

## Adding the wow to Cornwall...

Young entrepreneur Jonathon Parker is the creator of Wow-Wow a new web-based business that provides the ideal portal for Eco-solutions. Wow-Wow is seeking to make “going green” more accessible to everyone.

### Overview

Jonathon Parker has a passion both for design and ecology. Having been promoting environmental goods since University, Jonathon was always interested in how he could use his design expertise within the environmental sector. On graduation having secured a packaging and brand design degree, Jonathon worked for a large design agency. However, he quickly felt stifled and after doing a six month stint in New York he returned to the UK determined to set up his own business that reflected his passions.

Jonathon explains “I see myself as a normal person, not a hard core environmentalist. I think that a lot of people feel intimidated by what ‘going green’ can mean and many are switching off as more and more organisations have adopted a preaching approach. I decided to set up Wow-Wow to provide a more fun and vibrant strand to becoming more environmentally friendly, it’s not about the doom and gloom of global warming, it’s about pushing creative innovation and change that’s efficient in saving money and valuable resources to boot!”

On deciding to set up his own venture, Jonathon decided to move back to Cornwall, where his family live. “Having commuted for a while I thought there must be more to life than being crammed on a train! I wanted to be surrounded by people who are more real. In Cornwall people make time for you and that makes it the ideal place to set up your own business. It’s also a prime bonus being so close to the best surf spots.”

Jonathon raised money for his business idea by working as a chef and then enrolled on a business course at Truro College. On the course, Jonathon learnt key skills such as writing a business plan and how to run a business. Confident that his business idea could work, he approached the Prince’s Trust and South West Investment Group (SWIG) which both

### Employees

Wow-Wow works with an environmental adviser in order to undertake the business consultations and help companies secure the environmental accreditation ISO14001. In addition, Jan Behrens (product research) and Quintdown web provides technical support to the site.

### Support

Cornwall has provided Wow-Wow with the perfect foundation to get started. Jonathon concludes “We have received



provided him with small loans, enabling him to design and set up the Wow-Wow website.

Jonathon was keen that the business was more than a retail outlet, but also a one stop shop for people with environmental questions. Wow-Wow provides four services: Advice –delivered through consultancy, where clients can learn more about how their business or home can become more efficient in areas such as energy, water and recycling; The Wow-Directory –A free advertising platform for other sustainable businesses and charities to promote themselves; The Wow-Build Shop - enabling consumers to source environmentally sound building materials through its eco build shop; and finally The Wow-Wow Design Shop - where eco savvy shoppers can source and view ecologically desirable design. Eco designers are invited to display their products on the site, whether they are chairs made of recycled bottles or environmentally sound cleaning products, for example.

“We see creative innovations as the future and therefore I am really excited that Wow-Wow is able to support the designers of the future and bring their work to a wider audience.” Jonathon adds.

Wow-Wow continues to evolve and Jonathon sees the advisory element of his business as being just as important as the e-commerce side. “We feel strongly that the business should be more than a shop. This is why we also introduced the advisory service, to enable businesses to navigate and understand the minefield which is the environmental sector.”

The company has ambitious plans for growth and wants to eventually provide everything from products to design. “We envisage being able to provide enough expertise and access to innovations within the sector that customers will be able to design and build their own eco-build homes and lifestyles with our support.”

fantastic support within the county. In addition, Cornwall’s environmental credentials not only reflect our business ethos, but have also meant we have been able to tap into the skill base that exists within the county. I want Wow-wow to become a sound employer and contribute to making The South West the leader in modern Environmental design.”

Wow-Wow has received essential support from SWIG, Prince’s Trust and Truro College – where a business mentor was also assigned.