

In the Dragons' den

Peter Jones and Duncan Bannatyne have been Dragons on the show since it started. Deborah Meaden joined in 2006.



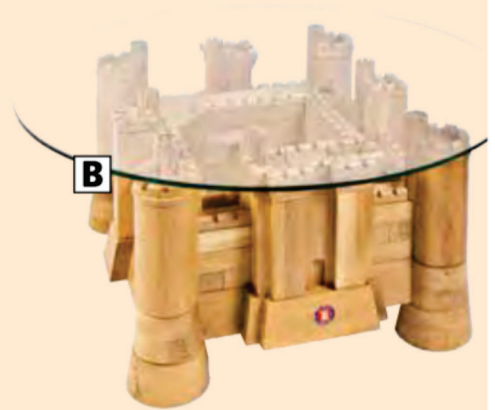
Dragons' Den is a UK TV series, with similar versions in many different countries. In the UK programme, contestants have three minutes to present their business ideas to five very successful business people. These people are nicknamed the 'Dragons', and the intimidating room where they meet the contestants is the 'Den' (the dragons' home). The Dragons, who are often multi-millionaires, are prepared to invest money in any business that they believe might be a success. In return, they take **a share in the profits**. The contestants are usually young **entrepreneurs**, product designers, or people with a new idea for a service. After the contestants have made their presentations, the Dragons ask them questions about the **product** and its possible **market**, and then say if they are prepared to invest or not. If they are not convinced by the presentation, they say the dreaded words 'I'm out'.



So far, the Dragons have agreed to invest in 110 businesses. They were very pleased with their investment in Levi Roots, the Rastafarian singer who had the idea for Reggae Reggae Sauce. He came into the Den with a guitar, a couple of bottles of sauce he had made in his kitchen – and nothing else. But the Dragons sensed an opportunity in the charismatic Levi, and two of them agreed to invest in his product. Two months later the sauce was on the shelves of one of Britain’s biggest supermarket chains, and Levi is now running an impressive and profitable company.



Paul Simpson wanted the Dragons to invest in his handmade coffee tables. They have a wooden base, which look like 14th century castles, and a glass top. Nobody was enthusiastic, and the Dragons **rejected his idea**. But Paul hasn’t given up. Now he is making a new table, this time a replica of Windsor Castle, which he thinks might be popular with tourists. And that is what makes a real entrepreneur – they never give up. If the Dragons invest in them, there is a good chance they will **be successful**. But if they leave the Den empty-handed, the determination **to make it** on their own is as great as ever.



And of course the Dragons don’t always get it right. Inventor Rob Law’s product, a suitcase for children which they can also ride on, was rejected as **‘worthless’**. One Dragon thought it was not strong enough, and another Dragon, who runs a holiday company, said she didn’t think there was a market for the product. A third Dragon simply said ‘I meet people like you all the time. You think you have something, but you don’t’. However, today Trunki cases are best-sellers, and are sold in 22 different countries.

