



*"This is a lifestyle business – and a great idea"*

The expert's advice  
**David Rose** is a marketing communications consultant and

**CEO of Development Capital Exchange. He cast his eye over Julie's business plans.**

"What a brilliant idea! And the website is well produced, but it's only a brochure that happens to be on the web. A website has to attract visitors as opposed to just transmitting the content to prospective customers.

"What Julie has here is a 'lifestyle' business, developed to match her own. My immediate thought is that she should promote it in her own area, build a track record, then look to franchise it to a wider market.

"Firstly, she should make herself known to her local media and tell them what she's doing. Then, she should talk to the local garden centres and card and gift shops and provide some free samples at the checkouts, with order forms. The pricing should be adjusted to take in a 'distribution' element that leaves her the same profit margin.

"Thirdly, she could produce some really attractive posters that the local maternity wards and other relevant outlets would not object to having pinned to their notice boards. Then, when she can demonstrate a successful track record through these marketing routes, she should promote franchise opportunities through the National Franchise Association and PR in relevant media.

"No business, no matter how small, should leave the starting gate without having a business plan prepared, which must include a cash flow and profit and loss forecast based on the most pessimistic sales figures. Check out [www.dcxworld.com](http://www.dcxworld.com) and download the *How to Write Your Business Plan* advice.

"However, before doing anything, she should visit her prospective outlets and show them the product. She should only proceed if she gets a positive response, because they are the ones who know her potential customers best. And when it's all working and she's a squillionaire, she can buy me lunch!" ■