

International opportunities unlocked on trade trip

Six businesses recently travelled to Amsterdam to visit the European Headquarters of the Alibaba Group, the leading global e-commerce platform on a learning trip.

The visit was part of the Alibaba Trade Programme which enabled business representatives to meet and connect with Alibaba senior personnel. Learning about the e-commerce platform's significant benefits, they were able to link up with successful Dutch companies that are thriving in the global marketplace.

As part of the experience, the businesses, which included Rosa Lifestyle, Sephra Europe, The Wee Tea Company, Growers Gardens, and CluistROM, who specialise in hearing protection products, visited the Alibaba Group Offices, met with senior personnel, were given information on how to use Alibaba to expand their product market, participated in one-to-one chats and were provided with a tailored action plan to identify key opportunities.

The visit was the first group of British companies to be invited to the Alibaba Group European HQ in Amsterdam.

Derek Walker, from the Wee Tea Company, said that he had participated in the Alibaba Trade Programme as he was keen to expand his online sales further. He was keen to find out more about the platform and hear about the potential successes that other businesses using it had experienced.

“This was an extremely worthwhile and unique project for us to be part of, offering a different opportunity for our business that we might otherwise not have had,” he said.

“We wanted to find out more about the costs and processes involved in listing on Alibaba, and we were keen to get feedback on how other businesses had got involved and what it had brought to the table.”

“Being given the tailored action plan to work with was fantastic,” Derek continued. “We’d like to thank Economic Development for making the trip possible.”

Echoing Derek’s comments that the trip was of real benefit, Nicole Spittle from Growers Gardens has now decided to go ahead and list on [Alibaba.com](https://www.alibaba.com).

“The trip enabled us to find out everything we needed to know, so we are going to take this important next step including onboarding onto the platform and are in the process of recruiting key staff as a result of the opportunity,” she said. “Thanks for a well organised and eye opening trip.”

Neil McIntosh of CluistROM also used the trip to assess the suitability of Alibaba for his product, particularly for his newest product range which is still in development.

“The trip was excellent as a research tool and will continue to bear fruit for us in the next few months, once our new product is released for sale,” he said. “I’d also like to thank Economic Development for arranging this. It was good to attend this with other businesses representing the Kingdom of Fife. The opportunity to access the world’s largest e-commerce platform does not come along every day!”

Pamela Stevenson, Service Manager for Economic Development at Fife Council, who enabled the trip said: “This is one of the most ambitious trade show learning development journeys we have been able to provide. We’re very pleased to hear that our

Fife businesses enjoyed the experience and now have tailored advice and a pathway for success to work through from the world's experts in the field."

