

TOP TIPS TO KICK START YOUR BU



GROWING PAINS: Juliet (right) and Emma want to expand

Big Smiley

Dear *BIZ* I HAVE my own childcare agency www.smileys-childcare.co.uk which I've been running for nine years with the help of Emma Rolfe, a part-time member of staff.

I want to expand and open branch offices. I've briefly looked into franchising but it looks very complicated. Any other ideas?

Juliet Barkley, via email

***BIZ* Says:** FIND areas similar

to where you are now operating successfully. Look for those popular with young families, where there will be a good healthy need for your services.

Check out the competition in these locations. Do they offer anything you don't?

Visit the areas in person and go out and about to get a feel for the neighbourhood and get an understanding of the type of potential clientele.

If there's an opening for your business set up an exact replica of what you currently offer. You don't need to change something that works well.

But ensure that you are

totally hands-on in the setting up and recruiting of local staff so you can guarantee the best quality of service.

We're not sure how far you got down the franchise route. The British Franchise Association (www.thebfa.org) runs regular seminars for those interested in expanding their business through franchising.

These events are designed to give the lowdown on the industry and give people the chance to find out exactly what's involved and to evaluate whether their business has the potential to work as a franchise.