



ESTABLISHING A UK ENTITY: DRIVING RAPID BUSINESS GROWTH

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Case study: Cedar Planters

Canada is known for many things: incredible natural scenery, remarkable tolerance, and Maple syrup, among others. Now, a small company is making waves in the UK with its range of gardening products, including raised garden beds handmade from Western Red Cedar wood, among the best and longest lasting exterior lumber products.

The idea was born during the pandemic, says Maria Gil, Supply Chain and Operations Manager at Cedar Planters.

"It all began as an idea from our owners Haley and Jason, who started doing some woodworking projects at home just to spend time together during the pandemic. One of those pieces was a raised garden bed for their condo balcony, which they posted on Facebook Marketplace. They started to receive really great feedback and people wanting to order raised garden beds for their own homes."

From small acorns... having generated some initial sales, interest rocketed. *"The company started to sell across Canada and US, pretty much only via e-commerce,"* Maria explains. *"We have our website on Shopify, and now our biggest market is in the US - around 70% of the business. We have grown, between 2021 to 2024, by easily 300%."*

That growth meant that not only did Cedar Planters need to invest in new warehouse facilities to meet the burgeoning demand for the product that was now available in an IKEA-style flatpack format, but also to look beyond North America to new markets.

"We know that in Germany, UK, Spain, and Greece, for instance, that gardening is really popular, so we hope to set up in a number of different countries. For first steps, it is ideal that Canada and the UK have a really amazing trade agreement as well as a common language, so that's why we started off our European plans in the UK!"

And that's where Paul Beare comes in. *"We found Paul on Google and the reviews were so positive. Then, when we'd had the first meeting with Wendy, we were even more confident and reassured that we were in the right hands."*

Having understood what Cedar Planters was aiming to do in the short and medium term, the team at Paul Beare organised a mini-orientation about what would be required to get the business established correctly. *"They were really clear about what we needed to send or submit,"* says Maria.

"Actually, they did almost everything – set up the business, organised our tax arrangements, helped with banking and got our board meetings up and running."

In all, Gil estimates the whole process, from initial contact to completion of the key elements of setting up for doing business in the UK took a little over two months. *"It turned out to be easier to do it with the entity to entity, where the Canadian company owns the UK one, so that made it fairly simple, because thanks to the Canada and UK having a straightforward trade agreement, it was easier for UK to verify the Canadian entity."*

Since launching late last year, Cedar Planters' progress in the UK and Europe has exceeded the initial projections, with customers enthusiastically embracing the products, enticed by the quality and competitive pricing. *"But even though we are already having sales, which is good, and positive feedback from the people who already received the product, they love it. We also started to do some projects with UK content creators, for social media."*

In fact, the company has already made some adjustments to its offerings in order to reflect different consumer tastes outside Canada and the US.

"The European market is a little different to the US and Canada, where people tend to have more room, with big back yards and gardens. So we found that when we did our research in the UK and Europe, balconies are very important there. We don't have a product yet for balconies only, but we are in the process of developing that for the European market."

The signs, then, are already encouraging for Cedar Planters. *"I believe in the next two years we definitely will need to hire people in the UK,"* says Maria. *"And that's also something that Paul will help us with, because we don't want to deal with payrolls and so on from here – in fact we have already discussed it with Wendy, who has explained how the system works."*

Whether that's logistics or customer service, there's a good chance that Cedar Planters will put further roots down in the UK in the near future, making the initial decision to engage Paul Beare even smarter. *"We're sure Paul's team will be able to help us on our growth journey in the future so it's all working out great so far."*