

Two Edinburgh mums in the semi finals of business competition



Only a day or two left to support the Scottish mumpreneurs Amy Livingstone and Julie Wilson.

They are founders of Cheeky Chompers and inventors of the award-winning Neckerchew and Comfortchew, who have made it through to the semi finals of Virgin Media Business' entrepreneur competition '#V00M:Pitch to Rich 2015'.

Cheeky Chompers is the **only** Scottish business and the youngest business in the GROW category, which is for existing businesses that are ready to go big-time. Cheeky Chompers is also now one of only 10 businesses left in its category of the competition, whittled down from over 2500 pitches overall which were originally submitted.



V00M: Pitch to Rich 2015 is a nationwide competition run by Virgin Media Business to find the country's most exciting and

innovative businesses. The winner of each category gets £250,000 marketing support and a whole host of Virgin Media Business prizes. The two runners-up receive £100,000 marketing support.

People have until 16 June to vote for their favourite pitch from the list of semi-finalists. The entrepreneurial pair are urging supporters to vote for Cheeky Chompers on the Virgin banner on www.cheekychompers.com.

Julie said: "It would mean the world to us to get to the final and win this game-changing prize. When we appeared on Dragons Den two years ago they didn't believe our financial projections were viable but we have now way exceeded the figures that the Dragons didn't think we had a hope of meeting.

"As a small company it's hard to devote the marketing spend required to keep growing awareness of a brand in a constantly renewing market. Winning Pitch to Rich would enable us to raise the profile of Cheeky Chompers and grow the business significantly. We're proud to manufacture in Scotland and as our business grows we will be able to take on more staff. When we started out there were just two of us – we have created 20 jobs in Scotland in the last two years.

"We have also adapted our products due to the demand from parents, as well as carers of children and adults with special needs. The initial response has been overwhelming which is so rewarding. We know our products work, but in order for more babies, children and adults to benefit from them we need to increase awareness of our brand nationally and internationally. Winning this pitch would make all the difference".

Amy and Julie invented the innovative Neckerchew, a unique combination of a dribble bib and chewy teether, after meeting at an antenatal class and identifying a gap in the market for

an attached teething product from their own experiences either losing or having to pick up and re-sanitise teethingers for their own children.

This simple idea has impressed parents and retailers alike – the Neckerchew is currently distributed in 30 countries worldwide, and has just hit the 250,000 unit sales milestone this month, thanks to listings in over 100 retailers across the UK, including John Lewis, Jojo Maman Bébé and Mothercare. Cheeky Chompers also has a successful collaboration with British fashion brand Joules.

The company launched their second product, the Comfortchew, an attachable teething comforter with textures and patterns to stimulate babies and soothe tender gums last year. Both Chewy products have just won gold Awards in the prestigious NAPPA (National Parenting products association) and the Moms choice awards in the USA.

The top three companies in the GROW category voted by the public, will pitch their business ideas, at the live finale on 26 June, to Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Media Business Managing Director Peter Kelly and their panel of judges: Jon Oringer, Jo Malone, Justine Roberts and David Gandy. The winners will each win a slice of the £450,000 prize fund up for grabs.

Peter Kelly, Managing Director of Virgin Media Business, said: “We are celebrating the creativity, ingenuity and acumen that exists in the UK and encouraging more budding entrepreneurs to confront their fears and go for it! We are backing today’s entrepreneurs so they can be a part of tomorrow’s success.”