



Entrepreneurs taste sweet success.



The North East SME Innovation Programme provided Newcastle-based Canny Drinks Ltd with funding, enabling the company to take their sugar free recipe to market.

After recognising a gap in the market for milkshakes containing natural ingredients, founders Liam Watson and Simon Bishop had the desire to create amazing drinks that contain real ingredients and also taste great too.

The entrepreneurial duo launched their own brand of all natural milkshakes 'Canny Milk' and customers include Virgin Trains as

well as many other independents stocking the milkshake range. With obesity on the rise, the company felt it was imperative to develop a sugar free milkshake without using artificial sweeteners. They turned to the Innovation Programme to access funding towards their latest creation.

Liam explains: "We approached the BIC with an idea to create a recipe for naturally sweetened milkshakes. We strive to ensure our products not only taste good but provide a great source of nutrients too so we didn't want to use artificial sweeteners to achieve our sugar free milkshake.

"With the Innovation Programme grant funding, we were able to access expert food consultants during the development stage which ensured the recipe, process and technical side were managed correctly, mitigating any problems. The support we received from the programme really helped us to achieve our ambitions and the new sugar free chocolate milkshake is now in distribution."

Gillian Middleton, Innovation Adviser said: "Canny Milk realised the importance of adapting their product to maintain a leading edge in the marketplace. I am delighted the Innovation Programme has been able to support a truly

committed, forward thinking business that holds its customers at the forefront of what they do.”

During their first year of trading, Canny Drinks also appeared on ITV’s ‘Give it a Year’, a factual

series featuring business leader Karren Brady CBE, who follows ambitious new companies in their first year of trading.

Talking of his appearance on the programme, Liam said: “It was a

fantastic opportunity and I’m thankful for the experience. The exposure it has created for us has been great and hopefully we can continue to build on that.”

For more information please visit: www.wearecanny.co.uk

What you need to know...

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The North East SME Innovation Programme is funded through ERDF, supporting a wide range of sectors including: manufacturing, digital, renewable energy and healthcare.

The aim of the programme is to support North East SMEs who are committed to developing and implementing innovative ideas and processes. Ideas may include (but are not limited to) those which:

- Broaden a product base
- Introduce a new service
- Introduce new markets
- Change operating methods
- Make better use of technology
- Ultimately reduce long term risk and increase sustainability.

The benefits

- The potential of 40% funding for innovative projects
- Project value between £5,000 and £40,000
- Signposting to other sources of innovative support.

The programme is available to North East based B2B SMEs that have traded for 12 months or more.

Get in touch

Visit: ne-bic.co.uk/supporting-innovation

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