

CLIENT STORY

ARK Brands



How we banished Suzi and Steve's admin overwhelm and gave them back valuable time to work on their business.

"I can't state how life-changing it's been for me"
- Suzi

Suzi and Steve Arkley founded their marketing agency, ARK Brands, in 2015. Having both reached the top of their industries in corporate marketing, the husband and wife duo wanted to achieve a more balanced lifestyle by running their own business.

Soon after setting up their agency, they realised how different it was to working in the corporate world and the responsibilities that came with it.

"It was a big change", Suzi remembers. "We were used to people doing everything for us...so it was a bit of a shock when we had to raise invoices ourselves, do all of the banking, submit annual accounts."

SUZI QUICKLY BECAME BOGGED DOWN IN FINANCIAL ADMIN.

She felt frustrated, knowing it wasn't the best use of her time – especially in the early stages of her business.

She spoke to a friend who had also left the corporate world to start her own business as a working mum. Her friend recommended DNA Accountants and told Suzi about her experience partnering with us.

She recalled how when she met Gillian and Ian for the first time, they picked her up from the train station before spending a couple of hours in their office, talking through everything she needed to do in the early stages of her business and giving her reassurance.

It sounded like just what Suzi needed.

WE IMMEDIATELY FREED UP TIME BY STREAMLINING THEIR SYSTEMS.

Suzi and Steve got in touch and we kicked off the process to start working together. We first looked at finding quick wins to free up time and give the couple a better work/life balance.

In charge of raising invoices, Suzi had been spending hours each month manually submitting receipts. It all changed when we introduced automation via digital accounting software Xero.

Once she started using Xero to process expenses, Suzi could use HubDoc to automatically scan and upload invoices and receipts. It's helped free up her evenings and has given her more time to focus on the business.

"The admin associated with raising invoices was the bane of my life, so I can't state how life-changing it's been for me." she says.

Steve agrees: "It's cliché, but time is money as an entrepreneur."

SUZI HAS THE REASSURANCE OF ASKING AS MANY QUESTIONS AS SHE NEEDS.

When submitting receipts, Suzi sometimes felt unsure which expenses were tax-deductible. She spent time searching for answers online but was often met with accounting jargon that just complicated things further.

With DNA she knows she can email Sam or Ian with any queries, as and when she needs. She can expect quick, clear answers and won't ever be judged for not knowing something.

"I had a conversation with Sam this morning about how to treat expenses, whether to apply VAT or not. She sent me back a very detailed and easy-to-understand answer with a link to an HMRC page." says Suzi.

"No question is ever too silly for them... They don't make you feel thick, even if you have a lack of understanding of that whole world."



WE'RE NOW PREPARING THEIR CASH FLOW TO FUND GROWTH AND SCALE SUSTAINABLY.

As Suzi and Steve's business enters its first key stage of growth, we've shifted focus to pay close attention to profitability: examining income streams and finding ways to improve margins.

While they focus on running the business, they can depend on us to conduct cash flow forecasts, deliver accurate budgets and keep an eye on every detail that impacts their top line.

“We’ve got more disciplined in the way we’re managing the economics of our organisation. DNA have been exceptional at helping us with that.”, says Steve.

“We’re really small but expanding a lot, and trying to keep it lean to maximise profitability. We’re leaning on DNA to help us stay one step ahead.”

THEY NOW HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE AND DIRECTION AS THEY RUN THEIR BUSINESS.

He now feels reassured they’re making good progress and their business is where it should be. By working with an accountant experienced in their industry, Suzi and Steve understand how their progress looks in context and compared with similar agencies.

“It’s nice to be able to hear, ‘You guys are doing really great, keep it up’. We haven’t been looking up, we’ve just been working. The guys [at DNA] provide a rear-view mirror to see how far you’ve come.”

“It’s given us more security about what the next 3,6,12 months hold rather than flying by the seat of our pants on a day-to-day basis,” says Steve.

Steve says working with DNA has also given them accountability:

“They’re a great balance. Sam helps us out and chases us up when needed, prompts us in a polite way to stay on top of things and holds us accountable about our receipts.”

THEIR ADVICE FOR OTHERS IN THEIR SHOES IS TO SET UP THE RIGHT SYSTEMS FROM DAY ONE.

Suzi says, “If we’d know what we know now, I would have automated a lot of things early on and invested in digital invoicing systems and expenses systems.”

“If you don’t get that stuff set up from the beginning, it can end up taking a huge amount of your time, which takes away the time you have available for your core business.”

Suzi and Steve went from feeling overwhelmed to having a clear direction. Working closely with an expert accountant helped them identify significant areas of transformation.

If you’re in a similar position to them when they started out, there’s a solution. Often a few tweaks to your processes can make your life a lot easier.



Book a chat

**LET'S EXPLORE WHAT YOU CAN DO
TO GIVE YOURSELF MORE TIME.**

**SOON YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO
SPEND ANOTHER SATURDAY
RAISING INVOICES.**

dna-accountants.co.uk

