



THE BUSINESS

Bodybuilding.com is the world's number one online fitness website and supplement store with sales of USD\$0.5 billion and growing.

The US-based company's European operation is in the superbly located Woodside Business Park in the Central Bedfordshire town of Houghton Regis, adjacent to Dunstable, offering fast access to the M1, and airport links, for quick and easy transport to international markets.

Bodybuilding.com's home is a mixed use commercial property in Foster Avenue currently consisting of a pick-pack and ship warehouse. There is plenty of room for growth in sales and the associated number of jobs.

Launched in Idaho in 1999, the business has grown from being operated out of a domestic garage to one which supplies to customers in 127 countries around the world.

Caroline Underwood, Bodybuilding.com's Vice President of Operations UK, said: "Our mission is not complete until we wow our customers. As a logistics business, the correct location is vital to that."



THE REQUIREMENTS

Bodybuilding.com's overriding commitment is to give its customers the wow factor by help them to change their lives for the better, including education and information.

It does this by delivering top quality supplements, currently on a next day basis, to their doors and by giving the best possible advice online and in print.

It made logical sense for the company to base its first facility outside the United States in the UK, as the UK and Europe is the biggest market outside the homeland. Consumers and potential employees in the UK are already sophisticated in their knowledge of e-commerce.

The importance of the South East of England market and easy access to the rest of the UK meant it was important for Bodybuilding.com to look for premises in the A1-M1 corridor.

Taking a commercial property in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, ticked all the boxes, including travel time from London to Bedfordshire and back.

Being in the UK Caroline Underwood, Bodybuilding.com's Vice President of Operations UK, did not have to ask "where is Bedfordshire?" before settling on the county as a location. She said: "Central Bedfordshire stood out on the map as the ideal location, with a hub of employable people within the resident population.

"Central Beds Council confirmed our thoughts that this was the best place to be."

"Central Bedfordshire Council were there to facilitate and support any needs during the start-up process and they continue to be there."

Be Central Bedfordshire



THE OUTCOMES

Caroline first contacted Beverley Gaynor, the Inward Investment Manager in the Regeneration and Business Directorate at Central Bedfordshire Council, in October/November 2014 and rates her relationship with the authority as 9 out of 10.

"I think I came into contact with every department of Central Beds Council via Beverley," said Caroline. "From planning issues to advice on setting up the business I found them accommodating and professional and always willing to make time.

"They were very good at filling in my knowledge gaps, reducing the impact of red tape on the business and in providing independent advice on health and safety."

She received alerts about commercial property available in Central Bedfordshire from the council, too.

Caroline added that the council was very impressive in arranging some key dignitaries to support the UK launch of Bodybuilding.com in April 2015. She said: "Beverley provided the liaison with the key contacts.

"The launch event introduced Bodybuilding.com to the local community and gave us a huge boost. In the US, the company was very impressed that the dignitaries including the High Sheriff and the Deputy Lieutenant who gave us such a warm welcome."

The company has continued to work with the council on arranging public relations opportunities.

THE FUTURE

Business has more than doubled for Bodybuilding.com since it arrived in the UK, giving one of the newest companies in Bedfordshire a superb platform and the confidence for future growth.

"I see no reason why we cannot stay in this location," said Caroline who says the company has commitment of at least five years to the area, where roots have been set down in the local community.

The current warehouse and office facility has plenty of car parking space, desk space and room to create more Central Bedfordshire jobs, including fork-lift drivers and pick-pack and ship operatives.

Currently employing 15 full time equivalent local people, the business plans to double the number of jobs in Dunstable in the next 18 months.

The Luton-Dunstable Guided Busway has proved to be a valuable link for transporting its workforce into and out of the business park to other Bedfordshire towns, London Luton Airport and the University of Bedfordshire.

Improved transport links to the M1, via the Woodside Link Road, due to open in 2017, are another key part of the infrastructure.

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For more information, contact the Be Central Bedfordshire team on 0300 300 8272 or via email info@becentralbedfordshire.co.uk

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