

University experts provide recipe for sweet success

Jim Garrahy's popular handmade fudge is now available to trade customers for the first time in the retail brand's 25-year history, thanks to the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Greenwich, Medway.



Julie Crenn, left, with Sian Holt making fudge

Jim Garrahy's Fudge Kitchen has seven stores across the UK, one of which is in Canterbury. Managing director Sian Holt wanted to expand the business and supply the fudge wholesale to other outlets such as farmers' markets and delicatessens. However, this was not possible as the shelf life of the fudge was too short.

Sian worked with food safety expert Linda Nicolaides and food technologist Julie Crenn at the university as part of the SEEDA Business Plus Programme. By changing the sugar levels in the recipe, they achieved a shelf life of more than three weeks without changing the fudge's appearance, taste or texture. As a result, Sian is hoping to achieve a turnover of more than £200,000 in the next two years as she enters new wholesale markets.

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CASE STUDY

Gateway to Success

Thames Gateway Kent Chamber of Commerce is a business-owned and business-led organisation. Over the last 117 years the Chamber has changed and expanded to cover the heart of the Thames Gateway Region.

Tracey Manley, Chief Executive, says, "We have a diverse membership of businesses, from one-man-bands to blue chips - all needing advice, networking events and chamber services. They know they can trust us as we are owned by the business community and are a not-for-profit organisation"



Some of Kitchen to Table's cookware range
 © Bob Alfrey creative photography

Through the Chamber's help and advice many members are bucking the economic downturn. In Rochester for example Mike and Hilary Moloney's homegrown Portuguese cookware company Kitchen to Table has gone from strength to strength and they are now celebrating an 80% increase in turnover.

Despite years of experience as an accountant, Mike realised he would need advice for his burgeoning business and started attending workshops and seminars run by the Chamber. "No one person has all the answers. You can always learn something from listening to others. And I have had to learn about sales, marketing and the Internet; for instance looking at the key words people use in search engines and optimising our chances"

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