us with funding to attend various international trade shows in the US. These have helped us make new contacts and learn from other businesses and their experiences.

The majority of the countries we export to speak English, which has made our exporting journey much less daunting, but there are other specific challenges we've faced. For example, every country has their own differing paperwork requirements. DIT has been a great help in understanding this in the US by providing advice and support on the logistics of customs.

There are so many opportunities to trade with international partners that businesses, like us, aren't aware of. But, with the

support of DIT and after doing some market research in potential target markets we discovered the quirkiness of our products was actually a unique selling point. If we can export successfully, with the right guidance and support, so can other businesses in the Midlands.

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports for the Midlands at the Department for International Trade, said:

We're pleased to see Ohh Deer's continued success in overseas markets and look forward to working alongside them as they continue to grow.

British firms have a strong trading relationship with the US, and Ohh Deer is a great example of a business who has made the most of the demand from this economy. It is important businesses identify suitable partners and fully understand market and regulatory requirements in order to do well, which Ohh Deer has done effectively.

We have a team of specialist advisers on the ground in the East Midlands, who are on hand to support budding firms as they look to start or build its exports.

Selection of Oh Deer's stationery range. (c) Ohh Deer

Online support, find a buyer, and export readiness tools are available at [great.gov.uk](http://great.gov.uk), where thousands of live export opportunities are also promoted.