Innovation in workflow management app sets publishing world buzzing

Software developers, General Products Ltd, are causing a bit of a stir in the world of publishing with an innovation part-funded by a Go-Create grant from the Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme. Their grant of £18,700 enabled a project to develop a software innovation, valued at £70,000, to be completed in time for launch at the London Book Fair in 2019.

Their app, called Consonance, is a comprehensive tool which manages publishers' businesses, from data to workflows. It is a vital tool for this global industry, managing everything a publisher needs to control such as lists of authors, rights, royalties, data management, production flows and everything in between.

Founder, Emma Barnes, and her expert team had identified the need for additional features to transform the platform, but needed financial help to realise their development. Without it, the work would have taken too much time.
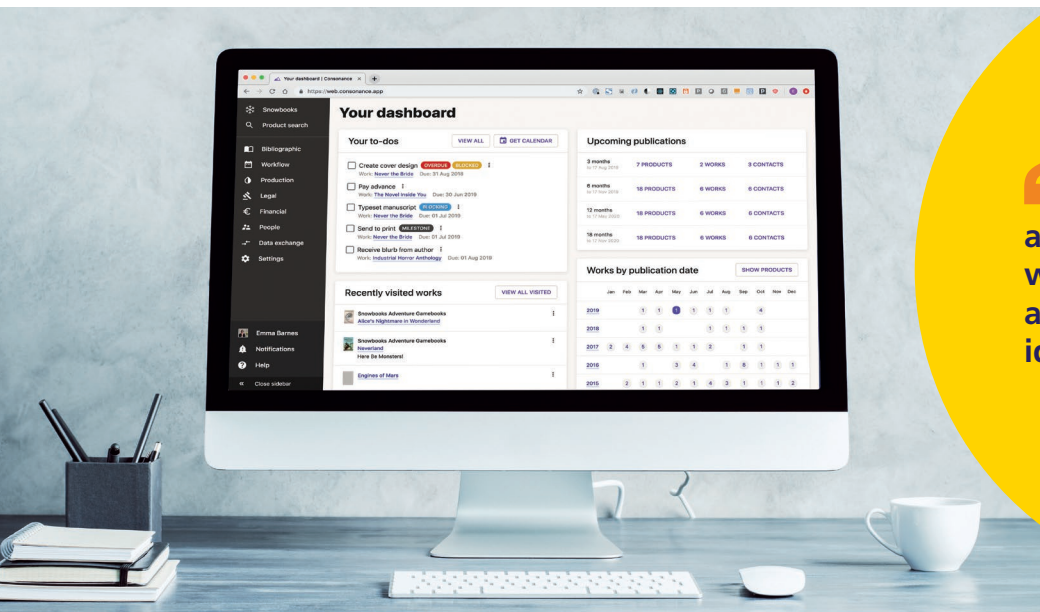
Thinking differently created a market advantage

"We recognised that creating an integrated 'To Do list' for publishers, which automatically updated as publishing dates changed, as they do, would immediately reduce the burden for publishers. Too many apps require laborious and time-consuming maintenance. It has long been our assertion that if people are spared the drudgery of admin, they can use that time more creatively and in areas which add real value to their business."

Support from OxLEP Business and the ISfB programme

Emma attended several workshops about different aspects of innovation including sessions on implementing innovations and launching new products.

"The money has obviously been great. In addition, at the workshops, I got a lot from spending time with other businesses, big and small, and took fresh ideas back to the team."

By winning a Go-Create grant, the programming team were able to devote time to creating the breakthrough features. "The process of applying for the grant really compelled us to synthesise the business case because it had to make sense to a non-technical panel. This has been a great benefit when developing our marketing for the product. Having been through that process, we were clear about every aspect of our proposal, and why it was strategically important to our client base."

Development and new product launch

The work to create the integrated 'To Do list' and other features for the software took just over 6 months. The work went to plan and was successfully completed in time for the London Book Fair - a major date in every publisher's calendar.

Having the Go-Create funding from ISfB meant General Products could afford to invest in a launch at this major event. They now have a long list of sales leads and the endorsement of new customers: world-scale businesses in the trade and academic, technical and scientific publishing sectors.

"The impact has been direct and immediate," Emma said. "It's proof that our potential in the market is significantly larger than might have been expected. Hearing about new ways of approaching growth through innovation sparked a lot of new ideas, and it has really helped to scale our potential. It been a springboard for growth."

HOW CONSONANCE HELPS PUBLISHERS

The integration of a 'To Do list' into the Consonance app enables automatic updates to related data. A delay such as the late completion of a manuscript by an author or a change to the printing schedule can all be seamlessly accounted for by the new features integrated into the workflow software.

ABOUT CONSONANCE

General Products Ltd develop and market software for the publishing industry. Their Consonance software has evolved to be an enterprise-grade book trade software — for publishers, by publishers. Their experience ranges across all types of publishing and the supply chain: academic, children's, international, professional and scholarly, and the system is designed to share that knowledge with all their clients.

Find out more about Consonance at
www.consonance.app
Email: info@consonance.app
Tel: 01844 216 290

Find out more about OxLEP Business' Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme and how it can help your Business to achieve its own goals.

innovation@oxfordshirelep.com
01865 897 180
oxfordshirelep.com/isfb