



where  
digital  
happens

**Bondgate IT**

Established: 1998

Owner: **Garry Brown**

Based: **Darlington**

Staff: **18**

Principal product:

**Managed technology service provider (MSP)**

## Case Study

# Bondgate IT



“*This business is unrecognisable from where it was in November 2017 when I started SCALE. I came away focused and energised and we have become a different business than what we naturally would have been. I can't speak highly enough of it.*” **Garry Brown – Managing Director, Bondgate IT**

A happy coincidence, an accidental meeting of minds or a serendipitous encounter, however it's described the coming together of Bondgate IT with DigitalCity presented the perfect business scenario.

Now in its 21st year, Bondgate IT has developed from humble beginnings as an IT build and service computer shop in Darlington town centre to an IT solutions business in modern offices on the edge of town. Loyal clients in the private health care, manufacturing and charities sectors have supported its evolution and growth.

With a mantra to 'embrace digital disruption and challenge thinking', the company works closely with enterprises to identify where technology can be used to achieve operational efficiencies, to drive down cost and to increase revenue. "We try to understand where technology can help clients and be a business enabler with a logical, rational reason for having it," explains owner Garry Brown.

However, in a familiar story of an entrepreneurial business, all the things Bondgate IT was doing for its clients it wasn't necessarily applying to itself. Garry knew it had huge, untapped potential which is where DigitalCity's SCALE programme came in offering intensive and action-focused workshops centred around five pillars of scaling and increasing the profitability of a business and developing leaders – everything Garry was looking for at exactly the right time. "To change the outcome I had to change my softly, softly approach. I had the vision and SCALE helped equip me to move towards that," he explains.

Full days out of the business allowed him to work on it – "It's such a rare luxury for owner managers but once you've made the commitment it's enormously valuable. I loved listening to others' success stories, hearing about the journeys they had taken. It showed me that not everyone nails it first time," he says.

Garry discovered he was further on his business journey than most but sharing his story was no less valuable.

"After 19 years in business I had a lot of experience, examples of things that had and hadn't worked. Sharing that was rewarding while at the same time being challenged upfront by others was very helpful. The speaker content was useful too, offering tangible advice and practical steps in customer psyche, product and service design, business culture and ethos and more." As a result he has joined a sector peer group to continue the external challenge.

Garry has applied much of what he learned to Bondgate IT: a revamped and simplified product portfolio, organisational structure, improved financial planning, budgeting and forecasting. He had already started work on culture and ethos and SCALE helped fast-track the process.

David Dixon, of DigitalCity, said: "Garry owns a very successful business and came to the programme with an open mind and creativity. He fully embraced the challenge and added value and experience to the programme for everyone. He was very open to learning and has fundamentally changed his business based on his SCALE experience."

It has led directly to the creation of five new jobs, a £50K investment in its own systems and a 30 percent increase in turnover in 2018 which is set to be matched in 2019.

Describing it as transformational for the business is not an exaggeration, while Garry says he is a better leader.

"This business is unrecognisable from where it was in November 2017 when I started SCALE. From how we differentiate ourselves in the market and the way we deliver our service, to finance and the way we talk, we have fast-tracked significantly. I came away focused and energised and we have become a different business than what we naturally would have been. I can't speak highly enough of it."