

# CASE STUDY

Company: **Shimmi Shake**  
Location: **Bromley**  
Support delivered by: **Business Focus**



Being made redundant from her job at The London Stock Exchange was the high kick Sue Mahoney needed to turn her hobby into a business and get a new career off the ground.

## **Business expansion**

Sue owns and runs Shimmi Shake, a successful dance school based in Bromley. Currently she runs 58 classes a week catering for 800 children from the ages of 3 – 28 years. Over the last year she has expanded the business into neighbouring boroughs and is now developing a franchise business model.

“Redundancy from the Stock Exchange was a jolt, but I’d just qualified as a professional dance teacher, so I reckoned that, at the age of 27 and with 12 years of city business experience under my belt, I was ready to launch myself on a new stage,” she said.

However, Sue had no knowledge of running a small business, so when she received a mail-drop from Business Focus, which delivers Business Link for London Start Up services in Bromley, she picked up the phone and called them.

## **Suitable adviser**

“I wanted a mentor, and Business Focus took great care to match me up with a suitable adviser,” she said. “Now I’m working with someone who is as sensible and grounded as I am energetic and fiery. He’s been my mentor for five years, I see him once or twice a month and we make a terrific team.”

## **Brand image**

“Our first challenge was to establish a strong brand image and a good name for the business,” explained Sue. “Shimmi Shake’s uniqueness is our firm belief that every dancer is special so I began talking to heads of local primary schools about the benefits to their pupils and the school. Once we were accepted by a few schools, our reputation spread.”

Shimmi Shake now employs eight people and Sue is looking to set up the first pilot franchise area.

## **Drive and wisdom**

“Dance is my first love, but business runs a close second. I strongly believe that Shimmi Shake is successful because of my personal drive and my business mentor’s wisdom. It’s my creativity linked in with his knowledge which has allowed the Shimmi Shake Show to run and run.”

# 2003

Mid Term Evaluation Report concludes that the programme has exceeded its targets. The service is satisfying its role as a Pan London support programme.