

Express & Star, Monday, May 11, 2009

ES & BUSINESS

A guide to Midlands commerce, industry and money matters

& FINANCE

Firms urged to consider exports as a solution

Businesses in the Black Country are being urged to consider international trading during the economic downturn at a seminar this week. Yorkshire Bank has organised a breakfast event in conjunction with Black Country law firm George Green to give companies valuable advice on how to win overseas orders. The Exporting out of Recession seminar will take place at The Register Centre in Old Hill on Wednesday. Mark Runiewicz, international partner at Yorkshire Bank's Financial Solutions Centre in Birmingham, will be the guest speaker. Mark said: "The current economic climate is presenting many challenges for businesses, but among the gloom, a changing business world does present some opportunities. "The recent depreciation of sterling relative to other currencies will undoubtedly boost export opportunities and make goods manufactured in the UK more attractive in overseas markets. "The seminar will provide an insight into the current and projected

TV appearance sets curtains boss on the road to a better business

By SIMON PENFOLD

A TV appearance on *Badger or Bust* – the programme hosted by Black Country Apprentice runner-up Ruth Badger – has given a major boost to a Willenhall curtain manufacturer.

It led directly to Camberley Curtains boss, Tina Noon, calling in Business Link West Midlands to give the business a facelift and a new marketing plan.

After an initial consultation, Business Link adviser Gail Smith arranged for business coach Martin Dobbs to visit the firm and see what help he could give.

Nine months later Tina is delighted with the result of the advice and aid from Business Link and believes the changes will revolutionise the business.

"Martin has been brilliant," she said. "It is due to his help that we are now in a far better position to survive the economic downturn than we would have been 12 months ago."

One of the main factors in seeking help was the company's

appearance on *Badger or Bust*. The Sky programme suggested ways the business could improve its profitability but it also exposed certain flaws in the way the company was being run.

"The programme was great for us but it highlighted certain problems and so as soon as it had aired I decided to draft in some help and that's why I contacted Business Link," said Tina.

"Martin came in and at first I struggled with some of his ideas but now I can see that it was all part of a plan.

"He doesn't tell you what you should or shouldn't be doing, instead he just directs you along the right path.

"If you had asked me 12 months ago was I a proper businesswoman then I would have said no.

"I could design a room and manufacture curtains but the actual business side of the business was being neglected.



Tina Noon has used Business Link support to carry out improvements at Camberley Curtains

"Martin changed that and now I have a marketing plan in place and I know what I'm doing for the next three years and why I'm doing it. "This has allowed me to relax far more and I think the whole business is in much better shape as a result."

The company, which employs seven people, is now concentrating on building up new business. It has revamped its website and is carrying out a number of marketing initiatives.

Tina added: "We have

recently had a care home and a pub get in touch with us and we are hopeful of many more as the website - www.camberleycurtains.co.uk - is now a lot easier to use and we can respond to enquiries much faster than before."

Jobs won gets grin

HA
G
Call



email:

Dept
- :
Pr
0190

email: t

IN

Per

Top 1
mile

Ne
EDM
new