



Timmy's Pies is a Ready Business

Read how Vodafone helped Timmy go places with a virtual landline and 4G

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Vodafone One Net Express & 4G connectivity allows London pie maker to think big and act social

A hobby that became a Ready Business

Tim Wilkes hadn't planned to make a living selling pies. It wasn't foremost in his mind when he completed his PhD in molecular biology. Making pies was just something he enjoyed.

But cooking for friends turned into a Saturday market stall hobby. The Thursday and Friday baking sessions in Tim's kitchen turned into weekday access to a professional caterer's kitchen. This then led to enquiries from potential stockists, which resulted in a serious rethink. "My focus had been on baking the best pie I could bake, but in that six months we'd built a bit of a company, and I really enjoyed what we were doing," says Tim. "Do I quit or continue?"

That was 2010. Today, Timmy's Pies, the name taken from Tim's pre-market stall blog and Twitter account, employs five people and is stocked in Harvey Nichols and Selfridges food halls. Tim has moved into new production facilities and plans to double sales in the year. "Treble, ideally," he says. "Every single order that comes in is absolutely crucial. We can't afford to miss a call."

“We're a London business, it's important for us to have a London number. But Vodafone One Net Express ensures those landline calls reach me on the mobile wherever I am, on a farm in Dorset or in a planning meeting with Selfridges.”

**Tim Wilkes, founder,
Timmy's Pies**

Personality baked in

The growth has come, in Tim's words, from "three years of slog". His week would involve door-stepping potential stockists, entering industry awards, shoestring marketing on social media, forging links with quality single-source suppliers, and finally door-stepping more stockists. No two days are the same.

"Knocking on doors, it's the only way for people to get to hear about you. You have to be proactive," he says. "I didn't have a holiday in the first two years, and just a week in year three. It does start to play with your sanity."

Tim needed the support of a trusted network partner to help take the business to the next level. Timmy's Pies is on Vodafone One Net Express and, for the first time, Tim has a smartphone and landline in one device. It means the business has a geographical London landline number but Tim can take calls wherever he is.

"We're a London business, it's important for us to be seen to have a London number," says Tim. "But we need those calls to be answered all the time, every time irrespective of my location. With Vodafone One Net Express the calls reach me wherever I am, on a farm in Dorset or in a planning meeting with Selfridges. If I can't take the call it will pass to a colleague."

Tim's new smartphone, with 4G, has improved his ability to keep track of the business while on the road – and turbo-charged his social media activity: "Previously, if I was ever doing anything online I would have to go back to the office to tweet or update my blog with my laptop in bed. Now I can take the office with me and stay connected to my customers and industry on social media."

“ Vodafone One Net Express with 4G makes my business more connected, more collaborative and more mobile. ”

Tim Wilkes, founder, Timmy's Pies

“ There are other guys in the team – in the kitchen, driving the van, on the market stall, and they all have something to contribute. Having 4G from Vodafone means the whole team can post stuff to Instagram or respond to tweets much quicker. ”

Tim Wilkes, founder,
Timmy's Pies

Though Tim remains central to the personality of the brand, there are now others helping him. Vodafone One Net Express means the business is more connected, more collaborative and more mobile. “There are other guys in the team – in the kitchen, driving the van, on the market stall, and they have something to contribute. With 4G from Vodafone the whole team can post stuff to Instagram or respond to tweets. Also, if there is a problem or customer order that needs turning round quickly, we're all available and online at all times.”

No set path

As the business has grown, so too have the number of products and services. Timmy's Pies now does lunch deliveries, personalised pies, pies by post, it even created a version of the Scotch Egg following a request from Harvey Nichols. It continues, however, to make a version of Tim's original market-stall favourite, the Bacon & Egg pie.

“My ambitions change every few months,” says Tim. “I came at this as an amateur, albeit a very enthusiastic one. We had a great product but no production or food service experience. We learnt and adapted very quickly to build a professional company and we're still learning things on a daily basis.”

Tim refuses to rule out anything. Books, apps and branded stores are possibilities, expanding stockists outside of London is a more likely next step:

“If a supermarket came to us wanting to carry our pies in hundreds of stores, we'd jump at the chance. But we're not chasing that. There is no set future, no clichéd path to roll down, and that's a nice place to be in.

“For now, with Vodafone, we're never going to miss an order, never going to miss an opportunity.”

Business benefits:

- **Responsive to his customers**
Creates a virtual London landline number on his and colleagues mobiles. This allows him to have calls forwarded to staff mobiles without any extra charge – improving productivity, reducing costs and never missing important business opportunities
- **Connected staff**
Enables all his staff to communicate through social media, allowing his brand to be central to blogs and conversation, an important channel for the business
- **Agile, efficient way of working**
Frees Tim Wilkes, the founder, to work remotely while keeping him in touch with the business and its customers

About Timmy's Pies

Timmy's Pies is an independent pie company based in West London. It has stockists throughout London, including Selfridges and Harvey Nichols. It also provides a Pies by Post service for those further afield.

timmyspies.com

vodafone.co.uk/business

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