

- Business Clinic
- Masterclasses
- Member Benefits
- Our Partners
- Talk Back
- Weekly Archive

**BUSINESS UTILITIES  
PRICE COMPARISON**

- COMPETITIONS**
- Win one of three BlackBerry Bold smartphones
  - Win one of five business coaching programmes
  - Win tickets to the PCA Celebrity Sports Quiz
  - Recent Winners

**GLOOMBUSTERS  
SHARE YOUR TIPS**

**SKILLS MARKETPLACE**

Request a quote

Search for people by job title/skill

 

**YOUR QUESTIONS  
BUSINESS CLINIC**

- EVENTS**
- Time Matters
  - The Business Growth Show
  - Chindia Rising
  - Sustainability*live!*
  - Mastering Leadership
  - Henley Business School Events
  - Enter postcode for other events in your area

**BUSINESS NEWS** [rk victory over store openings](#) • [FSA's Lord Turner to call for new bar](#)

**Bespoke designer proves jewellery can be a rock solid enterprise**

*Harriet Kelsall is seeing steady growth at her bespoke jewellery business. The company designs and makes rings and dress jewellery and, despite the downturn, business is booming. "This year will be better than last. Sales in January alone were up 7pc on the same period last year," she said.*

"I think when times are hard people focus on those things that are really important to them - either getting engaged or just buying a necklace to say 'I love you'," she said. "Maybe there is an element of that behind our success. On 9/11 - the day itself - we saw the most phenomenal peak, five times the normal hits to the website. It was the same after the July 7 bombings and we are seeing the same now.

"As a rule you are supposed to spend two or three months' salary on an engagement ring. It's supposed to hurt a bit - it shows commitment! But people now are looking to spend a little less but still want a quality ring," said Kelsall. "Most people are spending £2,000 to £3,000 but want to make sure that they get a bit more for their money.

"We have just finished a £30,000 ring. Imagine walking down the street with that on. It has a beautiful diamond. But that's not the norm."

Despite the premium prices, Kelsall is expecting the growth she has seen over the past 10 years to continue. With some 100 commissions a month, and prices ranging from £700 upwards, Harriet Kelsall Jewellery Design saw income of £1.2m last year. This year Kelsall is looking at £1.4m. "We carry no debt," added Kelsall, "We have grown though retained profit."

It's the same story for the off-the-shelf dress jewellery, which sells in the more modest £30 to £40 bracket. "We are getting several orders a day and that's weird. I can understand people still wanting an engagement ring but we have never had orders like this in January before for dress jewellery. Perhaps people are updating their jewellery rather than buying a new wardrobe"

Kelsall said she also has customers who see designer jewellery as an investment, as a sound alternative to placing their funds in banks or shares.

Working from a barn in rural Hertfordshire, with a shop in Cambridge, the firm employs 24, a mix of designers, goldsmiths and project managers.

She was quick to latch on to the internet as a sales channel. Soon after starting she launched a website so customers further afield could see the designs and place orders.

"That was in 1996 and I saw this 'internet thing' was good. I was lucky to be in fairly early on as it's helped us to keep a good position in Google," she said.

"Gold prices are shooting up and diamonds are priced in dollars so our costs are rising because the pound is falling. We are absorbing some of that in our margins but prices are having to rise."

**By Philip Smith**

**OUR PARTNERS**

Business Link

Expense Reduction Analysts

IBM

Royal Mail

T-Mobile

UK TRADE & INVESTMENT

**SEARCH**

 

**The most powerful tools in business**