



Darren Reynolds of Doody

### Background of business

Anyone can find themselves facing redundancy, no matter how skilled or experienced they are. Darren Reynolds, aged 40, of Clayton Heights, Bradford, worked for Empire Stores at their Canal Road headquarters for 23 years, since he left school in Buttershaw. He started in the loading bay but promotions led to him spending 13 years as an international buyer for the company, frequently visiting suppliers in the Far East. When Darren and his colleagues

learned almost a year ago that the Empire Stores brand was being sold to a competitor it was a huge blow to everyone. "When you have worked for 23 years then suddenly find yourself sitting at home with no job, you feel you have been thrown in at the deep end."

### Support journey

Visiting Bradford city centre he spotted a poster advising people interested in self-employment to contact Bradford Kickstart. He called the Gateway number and soon received a call from Tony Wilson, a Kickstart Business Counsellor. He helped Darren to write a business plan and made him aware of the wide range of training courses and skills workshops available through the Kickstart programme. In addition, Darren successfully applied for support through the professional services scheme, enabling him to have a professional website developed by a Bradford-based consultant. This is vital to Darren's business success as he runs a stand-alone website as well as an on-line store via E-bay. When he was young Darren was given the nickname 'Doody' by his family and he now uses this for his business, Doody's Fancy Dress & Gifts.

### Where they are now

Fancy dress costumes and wigs, party products, gifts, leatherware, homeware, clothing, toys....Darren's stock list seems almost endless. He has already supplied more than 5,000 customers all over the world and is confident about the future, even in the current economic climate. His turnover in his first year will exceed his target, which is good news for both Darren and his wife Michelle; they were married in Las Vegas in the Summer of 2008. If the business continues to grow at its present rate then Darren will consider recruiting his first member of staff next year.

## **Background Information**

Client Name: Darren Reynolds

Ward in which both resident and trading: Queensbury

Business Name: Doody's Fancy Dress & Gifts

Business Address: client prefers not to disclose address

Telephone: (07900) 950275

E-mail: darren@doodysfancydress.co.uk

Websites: [www.doodysfancydress.co.uk](http://www.doodysfancydress.co.uk);

<http://stores@ebay.co.uk/doodys-fancy-dress-and-gifts>