



# Case in Point

## Company aims to maintain growing success

### 'The Lady Gardener'

#### Maintain growing success

Turning a hobby into an income is never an easy challenge but Hampshire woman Ruth Jenkins has shown she is equally adept at growing her company as well as the flowers she tends in her garden maintenance business.

Ruth, from Otterbourne, near Winchester, set up The Lady Gardener in November 2006, after taking early retirement from her managerial post with the Land Registry. Having nurtured a life long passion for gardening and the outdoors, she started offering her services to maintain gardens in her local area which included those of several exclusive country homes.

After being referred to Business Link, the free business information, advice and support service, by an acquaintance Ruth was encouraged to register her company formally with HM Revenue and Customs.

She received advice and information on how to make the business grow and over the past 12 months her client base has steadily increased.

Her main area of work is tidying and regular maintenance of gardens, which are often an acre or more in size.



Since setting up, she has gradually increased the range of services on offer to include light landscaping, garden makeovers and also floral decoration.

While growing her company she has also attained a City and Guilds qualification in Floristry and 2008 will see her provide the floral decorations for her first large wedding order. She said: 'I had got to the point in my working life where I was no longer experiencing any job satisfaction and wanted to do something different from the normal nine to five routine that had been my life for the past 33 years.'

**I made a life-changing decision to follow my passion for gardening.'**



### Support and Advice

'Business Link was able to give me all the advice I needed and helped me with the preparation of a business plan and other important aspects of setting up my own company.'

'Throughout my life I have always erred on the side of caution and enjoyed the security of regular pay but this decision to run my own business has been the best I have ever made.' 'It has given me a wonderful new sense of purpose and everyday enjoyment in what I do. I would thoroughly recommend anyone to take the plunge and to go for it if they are thinking of doing something similar. I wish I had done it years ago.

I can honestly say I now look forward to the challenges each day brings and the delight on my client's faces when they see their gardens transformed is reward in itself.'

Ruth regularly uses one sub-contractor with others brought in if required for larger projects. Due to the rapid expansion of the business, she is expecting to take on a further sub contractor in Spring 2008.

### Business Link Adviser

Business Link Adviser Madeline Morton, who has been regularly meeting with Ruth, said: "After taking early retirement from her previous job, this is effectively Ruth's second career and shows what can be done with the right amount of dedication. We were able to help Ruth by advising her with costs, continuous planning, business strategies and targeting longer term contracts rather than one-off projects.

'The Lady Gardener has really taken off through Ruth's sheer enthusiasm and dedication. She has been able to carefully grow the business with the right mix of encouragement and advice coupled with her own personal drive and ambition.'

#### Company overview

Established in: 2007

Sector: Gardening

No. of employees: 2-5

[www.theladygardener.co.uk](http://www.theladygardener.co.uk)

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](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast)

