

Case study

Bridport Gourmet Pies



A huge new market awaits Bridport Gourmet Pies which is getting ready to make a big leap forward in terms of production and business.

Martin Aldridge, a butcher by trade, started his gourmet pie business back in 2000, supplying local shops and farmers' markets around Dorset. The company uses regional ingredients, such as Dorset Blue Vinny, award-winning Denhay Bacon, Westcountry beef and local fruit and vegetables in the high quality pies, pork pies, pasties and sausage rolls it produces.

Bridport Gourmet Pies, which employs eight people full-time, has seen 20 per cent growth in turnover year-on-year and has now outgrown its base on Gore Cross Business Park in Bridport.

The company plans to move to a purpose-built factory so it can increase production to serve a larger and wider customer base.

The move is being planned with the help of Business Link adviser Clive Ozzard who has been providing support and guidance to Martin for over three years.

Martin said: "We are gearing up for significant expansion. There's no in-between stage in this business: you either do things on a small scale or go for the big time."

BUSINESS ISSUES

Bridport Gourmet Pies has been growing year on year and needs bigger premises to be able to realise its expansion plans. Initially it will be looking to increase production of its Pork Pie and Dorset Plait ranges in order to supply these products on a national basis.

Financing the company's move and expansion plans is also a key consideration.

BUSINESS LINK SUPPORT

Business Link adviser Clive Ozzard is working closely with Martin to find ways of financing the next stage in the company's development, as well as analysing the current operation to identify the areas in which production can be increased. He also acts as a sounding board for Martin.

Clive explained: "Part of our role is to identify where specialist help may be needed and to get the right people on board to help Martin drive through the changes he is looking to make.

"Financing the move to new premises is vital, which is why I arranged for one of Business Link's finance specialists to work with Martin to ensure he achieves his aims.

"I am able to offer an objective and experienced eye and to provide ongoing support to Martin."

EVALUATING SUCCESS

Bridport Gourmet Pies is winning an average of three new customers a week and is supplying farm shops, markets, convenience stores, butchers and bakeries up and down the country.

Martin said: "The business is expanding steadily and this is due in no small part to the help we have received from Business Link.

"Marketing has been one of our weaker areas to date, but we are improving with Clive's help. We have worked together to develop an effective marketing plan and we are starting to generate publicity for some of our achievements, such as winning awards."

FUTURE PLANS

The next 12 months will be spent working on the plans for the new factory and preparing for the move.

Martin will also be adding further products to the Pork Pie and Dorset Plait ranges.

0845 600 9966
www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest

