

Dragons return hoping to ma

EXCLUSIVE

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BUSINESSMAN Gavin Duffy said yesterday he has made a huge profit in the recession – thanks to his Dragons' Den investments.

The millionaire claims he has the biggest-selling toy in Ireland this Christmas thanks to one of his investments.

He said: "I made five offers, was declined by one, and ended up investing in four.

"Sales of Animatazz have been phenomenal so far and we aren't even into the Christmas market.

"I invested €80,000 in that - I went home to my wife with some plasticine, some pipe cleaners, three polyester balls and two empty yoghurt cartons.

"She looked at me as if I had totally lost it. But we developed the product, our first cheque was €85,000 from Smyths - they have re-ordered twice since.

"I invested in the Takker, the wall hanging product which, from its Woodies and Atlantic Homecare sales alone, are expecting to sell 100 Takkers per shop in a 12-month deal.

"That's 4,000 Takkers per week and €1million profit per year which was a €50,000 investment on the Den.

"I think I got stunning value. I invested with Niall O'Farrell in hen-party.ie which has been a huge success.

"And the fourth was pedigreecattle.ie with Sean which has also been a great hit.

"To be honest I did so well I'm worried about the new series - I won't get that lucky again."

Gavin was speaking as RTE launched the hunt for entrepreneurs for the new series of Dragon's Den.

He said all his entrepreneurs had created their own employment in challenging times - while making him a tidy profit.

But he wasn't the only Dragon with a success story.

As well as hen-party.ie, Niall invested in designer jewellery company Buttons & Co run by the 24-year-old Elaine-Sarah Comberford.

And yesterday he was celebrating as the product has been placed in top-class jewellers Weirs.

Niall said: "I made three investments last year - Button & Co, a superb investment, and next year we will be in profit.

"I have hen-party.ie and the toilet snake which is still in the preliminary stages.

"The interesting thing is that we are marketing hen-party.ie into the UK and when I asked about hen-party.co.uk it turned out Peter Jones from the English version of Dragons' Den was the investor in that.



They don't like it when someone recognises me in the supermarket

BOBBY KERR

I was a bit cross.. but I can only be myself.. this isn't pantomime

SARAH NEWMAN



▶ **TOP-CLASS** Elaine-Sarah Comberford

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