**Rivals tend to want to talk to us when we have just taken their biggest customer**

Kather Dyson, founding chairman of the internet domain body Landmark, and Harry Granger, founder of PD Smartspace.

These experienced entrepreneurs have been as valuable for their advice and support as they have for the £130,000 of start-up funding they provided, because Jez and I are quite young and don't have the experience that others know, we got a lot of help from our board of investors,” Mr Allason says.

They enlisted the support of Dr Cynthia Barrashard, a logistics expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, only after Mr Allason and Mr Bregman tracked her down on a family holiday in Hawaii and wooed with gifts.

They were also fortunate in attracting several high-profile investors, including

Mr Bregman notes that competitors have sent people on delivery bikes to stand guard outside companies where eCourier has been taking their business.

The companies aren’t happy that in fact we are doing well,” he says.

He and Mr Bregman are also keen to acquire rival courier companies to consolidate what is a very fragmented market. The courier business in London alone is worth about £300m but is split among about 600 suppliers.

“Rival companies tend to want to talk to us when they have discovered we have just taken their biggest customer,” Mr Allason says.

However, growth through acquisition is likely to be difficult in an industry unused to such aggressive young competitors.

Mr Bregman says: “If you want to double sales in six months, you have to get people to talk about you.”