

Business Ready teams up firms on sports app

Clubbie - a social media platform for sports clubs and individuals to share video highlights - was growing in engagement until the Coronavirus pandemic hit. Meanwhile, another Warwickshire entrepreneur, Joe Wheatley, was looking to create an app to make life simpler for those who run sports teams based on his own experience of establishing a football club.



Pictured: Chris White (left) with Joe Wheatley

Both Joe and Clubbie founder, Chris White, have been supported by Business Ready on different ventures in the past and, by bringing the pair together, it has led to a new partnership that will benefit both parties – and sports clubs across the UK.

The Company

Clubbie was established in 2016 by Chris White as a social media platform aimed at sports clubs and individuals to upload clips and create a network within the amateur sports community.

The company was growing its network and had 4,000 teams in its database, with around 50,000 followers on Facebook, 4,000 followers on Twitter and 4,000 followers on Instagram.

Meanwhile, entrepreneur Joe Wheatley had set up his own amateur football team called Shottery United and quickly became aware of the amount of admin that goes into running a club – from finding out availability for fixtures through to ordering kit.

He was all set to launch his own app – Club Bubble – to help address this issue and make life easier for sports participants up and down the country.

The Challenge

When the pandemic hit, engagement with Clubbie suffered.

"Clubbie was built on the fact that lots of amateur sports clubs now have very good recording equipment," said Joe. "It created a space for teams to build a network and share some of the highlights and it was growing.

"The Coronavirus crisis saw most amateur sporting activity cancelled and then only return for a short period of time before being cancelled again.

"Chris was looking at ways that he could maintain engagement with the platform and I was just in the process of creating Club Bubble, which was aimed at the same market and audience."





The Solution

Gaynor Matthews, a Business Ready adviser, was mentoring both Joe and Chris separately but when she saw the synergy between the two individuals, she recommended that they meet and look at working together.

That advice would prove to be a game-changer for both as Clubbie had already developed the foundations of a major network in amateur sports and the Clubbie platform had the potential to make it an even greater staple of a coach's or amateur athlete's daily life.

The two have now joined forces under the Clubbie brand and Chris has given Joe the backing to get a new app created by experienced programmers and developers.

Gaynor has also supported a grant application for the business.

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The Results

The Clubbie app is moving quickly in development, ready for a potential launch in May 2021.

It will offer a range of features including the payment of fees, the ability to purchase kit, check availability for fixtures and even show team selection and formation for football clubs.

The company has been in discussion with the Football Association with the potential of fixtures being directly added to a coach's Clubbie app so they don't have to manually upload those fixtures.

It will also offer up-to-the-minute statistics such as top scorers, league tables and highest assists and match reports. It could then be rolled out to other sports.

Joe said: "From my own experience and from what other coaches tell me, they have so much admin to do and it would make life much, much easier if this could all be done in one place as they find themselves having to access various websites and different apps to get everything done."

"We've had very good feedback from the FA in our early discussions so we will begin with football and then move onto other sports very quickly."

"We believe the app will be seen as a real support for amateur sports participants and by attracting them to Clubbie with the convenience of what we offer, they will then follow that by using the engaging social media platform to upload and view videos."

"It's thanks to Gaynor at Business Ready that we were brought together and she is continuing to support us, including helping apply for grant funding to accelerate the pace at which we can grow."

Business support for the next level

The Business Ready programme is managed by the business support team at the University of Warwick Science Park. The experienced Business Growth Advisers team have been delivering business growth and support services to technology based businesses for over 30 years.

In addition, the team are supported by a range of specialist mentors who have run their own businesses and have expertise and experience supporting, advising, coaching and mentoring other growth businesses.



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