

Delivering for Amazon

When it came to choosing a location for its new customer service centre, Amazon again turned to UK Trade & Investment for advice it could trust



Fast facts

Company: Amazon
Country: Global
Industry: Retail
Website: www.amazon.co.uk

If you ask someone where to browse and buy books, 'a garage in Seattle' would be an unexpected and unlikely answer. But that is where internet book emporium Amazon sold its first book in July 1995. The company has come a long way since then and is now counted amongst the world's global technology giants.

A dot com era success story that has outlasted many of its peers, its appetite for innovation has driven the growth of Amazon to offer customers more types of products, more conveniently, and at even lower prices. In 2000, Amazon began to offer its best-of-breed e-commerce platform to other retailers, helping them to reach new customers.

Helping customers has always been a major focus for Amazon. Customers who use Amazon Web Services (AWS) are able to access computing resources from anywhere in the world, via the internet, with no up-front expenses or long-term commitments. Users pay only for the resources that are used and can add or shed those resources on demand. This allows businesses to spend less time and money managing their own IT infrastructure and more time on growing

their business and differentiating their offering for their customers.

"Amazon's evolution from web site, to e-commerce partner, to development platform is driven by the spirit of innovation that is part of the company's DNA," says Sally Duggleby, UK Property Manager at Amazon.co.uk Ltd. "The world's brightest minds come to Amazon to research and develop technology that improves the lives of shoppers, sellers and developers around the world. Offering low prices, vast selection and convenience, Amazon continues to grow and evolve as a world-class e-commerce platform."

A second home

Amazon began in the US and its first sites targeting the UK and German markets were both launched in October 1998. The English-language website, Amazon.co.uk, is served by an advanced fulfilment network, with six centres located across Scotland, Wales and England, fulfilling orders from Amazon.co.uk.

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has helped Amazon with its UK expansion programme, since initial contact with the company in Seattle. The latest venture they worked on together is a contact centre in Edinburgh, which is expected to provide 900 jobs in its first five years. UKTI helped Amazon.co.uk Ltd to narrow down a shortlist of potential locations. It also provided vital statistics and reports on labour availability, including details of skills that are prevalent in different areas of the UK, and supported the company in identifying suitable premises.

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"The UK is an important part of Amazon's global business and has played an integral role in Amazon's worldwide growth," says Sally. "As Amazon's business has continued to grow and moves into new areas like grocery, sports and clothing, our customer services support needs to expand as well. UKTI helped us to consider a wide range of options for the location of the customer service centre and we are delighted to be opening in the Scottish Capital. Edinburgh is an outstanding location, providing us with a highly-skilled workforce who will help us to achieve the high standards of customer service that shoppers at Amazon.co.uk expect. The new building is in a desirable location, with easy access to public transport and a great environment in which our new employees will work."

Continuing support

The new Edinburgh customer service centre will handle both internet and

telephone customer queries for Amazon.co.uk, and offer technical support for Amazon Kindle and Amazon MP3. Amazon believes that UKTI's support and guidance made this latest expansion a smooth and easy process. The company has also worked with UKTI on the launch of a new fulfilment centre in Dunfermline, due to open before the end of 2011. This centre is expected to create 750 permanent and 1500 temporary roles.

"We bring UKTI into the process as early as possible, as we know from experience the value of their support and guidance," says Sally. "We are very grateful to UKTI for their help, which has been excellent. We're currently focusing on the launch of our 1 million square foot Dunfermline fulfilment centre. Again, the information we received from UKTI at the site selection stage helped us to make an informed decision which will benefit all Amazon customers now and into the future. We are committed long term to the UK and look forward to further cooperation with UKTI."

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The UK - Europe's leading investment destination

The UK is an attractive springboard for companies who want to grow their global business. It provides a unique gateway of international connections, is a recognised leader in the fields of creativity and innovation and is the sixth largest economy in the world.

According to the 'Doing Business 2011' report from the World Bank, the UK is the best place to do business in the EU and the G8. It takes just 13 days to set up a company in the UK, compared to the OECD average of 15 days and the world average of 35 days.

The UK is home to four of the top 10 globally ranked universities, including Cambridge University which is ranked first. It is also the number one location for European headquarters: more overseas companies set up their European headquarters in the UK than anywhere else.

With over 2300 staff in 162 locations worldwide, UKTI is ideally placed to help companies grow their business internationally, offering expert advice, influence and practical assistance in establishing a UK operation.

Setting up your company in the UK

Deciding where to locate your international business is one of the biggest decisions you'll make and can be daunting. UK Trade & Investment helps businesses coming to the UK with every aspect of setting up their new operations.

As the UK Government's inward investment agency, it's our job to know the UK's strengths and where investment opportunities exist.

This means we can help your company to do all the research you need to make an informed decision, and then get up and running as quickly as possible.

UK Trade & Investment can help you to:

- Do your research
- Build key contacts
- Choose your location
- Set up your new office
- Grow your business internationally

For more information visit: www.ukti.gov.uk

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UK Trade & Investment is the Government department that helps UK based companies succeed in international markets. We assist overseas companies to bring high quality investment to the UK's dynamic economy. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.