

Phill's big idea is a 4ft by 3ft message in your letterbox



A YEAR ago while searching gift shops for a special card for his wife, Phill Hulme decided he could come up with something better, and after giving up his sales job he launched Massive Message last July.

The personalised greetings business delivers bespoke greetings posters that are nearly 4ft wide and 3ft high – 35 times larger than a standard card. The messages can be folded for delivery through a standard letterbox.

In the run-up to this year's Valentine's Day, Massive Message recorded a month's worth of sales in three days, and Phill is hopeful that today, Mother's Day, will see a similar boost.

Phill, 40, who runs the business from his home in Leicester, says: 'The greeting card industry is worth over £1.1 billion annually, but there are niche markets and it's when you can't find what you are looking for that the niche finds you.'

Massive Message has seen monthly sales growth of 20 per cent, with a £100,000 turnover anticipated this year. The business is self-funded, but Phill hopes to attract equity investment to expand overseas.

Katie Taylor

The Enterprise Zone

email: enterprise@financialmail.co.uk

Having a tree helps our bar bo

Last year we lent over £30 billion to UK businesses

THE number of bars, pubs and restaurants giving up their alcohol licences rose 13 per cent over the year to April 1, according to figures from legal information provider Sweet and Maxwell. But amid the gloom, some businesses in the sector are thriving, so what is the secret of their success? Former chef Adam Marshall, 34, runs Grand Union, an independent

By Helen Loveless

chain of pubs and bars in London, with business partner Adam Saword. He opened his first pub in Highgate, north London, with a personal loan of £20,000 before selling it and using the profits to buy the first Grand Union bar in nearby Camden in April 2006. Five



Marston's

With bank funding hard to secure, pub company Marston's has a different way of ensuring its pubs survive.

years on, the pair have built up a chain of 11 bars in the capital and are about to open their 12th, in Wimbledon, south-west London. The business now has 180 staff.

By the end of 2012 they hope to have 20 bars in London, with longer-term plans to open in cities around the country. The business is set to turn over £9 million this year and is on

offers new chee

deposit of £4,000, which is returnable at the end of the agreement. Marston's pays for all bills – food, drink and energy. It even agrees on the Old Sal Stoke, Stafford year ago under agreement. T both 22, have weekly taking

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