



NEWS RELEASE

Monday, November 18th 2019

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS AS ENTERPRISE SUPPORT ORGANISATION GROWBIZ WELCOMES 1000TH CLIENT



Rural Perthshire-based enterprise support organisation GrowBiz has welcomed its 1000th client since October 2016.

In the last three years, the team of experienced and skilled facilitators has advised and supported 1000 people of all ages, from all walks of life and at all stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

From those who have had just the inklings of an idea, to start-up businesses and well-established enterprises looking to further develop or change direction, GrowBiz has welcomed them all. And in Global Entrepreneurship Week this week it is particularly appropriate to be celebrating rural entrepreneurs.

GrowBiz clients offer everything from fish and chips to artisan vegan and gluten-free luxury products, from care and wellbeing services to adventure tourism, from designer wallpaper to body positive rainbow bright underwear demonstrating the level of ingenuity and resilience that exists in rural communities.

And the 1000th client herself is a perfect example of how creativity and tenacity can contribute to significant growth the rural economy.

Crieff-based Anna Malyon runs Coppertop Croft, producing a range of homeware products such as cushions and stationery with contemporary designs for the wholesale gift and tourism markets.

Her designs and products – everything from tea towels, aprons and coasters to cards and bags - are stocked by Historic Environment Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland and many independent retailers throughout Scotland. Anna also sells her products through her own website, www.coppertopcroft.com.

She set up her business last year and heard about GrowBiz through social media. She signed up to the monthly newsletter and then attended a Women's Enterprise Network event in Highland Perthshire.

Anna takes up the story: "My creative practice had almost exclusively been painting but I started to think about running my own design-based business. I saw an opportunity to use my printmaking to pursue my love of design and have a more commercial side to my artistic endeavours.

"I wanted to design products that would promote Scotland positively and provide retailers with something different and design-led to offer their customers, be they from home or abroad.

"GrowBiz has been so responsive to my need to get support and everyone at GrowBiz has a genuine desire to help. They have been able to identify the most pressing areas of support and have given guidance and support over and above what was ever expected.

"GrowBiz also recognises the need for the continuation of support and the importance of networking events to bring rural businesses together.

"This encourages shared experience, peer support and collaborations that wouldn't happen otherwise. It enables businesses to thrive which creates further opportunities for employment and builds resilience and capacity in rural communities."

Jackie Brierton is CEO of GrowBiz.

She said: "We were delighted to welcome our 1000th client in three years and Anna is a shining example of the innovative nature of so many people who live in rural areas.

"Rural enterprise is worth an estimated £36 billion to the Scottish economy each year, nearly 25% of Scotland's overall economy, and with the right kind of investment and business support, this figure can only increase.

"The rural economy offers huge potential for economic growth, but it's a bit different from the 'urban' economy. There are more small and micro-businesses, and fewer medium and large enterprises. More social enterprises and, increasingly, more businesses using digital applications in innovative ways which weren't possible even five years ago.

"In the last three years GrowBiz has attracted, on average, more than one new client a day.

"The ingenuity and resilience that our clients demonstrate day-in, day-out is testament to their creativity and tenacity and are a powerful indication of the importance of the rural economy to the national story."

Perthshire North MSP John Swinney is a long-term supporter of GrowBiz.

He said: "It is no surprise to me that GrowBiz has welcomed its 1000th client since October 2016.

“The team at GrowBiz is demonstrably passionate about supporting small and micro-businesses, and connecting them to work with each other in an effort to both boost business and reduce social isolation at the same time.

“Their client-centred, professional and inclusive service to anyone who wants to start or grow a business in a rural area is innovative and inspirational and the friendly approach that they take is clearly paying dividends and is to be heartily commended.”

Perth and Kinross Council chief executive, Karen Reid, congratulated GrowBiz on their milestone achievement and commented: “The GrowBiz model is simple but effective, offering advice and practical support through one-to-one sessions, learning events, both online and face-to-face, with regular networking events across rural Perthshire.

“With support from Perth and Kinross Council, their award-winning business mentoring programme is the first enterprise-focused programme in Scotland to be officially accredited by the Scottish Mentoring Network.”

The vice-chair of the Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Local Action Group, Iain Mathieson, added: “What GrowBiz has achieved in the last three years is incredible.

“National economic policy and business support tend to focus on high-growth sectors and businesses, often in urban rather than rural areas.

“But in the last decade, it’s been the growth of small and micro-enterprises which has fuelled innovation, employment and new kinds of collaborative working, and in rural Perthshire, GrowBiz has been at the forefront of that.”

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For further information see the website at www.growbiz.co.uk

For media enquiries, contact Clare McMicking on telephone 01828 627790 or email connect@growbiz.co.uk

Notes to Editors

- GrowBiz is an independent, community-based organisation providing support to anyone starting or growing a business in rural Perthshire
- GrowBiz Scotland (known as GrowBiz) is a company limited by guarantee number SC341655, and a Scottish Charity number SC043278, with registered office at Bank of Scotland House, Union Street, Coupar Angus
- GrowBiz is funded by Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Government, and the Making Rural Business Digital project is supported by the Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Programme 2014-2020: The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas. For more on LEADER go to www.pkleader.org
- Since October 2016, GrowBiz has supported more than 1000 clients across all business sectors
- GrowBiz runs an award-winning mentoring programme, which currently has over 70 participants and which is the first and only business programme in Scotland to achieve the Scottish Mentoring Network Quality Standard
- GrowBiz offers one-to-one meetings with clients as well as peer support and peer learning sessions
- Follow GrowBiz on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter by searching for GrowBiz Perthshire