



UK Trade & Investment

Paw Print Games makes an impression in new markets

Fast facts

Company: Paw Print Games

Industry: Creative

Target Markets: USA, South Korea

UKTI Services: Tradeshow Access Programme, Passport to Export, Market Visit Support

www.pawprintgames.com



Joining UK Trade & Investment's (UKTI) Passport to Export programme gave Paw Print Games an introduction to effective exporting. After UKTI funding helped pay the costs of attending international exhibitions in Germany, the USA and South Korea, the computer games software company won two significant contracts – worth US\$50,000 and US\$150,000 - from overseas customers.

Paw Print Games is an independent games studio in Chester, in the North West of England. The company creates unique games for a variety of platforms, including mobile, tablet, handheld and consoles.

Founders Steven Craft and Anthony White built up their experience at 2 major UK studios, Sony Liverpool and Traveller's Tales. Paw Print's first game, KAMI RETRO, went straight into

the video games charts and attracted media coverage. A publisher offered the company minimum revenue guarantees against sales to release the game. So Steven and Anthony gave up their jobs to devote themselves full time to perfecting it. They set up Paw Print Games studio at the start of 2011.

"KAMI RETRO is a retro-inspired game that mixes elements of classics such as Mario vs Donkey Kong, Lemmings and Bills Tomato Game," says Steven. "It did well and was named game of the week by Apple for both iPhone and iPad and received the top banners on the Apple App Store. This helped generate large numbers of downloads. Once we had proven ourselves with this success, it paved the way for other deals. Both HP/Palm and Blackberry wanted our software on their new phones."

Overseas interest

As Paw Print Games carved a name for

itself in the gaming world, its publisher, GAMEVIL referred the company to another US customer, Saban Brands LLC. A project followed developing the Paul Frank fashion brand into a mobile game called Swashbuckler.

Pro-actively seeking out new overseas opportunities, Steven and Anthony decided to attend the Game Developers Conference (GDC), a week-long conference in San Francisco attended by over 23,000 industry insiders. This would be the ideal place to see and be seen, but the cost of tickets, flights and accommodation would come to around £6,000. A referral to the Association for UK Interactive Entertainment led Paw Print Games to UKTI. A £1000 grant was a welcome contribution that enabled the company to attend the event in March 2013. Whilst there, Paw Print Games got excellent exposure speaking at one of the sessions and appearing on round table discussions and press panels.



“The great thing about UKTI is that they just want to help. They don’t have any other agenda and there’s no hidden catch.”

Steven Craft, founder, Paw Print Games

In June 2013, Paw Print Games joined Passport to Export, the UKTI programme that helps businesses to prepare for international markets. Steven and Antony attended a 2-day training seminar which gave a broad overview of exporting issues. Passport also entitled the company to matched funding of up to £3000 over the course of the year, towards the costs of attending trade shows. They used this to attend the Tizen Developer Conference in Seoul, South Korea in July 2013 and Gamescom in Cologne in August 2013. The event in Seoul was particularly fruitful, resulting in a new £30,000 contract.

“We have the expertise and the drive to succeed, but without attending events we were finding it difficult to bring in contracts,” says Steven. “UKTI’s financial support allowed us to travel to the USA, South Korea and Germany. Being there showed the industry that we are an established, experienced games development studio. The Passport to Export training was also interesting – it forced us to take 2 days out of our usual business routine to think about our strategy and how we will get to where we want to be.”

Return to GDC

In March 2014, Steven and Anthony returned to GDC, again with financial support from UKTI: a £500 contribution towards the flights from MVS and matched funding through Passport towards the costs of accommodation. They had already been in touch with a US television company looking for a developer to create a mobile version of a game on its website, and prepared a pitch to present to this potential client at GDC. The presentation went well and Paw Print Games was awarded the US\$150,000 contract. The company is already in talks about other potential projects with this client.

Paw Print Games also works with a UKTI International Trade Adviser (ITA) to progress its overseas business. She keeps in touch with the company to see how they are doing, lets them know

about any leads she comes across and recommends relevant avenues of support.

“A large US company like this may not ordinarily consider working with a small, independent studio from the UK,” says Steven. “But being able to present to them face-to-face at GDC, we were able to re-enforce the relationship we had already begun to establish via email and impress them. The funding we’ve had through Passport and MVS made the difference between us going to international shows and not – had we not been at GDC 2014, we wouldn’t have won this new business. Our ITA is also a great support. She tells us about useful developments, like the new video games tax relief scheme coming into effect for UK businesses. The great thing about UKTI is that they just want to help. They don’t have any other agenda and there’s no hidden catch. There’s no reason not to contact UKTI if you’re looking to export. For the little you have to put in, you get huge returns.”

The UK and the USA

The UK and the USA are each other’s single largest investors and most important partners in science and innovation. In fact, more than a quarter of new investment projects in the UK come from US investors, and bilateral trade between the UK and the USA is worth around £120 billion per year.

In 2013, the USA continued to strengthen its relationship with the UK, funding 501 projects and creating 32,488 new jobs. About a million people in the USA work for British companies, while a further million in the UK work for American firms.

The US economy is integrated and largely self-contained, with every major industry represented. The sheer size of the USA means it should be treated as a series of regional markets with varying characteristics.

For further information about business opportunities in the USA, please go to www.gov.uk/ukti

Helping you attend tradeshows

Taking part in overseas exhibitions is an effective way for you to test markets, attract customers, appoint agents or distributors and make sales. UK Trade & Investment’s Tradeshaw Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible SME firms to attend trade shows overseas.

Participation is usually as part of a group, a great advantage for inexperienced businesses, and is usually led by one of our Accredited Trade Organisations (ATOs). ATOs work with UK Trade & Investment to raise the profile of UK groups and sectors at key exhibitions.

For further information please visit www.gov.uk/ukti

UKTI was delighted to support Paw Print Games in its business overseas.

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