



### **Dancing with the stars**

Dance supplies designer and wholesaler International Dance Supplies (IDS) has become Devon's 53<sup>rd</sup> Beacon South West accredited company. A wholesale design and distribution company for dance supplies such as costumes and footwear, IDS has clients in almost every major country worldwide, and is the leading costume wholesaler in the dance industry. IDS has been awarded Beacon status in recognition of its substantial growth over the last three years, good business practices and a positive working culture at its Newton Abbot base.

Supported by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), Beacon South West brings together more than 200 of the region's most pioneering and rapidly expanding organisations, providing an environment for exploring new ideas and strategies with other successful companies.



The first dance supplies manufacturer or wholesaler to be included in the Beacon initiative, IDS was set up in 1986 by Anne Walker, now the managing director. Over the last eight years, the company has evolved significantly, and now employs 60 members of staff residing within its purpose built head office, Harlequin House.

The company provides a first-class mail order system for customers, and was awarded an ECMOD (European Catalogue and Mail Order Days) award in 2008 in recognition of this achievement. Promoting a sense of 'fun' within the workplace, and ensuring its staff are well looked after, are just some of the steps the organisation takes to maintain its low staff turnover. Furthermore, the company offers support to local colleges by offering work experience to students, and provides colleges with staff visits to illustrate the potential for opportunities within the company. As a result of these efforts, IDS was awarded 'Investor in People' status in 2005.

Anne Walker, managing director for International Dance Supplies, commented: “We like to see ourselves as a special company with a very diverse offering. This Beacon recognition will enable us to gain a different perspective by learning from thriving organisations across the region, and to pass on our successful business practices to younger companies.



“Our people are our strength, and we spend a significant sum on staff development and training not only to support them, but to enable them to develop and grow with the business. We promote progression from within, and as the business has grown, it has enabled our employees to carve out their own bespoke roles within the organisation. I see this award as the ultimate recognition for all of their hard work over the past few years.”

Sue Baker, Beacon South West project director, said: “IDS has evolved from a home-based distributor into a global business with a client base spanning 40 countries. Having made a huge investment in their staff and mail order process, the company is a shining example of what hard work and dedication can achieve.

“The support offered to staff members is outstanding, and this contributes to not only a happy workforce but a longstanding one, with staff turnover at the company being incredibly low. It’s a pleasure to welcome IDS to the Beacon initiative and I know how much Anne and the team are looking forward to sharing their knowledge with the region’s leading businesses.”

**ENDS**

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**Note to editors:**

**Beacon South West** brings together some of the South West's most forward thinking and ambitious companies to promote success and spearhead the growth of the region. A key business initiative of the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Beacon South West is an award given to those companies who can demonstrate outstanding achievement across a range of criteria, including significant improvements in productivity and performance, profitability, work culture and innovation. Beacon South West members play an important role in cultivating enterprise excellence in the region. <http://www.beaconsw.org>