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Ivan Button, Crown Consultants, Sowerby Bridge, May 2010

Business Link helps tree specialists to blossom

Working from home is the marmite of the business world. Some love the flexibility, others hate the distractions but few would argue against the financial wisdom in the current economic climate.

“Not having to spend money renting an office every month was certainly a big factor for me,” says Ivan Button, who launched Crown Consultants from his Sowerby Bridge home in February 2008. “It’s also great because you can stroll into your office and work any time of day or night that suits you.”

However, as his business providing tree reports and surveys to individuals, architects, developers, estate managers and lawyers took off, Ivan began to realise he needed more of a work/home divide.

“There were three of us trooping through the house to get to the office,” he says. “I found that work was encroaching too much onto my home life, so I converted the cellar into a proper self-contained office with its own entrance. It’s made

everything much more separate.”

Ivan has worked with Business Link adviser Peter White since launching Crown Consultants and has found his help extremely useful in moving his business forwards.

“It’s great having a Business Link adviser to call on,” he confirms. “When I set up Crown Consultants I’d worked for other people all my life and had no idea what sort of pitfalls and support mechanisms were out there. For instance, we used to send out marketing letters and follow them up with phone calls. We had no idea about the telephone preference service but our adviser told us about it and showed us how to make calls without getting into trouble.

“Our business adviser is helping us look into training options. One of our staff members wants to learn how to be a surveyor, so Peter is investigating courses and potential funding options to help with that. He’s also steering us in the right direction on intellectual property. We’ve developed a

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piece of software that needs protecting before we can think about starting to sell it.”

Although he won't be drawn on the nature or purpose of the software, Ivan has plenty more to say about the value of Business Link.

“The Business Link workshops I attended were excellent,” he says. “I did one called Excellence in Writing Quotations, which was brilliant. Off the back of that, we changed the way we write our documents and now send out quotes spread over five pages instead of one. I don't think it is a coincidence that we are now getting more of the work that we pitch for.

“I also did a workshop on how to market to big companies and local authorities, which was really useful, and I'm booked on a search engine optimisation (SEO) workshop later in the year. We're doing really well as a business. We've exceeded our targets so far and we're hoping to expand and take on

another two contractors this year, but the key to it all is online marketing. We need to get ourselves higher up the Google rankings and, hopefully, the Business Link workshop can help us towards that.”

One man who thinks that Crown Consultants will improve their online presence and go on to achieve major growth is their business adviser, Peter White.

“Crown Consultants have increased their turnover by over 50% in their second year and are projecting another big increase in 2010,” he says. “They are a perfect example of how a business can operate from home and achieve hugely impressive growth without the need for specialist premises. I think they're planning to bring in a couple more consultants to help them service their nationwide client base and if they do that, their potential for growth will be even bigger than it is now. The sky's the limit for them really.”

NB: All case studies have been signed off by the subject and Business Link Yorkshire. All details are accurate at the time of publication, but please check with Business Link's PR team before using this case study, as details may have changed.

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