Louella Morton
TestReach

Louella Morton's background is in the education technology sector, where she strove to deliver significant benefits through harnessing the power of technology. With her deep knowledge and experience she could observe trends in the sector, particularly in terms of the growing need for education assessment tools and simple, easy-to-use online tests for certification. She saw the gap in the market to provide a full end-to-end online exam management system and knew she had enough experience to set up a business to meet this need. As she puts it herself: "I couldn't not do it!".

And so TestReach was born, set up in 2014 by Louella and co-founder Sheena Bailey. The background context was the ever-growing demand world-wide for education and professional qualifications. Increasingly, this demand was being met by developing new technologies to deliver courses online. However, there was an acute gap in developing corresponding technologies to assess these courses, without recourse to traditional test centres, exam papers, face-to-face interviews, and the like. These traditional methods of assessment were not feasible on the level required to meet the significant increase in demand world-wide.

TestReach bridges this gap, providing an online assessment solution incorporating test authoring, test assembly, test delivery, marking, moderation and results issuing. Any kind of test can be easily created and rolled out, and there is extensive marking and moderation functionality. It is very secure, scalable and cost effective. A unique feature of TestReach is that you can easily 'turn on' remote invigilation for any test. With this option TestReach trained invigilators and supervisors monitor exams in real time over the web, via video, audio and remote screen share. The exam hall environment is effectively re-created online, in a way that can service customers from markets across the world.

The company's main markets are professional bodies, educational/training organisations and corporations, particularly those in highly regulated sectors like financial services, pharma and aviation. TestReach is recognised for their commitment to meeting individual customer needs, and their innovation in developing business-specific solutions. According to Louella, their priority is on "writing software and delivering systems for our customers that are fit for purpose, easy to use and which make a positive difference". It's an approach that clearly resonates with their customers and resulted in business growing year on year. Today, they employ 45 people directly with over 400 exam invigilators on their books.

Louella is clear that taking part in Going for Growth played a very big role in getting the business to where it is today. "Getting different perspectives on issues and effectively using the group as an informal advisory board was critical in helping us develop strategically and steer a clear path for growth at TestReach", she says. And the impact was not just at a business level but was also personal – "I have benefitted greatly from Going for Growth and from continuing as part of the Going for Growth community. It gave me a great opportunity to network and establish solid business relationships that I know will support me as we continue to grow the business".

Continued growth is very much the strategy for TestReach. Over 80% of their business is currently from export markets, mainly the UK. For the future, their priorities will be to expand further in the corporate sector and also into the US, where they are currently looking at some expansion options.