



think... small

What kind of companies do we all want to work for these days? *eureka* follows the trail of three modern-day businesses to see if 'niche' is the new 'now'

Seth Godin, an uber-marketer from New York, in his latest book, *Small Is the New Big*, writes: "Recent changes in the way that things are made and talked about mean that big is no longer an advantage. In fact, it's the opposite. If you want to be big, act small." He concludes: "Do something that matters."

The rise and rise of small businesses in the UK goes on apace. "We now have a record number of businesses in the UK," says a Department of Trade and Industry spokesperson. "At the start of 2005, there were an estimated 4.3 million business enterprises in the UK, an increase of 59,000 from the start of 2004." What's more, 99.3 per cent of these businesses are small, with almost no

employees or up to 49 employees - a clear pattern of a workforce doing things for themselves.

Gwyneth Holland, trends and research editor at consumer trend strategists The Future Laboratory, agrees: "It's no wonder that there has been a rise in the niche business. They are reacting to consumer wants. People now wish to know where they are buying from, they want to know that their money is benefiting the local community, they want something personal. We are moving into an age where the personal, the individual and the local, hold key relevance."

So is this a trend we'll see continue? Here are three companies that celebrate the strengths of doing what they do well.



"The aim eventually is to be producing all our own seeds from West Fenton Farm"

Simon Henderson, Fenton Wildseeds

Simon Henderson's family have been tenant farmers in Northumberland for generations. They have been on their current estate for the last 16 years and, in 2005, set up Fenton Wildseeds.

The company collects native wildflower and grass seeds from sites across Northumberland, and use sustainable methods to ensure the site's futures. Seeds are sorted, stored and planted out into single species seed beds for spring.

"It takes up to 18 months before we can harvest seeds from these new plants and collect from other sites to ensure we have all the species we need. The aim eventually is to be producing all our own seeds from West Fenton Farm," says Simon.

The company now supplies other farmers, land owners and managers who are looking to introduce native species to their fields and meadows. Another sideline is supplying seeds to Highway Agencies and builders who want to plant native wildflowers and grasses on open areas, new estates and village greens.

The scheme has been supported by funding from DEFRA's Rural Enterprise Scheme (Simon and his wife invested more than £175,000, with a grant of almost £65,000) and the company is one part of the wider, diversified work of West Fenton and the Fenton Centre which is re-introducing sustainable farming methods and education to the general public. fentoncentre.com

Win! Wildflower seeds

Fancy bringing a touch of the wild to your garden? Fenton Seeds is offering five lucky eureka readers the chance to win £30 worth of wildflower seeds to suit their soil type. To enter, send your details to: 'Seeds competition', Kia Motors eureka 7, Freepost (CV1879), Rugby, CV21 1BR, before 1 May 2007.

FROM LITTLE ACORNS... MEGA BRANDS THAT STARTED SMALL...

Innocent

The only still privately-owned company in our mega-brands column, Innocent gave the world smoothies before we even knew we needed them. Started in 1999, Innocent now has 62 per cent of the UK's smoothie market; it is turning over £75 million and counts more than 7,000 retailers as stockists; that equals one million smoothies sold a week. Not bad for seven years' work.
innocentdrinks.co.uk

Green & Black's

In 1991, Craig Sams (founder of Whole Earth, a pioneering organic food company) tried a piece of chocolate on his desk and pronounced it delicious. His wife Josephine Fairley, beauty editor of the *Daily Mail's* *You* magazine, who also runs her own website, beautybible.com, decided there was a chocolate shaped gap in the market. Green & Black's is now owned by Cadbury Schweppes but Craig Sams remains as chairman and the business is standalone and booming. Craig and Josephine now also run Judges, an organic bakery in Hastings. They just can't stop... greenandblacks.com

Rachel's Organic

Set up by husband and wife team Rachel and Gareth Rowlands in 1984, Rachel's family had farmed on land in west Wales since 1942. Using her grandmother for inspiration, Rachel's Organic Dairy has become the fastest growing organic dairy in the UK. They use 20 major organic farms to supply the demand for 15 million litres of yoghurt per year - that's 50 tonnes of yoghurt a day. Rachel was awarded an MBE from the Queen in 1997 and both she and her husband are now semi-retired but still act as consultants for the business.
rachelso.organic.co.uk

Chris Godfrey, Frank Godfrey Ltd

Being a butcher is in the genes. Frank Godfrey was great grandfather to Chris and his two brothers, Jeremy and Phillip, who currently all run the business. "We have been farmers for 400 years and butchers for 100 years," says Chris, who shows a photograph on the wall of a large Angus bull. This was one of their cattle kept on Clissold Park, north London. It's hard to picture cattle grazing on what is now a scene of dogs and young families on weekend walks.

The business of Frank Godfrey Ltd has had to move with the times. At one point in the last century, there were four butchers' shops under the Godfrey name but the supermarkets almost crippled them. They have now concentrated on the

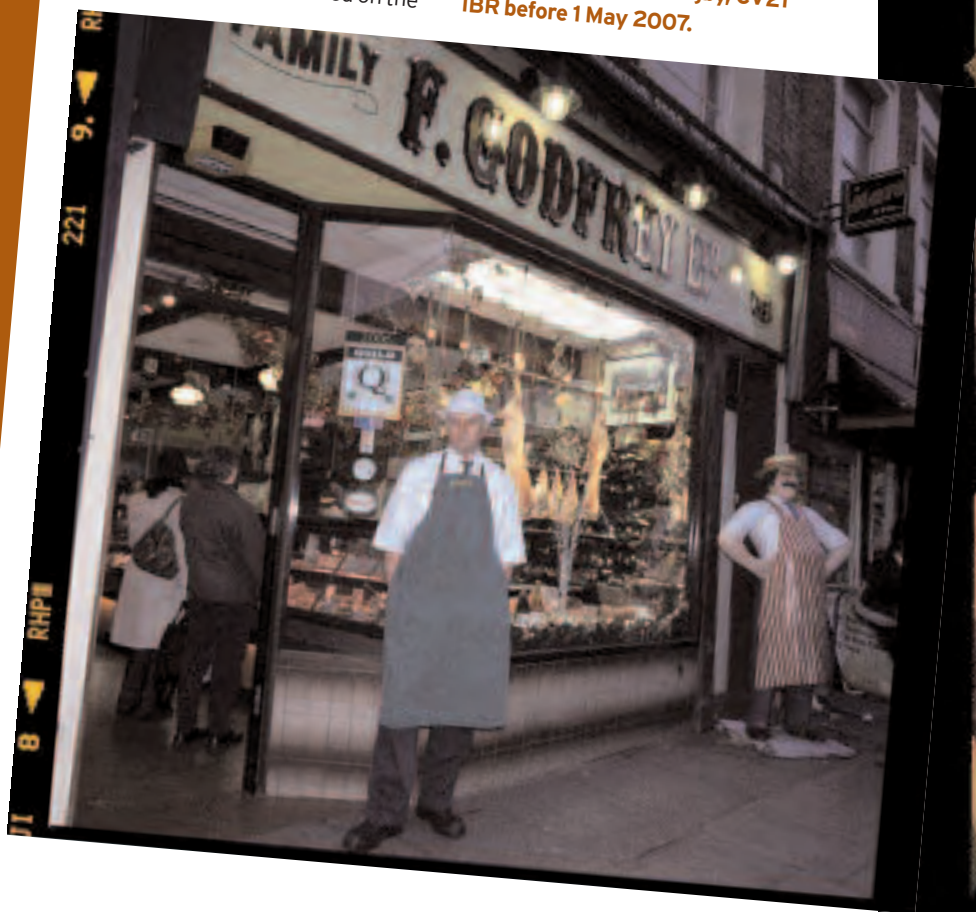
one shop and a factory in nearby Finsbury Park which markets to the catering and restaurant trade.

"We have started selling online," says Chris, "and we pride ourselves on the quality of our produce.

We have made a name for ourselves as specialist butchers and people recognise that the care we take reflects in the meat that ends up on their plates. We were recently voted No 2 of the nicest things in London. I couldn't believe that when someone told me!" fgodfrey.co.uk

Win! Godfrey's meat

Four lucky eureka readers could each win a £10 voucher to spend at the Highbury outlet. To enter, send your details to: 'Godfrey competition', Kia Motors eureka 7, Freepost (CV1879), Rugby, CV21 1BR before 1 May 2007.





Jane Powell, The Green Shop

Jane has been integral in the mail-order and online business of The Green Shop in Bisley, Gloucestershire. The shop started life as a petrol station and car workshop, yet Roger Budgeon, who set it up, has been selling sustainable, eco friendly and fair-traded products for 20 years. "If you want to change the world," he says, "you have to begin from where you are."

Indeed, The Green Shop has grown and now has a turnover of £3.5 million. The shop, in its present form, was opened by environmentalist Jonathan Porritt in 1997 and is a model for sustainable building. There are natural wood fittings, floors

treated with natural finishes, windows which make the most of natural light, a wind and solar-charged battery system and a grid-connected photovoltaic array, which means any surplus electricity can be sold back to the National Grid.

The Green Shop was the first petrol station in Gloucestershire to sell unleaded petrol and LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) and, in 2002, it was the first forecourt in the UK to sell blended bio-diesel. A new eco-building is going up at the moment and, even though they have had plenty of offers to sell up, running the business and all the opportunities it brings with it is a way of life.

"Sustainability is not about cutting off from the rest of the world, it's about taking

a long-term view and changing the way we do things." Every year brings new adventure and part of the pleasure of The Green Shop for Jane Powell is the people that gravitate towards the business - both customers and suppliers. "It's good to work with people who have the same ethos as you," says Jane. greenshop.co.uk

Win! A wind-up charger

Feeling a bit lost? This one's for you.

The Green Shop is giving away four wind-up LED torch & phone chargers worth £14.95 each. To enter, simply send your details to: Wind-up competition, Kia Motors eureka 7, Freepost (CV1879), Rugby, CV21 1BR, before 1 May 2007.