

CASE STUDY: 2018 WINNER

NIKKI HOLLIER

BORDER IN A BOX, WORCESTERSHIRE

WINN's Make it Happen 2018 winner, Nikki Hollier, owner and founder of Border in a Box, shares her WINNING experience since becoming the first ever winner of the Make it Happen challenge.

Nikki's dream became a reality several years ago when she moved into her new home, as she reveals: "When I moved into a new build property and had a garden that was turfed and surrounded by a wooden fence. It was soulless, boring, and uninspiring, yet I had zero funds to do anything interesting with it. There must be thousands of people in the same boat, so the seed was sown to create a product to solve the problem. I retrained as a garden designer, left my corporate job of two decades and started my own business."

Dedicated to growing the business, Nikki said: "After completing my garden design course, I applied to RHS Malvern to create a show garden and won a silver medal and the People's Choice Award 2016. I met Alan Titchmarsh and he purchased the sheep sculptures that were on my garden, so we got chatting and I showed him the Border in a Box concept and he loved it, and that encouraged me to turn it into a physical product which I launched on Amazon Launchpad in March 2017.



First discovering WINN and the Make it Happen challenge on social media, Nikki knew this was an opportunity not to miss. "I thought it was a fantastic opportunity for a new business in Worcestershire not only was there a cash prize, but also the mentors to help grow my business.

"I entered as I thought I could benefit from some help with my business. I'd moved from corporate life where I had a team of people around me to help with all of my projects. Setting up my own business meant I was the captain of my own ship but there was no team to talk to about anything. The prize would create a virtual team of mentors and sounding boards to support the next phase of my business growth. I also wanted a sponsor for my next show garden at BBC Gardeners' World Live and the prize money enabled me to invest in gorgeous plants for the show garden where I won Platinum and Best Border award and got featured on the TV show and magazine too.

"The prize money was definitely put to good use. I had won exhibition space with Theo Paphitis #SBS event, so I invested in a brand makeover to get ready to launch at the Autumn Fair at the NEC."

In terms of the application process, Nikki shared her experience and advice. "It is such a simple process so don't stress about the application. The best advice I can give to fellow businesses is to be yourself, just make sure you demonstrate what you would do with the prize and how it would help grow your business."

After winning the first Make it Happen challenge, Nikki shared how the challenge has helped the business in many ways over the years. Nikki said: "It enabled me to create my show garden border at BBC Gardeners' World Live, which greatly helped raise my brand and profile.

"It also funded a rebrand project as my mentors advised me to change my packaging, which helped sales increase. I also launched the brand on 'Not On The High Street' and Friends of Joules last year, which has really helped grow my business and product range. Originally, I launched with 5 versions which have increased to 8 including Sunny, Shady, Cottage, Clay, Contemporary, Wellbeing, Evergreen and Butterflies & Bees. With more kits on the way, I now have around 40 gardening gifts and cards to compliment my Border in a Box garden design kits."

"I didn't set out to build a gardening gift business, but I love it, and really enjoy creating unique gift boxes and cards."

The Support Nikki has received has had a great impact on Nikki's business. "The support has been ongoing. WINN have been so supportive ever since I won, and I've met so many brilliant people who have helped me with so many issues.

I still work with my accountant, Charles Lovell, and with Brand Refinery, who help me with my online presence. Terry Livesey has completed product photoshoots in the past for my website and online stores with Not On The High Street, Etsy, Amazon and Friends of Joules."

Reflecting back to when Nikki won the Make it Happen challenge, Nikki said: "I was in complete shock – I didn't expect to win as I have a gardening business, it's not the 'next internet' or life changing product and I thought with all the wonderful companies in the county, I expected someone else to win."



For those looking to apply to this year's Make it Happen challenge, Nikki shared some winning advice: "Just do it. You never know what will happen and even if you don't win, go along to the events, head to the WINN Hub online, there is so much you can still get from the experience. It is a fantastic way to raise your brand and profile as well as receiving a cash boost and some terrific support from the sponsors."



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