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Making an impression

Simon
wins
over the
Dragon

Duncan
Bannatyne
and Simon
Stokes



IT'S a brave entrepreneur who dares to enter the Dragon's Den... but Simon Stokes has managed to impress two of the toughest names in British industry. Simon, the managing director of Rotherham's Assured Fire & Security, has landed his company a major new contract after approaching Duncan Bannatyne, one of the most demanding members of the panel on BBC business hit Dragon's Den.

"I met Duncan last year at an entrepreneurs' event in London," Simon says.

"I simply went straight up to him, shook his hand and said I wanted to offer him our company's CCTV system for his chain of health clubs.

"We got talking and six months later we are looking after all 70 of his sites, which is a marvellous boost for our business, which saw 80 per cent growth last year and is on target for another 12 months of expansion this year too."

Straight-talking Duncan isn't the only Dragon to have been impressed by Simon's direct approach.

After reading her book *Business Nightmares*, Simon contacted Derbyshire-based Rachel Elnaugh, one of the original stars of the BBC series, and after several mentoring meetings, she has advised Simon and his team on long-term strategic planning, recruitment, financial planning and other areas important for growth.

"Being an MD of a fast-growing business is frenetic work and to have the advice of Rachel, who has been there and done it, is a great pro-active step for us to avoid some of the costly mistakes that a growing business can make," said Simon.

Rachel added: "At a time when so many entrepreneurs are needing advice on how to keep their business afloat, it is great to be working with a company which is profitable and growing.

"Simon Stokes has a fast-forward entrepreneurial energy. The challenge for Assured now is how to manage their growth while expanding the business UK wide."