

Lazy Daisy Glass

Glass artist Kathryn Abrahams's business, Lazy Daisy Glass, suddenly took off after she received funding from Business Gateway to help with the costs of exhibiting at trade fairs. Up until then, Kathryn, of Keith in Moray, had been selling her jewellery and other products on a small-scale through local art and craft shows. Attending trade fairs put her in touch with retailers from across the country. She came home from her first fair with a bulging order book and a network of new contacts. She recalls: "My order book from the first trade show I went to was quite overwhelming. Then, word got around and smaller shops began phoning me up and asking for my goods. I had to work around the clock and hire a bigger kiln to keep up with the orders."

Stained glass workshop

Kathryn and her husband, Scott, a self-employed builder, moved to Moray in 2003. She had previously worked as a corporate PA in London and quickly found an administrative post

with a local organisation before moving on to work for the local authority. Shortly after settling in the northeast, Kathryn signed up for a stained glass workshop at a local arts and crafts shop. She found it an absorbing hobby and began spending her leisure time making stained glass items and selling them at craft fairs.

Hobby becomes a job

Her pastime became her job after she had her daughter Amelia in June 2007, and decided to leave her office post. Using her maternity benefit, she bought a kiln and moved on from stained glass to experiment with fused glass, which is produced when pieces of glass are heated together. She says: "No-one else in Moray was producing or selling fused glass at the time so I had the monopoly and my jewellery proved very popular."



Kathryn seeks advice from her local Business Gateway officer

Keen to develop her business, Kathryn asked Craig Robertson, Business Gateway's regional development officer for Moray, for advice. He felt she needed to reach a wider market and recommended that she exhibit at trade fairs. Kathryn took part in the Aviemore Trade Fair in 2009 and at the Spring Trade Show in Glasgow in 2010. The costs of travel, accommodation and exhibiting can be prohibitive so she received funding from Business Gateway to attend another trade fair in Harrogate in 2010.

Investment in new equipment

The interest shown in her products encouraged Kathryn to invest in new equipment and a studio. "I was confident enough in the future of my business to buy a large, £4000 Flat Bed Kiln which is six times the size of my old kiln," she states. "My husband also built me a new studio. We live in an old schoolhouse and he renovated an outside toilet block so I now joke that I work in a toilet!" Kathryn has also embraced e-commerce and sells through her own website.

Business Gateway says

Moray's Business Gateway regional development officer, Craig Robertson said: "We've worked closely with Kathryn to help her develop her business and concluded that attending trade shows would help to raise the profile of the company and hopefully lead to new contacts and increased sales. We envisage Kathryn's business going from strength to strength and Business Gateway is happy to give continued support as it grows."

Business Gateway provides practical help, advice and support for new and growing businesses in Scotland. To find out how Business Gateway can help your business, visit www.bgateway.com or contact your local office on 01463 713889 or 01343 563634.