

# Case study

## Boxhouse Publishing

Juggling work and family is a challenge for any parent, but that was Sarah Sadler's inspiration for her new business.

Sarah started by selling other companies'

products from her home, later moving to business premises nearby. She has successfully established Boxhouse Publishing and the Organised Mum brand, designing her

own range of calendars and diaries and selling them to mums who want to organise their busy lives.

As well as selling online through her website, Sarah also sells her Organised Mum and Little Bird ranges to a number of high-profile stores across the country, including John Lewis.

Sarah's product range has grown with the business and now includes stationery for parents to help 'cure disorganisation'.

Despite difficult trading conditions, Boxhouse Publishing continues to do well and a new range is due to be launched shortly.

Boxhouse now employs seven staff at its Shaftesbury base and is projecting a turnover of £500,000.



## BUSINESS ISSUES

---

The biggest issue Boxhouse Publishing faces is bridging the annual gap in its finances – its stock is seasonal and has to be paid for well in advance of sales.

Sarah wants to iron out these peaks and grow the business by launching new, non-seasonal products available throughout the year.

## OBJECTIVE SUPPORT FROM BUSINESS LINK

---

Business Link adviser Owen Williams has been a constant support to Sarah since she launched the company in 2004, offering advice on the best sources of finance, providing advice on specific business areas and acting as a sounding board on a wide range of issues.

Sarah said: "Owen's help has been important in dealing with our financial issues. He has advised us on negotiations with suppliers to give us more breathing space and to delay payments.

"He's been there to offer information and insights based on his extensive experience, as well as provide moral support. He has become a real friend of the business."

Owen added: "When Boxhouse Publishing was in its infancy, we spent time discussing what needed to be done to protect its intellectual property and issues associated with selling newly-created products.

"Later we worked driving the business forward and in year two we talked about how to use marketing to achieve growth targets.

"When Sarah's husband Kevin joined the company I advised them on how to maximise the opportunity this offered, as well as supporting them on other staff management issues.

"During the company's third and fourth years of trading there were several, quite severe financial issues that we had to address. Sarah held a meeting of all the people involved in the business, including myself and we developed a plan to overcome the challenges and take the business forward.

"Profitability is up this year and the Little Bird brand has been successfully launched."

## EVALUATING SUCCESS

---

Turnover at Boxhouse Publishing had been doubling year on year and was set to continue at that rate before the recession. But it is now back on track.

Owen added: "This is a business which has gone from Sarah packaging other companies' products on her kitchen table to establishing a robust business with seven staff and very good prospects for further growth.

"Sarah has always shown a willingness to draw on advice from diverse sources and to keep focused on the most important issues which typifies her approach to the business and demonstrates why it has become such a success."

## FUTURE PLANS

---

Boxhouse Publishing is due to launch another new range, Made by Me, which is stationery designed to let children take the lead in creating works of art. It also includes products to help children organise their own lives.

The company will be moving to larger premises in early 2010, providing a strong platform for growth in the next few years.

**0845 600 9966**

[www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest)

