

Shed loads of enthusiasm reaps rewards

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When Marek Jakubczyk started his security business from his garden shed in the Shirehampton area of Bristol back in 1991, he wanted it to sound like the professional outfit it would become.

"I rebuilt the shed," he said. "It was 10ft long by 5ft wide and I called it 'Unit 2' to make it sound more commercial."

"I used to get some very confused delivery drivers looking for this commercial unit in our residential area."

Professionalism has been at the heart of Sovereign Fire & Security from early on, so appearance was important.

And it worked. The firm quickly grew and moved into leased premises before eventually buying a 5,800 square foot, purpose-built office in Avonmouth two years ago.

It says something about the way Marek runs the business that he made the £150,000 purchase, plus fit-out costs,



The team at Sovereign Fire & Security, Avonmouth

£3.7m

Turnover of business in 2014, up from £2.7m in four years

without borrowing. The company has a strong family core, although Marek promotes on merit not nepotism. Brother Jan joined six months after he

started, and both their wives, Ruth and Lorraine, are directors too.

"In the early days I was out getting business and my brother was fitting the systems while my wife did the compliance work in the evenings," said Marek.

Turnover has grown from £2.7 million in 2010 to £3.7 million in 2014, although it will be slightly lower this year as the team focuses on profit ahead of revenue.

Marek introduced high standards from the start, and was one of the first small independent firms to compete with the national companies on accreditation and standards.

Those standards have won business far beyond the Bristol area.

"The most important product we offer is customer service," said Marek.

"We supply integrated security solutions at the high end of the scale. Because of the level of service we offer it allows us to punch above our weight."

"We are able to supply very high end service to clients who want to use us outside our normal geographic area."

As the business grows, Marek is working on succession planning, but not so he can retire.

"I can't think of a time when I won't be doing something," he said.

"But I would like to spend more time doing what I enjoy most, being out there promoting the business."



New Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dr Diane Savory

Lieutenancy position for LEP chairman

Gloucestershire's Lord-Lieutenant, Dame Janet Trotter, has appointed one of the county's most high-profile business figures as a deputy.

Dr Diane Savory OBE, chairman of GFirst LEP and one of the early architects of the now worldwide Super-Group fashion business, is one of six new deputies.

The position is an honorary and voluntary one, supporting events and carrying out duties across the county.

Deputies are selected "for their considerable contributions to national life or to their local communities".

Dr Savory said: "This position is a real honour."

"As chair of GFirst LEP I'm passionate about empowering businesses to face challenges and new opportunities and I hope to continue to be a strong voice for businesses in the county."

"I'm extremely proud to be playing a part in the future successes of the county, and looking forward to working alongside Dame Janet."

Dame Janet, the Queen's ceremonial representative for Gloucestershire since October 2010, said: "The six new deputies' diverse backgrounds provide us with deep roots into the county and will help us to continue to serve it effectively in future."

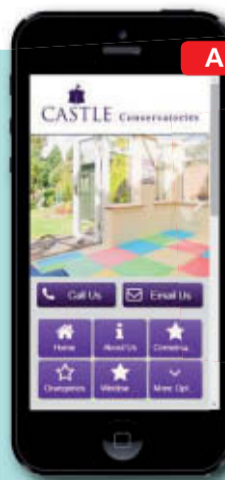
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