

The Men From The Boys

According to Theo Paphitis, owner of Ryman's, and among the fearsome dragons on Dragons' Den, the challenging economic climate we find ourselves in may be no bad thing for business.

"I like tough times," Theo told PG&H recently. "What they do is separate the men from the boys, the wheat from the chaff, the doers from the talkers. Tough times clear the backlog. It's a form of clearance, like having a sale. You get rid of the old and start afresh, which is not necessarily a bad thing, although, of course, you don't want it to happen too often."

So do influential gift trade suppliers agree with this dragon's roar?

Julian Hunt, managing director, Lesser & Pavey

"There is no denying the fact that the market place and the business climate is tough, and this is true of all trades and not just typical to our own trade. The TV and press remind us of this on a daily basis which doesn't help anyone! A bit more good news and optimism would help - not just the gloom and doom of which we are continually reminded.

From Lesser & Pavey's point of view, we are continuing to trade well and are very optimistic for the rest of the year and the foreseeable future. We did well in 2007, and continue to do well in 2008, to the extent that we are expanding and have recently recruited a new key accounts manager and an additional member to our sales team.

That said, business is not easy, and our sales team and all of our staff are working harder than ever to make it happen, and by doing so are justly getting the rewards.

Our product range is very strong, plus the fact that, on a daily basis, we are introducing innovative new products to the market place which, coupled with everyone's hard work, is producing good results and very good orders.

I do agree with Theo, and as the old saying goes, 'when the going gets tough the tough get going!' Without doubt, and as we are already seeing, this tough climate will 'sort the men out from the boys'".

Left: Julian Hunt, Lesser & Pavey.
Right: Theo Paphitis.



Chris Voisey, managing director, Junction Eighteen

"I agree with Theo, but I also feel that our press has a lot to answer for with the negativity that they fill our papers with. Undermining confidence tends to have the effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Paul Travis, managing director, Gleneagles of Edinburgh

"The current business environment is hard for us all, but we have to adapt to deal with it and it can become 'last man standing'. So in some ways, I agree with Theo. If you do more of the same you get more of the same, and a more difficult trading environment focuses the mind and makes you look at your business which I am doing at Gleneagles, on a regular basis, and taking the actions needed to ensure the business prospers."

