

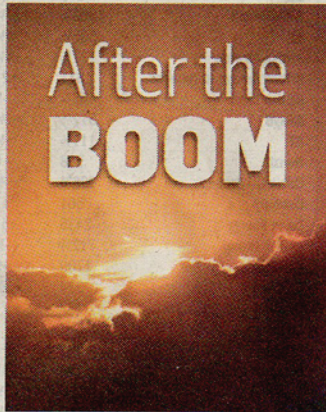
Kerry hair and beauty firm not feeling snip

DESPITE THE recession Seán Taaffe Hair and Beauty has opened a second salon in Co Kerry and revenue has jumped this year.

Seán Taaffe says profits at the Killarney salon, which opened in 2006 and employs 19 people, have increased 5 per cent this year and were also up 10 per cent in 2008.

He started the business 20 years ago in Killorglin when he was 16-years-old and last year it produced almost €1 million in turnover.

Mr Taaffe says he faced criticism for opening another salon with three staff at the business's original location in Killorglin last month. "Everyone says it is the worst possible time to do it. I felt there was a hole in the market, so I thought I would go for it anyway. I am very optimistic. It is exceeding our initial forecasts and has doubled in the first two weeks,



although they were conservative forecasts."

However, he admits the retail section of the business, which supplies luxury hair products, has dipped 5 per cent from last year.



Seán Taaffe: opened second salon and revenue has jumped

To fight this trend he has introduced more moderately-priced products and has reduced stock purchases from up to €17,000 per month to under €14,000.

"It has forced us to look at

where we were haemorrhaging money, even though we were doing well. I would not say I am selling more, but I think if we had not been monitoring it would be down a lot more."

The business owner has also invested more than €17,000 on staff training already this year.

"That has doubled from last year. We are doing a little better now, so we have the ability to finance it."

He has also introduced an online style account giving customers access to photos and information about previous haircuts.

"I think business is growing and pushing forward because we are maintaining a high standard."

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RENEE JONES