

Date: November 25th 2009

Subject: fit fur life

Source: <http://fromdragonsden.co.uk/pitches/fit-fur-life>

Fit Fur Life

Pitched by Sammy French - 3rd December 2007

Series 5 : Episode 7

Sammy French accepted a £100,000 offer from James Caan for 50% stake in her company.



[See larger image](#)

[Dog Jogger Motorised Treadmill \(Sports\)](#)

New From: £504.29 In Stock



Devoted animal lover and dog trainer, Sammy, 38, brought her idea – a treadmill for training dogs and for their rehabilitation after accidents and operations – before the dragons in December 2007. James was the only dragon to see the potential in her business, making her an offer of £100,000 for a 50% share.

'I've always trained dogs, particularly gun dogs for the shooting field. During the summer of 2002, I wasn't very well – I needed to get dogs fit for the season, which starts in September, but I could barely walk. And that's when I came up with the idea of a treadmill designed specially for dogs.

'My next step was to find someone to manufacture the product. I did some drawings and approached a fitness company who loved the idea. It took two years to actually launch Fit Fur Life. We took it out on the road on the usual show circuit and then did our first Crufts in 2005. By 2007, I'd changed the design of the treadmills and found a new manufacturer but needed a large cash injection to help develop the business – I was running everything on the phone from my flat – and that's when I applied for Dragons' Den.

'To say I was slightly nervous before the pitch would be an understatement – I spent the whole day beforehand on the loo! But once in the den, the adrenaline kicked in and I managed to get through it. I was in the den for a very stressful one hour and 50 minutes before James suddenly offered me a deal I couldn't refuse – £100,000 for a 50% stake in Fit Fur Life.

'James came on board quickly – we signed contracts almost immediately – and our first shipment came through in January 2008. The business has escalated massively since he got involved. In its first year, Fit Fur Life sold 27 treadmills, but last year this jumped to 500 and this year it is projected to achieve 1,000 sales. We've already revamped the company three or four times and now distribute all over the world. In fact, within weeks of James coming on board, I was on a plane to Taiwan to check on an order of 200 new machines. We've even had an order from the MOD!

'James and his team are so active and supportive. The first thing they did was update my website with a video demonstration on it so I no longer had to take the treadmill to potential customers to demonstrate it.

'We're in regular contact and have board meetings every month and telephone conferences every week. James' private equity firm, Hamilton Bradshaw, deal with all the finance of the company, which allows me get on with the marketing which is what I know best. Ultimately, the business is expanding in a time of recession, which says it all really.

FROM DRAGONS' DEN .COM

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