

## **Glyn Owen and Claire Keppie – Joint Principals, Mid Scotland.**

Hello and welcome to our success story..... The wonderful world of franchising, through the eyes of Claire Keppie and Glyn Owen, Joint Principals, Helen O'Grady Drama Academy, Lothian and Borders.

Four years ago if someone had said we would be running our own business, with over 450 students attending our classes each week and two teachers working for us we would have thought they were mad!



We suspect that, had we started our own business without being part of a franchise, we would not have been so successful. We are both trained actors. We are passionate, determined, committed, hard working, creative people, prepared to take risks but lacking in the knowledge required to run our own business.

Being part of a worldwide franchise really works for us. We have been provided with all the necessary training: how to set up, launch, market, manage and expand our business.

The support we have received from the franchisor, National Director of Helen O'Grady (CI) Ltd., Nigel Le Page, is fabulous and has been ongoing. There is always someone at the end of the phone who is willing to discuss any concerns, problems, successes or just for a friendly chat. We never feel isolated, it is great to have a team who can reassure your decisions or congratulate you on your achievements.

One of the major factors which ensure our franchise is a success is being prepared to follow the proven formula. We completely trust and respect the advice given by the franchisor and management team, we know they have all gone through the process of running their own franchise and therefore are able to advise from personal experience. We do believe people who are involved in franchising have to be willing to take on board the advice of the experts. Others may disagree but what is the point of buying into a franchise if you are not going to use the expertise of the franchisor to help ensure the success of your business?

Another superb part of the Helen O'Grady business is the unique curriculum we are provided with each term. It has been developed by experts to ensure the healthy development of children, through drama. We promise parents when they call to enrol their children into our classes that, through our programme, their child will develop confidence and self esteem, which is what life should be all about. To acquire this at such a young age can only set the children up for the best possible chance at having a happy and fulfilling adult life.

We strongly believe a business must be treated like a new born baby and should be nurtured as a child would be throughout its life. In the early months, many obstacles will have to be removed, then the business hits

the terrible twos, then arrives at the awkward teens and so on until it becomes a wise old pensioner, who has experienced the ups and downs life has presented. However, having learnt so much along the way, this creature has become wiser and stronger. We should never stop learning and a business should always be open to new ways of keeping it alive, ensuring it is a step a head of competitors, maintaining the professionalism which made it a success in the first place, and never sitting back on its laurels. We are convinced this attitude contributes to our success.

Being part of a franchise helps you to remain completely focused as you are constantly asked questions to assess your business. What is it you want? Where do you want your business to go? Are you meeting the targets the franchisor has set? Are you meeting your own personal goals? With the help of the franchisor you are able to pinpoint and deal with problems very quickly.

We attend three inspirational and very well-subscribed seminars every year, to discuss business issues and workshop future curriculum. We are all so empowered by the work we do and are desperate to share stories and meet up with the rest of our network.

Nigel Le Page, along with Executive Principal, Alison Mazanec and Training Manager, Margaret Darley, is constantly coming up with innovative and exciting ways to encourage and inspire franchisees and their product knowledge is second to none.

We both make regular contact with Head Office and certainly feel the support and advice we get comes from a team of people who really care about each individual branch of the Academy. We are proud to be involved in the Helen O'Grady network and look forward with excitement to a very successful future.