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PRESTIGIOUS ADDRESS: Inigo has offices in Queen Square

How firms can cut costs without affecting quality

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Business Reporter
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When times are tough, businesses look to cut costs wherever they can.

Overheads and long-term leases are often the last thing companies want to worry about when it comes to growth and development.

And, with the recession showing few signs of letting up, more and more firms are looking to serviced offices with flexible terms.

Serviced office provider Inigo opened its first premises in Bath last July after more than a decade of supplying work space to companies in locations around the country.

The firm rents properties in Edinburgh, central London, Leeds, Windsor, Banbury, Newbury and Basingstoke and now runs a Georgian building in Queen Square.

Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's Jamie's Italian was its first client and signed up for six months of office space shortly before the opening of its flagship restaurant at Bath's Milsom Place development.

Inigo rents its building in Bath from St John's Hospital and founder Giles Curtis said it is the perfect fit for the company's ethos.

He said: "Our theme is exceptional quality period buildings."

"All of our buildings are listed bar one and they are in prime addresses."

Mr Curtis and his team spent around a year researching buildings in Bath before signing up to its current location, which now offers a total of 17 office rooms and two meeting rooms.

All but four of the offices are now taken and, after a slow start, Mr Giles said pace of business has been increasing since the start of 2009.

Inigo's Queen Square building is now home to one of the world's major clearing banks as well as firms as small as a two-man commercial estate agency.

The firm's operations manager Sarah Ryder has been looking after its Bath tenants since it opened for business in the city.

She said: "A year or two ago people might have taken on their own premises but now is not the right time to be committing to a five-year lease."

"I have been talking to companies that are relocating from London because they want serviced offices which are flexible."



AT YOUR SERVICE: Sarah Ryder, operations manager of Inigo; inset, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's Jamie's Italian was its first client PICTURE: Kevin Bates

Miss Ryder said clients who lived in Bath had also relocated from offices in Bristol to serviced offices in Bath because they are looking to cut journey times and searching for a better quality of life.

The Inigo building is also used as a venue for networking by groups including the Bath Business Women's Association (BBWA).

Miss Ryder became a BBWA committee member in April this year and said: "We have such a fantastic space here that is crying out to be used for things so networking is very important."

"If we can facilitate that and help other businesses through running functions then that is brilliant."

Mr Curtis launched Inigo in a Regency building in 1997 after running a business which worked to create jobs for people in areas of high unemployment by finding them flexible office space in deprived towns and cities.

During the past 12 years his firm has seen a trend of small businesses signing up for office space alongside multi-national firms looking for a location in a specific town or city.

Communications giant Nokia took two rooms in its Basingstoke office for around two years alongside one-man operations.

Mr Curtis said: "Its all about creating a stimulating working environment."

Derek Walker

GROUND FLOOR SUITE: 530 SQ FT. South part of city centre near Southgate and station. Front office/meeting room and large rear room. Own kitchen and security alarm zone. Gas c/heating. To let at £6,850 pa. Sole Agent. FIRST ADVERTISEMENT

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