

Fatima Ba-Alawi



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| Name: | Fatima Ba-Alawi | Age: | 29 |
| Business: | DCS Designs | Service: | Healthcare products |
| Website: | www.dcsdesigns.co.uk | University: | University of Portsmouth |
| Degree: | Business Administration | Graduated: | 2005 |

“I always planned to work for herself, so during my degree I came up with the idea for an innovative hospital gown that would provide patients with dignity, comfort and safety. I attended a FlyingStart Rally in July 2005 and was chosen to join the very first year-long FlyingStart Programme. This helped me develop the knowledge and skills to turn me ideas into a successful business with financial support from SEEDA.”

The Business

“I have developed a new style of hospital gown, the DCS (Dignity, Comfort, Safety) patient gown, designed to be more patient-friendly than existing designs. The DCS gown provides greater comfort and can be changed and manoeuvred by hospital staff without causing potential embarrassment to the patient or requiring the removal of drip attachments to the wrist. This helps maintain patient dignity, minimises physical injury and controls risk of infection. It also provides easy access for medical examination and minor procedures. Feedback from hospital trials was very positive and there’s been lots of interest from health authorities.”

How the NCGE helped

“Before I participated in the NCGE FlyingStart Programme, I had a definite idea for my business and had trialed my gown design in a few local hospitals with positive results. The Rally really helped me turn the idea into a trading business, while the Programme guided me through the patent application process, and helped me develop important business contacts and find sources of funding.”

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| At a glance... | |
| Started Trading: | 2005 |
| Turnover 07/08: | £5,000-£10,000 |

Business Growth

“DCS designs is now receiving requests for gowns from all over the world, including the United States, South Africa, Kuwait and the Philippines. In 2007 my company appointed a finance director to help manage the business growth. Following the success of the flagship gown, DCS Designs has expanded its product range to include a gown with an anti-MRSA agent, a faith gown for Muslim women and is developing a new maternity range. I’m now in talks with several large retail chains about the possibility of stocking this new line.”

About the FlyingStart Programme

This 12-month business start-up programme for new entrepreneurs is delivered by the NCGE and supported by the UK Government’s Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). An intensive three-day residential training course is followed by 12 months’ specialist mentoring and support. The aim is to have 66% of all graduates trading within one year. FlyingStart ensures all new graduate businesses have a ready-made national and regional network, a dedicated mentor, appreciate the ‘know-hows and know-whos’ of practical business, and understand how to make money.