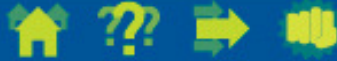


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CASE STUDY



## Running store for everyone gets off to flying start with Business Link's help



**Samantha Hale, founder and managing director at Advance Performance, originally started the independent running store from a back bedroom in 1996.**

It's so useful to have an external view on the challenges you face and pointers on how to overcome them.

**Samantha Hale,  
Advance Performance**

A first Peterborough store then opened in 1999, before a move to larger premises in January 2005. A second store opened in Cambridge in September 2007.

The company specialises in the correct fitting of running shoes and bases the business around excellent customer service.

Samantha has ten employees working in the two purpose-designed stores. These will be used as a model for future expansion into other areas.

Advance Performance wanted to manage its reputation and image in order to increase the business's visibility to its market across the UK.

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 **08457 171615**

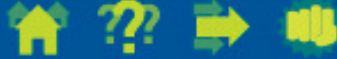
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## CASE STUDY



The successful growth of the business depended on Samantha and the rest of the Advance Performance team communicating effectively to the target market. Business Link has helped Advance Performance from the beginning, particularly in 2005 and 2006 when they sought advice on rebranding, marketing communications, training and PR.

Business Link advised on reputable PR consultants to support the marketing activity which resulted in Advance Performance outsourcing PR to consultant Katrina Morphet. The company also gained access to an IT system which enables Samantha to look at cash flows forecasts and projections.

Samantha feels that Business Link has been a valued contributor to the successful growth of the business. She explains: "Business Link has helped us enormously."

"It has really helped us to raise our profile and has taken some of the pressure off us having to think about gaining and organising publicity whilst running the business." Tangible results of this support include improved customer communications and becoming a national runner-up in the 2007 British Small Business Champions Awards and Retail Winner of the 2007 Peterborough Evening Telegraph Business Awards. The company has also formed a number of successful partnerships with the local community, charities, running clubs and associations.

Future plans include expansion to additional premises. Samantha concludes: "I recommend any business to utilise the support available from Business Link - we have a great resource available to us so use it! It's so useful to have an external view on the challenges you face and pointers on how to overcome them."

I recommend any business to utilise the support available from Business Link.

**Samantha Hale, Advance Performance**

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