



Case in point

'Women in business' Signature Balloons e- trade success

'Runner up of the 2007 Hantsweb Awards &
Runner up Wessex Business Woman of the Year
Awards 2005'

Signature Balloons expand with help from Business Link

A Hampshire business which started out as a 'sideline' is set to double annual turnover to almost £400,000 after increasing its range of services and moving into new premises.

New Forest based

Signature Balloons, based on the edge of the New Forest, was founded by Rachel Brown in 2003. The following year whilst on maternity leave from her full time job, Rachel created an online presence for the company with the help of Business Link. A website was developed to sell her products which at that time mainly consisted of helium-filled balloon gifts by post for special occasions.



Expansion plans

It was not long before she started diversifying. Rachel said: "I am one of these people that can't say no to business. If people come to me with a potential job I find a way to get it done even if it is work that we don't normally do."

After saying yes to a request for 5,000 printed balloons to launch a new travel brochure, Rachel found that demand for this particular service was high and adapted her business accordingly. Balloon printing has now become a much larger part of the business.

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



Today, Signature Balloons is a complete one-stop shop for balloons.

Throughout her expansion Rachel has worked closely with Business Link Adviser Trevor Thorogood. She said: 'It is incredibly helpful for people running their own businesses to have access to the expertise that Business Link provide.'

'I have utilised many of the resources Business Link offer; the website with its plethora of information covering a wide variety of subjects, free seminars, business reviews and networking opportunities such as a group specifically for E-traders like ourselves.'

The business now has five permanent staff, including Rachel's husband Greg, as well as others during busy periods such as Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Rachel said: 'We've come a long way from the days when I would run the business around my baby's nap times! Hundreds of balloon gifts have now been delivered with famous recipients including Peaches Geldof, Billy Fury's Mum and Darius Danesh of Pop Idol fame - we really are 'suppliers to the stars!' Meanwhile thousands of printed balloons have been dispatched to organisations and charities such as B&Q, BMW, Derby City Council and National Kidney Research for store openings, conferences, product launches and many other occasions.

Company overview

Established	2003
Employees:	5
Sector:	Online retail
www.signatureballoons.co.uk	

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