

Case in point

Entrepreneurial Mothers Score International Business Success

Winning idea hits the spot

When young mums Sarah Field and Christine Stanschus watched their small children playing football their business brains kicked in and they decided to launch classes offering very basic football coaching to children from 18 months to five years old. They figured that, apart from improving their fitness and co-ordination, the children would develop their social and communication skills – all dressed up as having fun which, the mothers knew, is the very best way to learn.

Little Kickers was launched in 2002. Just five years later, and with practical input from Business Link over the past three years, the business has seven employees and 60 franchisees in the UK, South Africa and the Republic of Ireland training over 6,000 children every week. Franchises in several other countries are under discussion and expected to be set up shortly.

Matched funding granted

Little Kickers first approached Business Link in 2004 after seeing on its website the kind of services that were available. The partners were seeking help with developing the Little Kickers website, with applying for assisted funding and with locating suitable website developers.

Business Linked was able to contribute significantly to the production of a benchmarking report which was used when



Little Kickers successfully applied for £5,000 matched funding towards the cost of developing its website, using a software developer on the Isle of Wight.

Phase two of the website involved the development of a back-office database, accessible by all franchisees, so that the owners of the business can monitor and manage all activity across all franchisees from anywhere that has internet access.

This web-enabled back-office software application has allowed the business to offer franchise arrangements, improved its efficiency, motivated all franchisees and increased turnover and profit.

The business link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start maintain and to grow a business.

For more information call 0845 600 9 006
or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast



Moving into overseas markets

As the company continued to grow – in size, reputation and ambition – Business Link put Little Kickers in touch with UK Trade & Investment which helps companies succeed in international markets.

At the same time, the Business Link innovation team was able to help sort out some issue arising over trademarks.

Throughout this whole process of development Business Link has been on hand to monitor, encourage and advise as and when Little Kickers have felt the need for support.

Over time this national network of informal, yet professionally-run football training classes for the under-fives has developed useful relationships with some premiership clubs such as Chelsea which accept a number of ex-Little Kickers on to their own training schemes.

Excellent management skills and clear vision

Business Link adviser Barry Williams, who has been closely involved with Little Kickers over the years, is thrilled with the company's achievements.

Entrepreneurial success

He said: "This is an excellent example of entrepreneurial success. Having arranged classes and resources Sarah and Christine took the decision to franchise their brilliant idea. They then grew the business rapidly within three years whilst developing business and computer systems to enable them to maintain full control of all activities. This included ensuring adequate security measures for what is a sensitive area for such young children and their parents.

"The owners have excellent management skills with great attention to detail and a clear vision for the future."

Company overview

Established 1992

Sector: Recreation, culture and sporting activities

No. of employees: 7

Growth Aspirations: With 60 franchisees in the UK further expansion is planned. Discussions are under way for growth into several other countries through UK Trade & Investment.

The business link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start maintain and to grow a business.

**For more information call 0845 600 9 006
or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast**

