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Yes we Caan!

DRAGONS' Den star James Caan has thrown his weight behind a new campaign aimed at boosting the fortunes of small business across the UK.

The celebrated entrepreneur has pledged his support for *Get Britain Trading* – a campaign which was recently launched by the Forum of Private Business to highlight the huge contribution smaller businesses make to the economy.

The Forum, which is a not for profit support organisation for smaller firms, is also using *Get Britain Trading* to call on the Government to tackle persistent problems affecting small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) including late payment, access to finance and excessive red tape.

Additionally, *Get Britain Trading* aims to spread positivity and business confidence in order to help pull the UK out of the economic doldrums – and this is what prolific investor and serial entrepreneur James says secured his backing for the campaign.

He said: "Sustainable economic recovery in the UK can ultimately be achieved by boosting and

supporting our small and medium sized businesses. Those businesses that have survived the recession have proven their strength and durability and I believe that with the right support, many of them could be very successful indeed.

"I have seen a great deal of businesses recently that have made cuts to survive the recession and have now stagnated in their growth. It is the responsibility of the Government and also the larger business community to support these businesses to help them return to growth and *Get Britain Trading*."

James, who regularly invests, advises and helps to grow SMEs, added: "I hope that *Get Britain Trading* will continue to raise awareness of the issues that small firms face and that the Government will take further action to enable small businesses to grow for the benefit of Britain's economy.

"The entrepreneurial spirit in Britain has never been more alive than now. Despite having to struggle through the recent recession, we British remain innovative, commercially

mindful and motivated to be successful. Small businesses who have survived the hardships of the recession with their businesses intact will not only have learned priceless lessons about the true nature of their business but have also proven their underlying viability. The challenge that many of them now face is no longer survival, but growth."

He also had the following advice for small businesses following the Forum's campaign: "Having made it through the recession, many UK business owners are now experts at survival, but not necessarily growth. There are hundreds of snippets of advice that I won't presume to give here since useful advice is usually specific to an individual business.

"What I will say instead is that businesses that are not growing need to access the right senior support at the executive level. A good recipe for growth is the right mix of strategic direction, structuring for scalability, mentoring, access to networks, access to finance, sales prowess and succession planning. Business should seek out those experienced

individuals that can advise, assist and support in these areas."

Commenting on receiving James' backing, the Forum's Head of Campaigns, Jane Bennett, said: "We're absolutely delighted to have someone with James' profile, experience and knowledge lend their support to *Get Britain Trading*. As someone who has started, invested in and grown countless small businesses, James is one of the best qualified people imaginable to back the campaign and endorse its aim of boosting the fortunes of Britain's vital SME sector.

"However we still need the support of ordinary business owners across the UK if we are to make the campaign a success so please visit the *Get Britain Trading* website – www.getbritaintrading.co.uk – and sign our pledge!"

As part of the *Get Britain Trading* campaign, the Forum is currently in the process of contacting every UK MP individually in order to raise awareness of the issues facing smaller firms in their constituencies.

www.fpb.org