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Table linen and chair covers proves successful franchise for Sarah

by **Simon Read, Daily Mirror** [10/03/2011](#)

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WHEN Sarah Pittendrigh was made redundant in August 2008, she decided it was time to set up her own business.

She had worked in the corporate events industry for 15 years and knew one thing that hadn't been hit by the economic downturn was the desire by brides to ensure their big day was perfect.

She thought there was a gap in the market for high quality table linen and chair covers and was quickly proved right with wedding venues across the country showing an interest.

In fact, she was so successful, she couldn't cope with demand.

The answer was to start a franchise, with the first franchisee joining in November 2009.

Last month, Sarah signed up her eighth franchisee and is now looking for more to roll out the business across the country.

She says: "I set up Simply Bows & Chair Covers in the north east of England with financial grants from Business Link.

"My idea was simple – we manufacture high quality linen in-house within the UK, provide a fully-fitted service, use the highest-quality fabrics, and have a creative edge supported by exceptional customer service. As part of that, if we haven't got what the customer want we will make it bespoke."

The winning formula has grown quickly, with franchisees already signed up in Northumberland, Cumbria, County Durham, Newcastle, Sunderland/Teesside, North Yorkshire, Lancashire and Devon.

"But now we need more southern-based franchises as we get a lot of inquiries for the London/Berkshire/Surrey areas," says Sarah.

Later this month, the company is in line for a Newcomer's Award in the annual North East Business Awards.

Simply Bows & Chair Covers franchises start from £17,000, which includes everything you need to start running your business and delivering events, says Sarah.

"We interview every potential franchisee as if we are interviewing an area director.

"We want people who will support our vision for the growth of the brand."