

Duo's big idea to help babies stay sound-a-sheep

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The world of baby products and pregnancy is not somewhere you would expect to find two young male entrepreneurs, but Mark Nicholls and Paul Maurice aren't fazed by a female dominated industry.

They are the founders of 'The Little Green Sheep', a premium organic baby bedding and mattress company based in the West Midlands region, now seen in some of the most exclusive baby stores in London and the UK.

The company creates and sells a range of baby bedtime products which help provide babies with a safe and natural environment in which to sleep and rest.

All of its organic mattresses and bedding products are handmade without the use of any harmful chemicals, and in particular pesticides and herbicides. This is not only more ecologically sound but also means parents can be reassured their babies are sleeping in a safe, natural environment.

Mark and Paul met at Aston University, where Paul graduated in Product Design and Mark in Marketing. Living together for one of their university years they quickly realised they both had an entrepreneurial spirit

The Little Green Sheep was formed in Redditch two and a half years ago, but didn't start trading until the Baby Show at the NEC, Birmingham, in May 2007.

Now the company sells organic bedding, sleepwear, mattresses and night-time oils and balms from its website and in baby boutiques across London, while high street stores are also beginning to take a keen interest.

Originally from the West Midlands, Mark was keen to set up The Little Green Sheep in an area he was familiar with and somewhere close to family and friends. Being an online trader, he also felt a big city location was not overly important.

Both he and Paul have found plenty of support from the local council and organisations such as Business Link West Midlands, which provided free advice from experienced consultants.

"We knew we'd find it hard," explains Mark, "but we also knew if we had the right products, the right brand and the right strategy it would succeed, so we focused solely on those three things.

"We sourced the highest quality products to ensure customer loyalty, but also because we recognised word of mouth was crucial in the baby market.

"We then spent a lot of time developing the branding of the company. It needed to be premium, memorable and trustworthy, yet still approachable. The Little Green Sheep ticked all of those boxes."

But the question still remains, why babies? Both men admit it's an unusual career choice.

Mark said: "Neither babies or organic products were my main concerns at the age of 23, but the more we looked into it, the more the two gelled so well together. We were stunned when we saw a complete lack of companies providing such a natural and pure service and variety of products."

ENDS

To arrange interviews or for further information and photography please contact Ed Dawes or Nick Trueman at Seal on 0121 616 5800 / eddawes@seal.uk.com

The Little Green Sheep is available online at www.thelittlegreensheep.com and from selected stockists