

FINAL: NestledIn

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Enterprising Barnsley estate agent using the magic of social media to fuel ambitious growth plans

Steve Betts is a trailblazing estate agent who took a leap of faith to fulfil his dream of working for himself. He first began his career working for two local agencies. But, in 2019, seized the opportunity for voluntary redundancy to start his own company.

The original business name was 'Next Chapter Property'. But fate had other plans. A solicitor's letter arrived urging him to change the name due to an existing company with a similar title. Steve's response was swift and amicable.

He called the owners of Next Chapter Homes to apologise:

"The people behind the company were great. They gave me lots of tips about how to set up, and what did or didn't work. They even offered me a franchise opportunity! But I wanted to continue with my own business, so renamed it to NestledIn."

NestledIn is now firmly rooted in the property market. The agency specialises in properties priced £150-300K in the S70 to S75 postcode areas.

A significant proportion of their listings come from the S75 region. And Steve believes their location in The Business Village has played a crucial role in building trust with local clients.

Embracing social media is the key to success for NestledIn

In the modern digital environment, NestledIn is leading the way.

Steve saw that the future of estate agency lies in catering to the way people consume online content. When clients prefer, he'll carry out valuations via video call. And he engages potential buyers with virtual property tours and commentary. It's an approach which creates a connection with buyers. But it also showcases the face behind the brand for future business.

“Our main aim is to get the property in front of more people than other estate agencies can. We use Rightmove like everybody else, but our Facebook page also has £17k followers. It means so many people get to see our properties organically. But we also use social media advertising to target specific buyers,” explains Steve.

Some may be looking to buy, but we often find it tempts others to book a viewing too. Many times, people have said it's my fault they're selling because one of our videos tempted them to buy. That's the power of social media.”

The cornerstones of NestledIn's social media strategy include experimentation and adaptability. And Steve is a firm believer in continuous innovation to stay ahead of the competition.

This has led to surprising success using TikTok. It's seen as a more unconventional platform, but Steve plans to expand on these results using other listings.

He also uses more traditional marketing methods such as sale boards, brochures, and online platforms. But the focus remains on driving engagement through imaginative techniques. For example, a recent innovation is using black and white photography on Rightmove to capture buyers' attention.

The Business Village is a thriving hub offering flexibility for growth

From the very beginning, Steve chose to rent office space at The Business Village. It's proven to be a great strategic decision. The supportive environment and flexibility have been instrumental in NestledIn's growth.

“The flexibility of The Business Village is brilliant. A high street contract would probably tie us into a 3-5 year lease with a break clause. But I know that in the worst case scenario, I can downgrade the office here. On the flip side, if we're

growing and want a bigger office, I can have that conversation tomorrow and make it happen. Where else can you do that?"

One of the benefits Steve highlights is the amount of free parking for both staff and visitors. He also loves that The Bistro can be used as a handy place for informal meetings, or to grab something to eat.

"From a costing point of view, The Business Village is well priced. And all our employees say how much they love the location. But it's the management team who really offer tenants the best of both worlds. They'll support businesses wanting a hands-on approach. Equally, they'll leave you to get on with things if that's what you prefer."

As NestledIn continues to thrive, Steve is always looking for fresh ideas to stay ahead of the curve. He seeks inspiration from peers and talks openly with them about what's working.

"I have the mindset that there's plenty of business to go around, even if we're working in the same town. What we do is not mind blowing. We're not changing the world, so it's easy to copy. But I tend to find that others will copy for a few weeks, then stop when they don't get the results."

Steve's vision for the future is clear. He's playing the long game wants to nurture ambitious growth. His focus for the next couple of years is to work on the business, not in the business. And his eventual plan is for NestledIn to flourish without his direct involvement.

He also wants to expand into other geographical areas, using the Barnsley office for centralised support. Steve has already invested in a London branch which he co-owns with a friend. NestledIn Homes opened in August 2022. It's already doing well, with one recent listing at an incredible £5.7million.

As Steve says, "It's all about trying to do things a little better than others or coming up with new ideas. Einstein said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. It's the same for us. We can't just keep on doing the same things. If something's not working, it's important to know why it's not working and then tweak it a little."