



In top gear towards international success

Cyclehoop specialises in producing innovative indoor and outdoor cycle parking solutions. Architect Anthony Lau established the London-based company in 2008 after designing the original 'Cyclehoop' product, a bicycle stand which can be retrofitted to existing street furniture providing attractive and cost effective bicycle parking with minimal clutter.



Designed and manufactured in the UK

There are now over 15 different products in the range and the team is very proud that all are designed and manufactured in the UK.

The company has enjoyed tremendous UK success: within four years of launch, Cyclehoop parking solutions were adopted by over 40 councils across the UK and with a contract to build over 6,000 bicycle spaces around London for visitors to the 2012 Olympic Games, there was obvious further potential.

Buoyed by the success of the Olympics, and knowing that cities and towns around the world were planning with cyclists in mind, the Cyclehoop team took the decision to exploit these opportunities and increase business overseas. They contacted UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the UK Government organisation helping companies to export, to enlist their support.

Cyclehoop joined UKTI's Passport to Export Scheme in May 2012 and worked with a UKTI International Trade Advisor, Mel Langton, who supported the team in developing their international strategy. It became clear that Cyclehoop's website was going to be pivotal in their plans for overseas expansion. With this in mind, Mel recommended UKTI's Export Communications Review (ECR). The ECR provides practical, impartial and straightforward advice and can help companies improve their online visibility in overseas markets, including devising an international website strategy. Each review is conducted by a communications expert and is tailored to the company's individual requirements.

"We weren't really set up for international trade"

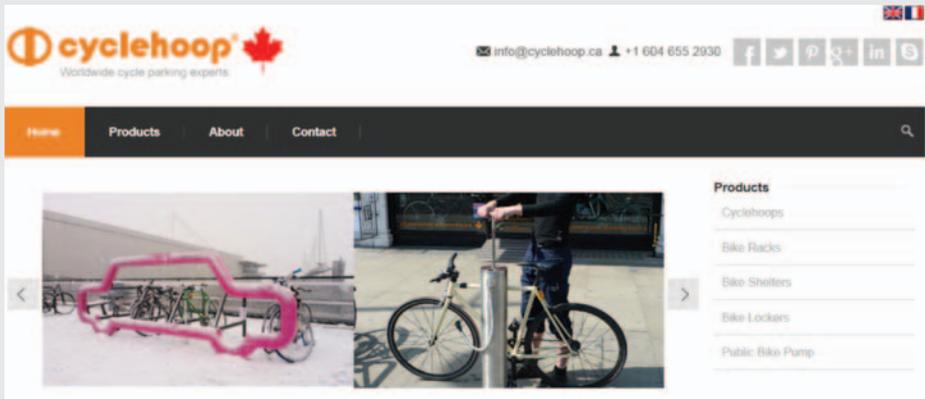
Harriet Burnham, Marketing Manager at Cyclehoop, explained their situation, "We'd done lots of one-off sales to various countries and had had some successful exhibitions,

but we weren't really set up for international trade. Our website was very basic and simply not designed for the outside world." Harriet met with Sarah Carroll, Export Communications Consultant who reviewed their existing website and export objectives and recommended a three-stage approach to developing a truly internationalised website. Cyclehoop undertook three Export Communication Reviews over a seven-month period, each building on the results of the previous:

Review 1: Firstly, Sarah gave recommendations to ensure the site was well-designed, well-structured and in clear English. She then advised that they developed some international content for the English website. "Sarah really helped us to focus on the priority areas to develop, recommending new pages for us to create," said Harriet.

Review 2: Sarah then helped the team develop a web strategy for each of the target countries. This next review focused on purchasing and registering local country

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A screenshot from the Canadian website

domains and translating them into local languages, then setting up effective navigation to access the right pages. Sarah also introduced Cyclehoop to the concept of adding an e-commerce platform.

Review 3: The third review centred on the Canadian website. As Harriet explained, “We had a very strong distributor in Canada who we knew would be more successful with a dedicated Canadian website which would allow him a more ‘hands-on’ and localised approach.” Sarah recommended the addition of more country-specific pages and a French translation for the Canadian site.

As a result of the ECRs and the subsequent development of the international elements of the website, visitor numbers to the Cyclehoop website have almost doubled to around 400 hits per day, and the ‘bounce rate’ (the proportion of visitors who leave the site before viewing other pages) has decreased significantly from 50% to only 3%. Not only is their site being found, but clearly these visitors are staying on the website and this is translating into enquiries and business. Previously, the website was

generating one email per month from clients, yet now 70% of their overall sales are initiated by the website. “It’s great!” exclaimed Harriet, “the phones are constantly ringing, and we’re now getting lots of interesting enquiries from overseas.” Since spring 2012, Cyclehoop’s turnover has increased from £0.9m to £1.5m.

Harriet was very happy to recommend the ECR, “It’s so important to focus on getting your website working for you – it’s your shop window, how potential customers will see you. But it’s not just about how the website looks; Sarah really helped us to develop our web strategy, considering every aspect of how to internationalise our business online. She helped us consider areas we hadn’t even thought of and I think it was this comprehensive approach that made all the difference”

How ECR can help

If you are thinking about reviewing your website to appeal to an International audience, then maybe an ECR could help you too?

Each review includes a visit lasting approximately 2-3 hours where a registered consultant will meet key members of export and marketing staff and prepare a customised action plan. The cost of each review is £500 plus VAT; eligible companies can receive a subsidy of £250 from UKTI for the first three of these reviews.

For more information please contact your ECR team on 0845 0342111 or info@ukecr.co.uk.