



FLOUR POWER: Viv Parry has seen Exquisite Hand Made Cakes go from strength to strength and there are plans for a new headquarters near to its current home in Kirkstall.

Entrepreneur enjoying larger slice of the cake

Peter Edwards

IT'S a familiar story for the British economy – manufacturing businesses fade away and are replaced by the service sector.

Except one Yorkshire businesswoman took the opposite route and left her career in chartered accountancy to buy a bakery. Seven years on Viv Parry's businesses turns over

£1.7m and has experienced 30 per cent year-on-growth for the past two years.

Exquisite Hand Made Cakes was set up when Ms Parry paid £20,000 for the assets of a small Leeds bakery.

"It was tough at first, cramming all the product samples into a small car for sales trips, then, with no credit lines, dashing round to pay ingredients suppliers in cash

before they would release the goods," she said.

"But by not compromising on the home-baked and hand-crafted quality ethos and listening to customer feedback, the business took off."

Exquisite's basic ranges are gateaux, loaves, tray-bakes and wrapped products selling across the UK, mainly through major distributors and into outlets

including cafes and leading airlines.

Ms Parry received an £8,000 grant from Leeds City Council through the Business Growth Fund.

The firm started with two units at Kirkstall's Cardigan Works and has now more than doubled that to five units spanning 6,000 square feet.

Now Exquisite wants to expand

further and plans to buy, or build from scratch, larger premises near to its current home.

Paul Stephens, Leeds City Council's chief economic development officer, said: "Viv and the team have achieved impressive growth. Entrepreneurs like Viv have a key role to play in creating employment and developing a thriving economy."