

# Business News



Jeremy Rodway-Smith (centre), flanked by personnel director Gwen Wheeler and operations director Shaun Cross, with some of the award-winning Benchmark workforce. (s)

## Growing reputation

A LANDSCAPING and grounds maintenance company has won a national 'best employer' award.

Benchmark Grounds Maintenance, based in Snitterfield, with seven regional service centres around Britain, landed 'Employer of the Year' at the annual British Association of Landscape Industries awards in London in December.

Launched six years ago, Benchmark employs more than 30 full-time staff across Britain, servicing a wide range of corporate clients ranging from Cadbury World to Savills.

Founder and managing director Jeremy Rodway-Smith, who launched Benchmark in 2005, said he believed that investment in employees had been the key to year-on-year growth.

He said: "We have grown every year between ten and 30 per cent and expect turnover to exceed £2 million in 2011."

"The company's vision is to continually improve and to set a benchmark for others to follow. To achieve this we knew that our staff had to be happy, involved, well trained, well rewarded and proud to be part of the team. We're delighted that our approach has been recognised by the industry in this way."

The judges said Benchmark had 'demonstrated commitment to its staff's well-being and skills development and, in turn, the company exemplifies service excellence'.

Previously, Mr Rodway-Smith was centre manager at Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill, near Dudley, where he worked for 12 years leading a team of 250 people. Shaun Cross, who was operations manager at Merry Hill, has joined him as



Dickon Green with Bryan Gardner, partner at Spencer Gardner Dickins who act as the company's accountants. (s)

## Now he's a bigger fish

A SALMON producer has taken a giant leap of his own after turning a small family company into a big success story.

Business is certainly going swimmingly for Bidford smoked salmon producer Dickon Green who is entering his tenth year running the company in Uig, on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, after the business was started by his father and uncle over 25 years ago.

He took over the smokery from his father Malcolm and uncle Barry, who run pig and arable farms in Bidford, in 2002 and has since built up the business which turned over around \$12,000 a year to one which now has an annual turnover of over £450,000.

Now the lodge, which can also be booked for

holiday breaks, has established itself as a leading supplier of smoked salmon and boasts several Michelin starred restaurants among its clients.

Dickon said: "We have just come through the busiest time of the year with Christmas."

"We tend to do 70 per cent of our business during the festive period mostly through private sales on top of the corporate trade which tends to be pretty steady throughout the year."

"We normally employ six people but during the Christmas period we expanded to about 11."

The company also recently launched a new website www.uiglodge.co.uk in order to increase the amount of private sales to support the increasingly successful corporate side of the business.

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