



Enterprise
Nation

Start me up!

How 100 entrepreneurs started
great businesses.



Introduction

Emma Jones

When people ask me the favourite bit of my job, it's easy to reply. It is hearing from our small business members on their successes; hearing how they've got stocked, funded, advised, and founded on the back of the daily support we deliver.

This eBook is written in celebration of those stories. It showcases 100 Enterprise Nation members and alumni members who are successfully starting and growing amazing enterprises. It includes CocoRose London who we've followed for years since founder, Janan, was working a day job and building the business in her spare time, to a company today that sells high fashion across the globe, and Aaron Henriques, a more recent member, who has left the police force to turn his vision of a call answering service into business reality.

They are all an inspiration. If you're reading this and have started a business, you know it comes with a tough job description. You have to perfect your product, build a team, manage money, attract customers – and keep those customers coming back. Hard work, it may be. Gratifying, most definitely.

As you embark on your entrepreneurial journey of start-up and growth, there's support all around. Support from your peers – like the people in this eBook – who are happy to share what worked for them, and support from experts and advisers who have spent years perfecting their practice so you don't have to.

I hope you enjoy our members' stories as much as we've enjoyed being part of them.

Emma Jones, founder, Enterprise Nation



We help you start and grow a successful business





Joe Devereux-Kelly Cool Cold Brew

Making it easier to enjoy chilled coffee in a convenient and healthy way.

“I began hand-producing (and by that I mean hand-brewing, bottling, labelling and self-distributing) the first Cool Cold Brew product on my own.”

I first discovered cold brew coffee in America in 2010, and fell in love with it. I made it for myself regularly but then I noticed that it seemed to be catching on in the UK. I entered one of my recipes in a national food and drink competition and came runner-up. And so the seed was sown.

I began hand-producing (and by that I mean hand-brewing, bottling, labelling and self-distributing) the first Cool Cold Brew product on my own and sold it to over 25 independent outlets across Manchester city centre.

I could see that I had something so I decided to scale Cool Cold Brew further and outsourced production to UK-based BRC manufacturers. I rebranded, created four new flavours and raised over £150,000 via a Crowdcube campaign from 490 investors.

Enterprise Nation has not only been great for opening doors, but it has also given us traction to secure investment for Cool Cold Brew and to secure more listings. We've attended three meet the retail buyer meetings as a result of our membership.

My advice is to take each and every opportunity that comes your way. We attended an Enterprise Nation meet the buyer event in 2016 but I didn't think the brand was ready. Ultimately, we weren't. But it opened the door for us, helped us gain constructive feedback and we're now in a position where we're building a relationship with Sainsbury's to begin supplying in 2018.

Get in touch

 [coolcoldbrew](#)

 [coolcoldbrew](#)

 [coolcoldbrew](#)

[www.coolcoldbrew.co.uk](#)



Hershil Patel Dips

It's not good enough to make an amazing product – you have to sell it too.

We came up with the idea after taking our mum's homemade condiments to friend's houses and they couldn't get enough of them! We decided to launch Dips, delightfully spiced products invented by mum. One of the most important steps was understanding packaged food product regulations including what you need to have on your label and what claims you can make. We also had to learn about branding and how to get our message out there. It's no longer good enough to simply make an amazing product; you actually have to sell it too!

After going to the Enterprise Nation Food Exchange event four years ago, I got the confidence to launch the products. Some of our proudest moments since then include winning two Great Taste awards and working with other small businesses to launch co-branded products. Our next business goal is to finish our rebrand and hit the shelves hard along with a new branding campaign.

I've learned that it's important to define your own success in your own way. For some it's being in every big multiple going and selling millions of products. But for others it's earning enough so you can make that transition from a day job to running your own business and being able to spend more time with your family and kids. Running your own business isn't easy and in some ways making a good product is actually the easiest part. Ideas are plentiful, but it's in the execution that you make money.

“Ideas are plentiful, it’s in the execution that you make money.”



Get in touch

[ukdips](#)

[ukdips](#)

[Dipsuk](#)

[www.dipsltd.com](#)

Stephanie Peritore

Mindful Bites

“Embrace the journey, because it’s also an amazing opportunity to get to know yourself better than you could have ever imagined.”

Don’t attempt to run this marathon at sprinting pace.

I was raised in a kitchen and creating a food business has always been a dream. Having studied the biochemistry and neuroscience of food, my experiment was to create the sense of indulgence we normally associate with fatty, sugary foods, but in something which was totally healthy. Premium nut butters and snacks, inspired by mindful eating; Hopefully the magic formula has worked!

We launched with Whole Foods Market in February 2017 followed by Selfridges and Revital, as well as various premium delis and high-end fitness studios.

The business is now getting ready for the next phase of growth and we’re working towards our first listing with a supermarket which should go live by the end of 2017.

Don’t attempt to run this marathon at sprinting pace. The temptation is there, and I’ve definitely tried to accelerate on occasion, only to realise that there are crucial milestones to achieve first. Embrace the journey, because it’s also an amazing opportunity to get to know yourself better than you could have ever imagined. Address negative behaviours if they’re there, and also get rid of a lot of the bad stuff that weighs us down.

It’s an incredible journey of brutal authenticity and every single day I feel a mixture of amazement and profound gratitude for being on this adventure. It’s important to participate in as many events as possible. You can make a lot of friends who are on the same journey. This network will be precious at many points.

I think of Enterprise Nation as a portfolio of mentors. With Enterprise Nation you can get pretty much any type of help you’re looking for, from the more technical details to introductions to industry experts, down to ‘sanity checks’ when you feel a bit wobbly (and there are lots of those moments).



Get in touch

- [@MindfulBitesUK](https://twitter.com/MindfulBitesUK)
- [@MindfulBitesUK](https://www.instagram.com/mindfulbitesuk/)
- [mindfulbitesuk](https://www.facebook.com/mindfulbitesuk)
- www.mindfulbites.co.uk

David Harris

David Harris Magic

Performing mind-blowingly exciting magic at high-end events.



From a very early age, I got a buzz from magic and first learned about it watching my father do tricks at home. It inspired me to learn more and more techniques and skills and to try creating ever more challenging effects.

I love watching people's reactions as the magic happens just in front of them. But I think my greatest trick was leaving the security of a good job and becoming a full-time professional magician. So far, it's a trick that's still working wonders.

The biggest challenge is making the right connections and the right networks to propel yourself into a full-time career. I've had the opportunity to perform at prestigious film and television studios with my unique style of magic. In the long run, there's a chance I could have my own TV show, and that's something I would really aspire to.

Enterprise Nation has helped my business by introducing me to people I wouldn't have normally got a chance to speak to plus I've heard excellent talks on a variety of topics such as social media and branding. The weekly webinars are great to listen to even if it's not your area of interest. And if you have any questions on business, the team are always quick to respond to emails.

My advice, based on experience, is that if you're offering a service, it's not enough to just tell people about it; go out and show them what it is! For me, I could get the best reviews, but real interaction and word of mouth will always be better.

Go to networking events that are aimed around what you do, or where your possible clients might be. If you hand out a business card, always get their card too. That way you can contact them the next day rather than waiting for them to call you.

And finally, make sure you're on some sort of social media and keep the content interesting. Don't just post about your products; share some fun and interesting stuff too. Like with magic, if you're boring, people stop caring.

“If you’re offering a service, it’s not enough to just tell people about it; go out and show them!”

Get in touch

 [@magicmanlondon](https://twitter.com/magicmanlondon)

 [magicmanlondon](https://facebook.com/magicmanlondon)

 [magicmanlondon](https://instagram.com/magicmanlondon)

www.themagicman.london



Diane Douglas Vigiles Group

I use technology to make a difference to how people feel about safety.

“Whatever business you’re in, it’s all about people, your team, clients, customers and the community.”

When my husband of 13 years walked out I was left with two young children, a lot of responsibility and sole directorship of the company we’d started together just a year before. Then I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.

It wasn’t an easy start, but the day before surgery, I took my prototype to a group of Year 12 students at a local school. They loved it, and I knew I had to continue and build my product.

My company creates experiences to enhance safety messages for the home and workplace. We use simulations and augmented reality video to embed strong emotions and feelings in safety learning, and so create more memorable experiences and ultimately save lives.

When all’s said and done, I’m a single parent, cancer survivor, and soon to be grandmother; a very unlikely tech founder. But with passion and drive, anything’s possible.

My next challenge is securing investment to be able to grow my business and ensure the model I’m developing is sustainable and meaningful.

Joining Enterprise Nation member is one of the best decisions I’ve made. Every week there are opportunities for networking meet-ups, pitching and focused events like Meet the Journalists or Meet the Buyer.

I plan to be doing this for quite a while yet, but here are a few lessons I’ve learned so far:

Pleasant persistence pays. It’s not always easy, but remaining persistent and pleasant, on the bad days as well as the good days, is critical to the culture of a company

Mindset is everything. Anything is possible if you focus, and have a positive attitude and mindset

Make it count. When building a business, always consider sustainability and responsibility

Get in touch

-  [@VigilesGroup](https://twitter.com/@VigilesGroup)
-  [VigilesGroup](https://facebook.com/VigilesGroup)
-  [@Vigiles_Group](https://instagram.com/@Vigiles_Group)
- www.vigilesgroup.com



Charlie Thuillier Oppo Brothers Ltd

Making healthy ice cream that lets you indulge, without looking like you have.

In 2011 my brother and I broke the world record for the longest distance travelled by kite, 1000km, along a very remote beach in Brazil. Our diet on this expedition was the inspiration for Oppo. I wanted to make the world's healthiest dairy ice cream, which would also win taste awards.

It took over two years to create the recipes, and we launched in 2014. Oppo ice cream has fewer calories and less sugar than an apple, yet gets 4-5 star reviews online. Oppo lets you indulge, without looking like you have.

In fact, Oppo is the first (and so far only) dairy ice cream in Europe to legally be called 'healthy'.

We've won awards for taste, like the Great Taste Award Gold Star, and for the business, like The Guardian UK Start-up Of The Year, Innovation of the Year and Brand of the Year, among others.

So far, we're the top selling ice cream in Wholefoods UK and Amazon Fresh and we're in the top 5% in Waitrose and Ocado. We're stocked in 2,000 stores in the UK, 700 in Holland, and we'll be in three more markets by the end of 2017.

From the start, Enterprise Nation has always been there for us. For the first pitch to Sainsbury's way back in 2013 (we finally launched with them in late 2017), to a trade trip to Ireland, to founder Emma Jones introducing me to Number 10 Downing Street for a trip to Milan with the prime minister in 2015.

Throughout, Enterprise Nation has been a great help and inspiration, and we now have 1,200 investors, including Andy Murray, the tennis champion. And we're still only two-and-a-half years old.

Along the way I've learned that yes, product is king. But you also need a vision. Something others, whether it's investors, buyers, consumers, customers, journalists or your employees, can get just as excited about as you are. It's not enough to just push a great product, you need to have a mission, and sell a vision.

"It's not enough to just push a great product, you need to have a mission, and sell a vision."

Get in touch

-  [@oppoicecream](https://twitter.com/oppoicecream)
-  [@oppoicecream](https://facebook.com/oppoicecream)
-  [@charlieoppo](https://instagram.com/charlieoppo)
- www.oppoicecream.co.uk



“It’s incredibly difficult to turn a homegrown recipe developed on an AGA to scaled manufactured production.”

Frankie Fox The Foraging Fox

An ‘all natural’, vegan, allergen and gluten-free range of beetroot ketchups.

My father was a plant and fungi expert who used to take me foraging as a child. He always said that you don’t waste good food, you just become more inventive with it.

The Foraging Fox began when I had a bumper harvest of beetroot and apples in my garden and I wanted to make something everyone would want to eat.

I started by giving away samples to family and friends, but it took three years of tinkering in the kitchen with my kids to perfect the first ketchup recipe. When we got good feedback at the Speciality & Fine Food Fair in 2014, we decided to launch the company there and then.

Our major challenges were to scale up manufacturing and scale distribution. It’s incredibly difficult to turn a recipe developed with homegrown ingredients on an AGA cooker to scaled manufactured production and get it out to customers. It had to be the best quality ingredients and cooking process to be as good as my handmade product.

In our first year we went to lots of regional trade shows to meet new stockists face to face and let them sample our products. We took orders, met with key buyers, UK and export distributors, and got valuable feedback from stockists. We also built strong relationships with our retail customers and our fellow producers. We launched in Waitrose in May, and most recently in Sainsbury’s, thanks to Enterprise Nation. They selected us to pitch to Sainsbury’s buyers at one of their events and we were successful!

Trust your gut feelings and never bury your head in the sand

Be proud of what you do and you’ll find you have an endless amount of passion and energy (you’ll need plenty of both)

Respect everyone you work with and hire people who are better than you

Get in touch

- [!\[\]\(891ae467a50cbcd6256dc7f42cbad244_img.jpg\) theforagingfox](https://www.instagram.com/theforagingfox)
- [!\[\]\(0dbab3585cc47ec99c341fade6880d5a_img.jpg\) theforagingfox](https://www.twitter.com/theforagingfox)
- [!\[\]\(b3938d0b1de59e819c382c7d8a8025ee_img.jpg\) TheForagingFox](https://www.facebook.com/TheForagingFox)
- www.foragingfox.com



Quentin Pain

Quentin Pain Ltd

Helping people become number one in their industry.



“Every word tells a story, so you’d better get your story right.”

When I was 23 I couldn’t stand being employed any longer. So I borrowed £500 from the bank (thank you NatWest) and started a business. I sold it four years later for what would be worth £250,000 today. I went on to start five more businesses – all with differing degrees of success.

Now, 38 years later, I’m still starting businesses. But there was one thing missing from my strategy that I never believed in or understood. A marketing plan. Why would I? I’d already been hugely successful without one. So a decade ago I decided to study every aspect of it.

Later I found my marketing specialism, copywriting. And today, that’s what I do best. Every word tells a story, so you’d better get your story right. Stories change the world. Stories make businesses stand out. Stories change opinions and minds. And today, websites are how you distribute your core story, backed up by social media channels to let people know who you are and where they can find you.

Over the years I’ve also learnt to program. This helped me set up two software companies, the last of which, Accountz, at one point competed with the likes of Sage (we were second in the UK).

It also led me to develop a new app that reverse engineers search engine results. SEO Roadmaps is my latest weapon in online domination to help high-achieving businesses achieve even more.

I discovered Enterprise Nation when they spearheaded the government’s Growth Voucher scheme. I could see immediately this was an excellent channel to help me grow my latest venture. And they certainly did. The Enterprise Nation online marketplace was the hub that launched my latest company and I have nothing but praise for the ways they help countless small businesses, including my own, to thrive.

The kind of lessons I try to teach my clients apply just as well to general business as they do to copywriting and storytelling:

1. If you have no idea who your customers are, they’ll have no idea who you are
2. You can’t write any meaningful copy unless you know who you’re writing to
3. Know what problem it is you’re solving
4. Understand that people only buy things they need right now
5. Never undervalue yourself, your products, or the value you provide

Get in touch

 [thequentinpain](#)

 [quentinpain](#)

 [quentinpain](#)

[www.quentinpain.com](#)



Genevieve Sweeney

Genevieve Sweeney

Creating premium British knitwear and celebrating contemporary design with artisan skills.

My career in fashion has taken me to New York, Switzerland and London, working for high-end designer labels in knitwear design, development and production. When I returned to the UK, I felt the need to do something for myself, though not necessarily as a business.

So I rented a studio in Essex and started to buy old knitting machines to help create and knit design ideas for myself in my spare time. It wasn't always easy to find good machines. I once drove up to Scotland to meet someone that was looking to sell his old machine that had been stuck under his stairs for over 15 years. It took a long time to clean.

During my trip, I came across a network of knitters and fell in love with their high-quality skills and extreme attention to detail. These 'hidden knitters' used techniques you hardly ever see in the industry, especially knitting by hand, which I thought just didn't happen anymore. I became very concerned that these skills might die out so I started working on projects with the knitters.

"Hidden knitters' use techniques you hardly ever see in the industry, especially knitting by hand, which I thought just didn't happen anymore."

After a few months, I realised I was forming the start of a collection, so I made the jump and decided to launch my own label celebrating and reinvigorating the UK knitwear industry.

Enterprise Nation has been a huge support since the early days. They've given me a voice to promote and celebrate my brand. But they've also given me the most amazing opportunities to meet like-minded brands and entrepreneurs.

I took part in the Go Global Berlin trade mission and visited the city to meet traders, buyers and marketers. I learned so much about the market, the customer and key plug-ins for my website, which is still a huge asset for my business.

My experience so far has given me three key points to keep in the front of my mind for my business:

Networking: There's nothing like meeting people directly to find common ground

Constant research: It's essential to keep up to date with the market and customer habits

Don't think, do: When you need to make a change you should make it, and be reactive to the demands of the market and your customers

Get in touch

-  [@genevieveknits](#)
-  [@genevievesweeney](#)
-  [GenevieveSweeneyLondon](#)
-  [Genevieve Sweeney](#)
- [www.genevievesweeney.com](#)



Simon Kallu SRK Accounting

Doing our bit to help reduce SME failure rates in the UK.

"We've empowered small business owners by teaching them financial essentials so they can achieve success on their own terms."

I saw the challenges my wife faced with her accountant. I knew I could offer a better service and clarity to small businesses at fixed prices with clear outcomes. I founded SRK Accounting in 2011 and moved one year later from my desk at home to a desk in a Soho, London office share.

In 2013, I took on my first employee and reached 50 clients. By 2014, we had 100 clients and a team of six, plus a back office in India. By 2022, we're aiming to be a £10m turnover company, with multiple offices and at least 1,670 raving fan clients.

We also believe we're doing our bit to help reduce SME failure rates in the UK. Outside London, Birmingham has the highest rate of start-ups but also the highest failure rate. It's my personal mission to try to improve these stats by providing advice, support and resources to increase start-up success.

My top tips for business success are: take advantage of all the free resources available, read every single day and make connections wherever you can and share your own knowledge with others.

We've presented webinars to other Enterprise Nation members, which has been great for raising our profile but has also allowed us to empower many small business owners so they can achieve success on their own terms.

Get in touch

 [@SRKAccounting](https://twitter.com/SRKAccounting)

 [SRKAccounting](https://www.facebook.com/SRKAccounting)

www.srkaccounting.com

Proud Member of
 **Enterprise
Nation**



Paul Durrant

PDT Sales Consultancy

Helping entrepreneurs, business owners and salespeople banish their sales demons.

We all make a living selling something to someone. Me? I make my living by helping others sell. But after 25 years in various sales roles, I got the 'itch' that every Gen X mid-lifer gets sometime – to become your own boss and decide your work/life balance.

That was three years ago. Now I use my sales experience, knowledge and know-how to help small business owners who're good at what they do, but not necessarily good at sales.

The first part of my company name (PDT) comes from the acronym for a problem-solving tool (like SWOT analysis, for instance). And as a qualified consultant, I use PDTs to help solve my clients' sales problems or challenges.

I also help manage and train salespeople. One of the most common reasons salespeople say they leave their jobs is "lack of training and development". I help small business owners retain their sales talent – by providing specialist outsourced sales training and development.

"My top tips for business success would be the same as if I was improving somebody's sales performance: strategy, process, and learning."

I signed up with Enterprise Nation early on and found the start-up shows, seminars and webinars really useful. Especially in areas that were alien to me, like finance.

Enterprise Nation has also given me the chance to network with similar like-minded start-up businesses which is great for sharing problems and comparing best practices. I registered as an approved adviser for the government Growth Voucher scheme through my Enterprise Nation Adviser membership which helped me in the first 12 months of trading. And I was part of an Enterprise Nation trip to 10 Downing Street, where we got to air our small business concerns to one of Theresa May's business advisors.

My top tips for business success would be the same as if I was improving somebody's sales performance: Introduce a simple system that combines a strategy, process, and learning.

You need the strategy to understand where you're going and what you want to achieve. The process will help you implement your strategy and the learning keeps you up to speed with what's happening in the bigger world, i.e. your market conditions, your competitors and your customers' buying habits.

Get in touch

@pauldurrant12

paul-durrant-28948218

PDT-Sales-Consultancy

www.pdtsalesconsultancy.co.uk

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



“You don’t have to be the loudest person to get noticed; you’ve just got to be the most effective.”

Jennifer Corcoran My Super Connector

I help busy business people to shine on social media and connect with finesse.

I stepped away from my successful career in the corporate world after I slipped a disc in my back. During several months of recovery I realised it was time to follow my intuition and become my own boss.

I started studying social media as a hobby while trying to get to grips with LinkedIn for business. Over time it became a passion, and led to My Super Connector.

In my 20 years of employment, I enjoyed a background role and helped support others to shine. But over time my confidence and voice grew and I started to speak up and self-promote online.

My Super Connector helps our clients achieve visibility, to have a voice and to create and add value in their lives. I firmly believe that you don’t have to be the loudest person to get noticed; you’ve just got to be the most effective.

Enterprise Nation has presented me with some fantastic opportunities along the way. I joined Enterprise Nation founder Emma Jones on LBC radio’s The Business Hour as a business expert discussing social media which was a definite career highlight so far!

This and other benefits for advisers are a fantastic way for me to promote the My Super Connector brand. I’ve only been trading since 2016, but already I’ve learned some extremely valuable lessons about starting and growing a business:

- 1. Surround yourself with positive people.** Being a business owner can be very lonely so you need supportive people around you.
- 2. Find your tribe.** Join an association like Enterprise Nation where you’ll feel part of an engaged community.
- 3. Networking is vital to success.** To build your brand you need to be a) social b) consistent and c) generous. Remember the 80/20 rule; share 80% of the time but promote only 20%.

Get in touch

- [@superconnector](#)
- [jennifercorcoran1](#)
- [mysuperconnector](#)
- [mysuperconnector](#)
- [superconnector](#)

www.mysuperconnector.co.uk

“Define who your customer really is and focus your marketing effort on talking to them”



Esther Partridge-Warner Online Media Works

I share marketing support and training for small businesses.

In 2015 I was diagnosed with breast cancer which brought about a desire to improve my work/life balance and to set up a business.

It seemed like an obvious way of using my 25 years of experience and skills in sales and marketing while finding a bit of space to focus on myself.

My biggest challenge has been the balancing act of marketing my business and raising my profile whilst working for clients and raising their business profiles.

Enterprise Nation has been very useful for my business, especially for networking and for advice.

My biggest achievement to date has organising a monthly networking group, The Social Media Café, in Malvern, for local small businesses. We focus on a different social media platform or aspect of social media and exchange ideas while enjoying coffee and cake.

Next, I'll put some of my social media training courses online. It's a bit of a scary prospect.

My advice to other small businesses:

1. Define who your customer really is and focus your marketing effort on talking to them
2. Be flexible! Listen to what your customer is saying and adapt and evolve your proposition
3. Look after you. It's easy to throw yourself into your business and forget to take a lunch break, go to a yoga class etc. But those things are really important and work/life balance is probably what attracted you to entrepreneurship in the first place

Get in touch

 [onlinemediaworks](https://www.instagram.com/onlinemediaworks)

 [onlinemediaworks](https://www.facebook.com/onlinemediaworks)

 [onlinemediaworks](https://www.linkedin.com/company/onlinemediaworks/)

www.onlinemediaworks.co.uk



Nikki Hollier Border In A Box

Creating bespoke and ready-made borders for beautiful gardens.

“Create your own opportunities and always say yes to everything.”

I moved into a new-build property and the garden was a blank canvas. Just turf and a wooden fence. So I created a lovely garden which my neighbours admired.

I discovered they were often overwhelmed at the garden centre with no idea about what plants and flowers work well together. I left my 20-year IT career and retrained as a garden designer.

I was accepted for a show garden for the Royal Horticultural Society in 2016 and showed the prototype of my ready-made borders. They loved it!

I launched my company in March 2017. Since then I've won a host of awards and media coverage.

Apart from never having enough hours in the day, a big challenge has been identifying my knowledge gaps and then learning new skills or deciding to outsource. I sometimes feel that I've spent too much time learning new skills but it's been very rewarding too.

A few things I'd recommend from my experience:

- Get to grips with social media. When I created my show garden I found all my sponsors via Twitter
- Always say yes to everything that comes your way regardless of whether you think you can do it or not. You'll learn from the experience and you never know what doors will open
- It's so easy to burn out because you're passionate about what you do, so even if it doesn't feel like work, take care to not get overwhelmed and stressed out

Get in touch

 [borderinabox](#)

 [borderinabox](#)

[www.borderinabox.net](#)



Natalie Luckham

Naturally Social

I provide creative social media mentoring and management.

After working in digital communications for the Wiltshire local authority for four years, I took redundancy. It was the third time in as many years I'd been asked to reapply for my own job, but despite everyone telling me to start my own business, I was nervous.

What soon became apparent to me however was the lack of experts in my immediate area. There were so many organisations muddling along with social media, but no real idea how to make it work for them.

I started Naturally Social to share my skills and passion for creative communications that puts the consumer at the centre and delivers results for the company at the same time.

Six months in, I nearly gave up. I faced a lot of challenges and I was naive in many ways, but I'm so thankful that I hate to fail! I gave myself a talking to, sought business advice and attended some sales training.

Overcoming imposter syndrome was a big achievement for me. I was constantly comparing myself to others and self-sabotaging by convincing myself I didn't know as much as anyone else. It was a difficult time and a real turning point once I realised that imposter syndrome affects so many start-up entrepreneurs.

My biggest achievement has been the social media campaign that saw Wiltshire Air Ambulance raise £10,000 in less than 72 hours for 2016's Big Give campaign.

I've learned a few things along the way too:

- **Don't be afraid of failure.** Learn and keep going
- **Don't undervalue yourself.** If you don't believe your worth no-one else will
- **Don't waste time overanalysing your competitors.** There's enough work for everyone so be clear on your vision and focus on doing your best

“Overcoming imposter syndrome has been a big achievement for me.”

Get in touch

 [NlySocial](#)

 [NlySocial](#)

 [natalieluckham](#)

www.naturallysocial.co.uk



Emma Cranstoun Scrubbington's

I create a range of children's toiletries designed to help children wash themselves.

I was washing my children in the bath (aged five and seven at the time) and thinking, 'Why am I still using a product with a picture of a baby on the front and why am I still washing them when they should be doing it themselves?'

My business partner, Karen, and I researched the market and thought there was a gap. We found a manufacturer, pulled in some favours from a design agency we knew and started taking the range to retailers.

Enterprise Nation selected us to pitch to Boots at one of the member events which eventually helped us to get listed in 400 Boots stores nationwide. It has taken two years of determination and belief but now we're so proud to be stocked in Boots, Waitrose, Ocado and on Amazon.

The next step is to get more distribution and then start exporting. British brands are really popular abroad at the moment and we want to capitalise on that.

My advice to other small businesses is:

Talk to everyone. Everyone has been so willing to help us and share their experiences. Ultimately, we need to make the right decisions for our business but it's great to get advice when we need it.

Make quick decisions. Having worked in large corporates previously, we're both enjoying the freedom to make quick decisions. We've made some mistakes of course, but we've always been able to correct them, and making quick decisions means we can act fast to respond to consumer or customer feedback.

Trust your instincts. We've always lived by this rule and even more so at Scrubbington's. When you live and breathe the brand every day, you're best placed to make the right decisions.

"Make quick decisions. We've made some mistakes, but we've always been able to correct them."



Get in touch

- [profscrub](https://twitter.com/profscrub)
- [ProfessorScrubbington](https://facebook.com/ProfessorScrubbington)
- [professorscrubbington](https://instagram.com/professorscrubbington)
- www.scrubbingtons.com



Jane Arthern FMCGenie

I help small and medium-sized food and drink businesses achieve their goals.

I'd been in the start-up world for a few years and could see so many brands frustrated by lack of knowledge and restricted by cashflow. I thought that my broad and varied skill set amassed over 30 years could be of use to them.

After floating the idea to some of my industry comrades, I took the plunge. I resigned from my day job and jumped straight into working for other brands.

Networking is key, and I pulled on every contact I had, making the most of self-publicity and generally making myself visible. It didn't take long before my diary was full.

FMCGenie is full to bursting so I'm considering what direction that now takes too. If expansion is next, I'll need to think carefully about how, with who and for what gain? I got to this point far quicker than I thought I might!

Enterprise Nation has been a great platform on so many levels. It has provided me with the ability to reach out and help others, but equally to learn from others too.

The networking events are fab and having attended the Go Global trade mission to Dublin in 2016, it really is a great way of understanding the worldwide opportunities. I've undoubtedly gained new clients from the events I've attended, and for which I'm very grateful.

My tips for success:

Be honest. Even with yourself. Bluffing only gets you so far.

Set a goal. That way you'll know when you've got there.

Celebrate milestones. Even if it's just 'I made that awkward call today'.

“Networking is key, and I pulled on every contact I had.”

Get in touch

-  [Foodiejane](#)
-  [FMCGenie](#)
-  [jane-arthern-33301814](#)
- [www.fmogenie.com](#)



Paula Hutchings Marketing Vision Consultancy

I provide professional marketing support to small businesses and start-ups.

“Thoroughly research your target audience and what they really want.”



Get in touch

- [@MarketingVC](https://twitter.com/MarketingVC)
- [@MVisionC](https://www.facebook.com/MVisionC)
- [paula-hutchings-38a90736](https://www.linkedin.com/in/paula-hutchings-38a90736)
- www.marketingvision.co.uk

After the birth of my first son in 2011, I left 10 years in corporate marketing to start my own consultancy.

Time management was a big challenge, particularly in the early days of building my business with two young children. As a small business owner there are so many hats to wear, from building an online presence, networking and marketing to looking after the finances. And all that has to be managed alongside your core business.

My biggest achievements so far have included writing marketing features for Country Living's *Turn Your Hobby Into A Business* book.

Attending Enterprise Nation's StartUp Saturday one day business class was invaluable. I learned so much and wrote a post for the Enterprise Nation blog which opened up great opportunities for me.

My tips are:

Write a marketing plan for your business: It's tempting to jump straight into action, but without a considered plan, you leave yourself wide open to erratic marketing, stress and wasted budget.

Thoroughly research your target audience and what they really want:

Establishing that you satisfy a customer need is crucial. Even the most seasoned marketer can't sell a product or service in the long term if there's no real demand for it.

Take a break: Running a business can easily take over your life so make time for the things outside of work that make you happy.



Lucy Woodhouse Claudi & Fin

I make naturally healthier frozen desserts for families the world over.

We started business life as two mums at our kitchen table with a ravenous desire to make a healthier lolly for our children, Claudia and Fin. Tired of the sugar and additive-laden lollies, dressed in the garish packaging of our 1970s childhoods, we spent a year and a half creating the perfect frozen yoghurt lolly, made with 100% natural ingredients including Greek-style yoghurt and loads of real fruit. Six months later we'd won a contract to supply 250 Sainsbury's stores.

The biggest challenge? Finding a manufacturer that would take the risk of producing a new product from a start-up company with absolutely no experience whatsoever.

Three years on, and our products are now stocked in over 3,600 stores and restaurants across the UK. We'll also be launching three new products in 2018 and start exporting into Europe.

We were two mums with a lolly recipe when we first met Enterprise Nation's Emma Jones. Through a competition organised by Enterprise Nation we got to pitch our idea in front of one of the biggest supermarkets in the country, and our brand was born. Without them we wouldn't be where we are now. Our tips for success:

- 1. Talk to other entrepreneurs** – all the time. They're going through the same experience and often have solutions and ideas. They're a continual source of strength and support.
- 2. Create an incredible brand that people want to talk about.** If people don't want to pick it up off the shelves it doesn't matter how good it tastes – they'll never know because you haven't sold it to them through your packaging or brand.
- 3. Keep things simple.** Don't be a busy fool. Ask yourself – is this going to grow sales or the business? If it isn't, don't do it.



"After six months, having never sold a single lolly in our lives, we'd won a contract to supply 250 Sainsbury's stores."

Get in touch

- [@claudiandfin](https://twitter.com/claudiandfin)
- [@claudiandfinHQ](https://facebook.com/claudiandfinHQ)
- [@claudiandfin](https://instagram.com/claudiandfin)
- www.claudiandfin.co.uk



Rebecca Struthers Struthers London

Businesses can't survive in isolation.

"The best advice we receive is almost always from other business owners who can speak from their own past experience."

My husband Craig and I met while we were studying watchmaking at the School of Jewellery in Birmingham back in 2004. We initially trained as watch restorers and, after a spell working in London, we founded our first boutique restoration workshop in 2012.

It quickly became apparent that maintaining a workshop in London as a small business wasn't going to be viable in the long run. So, we relocated back to Birmingham.

The following year we entered and won a design competition to create a watch in platinum. It came as a bit of a surprise, but the response was so fantastic we decided to give it a go and start making our own watches.

Since then, we've exhibited both in the UK and Switzerland, collaborated with the Morgan Motor Company and collected a string of awards for design, innovation, watchmaking, and entrepreneurship.

Being part of an active network is hugely important for our business and Enterprise Nation has helped us greatly along the way. The best advice we receive is almost always from other business owners who can speak from their own past experience. Always ask questions, there are networks to help you find the answers and so many other business owners who will have experienced the same challenges as you and are happy to help.

Above all else, communication is key whether it's between you and your suppliers, your clients, business partners, family or friends. Businesses can't survive in isolation. Also, you shouldn't be too hard on yourself or give up if your business takes longer than you anticipated to get up and running. Overnight successes are incredibly rare.

Get in touch

[@StruthersLondon](https://twitter.com/StruthersLondon)

[@strutherslondon](https://www.facebook.com/strutherslondon)

[@strutherslondon](https://www.instagram.com/strutherslondon)

www.struthers-london.co.uk



Rin Hamburgh

Rin Hamburgh & Co

When I launched in 2016, I was a single mum of nine-month-old twins.

After starting out in journalism I moved into copywriting almost by accident. Soon I got very busy, so I asked a junior copywriter to help out. The same month I found out I was pregnant and the decision to start an agency was made.

By the time I launched in August 2016, I was a single mum of nine-month-old twins. I've since grown the freelance writing team to four, taken on my first employee, and worked with a huge range of clients including Lloyds of London, Pot Noodle and the Roman Baths.

A few things I've learned:

Know your numbers. At the start of 2017, taking on an employee was on my three-year goal list. But once I started to budget and forecast, I understood my targets and what I could afford.

Delegate. You need to know what you're good at and what you're better off passing on to someone else. It doesn't make sense to spend hours slogging away doing something that someone else could sort out in a fraction of the time. Try to work only in your 'zone of genius'.

Take time out. Commitment and drive are vital when you're starting out, but working 24/7 is actually the worst thing you can do for your business. Burnout isn't something that only happens to other people.

"Try to work only in your 'zone of genius'."

Get in touch

-  [@rinhamburgh](#)
-  [rinhamburghandco](#)
-  [rinhamburghandco](#)
- [www.rin-hamburgh.co.uk](#)



Temi Alanamu Whatsinit?

An app that decodes and explains any food ingredient.

“Pitch your business whenever you can.”

In 2015, both me and my partner lost our jobs. Funds were really tight and we couldn't afford to eat as many fresh foods as we used to.

Trying to eat healthily became a problem, especially as I'm living with the genetic disorder sickle cell anaemia, so I need to be careful not to eat anything that could exacerbate my condition.

Reading labels and researching ingredients became a big part of our lives, and the idea for Whatsinit?, an app that decodes and explains all food ingredients, was born.

It took us two years to build Whatsinit?. We built the app with some contributions from family but mostly with savings and money earned from our full-time jobs. This meant two years of very frugal living.

The next challenge was finding the right team to develop the app, who believed in it as much as we did. It took us a year to find them and another year to build it.

It's now available free on the App Store and Google Play, but finding a way to stand out there is our new challenge.

Enterprise nation networking events have helped us pitch our idea to other people who've given us invaluable tips for success!

A few things we've learned:

Persevere. Establishing a business is hard, succeeding in business is even harder. Almost every entrepreneur has thought about giving up at one time or another, especially when things get very difficult. Don't.

Tell anyone who'll listen. Pitch your business whenever you can. Whether it's at a dinner party, a business show or a mixer, you'll find people who can give you the advice you need.

Get in touch

 [whatsinitapp](#)

 [whatsinitapp](#)

 [whatsinitapp](#)

[www.whatsinitapp.com](#)



Amanda Ruiz

Amanda Ruiz

From managing an online store to being a PR expert.

My first step into entrepreneurship was importing and selling artisanal knitwear from Peru, where my husband is from. I was inspired by my mother's very successful mail order business importing handmade beads.

My mother's business had undergone a game-changing experience when she was featured in a small paragraph in the national press. So I set about approaching newspaper and magazines. It worked! I got mentions in most of the major nationals resulting in orders for the knitwear.

Then while doing pop-up shops I noticed that my fellow business owners weren't excelling at their marketing and were missing out on lots of opportunities.

I'd enjoy advising them and I then offered my services to help with their marketing, PR, websites and branding. And so my business evolved. I went from being an online store to now being a PR expert where I train business owners how to get press coverage.

Being an Adviser member of Enterprise Nation has enabled me to share my expertise with fellow members and being part of such an incredible community makes the whole 'working from home' thing not so isolating.

My top tips are:

Don't ask, don't get. If you want something or to meet someone, don't take the first no as a no! Keep on knocking at that door. If that's hard, be creative and think outside of the box.

Be visible. Every day, aim to do at least one self-promo activity. This doesn't mean a hard sell, it can mean helping someone out or making an intro for someone. Remember the rule: 80% help, 20% push!

Never give up. You may be having a hard day, but remember your big 'why'. Why are you running your business? Remember the passion that you created the business with and keep on going.

"Being part of such an incredible community makes the whole 'working from home' thing not so isolating."

Get in touch

 [amandaruizuk](#)

 [AmandaRuizUK](#)

 [amandaruizz](#)

 [amandaruizuk](#)

[www.amandaruiz.co.uk](#)



Beatrice De Montille Merci Maman

A personalised jewellery brand loved by royalty.

I called a shop in France to buy a personalised gift for my young daughter, but the owner was unwilling to send it to the UK. That gave me the idea of quality, personalised products shipped to your doorstep.

Since then, we've grown steadily, but when the Duchess of Cambridge was spotted wearing a personalised Merci Maman charm necklace following the birth of her son, we received massive press coverage and social media buzz around our brand and the 'Duchess' necklace.

We've established a strong presence in the UK through our website, we opened our second workshop in Paris in 2016 and are planning to open a third one in Berlin in 2018. We will also translate our website into Spanish and Italian.

The key challenge has been to recruit the right people and once they've joined the team, make them grow by keeping their curiosity and can-do attitude at a high level. And of course to retain the team spirit as we grow, with everyone always having our values in mind: make, grow, try, share.

We started working with Enterprise Nation in 2016 when we joined the Go Global trade mission to Berlin. It enabled us to make connections, better understand the specifics of the German market and to meet bloggers; a great first step in the country!

Since then, we've more than doubled our sales to Germany and we'll be investing even more in the country in 2018 by opening a workshop and showroom in Berlin.

My tips for success:

It's all about the customer: Know them and listen to them. Believe passionately in your product, be innovative and fresh and create a reason for your customer to return.

Humility, ambition and hard work: I don't know everything, I have my limitations and always need others to help or even rescue me!

Absolute commitment: It's important to be utterly dedicated to what you're doing. Establish what you're good at and stick to it.



"The key challenge has been to recruit the right people and keep their curiosity and can-do attitude at a high level."

Get in touch

 @mercimamangifts

 @mercimamangifts

 @mercimamangifts

www.mercimamanboutique.com



Indi Deol DESIblitz

Publishing the world's largest British Asian online magazine.

Many of the websites that were catering for British Asians and their interests were very niche and focused on just one or two vertical areas. Nothing was bringing them all together into one platform.

I also wanted to tackle some of the more sensitive issues in the British Asian community which were largely ignored in the online space, things like forced marriage, domestic abuse, the stigma around mental health etc.

DESIblitz launched in 2008 and we currently have more than 290,000 unique readers a month.

We're proud to have won a number of awards and recently produced a documentary on the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. We also launched the DESIblitz Jobs board that helps to address diversity and inclusion issues by increasing the candidate pool for employers. It's important to have a purpose in business which is not just a financial one.

Enterprise Nation has helped us by arranging a visit to 10 Downing Street to discuss some of the issues that small businesses like ours face daily.

Our next big business goal is to branch out to India and develop a team there.

My top tips for entrepreneurs are:

- Stay focused no matter how hard the struggle
- Stay humble and approachable

“Have a purpose in business which is not just a financial one.”

Get in touch

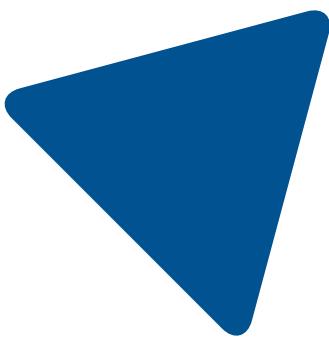
 [desiblitz](#)

 [desiblitz](#)

 [desiblitz](#)

 [desiblitzer](#)

[www.desiblitz.com](#)



Ed Bird Bird Sunglasses

Don't be afraid to ask for help, support and advice.

My brothers and I had been looking for a way to combine design, business and social purpose to create a product that would look good, but have purpose too.

When we heard about the work SolarAid were doing in remote communities in Africa, replacing toxic kerosene lamps with clean and efficient solar lights, I knew I wanted to work with them.

After two years of researching, learning, prototyping and advice, we were thrilled to launch a fully-fledged product following a Crowdfunder. Since March 2017, Bird Sunglasses has been making and selling ethical sunglasses using high quality sustainable materials!

The hardest part was believing that it was possible. There's never a 'right place' to start when building a business. You begin with a pen and paper and slowly build the layers.

We're still a baby business, although in the first six months we were featured in Forbes, The Mirror and named in The Independent's Top 15 Best Women's Sunglasses of 2017.

Our next big step is to establish a full-time team, make the move into prescription eyewear and to launch in some larger retail chains.

A few things we've learned:

Don't wait until your product or service is 100% perfect to launch. Real customer feedback is the most valuable you can have. Launch your minimum viable product and improve along the way.

Don't be afraid to ask for help, support and advice. Most businesses fail because they lose focus and lack the correct support. With Enterprise Nation, we really love the steady stream of useful information and inspiring stories. It's nice to know we're not the only ones going through the start-up process.

Get in touch

[@shareyoursun](#)

[shareyoursun](#)

[shareyoursun](#)

www.birdsunglasses.com





Joel Blake OBE FeeLYX

I help small businesses make better decisions by sharing financial data safely and securely.

After 12 years, five start-ups and many mistakes, I recognised a problem. I wasted time and money on the wrong growth decisions because I couldn't afford to buy large external data-sets. So in April 2015 I asked myself, what if I could help small businesses share their financial data instead of trying to buy it elsewhere?

But with no funding, no experience in the technology space and no team, I didn't know where to start. I got on to the Entrepreneurial Spark accelerator programme to help establish if there was a sustainable need for my idea.

We spent the next 18 months creating, training, pitching, iterating and learning, until finally we settled on a product that we felt was a good market fit.

We went on to raise angel investment, and recruited a small team. We built early versions of the product, demoed it for likely customers and we're currently preparing for our official launch.

We're passionate about helping to reduce the failure rate of small businesses and Enterprise Nation has been instrumental in helping us reach out to many of those!

As we prepare for launch, we've learned some very valuable lessons along the way:

Validate the customer need before you invest heavily in resources.

Include your clients especially in the strategic build of your solution, so you know you're genuinely supporting them.

Love what you do and make sure your purpose remains your passion.

“With no funding, no experience in the technology space and no team, I didn’t know where to start.”

Get in touch

 [feelyxtech](#)

 [DiversityJB](#)

[www.feelyx.com](#)



Sonja Leason Love Mondays

Helping small businesses grow via sales, marketing, coaching, recruitment and development.

When I got pregnant with my son at 17 I had to work much harder than anyone else to both prove myself as well as juggle home, motherhood and a career. I did all kinds of low-paid jobs and took courses whenever I could.

I got into sales when I was about 19 and later, advertising. I was a high achiever, always top sales in the company I worked for and always hit my bonus every month. I loved the sales and marketing cycle and could see how powerful it could be for the clients. However, corporate life meant that I was restricted by KPIs and targets.

My son got very ill in 2012 and while I was caring for him, I lost my job and our house. By the time I went back to work I knew I wanted to focus on the benefit to the client, rather than just hitting my targets.

I walked out of my job in 2014 and set up my business the next day. I had no business plan, no company name, no money, nothing. Just a laptop and my mobile phone.

I now have three businesses subcontracting for me, which works really well. It means I don't have to manage staff and I'm free to work with my clients more closely. Each company I outsource to has something different to offer so I know that I can get exactly what each of my clients needs.

Enterprise Nation has been great for me and I really love the meet-ups! The networking opportunities are excellent. The events are of great quality and the speakers are very inspirational. The connections are unlike anything I've experienced before from a group. I'm very impressed.

I also took part in a traineeship programme and mentored teens who weren't in employment, education or training. I enjoy giving back.

A few things I've learned:

Keep going, whatever happens. Some of the most successful businesses only got there because their founders refused to give up.

Do the right thing, always and don't be afraid to trust your gut when it comes to working relationships.

Cashflow is king. I always keep three months' money in the bank at all times.

Respect everyone you meet. Relationships are important to me and I believe network is everything. Sometimes, it's not what you know, it's who you know.

“Cashflow is king. I always keep three months’ money in the bank at all times.”

Get in touch

 [lovemondayshq](#)

 [Love.MondaysLtd](#)

 [lovemondayshq](#)

 [sonjaleason](#)

[www.wearelovemondays.co.uk](#)



Matt Dredger Borroclub

We're disrupting the retail and hire shop model.

"We want to stop people constantly buying new stuff. They can mobilise their idle items to earn and save people money."

I was clearing my garage for a car boot sale and I found stuff that I didn't want to get rid of but knew I wouldn't use often, like the roof box for my car and a jet washer.

I decided to set up a basic website where I could share my belongings with others in my local community. Soon, people were borrowing from me and then other people started to list their items on the site.

I started in the Midlands but it's now nationwide with members in Bristol, London, Devon, Nottingham, Leeds, Edinburgh, Northampton and more.

As a society we're constantly buying items that we hardly use. We want to stop people constantly buying new stuff and give them the opportunity to mobilise their idle items to earn and save people money.

We've won numerous awards locally, nationally and internationally for our work in the community, innovation and for our support of the circular economy.

I've been helped especially by my local Enterprise Nation representative, Debbie Assinder, who's constantly inviting me to talk at events, including being a judge for young entrepreneurs, and feeding me information about articles relating to my industry, the sharing economy.

My advice to other entrepreneurs is very simple: never give up. That's it!

Get in touch

[@borroclub](#)

[@borroclub](#)

[@borroclub](#)

www.borroclub.co.uk

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Cemal Ezel Change Please

I wanted to set up a social enterprise to help people experiencing homelessness.

On a work break in Vietnam, I visited a 'Silent Tea House' run by deaf and mute women. It was here that I saw the potential that trade could have for both social and economic benefit. I had the idea of setting up a social enterprise to help people experiencing homelessness, some of the most disadvantaged people in our society.

Change Please launched in 2015, selling excellent coffee while training people experiencing homelessness as baristas. Since then we've had a huge amount of success, with awards including Marketing Week's Top 100 Disruptive Brands and the Great Taste Award.

Our plans include launching a training academy and taking our model nationwide. We've just launched our coffee bags in 350 Sainsbury's stores.

My tips for business success:

Take the right opportunities and don't just chase everything that's out there

Get in front of the right people who can make a decision about buying from you

Make sure you look after your staff. Enterprise Nation has been invaluable in helping us think about how we run our business and ensuring that we work in the best possible way and keep going!

"Get in front of the right people who can make a decision about buying from you.



Get in touch

[Twitter](#) [ChangePlease](#)

[Facebook](#) [changeplease15](#)

[www.changeplease.org](#)

Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Lis Anderson AMBITIOUS

I believed there was a different PR agency model.

The business was born out of my experience working as director for large communications agencies where inflexible working and an obsession with 'presentism' were often damaging aspects of the business.

I believed there was a different PR agency model that builds the business around client needs and pulls together the best, most relevant teams with matching expertise. I got in touch with a former colleague to ask her to join forces and AMBITIOUS was born.

We started with a desk share, then quickly moved to larger offices to accommodate the growing team. We're now proud to boast a team of ex-editors of national magazines, certified LinkedIn coaches, award-winning bloggers, digital pros and well-established PR professionals, all of whom work flexibly.

We recently picked up Best Marketing Campaign of the Year in the Business Leader Awards 2017 which was the first award we've entered!

My advice for other small businesses:

Don't undersell. Not that you should overprice your services, but if you value what you do then others will to.

Try things out. It doesn't always work out the way you planned but you always learn something!

Look after yourself. Not sure I've achieved this one yet but making the effort to eat better and keep fit (mind and body) is important.

"We pull together the best, most relevant teams with matching expertise."

Get in touch

[Ambitiouspr](#)

[ambitiouspr](#)

[Ambitiouspr](#)

[www.ambitiouspr.co.uk](#)



Rachel Jones

SnapDragon Monitoring Ltd

I help small businesses fight fakes online.

For many years I successfully defended the copyright of a baby product, which I'd created, online and around the world. The expertise and experience I garnered in doing so proved hugely useful to others in the industry and I soon found myself in demand from other companies who were having similar problems.

After a couple of years of helping others for free SnapDragon was born in 2015.

Bootstrapping for the first two years and then building the technology were big challenges for us, and it took time to establish ourselves.

But clients now include a myriad of brands in the baby, toy industries and other sectors.

The team is multilingual, international and working across the globe and is mostly composed of women!

Through hugely valuable introductions, a trade mission to China, networking, general advice and encouragement, Enterprise Nation helped us make connections and move forward faster than we could have done on our own.

Some things I've learned:

Surround yourself with experts. Always recruit people who are better than yourself and if possible, focus on recruiting people with the right attitude. You can teach them the skills later.

Stretch every pound. Bootstrapping and making every penny count is essential in the early days, and you can do it through being selective with your partnerships and innovative thinking.

Remember to say thank you and do it frequently. It's amazing how such a simple act can help you foster good business connections.

“Focus on recruiting people with the right attitude. You teach them the skills later.”

Get in touch

- [@Snapdragon_ip](https://twitter.com/Snapdragon_ip)
- [snapdragon-monitoring-ip](https://www.linkedin.com/company/snapdragon-monitoring-ip/)
- www.snapdragon-ip.com



Kristal McNamara & Shelley Snelson Flexology

Recruiting high quality professionals from an untapped pool of flexible working talent.

We started our business in March 2017 after hitting a glass ceiling as senior managers in financial services. We looked to the market for other opportunities to work in senior positions with flexibility but found there were none. So we left the corporate world to promote the benefits of flexible working to employers and find more opportunities for people like ourselves.

We pride ourselves on our personal approach. When we launched, we wrote down our core values and mission statement, and central to this was to fairly represent our candidates and to be straightforward and honest to deal with. Something that the recruitment industry is often not known for.

We now have a growing number of clients and our first employee. We've been inducted into the Entrepreneurial Spark 'Enable' programme for growth and have ambitious plans to establish an office in Bristol and recruit more staff over the next 12 months.

We're proud that our business is self-funded and have had a continuous revenue stream from the candidates we've placed over the last six months.

The biggest challenge has been trying to smooth the peaks and troughs in workload; it's a rollercoaster! When we're busy, everything that isn't directly related to satisfying client contracts goes out of the window, including business development, marketing and admin. Then the contracts end and you have to pick up everything else from scratch. Over time we're balancing this better, but it's taken discipline and quite a few late nights!

We've attended a number of Enterprise Nation events, from webinars to face-to-face meetings. They've always proved useful, with advice and also for growing our network.

Our tips for fellow entrepreneurs:

Stay focused on your goals. You'll be pulled in all directions so make sure you set clear targets and regularly check in against them.

Pivot, pivot, pivot. Keep checking what works and what doesn't and refine your plans. We initially thought the financial services and legal sectors would have the highest demand but technology is booming in the South West and we've adapted to support that.

Set your mission statement early and stick to it. It's important to know your values and the reason you get out of bed every day.

“The biggest challenge has been trying to smooth the peaks and troughs in workload; it’s a rollercoaster!”



Get in touch

-  [Flexology_sw](#)
-  [flexologysouthwest](#)
-  [flexologysouthwest](#)
- [www.flexology.co.uk](#)



Chloe Mabey Maybe Baby

Creating fashionable but functional handmade fiddle and teething jewellery for little ones.

I started my business after my little boy started to pinch and scratch while feeding. I'd previously been making silver jewellery for a number of years and was itching to get back into being creative. I nearly bought a fiddle necklace, but decided after a lot of research that I would make my own and it's gone from there.

I was a finalist for Product of the Year through a networking group in 2017 which has been a really positive step for me. But the biggest challenge by far has been starting a business with a little one to look after. The lack of predictability around sleeping and naps makes it incredibly difficult to plan ahead.

My next business goal is a massive one for the business. At the moment I make fiddle and teething jewellery but the next step is to launch my own range of maternity and nursing lingerie. It's something I became quite passionate about during pregnancy and when nursing my little boy. It's been a steep learning curve but it's progressing well.

I'm currently in the sampling phase of the project. When the design has been finalised I'll be planning a crowd funding campaign to get it into production.

Finding UK manufacturers has been really difficult but the day I joined Enterprise Nation I found a webinar about fashion manufacturing and a number of other possibilities. That was on day one! .

My tips for other entrepreneurs are:

Don't compare yourself to others: A very simple thing that's also really difficult not to do!

Be realistic about how much work you can get done. Work at a pace that's suitable and do-able for you and don't plan things in timescales that just won't work as it will have a negative effect on your mindset and the business.

Love what you do. Being in business is not an easy ride so the business has to be something you're passionate about.

"Don't compare yourself to others. A very simple thing that's also really difficult not to do!"

Get in touch

- [@Maybebabyprod](#)
- [chloe-mabey-11a577142](#)
- [maybebabyproucts](#)
- [maybe.baby.products](#)
- www.maybe-baby.co.uk



Veronica Umoetuk Tehila Designs

Creating art jewellery with a story.



I first came up with the idea of creating Tehila Designs after the recession of 2008 and other personal challenges I was facing at the time. It took a while to germinate but in 2010 I embarked on a new career path by studying jewellery manufacture and design at the British Academy of Jewellery in London. I completed my studies in December 2013.

The idea behind Tehila Designs is to create pieces that visually demonstrate the different paths that we sometimes have to take in order to fulfil our purpose. Generally speaking, the inspiration for the pieces comes from everyday life experience which I use as a message of upliftment and encouragement for the wearer to cherish forever.

I think my biggest achievement so far is the ability to attend high-profile shows with confidence. However, I still need more exposure and sales so that I can genuinely say that the business has enabled me to make enough profit to qualify as a financial success.

There have been quite a few challenges along the way, but I'm working on them gradually. Number one is understanding that I can't just make beautiful pieces; everything has to look like it's been done professionally for me to be taken seriously.

Secondly, I've learned that I need to focus on the people and businesses who really appreciate what I do, and not try to please everyone.

My next business goals are to reach out into areas that I hadn't considered before and work on gaining business from them.

Enterprise nation has really helped me to look at what works and what doesn't after attending the Fashion Exchange event in 2016.

What I've learned:

Stay focused. It's easy to get distracted but I can't afford it!

Be truthful to yourself. I've learned that what works for Mr A doesn't necessarily mean that it is right or will work for Mr B.

Networking is essential but it needs to be with the right people and on the right platform.

“The biggest challenge has been trying to smooth the peaks and troughs in workload; it’s a rollercoaster!”

Get in touch

-  [tehila_designs](https://twitter.com/tehila_designs)
-  [tehilajewellerydesigns](https://www.facebook.com/tehilajewellerydesigns)
-  [tehiladesigns](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tehiladesigns)
-  [tehila_designs](https://www.instagram.com/tehila_designs)
- www.tehiladesigns.com



Gizelle Renee Thorpe

Gizelle Renee

Creating premium gloves that empower, energise and inspire confidence.

I'm passionate about fashion and people. Our hands are the first thing that age on our body, the things we pick our children up with, hold our loved ones and carve out our lives with. It makes sense to protect them just like we do with our feet.

Throughout Europe, you hear of these beautiful glove shops devoted to stunning gloves that make you feel special and unique. I wanted to create that sense of intimacy, that feeling of sensuality and give it to my customers in a fashion-focused, yet edgy way.

Creating Gizelle Renee has been an incredible journey and its three core principles have always remained the same: creativity, craftsmanship and character.

Not every woman can feel confident wearing a little black dress, but every lady can have that pocket of confidence to wear the little red glove. That's where we come in. We're that reminder, that inspiration of confidence at your fingertips.

Enterprise Nation has helped me in a variety of ways. From the opportunity to pitch to Selfridges, which was great, to meeting like-minded entrepreneurial individuals. And by creating opportunities to meet experts who have different skill sets that have helped me to make the right decisions for my business.

I've met a number of incredible people, with fascinating businesses and excellent skill sets that have helped me to grow my brand and shape what it has become.

What I've learned along the way:

Focus and persistence is everything. If you keep going, so will your business.

Be grateful for every opportunity. Remember to look beyond and creatively at every situation and any relationship.

Enjoy it all no matter what happens. Even the failures can make you what you are.

“Our three core principles have always remained the same: creativity, craftsmanship and character.”



Get in touch

[Gizellerenee](#)

[gizellereneegloves](#)

[gizellerenee](#)

[www.gizellerenee.co.uk](#)





Ada Okpe TROVE

Personally picking amenity kits of local goods for Airbnb hosts to impress their guests.

TROVE started with the trip of a lifetime; how clichéd! I went with my partner Tom to California in 2015. The goal was a tour of the sights and a truly local experience. We booked Airbnbs and were welcomed into the homes of strangers, leaving as friends.

As our trip unfolded we shared more homes, with more hosts, each with a unique experience. We noticed that our Venice Beach host left us coffee for the morning, our Santa Barbara host left us tea and a flapjack, and our host in Monterey kindly gave us toiletries.

We came back to London and started hosting ourselves. Unsure of what to leave our guests, and remembering feeling uncertain of what we could use when staying in people's homes, we thought of all the welcomes we'd received. The teas and coffees, the toiletries, the little treat snacks and a surprise or two from the neighbourhood; local treasures! What if we could put them all together to make the warmest welcome? Into the Moleskine notebook the idea went. And TROVE was born.

Balancing two full time careers on top of trying to get this going has been the biggest challenge for us. It's been a struggle, but it was all worth it when we made our first organic sale through our website.

For TROVE it's all about becoming a supplier to Airbnb management companies. For me personally it's to keep sharing my business ideas with people and helping them get them going!

Meeting Enterprise Nation founder Emma Jones at Enterprise Nation's StartUp 2015 event was huge for me. I'm not big on 'inspiration', but I do believe in just doing the next thing and seeing what comes from that.

Being part of Enterprise Nation has been wonderful. I've been able to meet a lot of interesting new people, share ideas and not feel so isolated as a start-up. I did a podcast too which was great!

My key to starting a business? Just start, get on with it and see where it takes you. I would say that finding a balance between your work and personal life is key though. And in the early days, don't quit your day job!



Get in touch

[trovelondon](#)

[www.trovelocal.com](#)



Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Raissa de Haas Double Dutch Drinks

Creating 100% natural mixers that uplift your spirits yet are equally delicious on their own.

Joyce: Being Dutch, we've always enjoyed a good quality drink! Our country has such a great history of gin and other spirits but we've always been quite frustrated by the fact that the mixer market isn't quite as experimental.

Raissa: Our parents had a small wholesale wine and spirit shop so we grew up with loads of different spirits and nurtured a passion for high-quality drinks from an early age. During our years studying finance and business administration at university we found that mixers for our favourite gins and vodkas were quite boring and often very overpowering. So we started making our own for ourselves and friends.

Joyce: After graduating we realised that banking wasn't really for us and we wanted to do something more entrepreneurial. So we enrolled in University College London's entrepreneurship programme and we used the syrups we had made during our undergraduate course as the starting point for our thesis. In September 2014, Double Dutch Drinks was born. We received the UCL Bright Ideas Award for most promising start-up along with an initial UCL cash investment.

Raissa: It took us about seven months to get two amazing products – Cucumber & Watermelon and Pomegranate & Basil – and we've moved on quite a bit since then. We love feedback and are always very interested in what people have to say about the flavours.

Enterprise Nation has been very good for us. We took part in the Go Global trade mission to France in 2017 and we're eager to do more together in future.

Joyce: Our main tip for success is that we think it's important to launch your product as soon as you have something, even if it's not perfect yet. It's a lot better to get feedback while testing products in the market as you will learn a lot faster what your customers actually want.

“Holland has such a great history of gin and other spirits but we've always been frustrated that the mixer market isn't quite as experimental.”

Get in touch

- [DoubleDutchMix](#)
- [doubledutchdrinks](#)
- [doubledutchdrinks](#)
- [www.linkedin.com/company/10791787/](#)

[www.doubledutchdrinks.com](#)



Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Alison Battisby Avocado Social

Social media strategy and training for growing businesses and brands throughout the UK.

I started Avocado Social in 2014, having worked at agencies and freelanced across London in social media since 2009. I saw an opportunity in training and strategy as many businesses were struggling to get started with social media, or to see tangible results from their efforts.

There's so much conflicting information out there regarding social media, which can be extremely confusing and also time-consuming for businesses. Last year I launched an online course, and my next business goal is a series of ebooks which people can download as a guide to manage and grow their social media. This will complement the training workshops I run across the UK, which I'm hoping to expand.

The main challenge of running my business is always managing the workload. I just need a few carbon copies of myself to send to meetings, workshops and events at the same time.

Enterprise Nation has been absolutely integral to the success of Avocado Social. Since day one Emma Jones and the team have been hugely supportive, inviting me to offer advice to members at events, bus tours, on live Facebook video chats, and on their blog. They've really helped me to spread awareness of my business, and are great at recommending me to members to use for consultancy too.

This year, I worked on the Enterprise Nation and Facebook She Means Business campaign, helping to train 10,000 female founders across the UK in social media skills. It was an amazing opportunity to boost the credibility of the advice I offer, and to reach more businesses across the UK. Going to Facebook's Europe HQ was a fantastic experience and to get advice from the 'mothership' was an incredible opportunity.

My tips for success are:

Use your network. Have a great simple elevator pitch for your business, and make sure your friends and family know what you're working on. Talk to people about your business at family gatherings, weddings, to your hairdresser; you never know who might be interested! You have to PR yourself as no one else will, certainly in the beginning.

Be generous. Whether you offer products or services, don't be afraid to give. Free samples, gifts to your best customers, free advice etc. It all helps to make you memorable and let people see what you're all about.

“The main challenge of running my business is always managing the workload. I just need a few carbon copies of myself.”

Get in touch

 [avocadosocial](#)

 [avocadosocialUK](#)

 [avocadosocial](#)

[www.avocadosocial.com](#)



Caroline Jackson

Little Women Fashion

Creating lingerie for ladies who are beautifully small of bosom but who want to dress in glamorous, grown-up underwear.

I bought Little Women about three years ago from a lady who had run the company for 20-odd years as a 'lifestyle' business, offering lingerie for women with small busts. It fitted nicely as I was looking for a new challenge that would make use of my fashion buyer background.

Our first challenge was to build the brand, which we've done with a combination of excellent social media content, a good inbound marketing team and great PR. We've also struggled to source manufacturing in the UK but it's something I feel passionate about and we're working on it.

We've tripled turnover since I bought the business and been shortlisted for the 'underwear Oscars' (STARS) twice.

I think the essence of Little Women is that we believe that everyone is beautiful whatever their shape and size. We're in a position to offer something to ladies who are largely ignored by the mainstream lingerie industry and I feel proud that we go some way to meet this need and to redress the balance in some small way.

Enterprise Nation is the best resource available to us. When I have a question or a knowledge gap they're my first port of call. Whether it's the webinars or reading an inspirational story to get my mojo flowing again, I go back to the website again and again.

Events like the Fashion Exchange are unsurpassed. I also went on the trade mission to Hong Kong and China and find it hard to describe the value that this brought to me personally and to my business.

Things I've learned:

People always buy from people. We actively refuse to be anything other than our customers' professional friend and to offer complete honesty.

Invest in decent PR and inbound marketing. Whether you do it yourself or outsource it, you cannot ignore the benefits that these things, done well, bring to your business.

Always be mindful of your brand. Keep thinking about how to keep your offer fresh, relevant and engaging.

Remember the sales funnel. If you're not familiar with the concept, you need to learn it. It will change your view of your sales processes, your customer service, your website and your shop.

"We've tripled turnover since I bought the business."



Get in touch

-  [@LittleWomenBras](#)
-  [LittleWomenFashion](#)
-  [@LittleWomenLingerie](#)
- [www.littlewomen.com](#)



Vicky Warr The Beez Kneez

Helping mums feel more body confident without spending hours in the gym or kitchen.

Before The Beez Kneez I was a senior account director at a global advertising agency. But after more than a decade in advertising, I experienced 'burn out' and wanted to improve my health by exercising and eating better. After a year of research and going to exercise classes I got the wellness habit!

I qualified as a fitness instructor and personal trainer, then set up The Beez Kneez and spent the next 10 years developing my pregnancy and postnatal fitness method. It's designed to help mums-to-be stay in great shape to deliver their babies and new mothers to heal their core and spring back into shape safely after childbirth.



I quickly grew my client base and took on a couple of trainers to help me. With my team we delivered the workouts at one-to-one and small group classes across London. As the programmes saw great results, the word spread and many new mothers in other regions wanted access to The Beez Kneez method.

The Beez Kneez Hive online was born so all new mothers can follow the moves and see the results, no matter where they live.

Finding the right people to build a good team where everyone shares the same core values and is behind the vision of the business was a big challenge at first but we got there!

My biggest achievement so far has been growing my business online so I could reduce my own working hours and spend time with my family. It has been great to help mums from London, Australia, Belgium and Spain! This year my business is expected to grow by 15% and next year, I'll be helping 1,000 mums globally with my signature postnatal fitness and nutrition programme.

Enterprise Nation and Facebook's She Means Business campaign and the weekly online masterclasses have helped me develop my marketing plan and strategy without having to spend big money on hiring marketing gurus. It has enabled me to access quality training and others' experience on a limited start-up budget.

These thoughts have served me well over the years:

1. Develop resilience. You're always climbing!
2. Go on your intuition
3. Listen to others, especially your customers

"My biggest achievement so far has been growing my business online so I can reduce my own working hours and spend time with my family."

Get in touch

[@BeTheBeezKneez](#)

[beezkneezfitness](#)

[beezkneezfitness](#)

[TheBeezKneezUK](#)

[vickywarr](#)

[www.beezkneezhive.com](#)





Emma Gillespie Belles and Babes

Offering beautiful, sustainable and affordable baby and maternity clothing to hire.

When I was pregnant with my son, I felt that there must be a better, more sustainable way of clothing babies which didn't involve spending lots of money on clothes which are only used for a short space of time. I had the same feeling about maternity clothing too.

After a lot of research, I finally launched Belles and Babes in mid-2016, starting with occasion wear in Bristol.

The idea is to hire outfits for special occasions which might only be worn once. I plan to offer this service throughout the UK and launch a maternity capsule wardrobe subscription as well as an organic baby clothing subscription. With these services customers will receive a bundle of clothing and then when they bump or baby grows, they'll send them back and receive the next bundle.

The huge amount of planning and research required before I could launch was really challenging. It was so overwhelming that I didn't know where to start, and I could have gone on forever! Eventually I just had to go for it, and get over the feeling that I wasn't quite ready, knowing that the business would be able to grow and change over time.

A drop-in event hosted by Enterprise Nation a couple of years ago was what first got me fired up about my business idea. Everyone was so enthusiastic and gave me some great tips.

Since then I have been watching the online masterclasses which have been really helpful, and I also had a consultation with an expert when I was first designing my website.

What I've learned:

Rely on your networks and make new ones. I've found so many inspirational women in business in just a few months, and because I'm working from home it's great to meet people in a similar situation, for moral support, motivation, and just someone to talk to!

Collaborate with other small businesses. Whether it's to combine your products and services, or just to share social media posts so that you reach more of your target audience, so many small businesses will be happy to help you and work together.

Just go for it. It sometimes feels like there is never a 'right time', so believe that you can achieve your goals and that positive attitude will take you far.

"The planning and research before launch were so overwhelming that I could have gone on forever!"

Get in touch

 [bellesandbabesuk](https://www.facebook.com/bellesandbabesuk)

 [bellesandbabesuk](https://www.instagram.com/bellesandbabesuk)

www.bellesandbabes.co.uk



Simon Lyons

Version 22 Design LTD

Creating accessible, useful tools which solve real everyday problems in ways that make you smile.

I've always loved creating and building things, from constructing things out of K'Nex and building furniture as a kid, to studying product design engineering at university. I decided to keep building and creating through my own business, and so launched Version 22 after graduating in 2013.

Since then we've run three successful crowdfunding campaigns and been lucky enough to win several national and multinational awards for our products.

Our biggest achievements to date have been winning the DIA Excellence Award in China, raising 700% of our funding goal for our second product, Nimble, a one-finger safety cutter and being featured on the cover of The Sunday Times business section.

Our biggest challenges to date have been managing cashflow within the business, and continually growing our end user customer base in new and creative ways. Next year we plan on launching at least two new products, hopefully three! We'll also probably be popping up on Kickstarter.

Enterprise Nation has played a huge role in helping our business with PR. It was through contacts at Enterprise Nation that we got a feature in The Economist for our first product, Geco Hub, and it was through one of Enterprise Nation's Meet The Journalists events that we got the opportunity to pitch Nimble which led to that feature in The Sunday Times.

Along the way we've learned a few things:

Know what your strengths are and make the most of them.

Don't be shy especially about asking for help from people with more experience than you in areas of weakness or inexperience. Remember to pay it forward in any way you can too by offering help of your own to others.

Be careful when planning your budget. If at all possible, only spend based on money you know is going to come in. Even if the money is 'guaranteed', there's always the chance it can be delayed.

“Don’t be shy about asking for help from people with more experience than you.”

Get in touch

[version22design](#)

[version22design](#)

[version22design](#)

[www.version22.com](#)





Jason Nichols New Kings Coffee

Providing quality, single origin, Fairtrade and organic coffees, individually wrapped for freshness, convenience and choice.



“Enterprise Nation has helped promote my business and put me in touch with valuable contacts. They’ve even become a customer!”

I'd often seen tea selection boxes at hotels and conferences and wondered why the same didn't exist for coffee. But one day, I was served coffee in a coffee bag; like a tea bag, but for coffee! I connected this idea to the selection box and hey presto, New Kings Coffee was born. Then I just had to get on with the job of creating it.

In my experience, starting up a business is a series of hurdles to overcome. My company registration was initially rejected because the business name required 'royal' approval. I've had to learn to do everything myself, like design logos and labels, create a website and everything else, as I don't have huge funds to pay others to do it for me.

So far, I've secured a large deal with a luxury hamper company to provide them with my coffee bags for their Christmas hamper range. I've got huge ambitions for the business, and so many goals, but in the short term I'm focused on gaining more customers and more product ranges. I'm currently working on a retail version of the product and a gift selection box, which would be great to have stocked in one of the prestigious department stores.

Enterprise Nation has provided me with so much help over the last year or so. Since joining and initially attending the regular meet-ups in Bristol, they've been so supportive about my intended business and product concept.

They've helped promote my business and put me in touch with valuable contacts. Plus, they gave me the opportunity to give samples of my product to Eurostar in Paris, as well as a host of other companies, at the Food and Travel Exchange event. They've even become a customer!

What I've learned:

Take action. You'll learn from doing, not thinking or planning, so get going sooner rather than later.

Get support. Find organisations and like-minded people to surround yourself with. Starting a business is hard and you'll need lots of support, advice, motivation and inspiration.

Focus. Understand what's really important to make progress in your business. There's loads of 'stuff' that needs to be done but a few key things will accelerate your progress more than others.

Get in touch

 [newkingscoffee](#)

 [newkingscoffee](#)

 [newkingscoffee](#)

[www.newkingscoffee.co.uk](#)



Roseanna Croft

Roseanna Croft Jewellery

Championing high-quality bespoke jewellery design and fine-fashion collections.

Trained in England, but with experience from all over the world, I have developed ten years of expertise in design, goldsmithing and luxury goods. Officially founded in 2015, Roseanna Croft Jewellery has been a lifelong dream of mine but as it turned out, I began it a bit earlier than I might have expected.

Made in Britain, all our unique jewellery is hand-crafted in our boutique in Bakewell, Derbyshire set in the heart of the Peak District. Since I started, there have been challenges every day whether they're financial or technical, but I feel they've all been far outweighed by our achievements – it's been more than worth it.

As well as our luxury boutique in the Peak District we also have an amazing website, which has allowed us to sell much further afield than would otherwise have been possible. For instance, we've received a letter from Kensington Palace in thanks for Princess Charlotte's first birthday present, which we made especially for her. Our work has appeared in Tatler magazine and we've created some stunning designs for a wide range of incredible people around the world. Little by little, we're growing our brand and getting ourselves known both within, and far beyond, the Peak District.

Our next business goal is to become the most sought-after bespoke jewellery designer in our local area. But eventually, we plan to spread our wings and open other bespoke design boutiques across the country.

Enterprise Nation is forever sending amazing opportunities our way, including the chance to pitch to Selfridges buyers at the 2017 Fashion and Jewellery Exchange, which was a terrific chance for us to reach out beyond our origins.

My single piece of sparkling advice to other small businesses and entrepreneurs is to stay positive, even through the tough times. Believe in yourself and your abilities – and don't undersell yourself!

Get in touch

[RoseannaCroftJewellery](#)

[roseannacroftjewellery/](#)

[www.roseannacroftjewellery.com](#)

**“Believe in yourself
and your abilities –
and don’t undersell
yourself!”**



Catherine Gazzoli Piccolo

Using Mediterranean inspired family recipes and 100% organic ingredients to create tasty, nutritious and balanced meals for babies.

I started out my career working for the UN, supporting food agencies and campaigning for good, healthy food to be understood and available wherever possible. Later, I became head of the non-profit organisation Slow Food UK, and set about transforming the way we think about food. That mission has included championing small producers and sustainable regional sourcing.

The idea for Piccolo began to germinate when I had trouble finding quality baby food for my daughter. I knew there had to be a better way. Having decided to create the kind of quality, Mediterranean baby food meals that I couldn't find when feeding my daughter, I set up Piccolo in 2016, with the intention of bringing a unique and quirky ethos to FMCG business and the traditional way of doing things.

I launched Piccolo in style, by inviting a range of retailers round to my Covent Garden house for a traditional Mediterranean sweet potato and beef ragu. Since then, I have spent a lot of time taking home-cooked Italian lemon cake and other delicacies to trade shows around the country to demonstrate exactly what we do. It's all about showing, not just telling.

We're now the fastest growing baby food brand in the UK and are beginning to make real waves in the category. We're also passionate about giving all children the best start in life and we put our money where our mouth is by giving 10% of our profits to food education charities.

Enterprise Nation has been a great help since we started. I've attended many of their events and found them all really useful, interesting and full of great business contacts and inspirations. They were also kind enough to profile Piccolo and nominate me for an award for the Female Start-up of the Year in 2016.

My advice to other entrepreneurs is simply to get started. Do your research and hustle!



“I launched Piccolo in style, by inviting a range of retailers round to my Covent Garden house for a traditional Mediterranean sweet potato and beef ragu.”

Get in touch

- [@mylittlepiccolo](https://twitter.com/mylittlepiccolo)
- [@mylittlepiccolo](https://facebook.com/mylittlepiccolo)
- [@mylittlepiccolo](https://instagram.com/mylittlepiccolo)
- [Piccolo \(Organic Baby Food\)](https://linkedin.com/company/piccolo-organic-baby-food)
- www.mylittlepiccolo.com



Simon Cavill

Bee Good

Creating award-winning, natural skincare made by British bees.

My wife Caroline and I have had a love affair with bees going back many years. I'm an experienced beekeeper and tutor, producing award-winning honey and beeswax from my bees based at several sites in rural Hampshire.

In 2008 we found a recipe book dating back to the 1700s and started making lip balms and hand creams. These products born initially out of our kitchen were an instant success at various local markets, fetes and beekeeping exhibitions, winning first prize at the Hampshire Honey show five years in a row!

Though the brand enjoyed local goodwill, we realised there was a market opportunity to make Bee Good a national brand. However, we lacked any experience in the beauty business and needed people with relevant skills.

In 2013, we started building a team of experienced professionals who were passionate about producing skincare products made by British bees. The team's varied experience in operations, branding and skincare has transformed Bee Good from a brand known in Hampshire to one that's now known nationally and being sold through Waitrose, Amazon, QVC and more.

In spite of being a young brand we've won rave reviews from beauty editors and bloggers, not to mention receiving positive messages and impressive product reviews from our customers. Our products continue to win awards, both from beauty industry insiders and consumers. We're immensely proud of the 25 awards and accolades we've received to date.

We plan to keep creating high-quality skincare products that are good for the skin and easy to use by combining the age-old, magical properties of honey – beeswax – propolis with British botanicals. We also want to leverage the benefits of bee ingredients while protecting our precious British bees.

All our production, design and ingredients are primarily British sourced. We believe that buying local is an ongoing trend and that demand for in-country local products is rising. We maintain that an honest and authentic approach is possible in the competitive beauty environment and we'll continue creating products that our British customers love. Once we're established here, we'll look to open the door to international opportunities.

My single core of advice to start-ups is to be stubborn! Success comes out of hard work and persistence.

“We’re passionate about producing skincare products made by British bees.”

Get in touch

 [BeeGood_UK](#)

 [BeeGoodUK](#)

 [beegooduk/](#)

[www.beegood.co.uk](#)





Helen James Nutriri*

Nobody should have to settle for restriction diet clubs.

After three decades of yo-yo dieting, I just knew a better job could be done and that nobody should have to settle for restriction diet clubs.

Nutriri* is a growing a network of body-positive clubs around the UK, coaching mindful eating and supporting self-compassion.

It's a social enterprise which I set up to help and support itself through business. We've taken the best bits from slimming clubs and developed a non-gimmicky way to re-learn self-trust and compassion, all within a safe, non-judgmental space.

Our biggest achievement so far has been graduating from Lloyds Bank School for Social Entrepreneurs and receiving lottery funding.

Our continuing challenge is to move past initial assumptions that we're just another diet plan. Lots of people are just so fed up with dietland, it can get in the way of further engagement. So raising awareness will come with growth, and growth will come with raising awareness of what we are and how we can help.

Some things I've learned:

Stop believing you need all the answers to get going.

Always be open to where a connection or collaboration might lead. I'd always feared networking a little but being a little bit more fearless and taking the time to connect can be so rewarding.

Stop seeing competition as competition. Business is more niche these days, and people in similar business can benefit by helping, rather than competing, with each other. Attending the Enterprise Nation Festival of Female Entrepreneurs and having access to a wider community of similar and complementary businesses and associates was a real help!

“Stop seeing competition as competition. Businesses can benefit by helping, rather than competing, with each other.”

Get in touch

[nutriri](#)

[nutririhappy](#)

[nutriri_helen](#)

[www.nutriri.org](#)



Mike Turner Bluebird Tea Co.

On a mission to make people happy with tea.

I met my partner Krisi when we were studying politics (of all things!) at university. We found that we both had a profound love of tea, and had many long and involved discussions about it in those early days. So before long, we were creating new blends, packing tea in our bedroom and attending markets, learning more about tea – and the business of tea – as we went.

Our name comes from the term 'Bluebird Day' which is a day with perfect blue skies. The motto for the company is 'spreading happiness, one cupful at a time', and we wanted to choose a company name that reminded us of this every single day. We think it's working.

Building Bluebird from scratch has been our passion for the last three years, and we've come a long way in a relatively short time. From our beginnings in that bedroom we now have an awesome team, multiple retail stores and a thriving international online store too.

We like to think that Bluebird is leading the way in tea innovation in the UK, with exciting new recipes, interaction with our customers and a quick response to inspiration.

Our advice to anyone thinking about starting a new business is to just do it but make sure you enjoy the journey!

Enterprise Nation has been a great help for us. They've been really supportive and have given us lots of advice, along with plenty of PR opportunities and of course great networking events.

"If you're thinking about starting a new business, just do it but make sure you enjoy the journey!"



Get in touch

[bluebirdteaco](#)

[BluebirdTeaCo](#)

[bluebirdteaco](#)

[www.bluebirdteaco.com](#)

Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Peter Lawrence

Human Capital Department

Outsourcing people management and development consultancy for SMEs and larger businesses in the UK and GCC.

I set up the Human Capital Department in 2016 having returned from Qatar in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where I worked in senior HR and learning and development advisory roles for leading international companies including Exxon and General Electric.

I joined forces with Rod Lee as co-director and we were later joined by Sue Rumsby, a highly experienced HR consultant. Having worked in human resources consultancy and related fields, including recruitment as well as training and development, I began to develop a burning ambition to set up on my own company in a similar field.

I wanted to offer SMEs the expertise I had gained from some of the most successful organisations in the world, and help them to grow with leading people management and development practices.

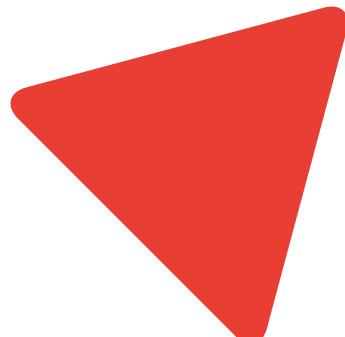
“Our biggest challenge has been to let potential customers know about us without an advertising budget.”

Our biggest challenge so far has been to let potential customers know about us without an advertising budget. It has not been easy, but our reputation has been growing quickly. In fact, we've recently won a national contract to conduct human capital due diligence. That's quite something for a company of our size.

Our next big goal is to build the number of our retained clients. Our target is to have 20 retained clients by the end of 2018, and achieve sales turnover of over £100,000. It's an ambitious goal, but with the skills and talent we have, and the potential of the market, I'm confident that we can achieve it.

Enterprise Nation has provided us with training opportunities, information and advice, as well as support and plentiful networking opportunities. They've been a great help to us so far and I expect that they will continue to be.

My advice to other small businesses is to have a clear business plan, but be responsive to customer feedback and always be ready to adapt and change to meet your clients' needs.



Get in touch

 [@hcdept](#)

 [hcdept](#)

 [human-capital-department](#)

[www.humancapitaldept.com](#)



Rob Hallmark Gruhme

Creating stylish fragrances and grooming products for men in the UK.

I've always been fascinated by the idea of starting my own business from scratch. I saw that subscription services in men's grooming products could be a good future but those businesses take large subscriber numbers, substantial investment and continuous marketing and sales support to maintain the customer base.

Instead, I decided to get into the products themselves, retain control over the rate of growth to keep it manageable but organically scale without the need for a large team or investment.

Running a start-up brand has been incredibly rewarding, a lesson in psychology as much as a steep learning curve in business. Maintaining cashflow is a never-ceasing challenge. Choosing the right suppliers and the right place to spend the precious cash is a constant learning curve, often only resolved through experience gained by expensive mistakes.

The atmosphere at Enterprise Nation is an important driver for getting people connected and pushing each other forward. They've given me several unique opportunities, such as a visit to Downing Street, which I couldn't have achieved alone. These create a significant boost to morale and provide a sense of progress and achievement.

Four things I've learned:

Over a long enough period you should end up where you meant to be. Keep the focus on that goal rather than on the speed taken to get there.

Preserve cash as a number one priority. Spend it wisely and make it profitable as much as possible (compromise to retain profitability if you're a bootstrap business).

At an early stage, make a decision about the type of growth and kind of business you want to create. There's nothing wrong with making small gains and learning along the way but if you expect fast growth and a scaled-up, disruptive business you should expect to consume your time and cash resources accordingly (i.e. significantly faster than you might imagine).

If you plan on raising finance and investment you should make that part of your business plan from the start. Businesses that scale with investment should be approached differently to organically grown, bootstrapped start-ups.

“Running a start-up brand has been a lesson in psychology as much as a steep learning curve in business.”

Get in touch

[gruhme](#)

[Gruhme](#)

[gruhme](#)

www.gruhme.co.uk



Rosie Letts

Rosie Letts Nutrition

Using nutritional medicine and diagnostic tools to drive lasting and powerful health results.

After many years struggling with my weight and overall health, I set up Rosie Letts Nutrition in June 2015 following a personally devastating set of events earlier that year including redundancy, losing our home and my mum's death.

I wrote my first business plan and secured a job centre loan to pay for basic start-up expenses. In August 2016 I earned a place at Entrepreneurial Spark, where the enablement and events helped me to re-evaluate what I really wanted for my business and focus on long-term strategy.

I developed a consistent approach to the day-to-day running of the business and became more results-driven, keeping a close eye on my metrics and using them as motivation to push harder. The business accelerated fast and within six months my turnover tripled, my team grew from one to five, I received national media attention and I gained the confidence to become the face of my brand.

“It’s easy to get caught up in things like spreadsheets and meetings, but at the end of the day I’m working to create something truly special for people who need it and who can really benefit from it.”

With my clinics filling up each week, my business model was limiting the impact I could have. So I started a beautiful members-only platform to house all the resources, recipes and tools that I use in my clinic and created the online version of my signature Reinvent programme.

In just four months, the community grew to 700 and it’s still organically growing every day. Later I plan to design similar programmes for fertility, pregnancy, male and sports audiences. I would also like to publish cookbooks to complement each programme.

Throughout my business journey, Enterprise Nation has provided inspiration, support and advice. It feels great to be a part of the Enterprise Nation community and I always look forward to meeting new business friends and learning at the events.

For me, my success has been down to three (seemingly) simple things:

Perseverance. I know this is clichéd, but every new business goes through teething steps.

Delegation. Like many business owners, I want to do everything myself so I know it’s done right. But allowing others to take the reins of some parts of your business can be incredibly rewarding.

Look after your customers. It’s easy to get caught up in things like spreadsheets and meetings, but at the end of the day I’m working to create something truly special for people who need it and who can really benefit from it.

Get in touch

[RLNutrition1](#)

[rosielettsnutrition](#)

[rosieletts](#)

[rosieletts](#)

[www.rosielettsnutrition.com](#)



Suzi Hull Hullo Creative

A collaborative design studio working with charities, start-ups and medium-sized businesses.

Hullo Creative started with me as a freelance designer wanting to provide a visual solution for people trying to connect with their audience. But having been used to working in bigger teams, I struggled to do it all on my own.

So I set up the barn space with the intention of connecting up and supporting other freelancers like myself who wanted to be creative and work for themselves but have the opportunity to work on bigger projects. Now we provide a space where people can feel connected and supported while developing their own brand. We pull people in to work on bigger projects when it suits but also encourage working together as a team on projects throughout the studio barn.

We're a collaborative design studio working with everyone from charities, SMEs, start-ups and medium-sized businesses that are struggling to connect with their client market and need help with any of the design aspects of their business, whether that be their logo, business cards, website, animation or any printed materials.

We've grown as a studio and now Emily and myself, as a partnership, run the studio supporting, encouraging and developing together.

Enterprise Nation has helped us a lot by putting on inspirational events that have aided us in connecting with our clients on a deeper level.

What we've learned along the way:

Trust your gut. If it doesn't feel right, don't do it, even if everyone is telling you to!

Be brave in how you approach situations. You don't grow unless you attempt something new.

Surround yourself with people that will be honest with you but will also support you, even when you fail.



Get in touch

[HulloCreative](#)

[hullocreative](#)

[hullo_creative](#)

[www.hullocreative.com](#)





Naeem Alvi Notepad

Defining, creating and growing brands for start-ups and new ventures that challenge the status quo.

Birmingham has more start-ups than any UK city outside of London. We're a city of innovators, risk-takers and optimists. In contrast however, Birmingham's business failure rate for 2017 was 64%.

This means, out of the 7,310 new businesses, more than two thirds of new ventures that were started with all the best will in the world are now dead in the ground. And outside of Birmingham, it's much the same story.

I set up Notepad to stop so many new businesses failing, and build brands, products and services that stand the test of time and move the world forward.

Our network of senior strategists and designers have worked with some of the biggest brands in the world and by using the same principles to define and build brands for start-ups and new ventures, we'll show what's possible when you invest in your brand from the get-go. Failure isn't an option; let's grow something noteworthy!

I honestly think without the support of Enterprise Nation's resources, networks and profile opportunities, my business wouldn't exist.

Through speaking at Enterprise Nation events and attending monthly meet-ups, I've won four major client contracts, totalling more than £30,000 revenue for my business. I visited 10 Downing Street to represent our region and discuss the challenges we face and I've since become a shareholder in another company that attended on the day.

Enterprise Nation's webinars have also helped me develop as a more rounded business leader. From digital security to HR policies and understanding tax, each one has helped my business immensely.

My five top tips for business success are:

Set a long-term objective and then get into the habit of setting daily micro goals that help you move towards achieving this objective.

Always turn up. You miss 100% of the shots you don't take. Simply turning up for an event or meeting (even if you think it's pointless), can change everything.

Surround yourself with good people who motivate you to be better and do more.

Always pay suppliers and freelancers on time. Goodwill is priceless for a start-up.

Have killer customer service. It's your customers who'll really make your business a success.

"Failure isn't an option. Let's grow something noteworthy!"

Get in touch

-  [notepadstudio](#)
-  [wearenotepadstudio](#)
-  [notepadstudio](#)
- [www.notepadstudio.com](#)



Camilla Warren

Memories of Growing Up

Creating products that help people preserve memories of growing up.

I started Memories of Growing Up a few years ago in London. As a mum of three, I was passionate about storing memories of my children while they were young and as they were growing.

Any parent who has recorded their children's heights by marking them on a wall or door frame knows the agony of what to do when the kids have grown up and it's time to redecorate. My first invention was the portable children's height chart, Talltape.

The Talltape is made of a sturdy, flexible plastic that can be rolled and unrolled easily and has a write-on surface for recording measurements with a permanent marker pen. It makes a long-lasting keepsake and it's available in a variety of designs by British illustrators, to suit any style.

The Memories of Growing Up range also includes the Memories Stick, a beautifully packaged and designed USB stick that allows parents and relatives to safely store photos and scans of certificates and first drawings. I also have a collection of beautiful jewellery with hidden compartments to store mementos. Each and every baby gift in our range is designed to make a unique, personal and long-lasting keepsake to pass on through the generations.

The biggest challenge in the early days was always being too small and having just one main product. Suppliers of packaging and parts tend to penalise small volume buyers and every retailer wanted to deal with a brand or a distributor. But there was no margin for me to take on a distributor.

My next business goal is to try and step away from my dependency on Amazon. I want to sell on other platforms through ecommerce and via retailers.

The weekly Enterprise Nation webinars have been invaluable, and as the business grows, they'll become more and more helpful.

Three things I've learned:

1. Criticism should be used advantageously. You should never take it personally.
2. Be flexible and always look for alternative avenues
3. Network whenever possible. Apart from the practical help, it's good to feel you're not alone in your quest



Get in touch

@tall_tape

memoriesofgrowing

@memoriesofgrowingup

www.memoriesofgrowingup.com

Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Mark Neild

Grow Inspires

You have to 'productise' what you offer to customers.

I came up with the idea while I was chairman of award-winning charity Grow Movement. Our volunteers gained so much from phone coaching our clients in Africa and developed much better people skills that I knew there had to be a market for it.

Many business people struggle with people skills, so by coaching our coaches, we help more people escape poverty and build successful businesses that can bring them out of poverty.

The biggest challenge was zeroing in on my niche. I left the corporate world with lots of different skills, but finding the value proposition that most appealed to customers (which I also enjoy and am good at delivering) took me a lot longer than I expected. I wasted a lot of money in marketing something that was really not ready.

Writing a book helped me to nail down exactly what I do for customers. Now I need to scale up the way I deliver it so that I can have more impact and help more creative people to be successful.

Along the way, I've learned:

What's clear in your head is often far from clear to customers. Be absolutely crystal on the benefits and outcomes that you deliver to customers.

Do one thing at a time and stick to it until it's either obvious that it's not the right thing or it starts to work. Enterprise Nation has given me great insight and advice from other small businesses and I particularly enjoy reading the tips from experts in their field.

Be ruthless with expenditure and try to save where you can. You'll be grateful for it later.

"The biggest challenge was zeroing in on my niche. I wasted a lot of money in marketing something that was really not ready."

Get in touch

 @mpneild

 facebook.com/agileering

 [markneild](https://www.linkedin.com/in/markneild/)

www.growinspires.org



Sabrina Bluck CoCo Loves

We see CoCo Loves becoming a marketplace for likeminded entrepreneurs.

Soon after the birth of my first child, Isaac, I started designing bespoke presents for my friends. When I created a framed gift for a friend's wedding in Santorini, the response was overwhelming.

Before long, people started commissioning me to design them for others, and CoCo Loves was born. That was less than two years ago, and since then the business has taken off. With the help of my husband, I set up a website and social media pages, and began building a brand.

By the summer, we'd hit 30,000 followers on Instagram and began branching out with new products and services. So far this year we've taken on a couple of suppliers for candles, diffusers and more. It's early days, but we're always thinking outside the box to grow the business and create a sustainable income for our family.

We're really active in the business community, both in Birmingham and at a national level. We love getting involved with Enterprise Nation, and have found Emma Jones to be a real inspiration and source of support.

As our business grows, we're also partnering with other small businesses to create a retail network. Our products are in several independent shops across the UK, and we're adding other suppliers' products to our platform to boost their online exposure through our marketplace.

Starting and running a business as a 'mumpreneur' isn't always easy, but I believe that with passion, hard work and the right support, it's possible to do amazing things. In less than two years, CoCo Loves has evolved from a hobby to a thriving online business, and I hope that my journey might demonstrate that you don't need to have a shop front, business experience or a background in digital to succeed!

"Starting and running a business as a 'mumpreneur' isn't always easy but it's possible to do amazing things."

Get in touch

-  [CocoLoves_x](#)
-  [CocoLovesWallArt](#)
-  [cocoloves_x](#)
- [www.cocoloves.co.uk](#)



Clive Brazier The Food Agency

Helping food and drink entrepreneurs get 'buyer ready' and 'investor ready'.

After 30 years running my own food and drink manufacturing companies, people kept asking me for help and advice. One of those people is my now business partner, Jeremy. He's all things sales and I'm all things manufacturing, so we decided to pool our experience and The Food Agency was born.

I take care of advising clients on strategy, operations, manufacturing, efficiency, and technical aspects of the food production business. Meanwhile, Jeremy looks after everything to do with sales and marketing - from design and outreach to all the tough numbers stuff. We've built a team of food industry specialists across finance, accounting, marketing, product development, HR and more to help our clients with skills that they may not have or struggle with.



We decided that traditional consultancy is a thing of the past in the vibrant and fast-moving food sector. So we developed a platform where clients can hire our team of professionals by the hour so that they can get maximum support while controlling their spend at all times. The most important thing to us is that our clients succeed but we also want to have fun doing it!

Enterprise Nation is an amazing network of positive, aspirational business people and they've been a great help to us. We attended our first Food Exchange event this year and were really impressed with the opportunities that it gave us to learn from and reach out to entrepreneurs across our industry.

One of the main things I've learned along the way is that you should always ask yourself 'If I was an investor, would I invest in my business?'. If you're honest about the answer, you may surprise yourself, and it will open your eyes to where your business strengths and weaknesses are. Even if you're not looking for investment, ask the same question of business people you trust and pay attention to their reaction. They could become your customers after all.

“Always ask yourself ‘If I was an investor, would I invest in my business?’”

Get in touch

[The_FoodAgency](https://twitter.com/The_FoodAgency)
 [the_foodagency](https://www.instagram.com/the_foodagency/)
www.thefoodagency.net

Proud Member of
 **Enterprise
Nation**



Liesel Corp Magic Mirror

The PR and marketing is critical but it's expensive.

Being able to check what you look like is absolutely critical before you perform and not always possible when you're getting ready on location. As a film and live performances costume designer, I needed was a full-length mirror that would enable people to see themselves from top to toe before going on set.

Some of the best film studios and theatres aren't always equipped with mirrors, sockets and lights or there just aren't enough if you're working on a big show. I developed the Magic Mirror for professional use, a multifunctional, full-length travel mirror.

I soon realised there was a crossover into the domestic market. Since I launched the product in early 2015 we've achieved multiple sell-outs on QVC and I'm very proud of what the brand has become.

The biggest challenges have been product development and finance. The product itself costs a lot to manufacture and since Brexit we now manufacture everything in the UK, having started in the Far East. Our next goal is to take Instagram by storm and build the B2C side of the business in the UK and USA.

When you start a business you will of course experience huge highs and deep lows. But always remember when you're going through challenging times that if you believe in your business the answer will come and things will move along at the right time. Everything is cyclical. Enterprise Nation has contributed greatly to our success, they've given us a constant stream of relevant blog posts, articles and events that provide extensive reference points of knowledge and advice.

“If you believe in your business the answer will come and things will move along at the right time. Everything is cyclical.”



Get in touch

[f magicmirroruk](#)

[i magicmirroruk](#)

www.magicmirroruk.com

Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Rachel Hugh The Vurger Co

Revolutionising fast food burgers through the power of plants.

We started the business owing to my partner Neil's long-term health issues. We did a lot of research as to where our food comes from. While on the lookout for insanely delicious vegan burgers, we realised that London seemed to be way behind and lacking great, delicious options in a mainstream environment. That was the lightbulb moment!

We worked to get our name out there by starting in market stalls, events, pop-up restaurants and festivals alongside our full-time jobs, before taking the plunge in February 2017. We always knew our goal was to open a restaurant, but trying to do so in the most fragile industry that exists right now was no easy path.

So we set about launching a CrowdCube campaign, and based our whole business on our social following, allowing our customers to follow our journey from market to restaurant. We successfully raised our target of £180,000 in 24 hours and then almost doubled that to our designated second target of £300,000 in 77 hours in total!

It was a mind-blowing moment for us, to see that our small business had been backed by investors from all across the world. This has allowed us to start working on our first permanent space to serve our food every single day.

I always suggest to other new businesses that you should seek advice from the best in your industry. It's tough out there, and without people to help it really can be an overwhelming environment. Enterprise Nation has been our go-to source for pretty much everything along our journey. From online advice to community support and snippets of info on social channels, we've never been far from the best advice in the industry.

“We launched a CrowdCube campaign and based our whole business on our social following”



Get in touch

[thevurgerco](#)

[thevurgerco](#)

[thevurgerco](#)

www.thevurgerco.com

Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**

START ME UP! 63



Katherine Senior EcoStardust

We are crazy about glitter and passionate about the environment.

We love glitter; we cover ourselves in it and throw it around like confetti at parties and festivals. But once we realised we were covering ourselves and the world in little bits of plastic it took the sparkle out of it for us. So we started our mission to find an alternative. We launched EcoStardust in April 2017 and headed straight out to UK festivals to start spreading the word about eco-glitter! And we give 10% of net profits to environmental charities and bodies.

The biggest challenge has been sourcing the right kind of packaging for our products, especially affordable, environmentally friendly packaging. It was difficult, but we're using easily recyclable materials for now, and will evolve our packaging as the business grows.

Our initial aim was to get to market and get to as many festivals as possible. We're working on new eco-glitter blends, bigger eco-glitter pots and all the tools you need for being an eco-glitter artist.

Some things I've learned so far:

Get out there and meet people

I hate the idea of 'networking' but I've learnt so much. The insights I've gained over a cup of coffee with a stranger have been invaluable. The best thing about Enterprise Nation has been the events and meeting other entrepreneurs and learning from them.

Don't wait for everything to be perfect

It took me eight months to get the website live as I wanted to make sure it was perfect. But within a couple of months, I overhauled the website anyway as we'd already learned so much. I should have just put it live earlier and improved it as I went along.



"The insights I've gained over a cup of coffee with a stranger have been invaluable."

Get in touch

[ecostardust](#)

[EcoStardust](#)

[ecostardust](#)

[www.ecostardust.com](#)



Alan Jones Priferential Accessories Limited

We design and manufacture a range of innovative gaming accessories.

However players consume their content of choice, they have to interact with the game via an accessory. Traditionally this has been via headsets and controllers but as VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) develop, whole new ways of interaction will be possible via touch, eye movement and perhaps even thoughts alone!

Prif is positioned to develop new accessories that improve the immersiveness of gaming. Always affordable, these new prif devices are built on genuine insight into what gamers require and how they play games.

I attended the Enterprise Nation Shanghai trade mission which helped eliminate China from my immediate list of target countries. It may seem odd to say a successful trade mission brought me no sales leads, but I could have expended a lot of effort on this market with no results. Now however, I'm ready, and will revisit online selling in China in 2018.

What I've learned:

Build a cashflow model as soon as you start to trade and have five times more cash than you think you'll need!

Don't be disappointed by failure and don't get ecstatic about early success either.

Believe in partnership. Even your supposed competitors can help you meet your goals.

Don't give up. Being an entrepreneur is often very challenging and can involve some big disappointments. There's always a solution to every problem.



"Don't be disappointed by failure and don't get ecstatic about early success either.



Get in touch

- [prifgear](#)
- [prifgear](#)
- [company/9229846/](#)
- www.prifgear.com



Brian Watt

Sloane's Hot Chocolate

Making hot chocolate that actually tastes of chocolate.

Sir Hans Sloane tasted cocoa and water in Jamaica back in the 17th Century and thought it was nauseating. So he set about making his own recipe, adding some milk and sugar. He brought his Milk Drinking Chocolate to London in 1689 and his recipe soon became popular all over the city in fashionable places like Whites of Soho.

At Sloane's Hot Chocolate we make Posh Hot Chocolate. We put more cocoa into our chocolate so it actually tastes of chocolate. We blend, make and pack our unique chocolate beads in our studio in Surrey. We launched the range in 2014 and were soon listed in Waitrose and lots of coffee shops who wanted something different from their sugary powders.

We won the Best Hot Chocolate award from The Sunday Telegraph and have won several Great Taste awards. But our biggest achievement to date was becoming number one in Waitrose's premium hot chocolates, versus some tough competition from big players like Twinings and Charbonnel. Our next goal is to launch into two or three new export markets in 2018.

“Focus on your point of difference.”

Enterprise Nation is one of the best value-for-money groups an entrepreneur can join. Their events are always a mix of listening to people who have made it, talking to retailers who are interested and making friends with other entrepreneurs who are going through the same journey. If you're only going to join one entrepreneurs' group, you should make it Enterprise Nation.

Our tips for success include:

- Focus on your point of difference
- Develop one sentence that sums up your proposition
- Watch the consumer shopping your category for free insights
- Ask questions of people who've made it. Most are happy to share
- Be bold with buyers and try something different



Get in touch

- [@sloanehotchoc](https://twitter.com/sloanehotchoc)
- [SloanesHotChocolate](https://www.facebook.com/SloanesHotChocolate)
- [sloaneshotchocolate](https://www.instagram.com/sloaneshotchocolate/)
- www.sloanehotchocolate.com



Chris Thomas Apex Ecommerce

I help businesses discover their digital potential.

I was an online retailer for 17 years, from the very start of what we now know to be ecommerce. Over that time I built a business called Cloggs.co.uk which sold millions of shoes all over the world and was eventually bought by JD Sports in 2013. All the digital skills required to build a business of that scale needed to be learned in-house as there was no-one else about at the time to do it for us!

It would be fair to say that it was the strength of our digital marketing, our search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC), rather than the product, which was the reason for our success. I had a number of agencies pitch to me over the years but none of them ever really impressed me enough to outsource the work as they weren't 'retail-hardened' in my view.

This is what I want to bring to the table with Apex Ecommerce. My skills and experience are in applying digital marketing to the real retail world, managing its ebbs and flows to build successful campaigns over the medium and long term.

My number one tip of all time is to invest in your staff and keep your workplace a happy, harmonious place. Give your team the training they need and the equipment to do a great job and they'll grow your company with you. Cutting corners with HR is not a recipe to success in my view.

“It was the strength of our digital marketing, rather than the product, which was the reason for our success.”

Get in touch

 [apexecommerce](#)

 [apexecommerce](#)

 [apex-ecommerce](#)

www.apex-ecommerce.co.uk

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation

START ME UP! 67



Jamie Hewitt RocketshipWP

I turned my hobby into a home-based business.

I've always been interested in technology and I'd been building websites on the side for over five years, so it felt like quite an intuitive step to turn my hobby into a home-based business. I set up my boutique web design agency in early 2016 after I left my career in political PR to take on more childcare responsibilities with my girlfriend.

I've since worked with an incredible collection of businesses, including a multi award-winning wine shop, one of London's top Indian takeaways (as rated by GQ magazine), a famous economist, a plastic surgeon and a start-up working in children's education in Peru. It's been the most interesting and rewarding time of my life.

Marketing was a challenge in the early days. Web design is a heavily commoditised service and lots of people offer it. So my initial challenge was getting myself noticed and working out who my target audiences were. Now that the business is established in my local north London community, my major challenge is cashflow as local businesses don't always have the funds to hand and projects are regularly paused.

There are three pieces of advice that I would offer new businesses:

Make sure your business targets a specific niche

If your business serves everyone, it really serves no-one.

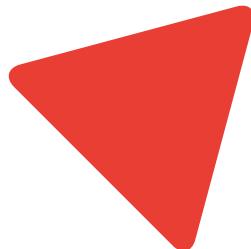
Try lots of different marketing techniques to begin with

Then double-down on the ones that work.

Be prepared to do stuff for free

Or at least do work at a deeply discounted rate at the beginning in order to generate goodwill and promote word-of-mouth. You can then gradually raise your rates over time to make more profit.

“My initial challenge was getting myself noticed and working out who my target audiences were.”



Get in touch

[rocketshipwp](#)

[RocketshipWP](#)

[rocketshipwp](#)

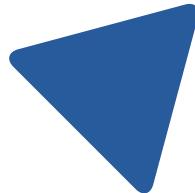
[www.rocketshipwp.com](#)



Rebecca Linnell The Country Dog Hotel

I combined my experience in sales with my passion for dogs.

“I wanted to offer dog owners something different from the norm and somewhere I would want to leave my own dogs if I ever wanted to go away.”



After being a single mum at home and looking after the children I wanted to provide an income for my family and be able to continue being ‘mum’. With experience in sales and a passion for dogs, it seemed like a logical choice to combine the two.

I wanted to offer dog owners something different from the norm and somewhere I would want to leave my own dogs if I ever wanted to go away. With the help of friends and family and pulling in a lot of favours we were able to get the house and field ready for our first guests, once we got our licence and insurances in place.

Country Dog Hotel was born! A bespoke home from home service for your dog in a rural, family-run five-star luxury dog hotel.

We were blown away by how many enquiries we got! There have been challenges, like unruly guests (urinating in the house, digging up the garden, barking; you name it we’ve had it), working 16-hour days, juggling the business with seven children, being on a limited start-up budget and not being able to do everything at once.

But it’s all been worth it. We’ve taken over 200 guests, many with repeat business, and had over 1,000 enquiries. We have great word of mouth in our local community and great interaction on social media with over 50 reviews and all with five-star ratings.

Being selected to pitch in the final for the Enterprise Nation Female Start-up of the Year 2017 was a definite highlight and having our business featured in Country Living in August 2018 will be amazing.

My top tips for success are:

- Believe in yourself and be persistent. If you get a knock down, keep going and don’t stop! If I can do it, anyone can!
- Be prepared to put in long hours and hard work and get organised, especially if, like me, you have young children
- Be ready to do all aspects of the job, especially at first!



Get in touch

[@CountryDogHotel](https://twitter.com/CountryDogHotel)
[the country dog hotel somerset](https://www.facebook.com/thecountrydoghotelsomerset)
[the country dog hotel](https://www.instagram.com/thecountrydoghotel/)
www.countrydoghotel.co.uk

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Sirka Moore

BDC-Business Development Consulting

I turn opportunities into business growth.

Having worked in business development and international sales in engineering manufacturing companies for over 20 years, I've identified how important it is to speak the customer's language and to understand their culture to win those important contracts.

I derive a great deal of pleasure by supporting SMEs to achieve growth in national and international markets. Because of my language skills and extensive market research, I've managed to open markets for clients which they themselves have been unable to penetrate. This has already led to new orders for my clients.

The biggest challenge is how to become better known which requires extensive networking at this stage of my business. My next big goal is to achieve an annual turnover of £250,000 within the next three years.

I've learned that extensive groundwork is required before launching any business based on an idea. It's important to sample opinions of your future customers to see if there's a requirement or appetite in the market.

The next step is very important too: get your business plan right and go through the numbers. Once that safety net of a guaranteed monthly salary is gone, money can run out very quickly if no business is generated and invoiced.

Enjoy what you're doing and believe in you and your company and you'll find customers joining you on your journey.

Keep at it and never give up. The personal reward you get is priceless!

“Enjoy what you’re doing and believe in you and your company and you’ll find customers joining you on your journey.”



Get in touch

 [bdc_moore](#)

 [company/17991281](#)

[www.bdc-moore.com](#)



Anne-Clare Ribbons Cotton Twist

I provide craft kits and gifts to spark creative play and a world of make-believe.

Once upon a time, I had two young children bringing home party bags full of plastic junk which I was continuously throwing into the bin. At the same time, a friend did a homemade party bag which was full of creative ideas. These two things led to the start of the business in 2015.

I began to create enchanting and appealing designs together with simple, creative and imaginative activities to engage children in an innovative and classic way. Since going full time I've created a brand which I'm proud of, and diversified the product range from only focussing on party products to now adding gifting ideas.

Marketplaces like Not On The High Street and Babycino which have really helped me to grow the business and I've received some lovely pieces of press from the likes of The Metro and The Pool. I've now got over 2,000 followers on Instagram but it's been a hard slog to get there.

Since the beginning I've struggled with being too small to get good prices from suppliers, or even getting suppliers interested at all. And of course there never seem to be enough hours in the day. Ultimately, I'd like to run the business from premises out of my house, now that my children are a bit older, but I'll need to shift more volume to be able to do that.

Get networking

It's easy to get buried in your own entrepreneurial world and block the rest of the world out. The highs feel ludicrously high and the lows feel like you've been punched in the stomach. But swapping stories and ideas can lead to partnerships and collaborations. Enterprise Nation has been an amazing resource for what can be a lonely profession as an entrepreneur.

Take time out

Passion can lead to obsessive working patterns (I'm guilty of this) but it's important to step back and get perspective. It freshens the mind for the next stage.



Get in touch

[cottontwist](#)

[inspiredbycottontwist](#)

[cotton.twist](#)

www.cottontwist.co.uk



Alex Limia Dieguez Ally Pally Poems

I create quirky poetry prints to celebrate all the good stuff in life.

I couldn't find a really thoughtful new baby present for my close friend Helen, after she'd had her second baby. I wanted something different from the usual silver photo frames and money boxes, but I couldn't find any alternatives I liked or thought she would!

I've always worked as a writer, and I love writing poems, so I just started making one up, thinking I might write it in a nice card and give it to her that way. But then I thought it would be great to be able to display it with photos of the four of them all together and decided to put it in a frame with space for them to add their own photos of the family.

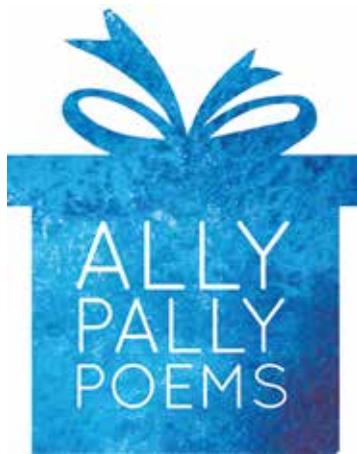
I've since developed a range of 'off the shelf' poems, which have a faster turnaround time than my bespoke poems, but which can still be personalised.

I'm really pleased with what Ally Pally Poems has achieved already, especially when I think that I've been combining it with my freelance writing career, but I'd be lying if I said I'm not aiming high! My next goal is to launch my own website where people can customise my poems themselves.

For me, the biggest challenge is definitely working alone, as I have no-one immediately available to talk through ideas with. Of course, I'm always telling friends, family (and, often, anyone who'll listen!) about my ideas for building my business, and they've always been incredibly supportive, but that's not the same as having colleagues on hand to collaborate with. Enterprise Nation helps me to feel connected to other people with a similar mindset, and part of a 'proper' industry, not just messing around at home with my hobby.

And my advice for other entrepreneurs? Be bold, be different, and be inspired by your competition.

"The biggest challenge is definitely working alone, as I have no-one immediately available to talk through ideas with."



Get in touch

[allypallypoems](#)

[allypallypoems](#)

[allypallypoems.etsy.com](#)

[www.allypallypoems.co.uk](#)





Jennifer Unsworth Be-Baby Ltd

Creating the award-winning weaning kit that eliminates the gap between your baby and the front of their highchair.

As a new mum, I found weaning my baby daughter on to solid foods incredibly stressful and incredibly messy. Unable to find something on the market that properly contained the mess of mealtimes, I set about making a solution to the problem myself. The first iteration of Tidy Tot was made from chopsticks, a muslin square and some sticky tape. It has come a very long way since then.

Trying to develop Tidy Tot while juggling job and family wasn't easy. But I eventually found a UK factory to make my product, and ran my first proper consumer trial with 43 mums and their babies. When 98% of them said they'd recommend it to another mum, I knew I had something. So instead of returning to work, I took a huge leap of faith and ploughed my heart and soul (not to mention my savings!) into making Tidy Tot a success.

The challenges have been immense, but I'm very proud to say, so too have been the achievements. I've moved manufacture of Tidy Tot from the UK to China, extended the product range, learned how to export, and worked alongside UK retailers to really drive brand awareness.

I now have a multi award-winning product that's listed in most of the top UK retailers including Boots, Mothercare, Tesco, Asda and Argos, and I export to almost 20 countries worldwide with a team of six people.

I became aware of Enterprise Nation through the Female Start-up of the Year competition. There are some really interesting events scheduled for the coming months so I'll certainly be booking myself on to a few of those.

My tips for success:

1. You genuinely need to provide a product or service that's better than the rest. Once you know what makes you different, use it in everything you do and shout about it loud and clear.
2. It sounds simple, but it's so important to know your numbers! A clear understanding of your cash position, sales forecast and budget are absolutely essential to surviving the first three years.
3. Don't become blinkered to sound advice from others. Passion and enthusiasm are great but sometimes you need to take a step back from the day to day and look at the bigger picture, preferably with a business mentor.

**“Don’t become
blinkered to sound
advice from others.”**

Get in touch

 [tidy_tot](#)

 [TidyT](#)

 [tidy_tot](#)

www.tidytot.co.uk



Lidia Drzewiecka Visuable

I develop marketing for businesses with personality.

“When you build a strong brand for your business, something magical happens.”

I noticed there were many small business owners who struggled to present their business identity online. All the web design and online marketing companies I knew about were offering basic template websites with no soul. I knew they struggled to attract customers as the visual message they were projecting was confusing. There was a better way.

So I set up Visuable to help my clients better express the personality of their business so they can connect with their audiences on a deeper emotional level. During the last two years we've worked with over 100 brands, transforming their identities in a way that not only leads to business growth but also inspires personal and business confidence.

When you build a strong brand for your business, something magical happens. The roles switch and your products and services become something that people desire. This means you no longer have to sell, people just want to buy. Your brand acts as a vehicle for generating leads and ultimately sales.

Nail down your business foundation

Identify your ideal client so you can connect and engage with them on a whole new emotional level. Don't be a perfectionist. Create your MVP (minimum viable product) and test it out with your target audience. Identify what you stand for and why people should buy from you, not your competitors.

Get business support

When starting out, it's very important to access as much business support as you can afford. The sooner you do it, the better.

Identify your role

From technician, to manager, to visionary; it's really important to know when your role as a business leader needs to change, adapt to new responsibilities, and when it's time to bring new people in to help you with key activities and free your time to be spent where it's needed most.

Get in touch

 [visuable_](#)

 [Visuable](#)

 [lidiadrzewiecka](#)

[www.visuable.co.uk](#)

James Chetwode

Compass Video

Using video and animation to bring business stories to life.

**“Learning is fun,
and you never
stop learning in
business.”**

We came up with the idea of doing our own thing while sitting in a pub called the Compasses. Hence the name! Our biggest achievement has been to build a client base from scratch that includes Capita and the NHS.

That said, our biggest challenge is finding new clients, but the challenge has opened our eyes to an opportunity to help others and make some money at the same time. We needed to create content that people would find useful and allow us to present our ideas to others at networking events without being all about sales. Smartphone video training for small business means we can help others for free and if they want to know more, then they can book a training day.

We weren't quite sure we were ready until we got the feedback from visitors at the Enterprise Nation StartUp 2017. That was a good start to the year! It also gave us the idea of what content to start creating ourselves.

We now need to find at least two big companies that can produce regular work so we don't have to worry about fighting just to survive each month. We long for the day when we can begin giving back by employing a few staff and getting them to understand how we want to work and the service we want to offer our clients.

What I've learned:

Be prepared to change direction quickly.

Be ready to do a bit of everything from accounts to PR even if you don't think you can. Learning is fun, and you never stop learning in business.

Always, always get feedback from customers and ask if you can use it. It's invaluable as you go forward.



Get in touch

- [CompassVideo](#)
- [CompassVideo](#)
- [company/15074692](#)
- www.compass-video.com



Karen Willcox QuirkyLime

I transform children's drawings into wall-worthy art and creating memories.

My two daughters were producing many drawings at home and school and I was unsure what to do with all the artwork. I started selecting the best ones to edit, print and frame or give away as presents. A friend saw one of the prints and wanted something similar. This became the first family portrait. By word of mouth, QuirkyLime has steadily grown ever since.

Keeping going after setbacks and things that didn't go as well as I hoped was a real challenge but I realised I learn much more from mistakes than from successes.

In April 2017 I joined Not on the High Street and I'm having a full page in their Christmas catalogue this Christmas! I also won Bronze in the Junior Design Awards 2017. I have met some great people at Enterprise Nation and Facebook's She Means Business events. I feel more at ease at all women events as it helps my confidence and my product is quite female orientated.

My small business tips:

Be patient and don't expect instant change or returns when you have completed your milestones such as opening an online shop or launching a product range.

Don't just have a to-do list but also make a list of the things you have achieved. Have a daily planner with an hourly timeline so you work in real time and add your to-do list.

Give in when a product or idea doesn't work. Evolve it and try again from a different angle.

“Don’t just have a to-do list but also make a list of the things you have achieved.”



Get in touch

[@quirkylime](#)

[/quirkylime](#)

[@quirky_lime](#)

www.quirkylime.co.uk



Samantha McFarlane Baby Bump & Birth

I create products to support women through pregnancy and delivery.

I came up with the idea when I was pregnant in 2017. I was buying products from the US that weren't available here (or at least not without huge shipping costs) and I found out about some products too late. I decided to set up an online store so that people could find all the amazing products in one place.

The issue I had while building the store was that I had recently had a baby. This was both the inspiration for the business as well as the biggest challenge. Trying to navigate sleep deprivation and looking after the baby while building my website and arranging suppliers was not an easy task!

My biggest achievement to date is getting the store up and running with a newborn at home. He's currently five months old and I'm now focused on promotion. My next big goal is to hire some people to help. At the moment I use freelancers and outsource a lot online. But I'd like to hire someone part time (maybe another new mum) who can get behind the values I'm building into the business.

Don't give up. It's tougher than you think it's going to be but that first sale makes it all worth it.

Have faith in yourself and your idea. Lots of people will have opinions. Listen and take them on board but know what you want to achieve and listen to what's important and filter the rest.

Take a break every now and then. It's hard to do but what's the point in working so hard if you don't get to take a step back and enjoy it every once and a while?

**"It's tougher
than you think
it's going to be
but that first
sale makes it all
worth it."**

Get in touch

 [babybumpandbirth](#)

 [babybumpandbirth](#)

[www.babybumpandbirth.com](#)



Danny Matthews

Danny Matthews

I link small businesses with simple technology to achieve extraordinary things.

I spent 10 years struggling through the paper-based world of financial services advice. But I knew technology could provide a better solution. So after eight months of learning about consumer behaviour, agile project management, coding languages and user experience design, I launched Mortgy (pronounced 'mortgage'), an online mortgage broker which reduced the time to apply from 10-15 hours to under 60 minutes, all online, 24/7. After 90 days and £1.36m of applications I closed the door to new applications to take up an opportunity to help some other businesses be the innovators in their industry.

As I've shared my experience with small companies, my new-found passion has grown into a thriving consultancy where I help ordinary small businesses owners do extraordinary things. After becoming the first mortgage adviser to digitise my business, I found out that half of small businesses are still yet to go online. So my next goal is to help as many business owners as possible future-proof themselves and survive through an era of constant innovation.

To do this I've teamed up with the best in design, banding, mobile and web development to form FutureBaked, a results-based digital 'change agency' which will be launching soon.

Not only am I a digital skills trainer for Enterprise Nation's Go and Grow Online campaign, but the connections I've made have put me in front of thousands of businesses for mutual benefit.

I'm now in the process of publishing my own book on staying ahead with simple technology for small businesses which will be released in 2018.

My top tips:

What people say and what people do are very different. Never assume an outcome, just do it. Look at the results, then pivot.

Take it one step at a time. Don't pay attention to the big picture problem you want to solve. First find the biggest inefficiency in your business and solve that before moving on.

Pay attention to what other businesses are doing and don't be afraid to talk about your ideas with them. Collaboration over competition is the new secret to success for forward-thinking companies.

“Collaboration over competition is the new secret to success for forward-thinking companies.”



Get in touch

 [theactualdanny](#)

 [theactualdanny](#)

 [theactualdanny](#)

[www.theactualdanny.com](#)



Henry Deakin Deakin & Francis

Deakin & Francis was originally founded over 230 years ago.

“Family is at the heart of our business and the guilt of letting the family down after 230 years is a big driver!”



As a well-respected British brand (and England's oldest family jeweller), Deakin & Francis was originally founded over 230 years ago, back in 1786. And seven generations after our ancestors developed the product range, the business is now managed by us, brothers Henry and James Deakin.

We're renowned for our diverse mix of products, from luxurious gold cufflinks, to classic and quirky sterling silver designs and innovative fundamentals, there's something for every passion.

For us, family is at the heart of our business and the guilt of letting the family down after all these years is a big driver! The key challenge is to retain the strong family values that the business was built on while continuing to offer an innovative, quality range of products.

It's always an exciting challenge to come up with our next design. We want to keep our customers engaged and excited!

We've recently opened our very first flagship store in Piccadilly Arcade, London which is a huge achievement for the brand. We're incredibly grateful that our customer base is growing every day all over the world and the shop was the next natural step in taking our quintessentially British brand to the next level.

Our experience has involved some twists and turns, but throughout it all we've maintained our core values. That's essential. Enterprise Nation has been a great support to us with access to a whole host of information and we've found the help of some of their experts invaluable

Our other top tips would be:

1. Find a niche in the market and own it.
2. Maintain quality and keep your standards high in everything you do.
3. Have some fun! Remember you work to live, not live to work.

Get in touch

 [deakin_francis](#)

 [deakinandfrancis](#)

 [deakin_francis](#)

www.deakinandfrancis.co.uk



Sophie Carefull

Sophie Carefull Photography

With my combination of photography and marketing skills, I could help entrepreneurs develop their businesses.

I have always loved photography and started shooting weddings for family friends and slowly built my business alongside university and then a job in digital marketing. At the end of 2016, I left to pursue my business full-time.

I knew that Bristol was full of amazing creative entrepreneurs and that with my combination of photography and marketing skills, I could help them develop their businesses.

I took a Prince's Trust Enterprise course in February 2017 and this helped me to refine my offering. I then built a website that focussed on personal brand photography for creative women.

My biggest achievements so far have been getting featured on several influential blogs, and receiving a commission for styled stock photos from a client in the US.

I'm not naturally a networker, but having thrown myself into it, I now get most of my work through face-to-face introductions at small business events that I attend every month.

I now want to build my clientele in Europe. I studied languages so it would be great to put my French and Spanish to good use on location shoots with brilliant businesswomen!

My tips:

Surround yourself with positive people who support you and what you're doing. I went to the Enterprise Nation Festival of Female Entrepreneurs, which was brilliant. It gave me lots of food for thought and inspired some new ideas.

Focus on building a personal brand from day one so that your customers have something to connect with and also to allow you to take your business in a new direction in future if you wish.

Don't be shy about promoting yourself. Believe in your product and put yourself out there so that you reach the people you want to help.

“Focus on building a personal brand from day one so that your customers have something to connect with.”



Get in touch

- [!\[\]\(69a3b3afab2b2b1deb5ad93eb0fc25a2_img.jpg\) SophieCarefull](https://twitter.com/SophieCarefull)
- [!\[\]\(2e7b0e353677c6d4b1e655527dfe89f2_img.jpg\) SophieCarefullPhotography](https://www.facebook.com/SophieCarefullPhotography)
- [!\[\]\(f1cef8fcfa0ea816c87c6b77cbb8058a_img.jpg\) sophiecarefull](https://www.instagram.com/sophiecarefull)
- www.sophiecarefull.co.uk



Mel Bound This Mum Runs

Empowering mums to be healthier and happier.

This Mum Runs was really a happy accident. It started one damp night in November 2014 when I put a desperate shout out for a running buddy on Facebook. From that one Facebook post, 75 mums turned up. Hundreds came the following week and This Mum Runs was born.

Three years (and a lot of sleepless nights later) and This Mum Runs is a growing, thriving community of over 25,000 women. We offer hundreds of free runs at family-friendly times across London, Bristol and Bath, award-winning coaching programmes and a fab range of running gear for mums and kids.

In 2016 we completed a successful round of equity crowdfunding with CrowdCube, exceeding our target in just 10 days. 80% of our investors are female which is something we're hugely proud of. Having launched This Mum Runs in London in 2017, everything's in place for a national roll out in 2018.

There have been many challenges along the way and the learning curve has been steep. I've had to learn to ask for help and accept that I don't need to know the answer to everything. Building a team of people with the right mindset and managing the pace of growth we've experienced with a small team has been extremely challenging at times.

What has never wavered though is the vision for what we want to achieve, our 'why', which is what gets me out of bed in the morning.

Aside from the really useful online training I've received through Enterprise Nation, winning the Female Start-up of the Year Award in 2016 was a massive personal achievement, and has had an extremely positive effect on my business's growth in the past year.

My rules for success are:

1. Know who your customers are and what they need.
2. Have a clear purpose that gets you out of bed in the mornings, and keep sight of it.
3. Build headspace and time out into your week so you have time to think



Get in touch

- [@thismumruns](https://twitter.com/thismumruns)
- [This Mum Runs UK](https://www.facebook.com/ThisMumRunsUK)
- [thismumruns](https://www.instagram.com/thismumruns/)
- www.thismumruns.co.uk



Alec Cuffy Lobster Homeware Ltd

We called it The Lobster because it's what people look like when they wear it.



My sister Nathalie designed The Lobster Apron one day when she couldn't find any oven gloves in the kitchen. She sat down and drew an apron with integrated oven gloves on the back of an envelope. I suggested doing something with it so we called it The Lobster because it's what people look like when they wear it. Then we made it, got it patented, and here we are.

We've had challenges with manufacturers who didn't deliver as promised including one we're in legal discussions with over design infringement. We lost quite a bit of money early on with orders that weren't properly fulfilled for various reasons.

We've now had some investment to get the production onto the market and to fund attendance at trade shows. We have a branded Lobster Van, events FSDU (floor standing display unit), wonderful packaging, a gift box and even some branded jewellery.

In 2017 we won £20,000 from Pop Up Start Up as well as Gift of the Year for two categories. We've also been nominated for the Homes & Gardens Fabric Awards 2017.

We now need investment to reduce the cost of production with larger orders and to apply for international patent and design registrations. We're setting up our own production and shops with the Lobster Homeware Group, which will feature a lot of new designs, and we want to market the products internationally, get them into the shops and increase sales on our website.

Our early experiences weren't always good, so we'd recommend that you do background checks and get references on everyone including your business partners and those who invest in you and especially those you employ.

Also, get samples from manufacturers and material suppliers as well as a short 'test' run, before committing to big orders. Even if they say they have an MOQ (minimum order quantity) and have supplied a good sample, do the test!

"Do background checks and get references on everyone you do business with."

Get in touch

[lobsterhomeware](#)

[lobsterhomeware](#)

[lobsterhomeware](#)

[www.lobsterhomeware.com](#)





Janan Leo Cocorose London

I invented a foldable footwear concept for 21st century lifestyles.

As a young professional in London, I loved wearing heels but quite frankly, commuting in them was just not worth the hassle. So in 2007, I founded Cocorose London and invented my foldable footwear concept; stylish shoes you can wear on your commute, then pop them in your bag and replace with heels when you get to work.

I started with a foldable ballerina concept and later pushed the boundaries of footwear design with further industry-first styles such as foldable loafers, espadrilles, trainers and even boots.

I approached over 100 shoe factories all over the world to help me get my concept to market and got negative replies from all of them. But I persevered, and not long after, a small factory took a risk on me and we launched online in early 2008.

I was still working my full-time job in product design (not fashion-related) in the early days, but would hand out flyers at my local Tube station to get my concept in front of my core customer group. At weekends I'd take a stall at Brick Lane market so I could chat with potential customers and find out more about what they wanted.

Over the years, we've received phenomenal press coverage. We've also collaborated with iconic British brands including the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and The Royal Ballet.

My tips for success are:

Get on with it. It's so easy to overthink things and procrastinate, but if you at least start, then you can always learn and improve as you go.

Focus on your DNA so that your customers can understand who you are and why you exist. This will also make it much easier to grow the business as everything else, from your branding, marketing and sales right through to recruitment, feeds into this.

Think big. Know what you want and how you're going to get there. Have the confidence in yourself to be able to deliver and achieve your vision. Emma Jones and Enterprise Nation have been instrumental in the history of Cocorose London and supported us from the start. We won their Start-up Business of the Year in 2010!



Get in touch

- [cocoroselondon](https://twitter.com/cocoroselondon)
- [cocoroselondon](https://facebook.com/cocoroselondon)
- [cocoroselondon](https://instagram.com/cocoroselondon)



Krupa Suthar

Insights that Shine

I help start-ups and larger businesses conduct cost-effective research.

I had the idea for my business in early 2015 while still in my corporate role overseeing research across Europe. I was constantly being challenged to make cost savings and realised there was a gap to support SMBs with cost-effective research.

I was very aware that larger research agencies would be out of reach for start-ups. They often require a minimum spend or they'll assign entry-level executives for a project, often not helpful for small businesses who require experienced strategic support.

My next business goal is to educate small businesses about the importance of research. All too often on shows such as Dragons' Den, I see people presenting ideas without conducting any research. It's painful to watch! By the time they're on the show, they've already spent £500,000 without conducting any research. So, if I can help small businesses understand the basics of research, I think that could go a very long way.

So far I've learned:

Plan your research and build it in from the beginning, rather than adding it at the end of a production cycle.

Keep an eye on the business news through signing up to newsletters, watching TV, social media, talks or via the newspapers. This shouldn't just be for your specific sector but the global economy. Enterprise Nation website has a great wealth of information!

Be flexible to changing market needs. Strategy's one thing, but if this isn't the way the market is moving your business could be doomed. Listen to the feedback, keep an eye on the market and be as agile as you can.

"On Dragons' Den, I see people presenting ideas without conducting any research. It's painful to watch!"

Get in touch

 @Krupa_ITS

www.insightsthatshine.com

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Sarah Stenhouse Pixey

A powerful search engine for marketers to find unique images and videos from Instagram.

“It was awesome to see users getting to grips with it and actively enjoying it!”

The idea for Pixey was born out of frustration from the inability to find real-time genuine images for content marketing.

While working as an account handler in a well-known Edinburgh advertising agency, one of my clients supplied a brief to develop a Father's Day campaign, specific to Scotland and with a warm social feel. I eventually found the content I needed on Instagram but had no simple way of acquiring the correct permissions to reuse this content, or to reward the Instagram user. It was the lightbulb moment when I realised there must be thousands of other marketers just like me who'd come across the same problem.

After launching Pixey.io in January 2017 I did a lot of user testing and the sheer delight from initial users was amazing after spending so long building the software. It was awesome to see users getting to grips with it and actively enjoying it!

My four top tips for business success are:

1. Grow your team as early as possible. The faster you can get extra hands, the quicker your business will grow.
2. Don't take no for an answer. Sometimes, being stubborn is what gets you through the obstacles.
- 3 See every setback as fuel to your fire to succeed. They'll come along all too regularly, but turn them to your advantage.
4. Watch the market. Put time in your diary to look at what's happening in your sector and the world in general, every week. I'd definitely encourage any entrepreneur looking to join a small business organisation with the highest ROI to join Enterprise Nation!

Get in touch

 [pixeyio](#)

 [pixeyio](#)

 [pixey](#)

[www.pixey.io](#)



Maria Magembe Daughter of the Soil

We use nature's most effective superfood ingredients for a safe, effective and healthy skincare.

My great-grandmother was my inspiration. She believed that natural is best, a philosophy that's quintessential to Daughter of the Soil.

Beauty oils have become popular over the last few decades in the West, but botanical oils have been used in Africa for centuries to nourish, moisturise and protect the skin.

Our products are made in the UK but we source rich botanical oils from across Africa. We're creating a network of women farmers supported through entrepreneurship, education and technology, with the aim of broadening their horizons and providing the tools for self-empowerment and efficacy.



With that in mind we've created the Daughter of the Soil Foundation with a vision of building an empowered and thriving community of rural women across agriculture in Africa.

We've funded the business venture ourselves so we've had to bootstrap, making it challenging to compete with the bigger beauty brands. But we've been shortlisted for a Pure Beauty award, received repeated coverage in Vogue and Glamour magazines and even appeared on Dragons' Den. More recently we've introduced a new DOTS@home selling channel supported by dedicated brand ambassadors, which has proved itself as a model to reach more customers faster.

My tips for success are:

Have a clear vision for your business

Always have realistic goals and a plan to achieve your vision. Then focus on it. I attended the Enterprise Nation Beauty Exchange before Daughter of the Soil even existed and found a good branding and design agency to bring my brand to life!

Keep moving forward until you get there

Whatever happens, keep going one step at a time, even if the steps are small.

Be resilient

Running your own business is tough and there will be obstacles on the journey to success.

Invest in PR

Build relationships with the right people in your industry and leverage social media as a relatively inexpensive way of marketing your brand.

“We've funded the business venture ourselves so we've had to bootstrap, making it challenging to compete with the bigger beauty brands.”

Get in touch

-  [daughterof_soil](https://twitter.com/daughterof_soil)
-  [Daughterofthesoil](https://www.facebook.com/Daughterofthesoil)
-  [daughterof_soil](https://www.instagram.com/daughterof_soil/)
- www.daughterofthesoil.co.uk

Emily Penny

Colourful

I help pin-point what a brand stands for and bring it to life.

“A name should capture attention and flow seamlessly into your pitch.”

I set up as an independent brand consultant in 2013 following a 17-year career in many top 100 London design agencies. Since then I've worked with start-ups and small businesses in food, beauty, technology, leisure and other sectors too. I also run group training days for start-ups to explore branding, packaging and website design.

In all that I do, my aim is to help businesses use design to drive growth. I see it as an investment – one that can be very powerful for start-ups with a very strong ROI. I help business owners identify their selling points and develop a narrative. To do that I start by asking some challenging questions like “Why bother?” and “What makes you cross?” It's about finding their story and their spirit.

Projects usually involve reviewing the market, looking at trends and thinking about how to really stand out. I strongly believe that a good brand name can win many battles. A name should capture attention and flow seamlessly into your pitch. I help find the name, write the proposition messages and, with my design team, develop visual branding, packaging and promotional materials. It's all about being memorable and meaningful for customers.

Enterprise Nation has enabled me to learn about the real challenges start-up businesses face, the context for design and for branding. I've heard first-hand experiences of how entrepreneurs have built successful brands. And I've had the joy of meeting many small business owners, talking with them, and sometimes working with them too.

What I've learned:

- 1. Decide on a target market.** Don't start with everyone and focus on who really needs your product or service.
- 2. Write down your ‘philosophy’.** What are the beliefs that underpin what you are doing and why?
- 3. Don't just try to fit in.** Try to stand out!



Get in touch

 [@qemilypenny](https://twitter.com/qemilypenny)
 [WakeUpWorkshopsTraining](https://www.facebook.com/WakeUpWorkshopsTraining)
www.becolourful.co.uk

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Deborah Parietti

The Red Beetle Travelling Food Ltd

Easy to use e-commerce platform selling delicious Italian food products.

The Red Beetle was born out of pure love for my home country, Italy, combined with a huge passion for food and travel. There is so much beauty in Italy, so many great stories and incredible products that I wanted to give them an outlet to broadcast their excellence to the world.

The name of the company has its own story. One day I was looking at our 45-year-old car and thought: 'wouldn't it be amazing to travel the country in our vintage Volkswagen Beetle?' Red became the designated companion for all our discovery tours and adventures, and a real hit on the road. Slow travel at its best!

My background in e-commerce helped me create an easy-to-use platform where customers from all over the UK and Europe can buy a little bit of Italy and have it delivered to their homes. That was the easy part. Learning everything else and managing the business on a daily basis has been the real challenge, but one that I wouldn't trade for anything in the world. Having a business is hard work, with long and lonely hours. From the moment I signed up, Enterprise Nation has been the precious business companion I needed to find answers and grow my network. When I receive a message from an ecstatic customer, thanking me for the service and the incredible food they've just received, then I know I'm on the right track.

2018 is full of interesting plans: from spending four months travelling around Italy, to meeting with my existing and new suppliers to share their knowledge and stories, to exploring partnerships with local food stores all over the UK, to discovering new markets and revenue streams. It's going to be very exciting year!

Not to mention the friends I also made along the way!

My advice for small businesses is to be smart in what you outsource, who you hire, and what you learn to make your business successful. Enjoy every step, celebrate failures and surround yourself with people who'll support you, no matter what.



Get in touch

[theredbeetle](#)

[redbeetlefood](#)

[redbeetlefood](#)

<https://theredbeetle.com>



Brian Luckhurst Home Exchange 50plus

Swapping homes for holidays, exclusively for the 50plus traveller.

It started in early 2009 when, due to the recession, I was put on a two-day working week when still employed. It soon became obvious that I couldn't just play golf every day, so I looked for something else to do. Having been self-employed twice previously, and also with retirement in mind, my partner Catriona and I looked to go down that route again.

Having spent 30 years in the estate agency sector and having swapped our home for holidays when our children were younger, we kept coming back to the idea of a business based around home exchange, which we thought was a perfect fit for us.

When home exchange first started way back in the 1950s it was paper-based, with catalogues and post being the only way to know what was available. The internet has been a great boost to the home exchange community but we knew nothing about creating and designing a website so we hired a website designer and in late 2009 our site was launched.

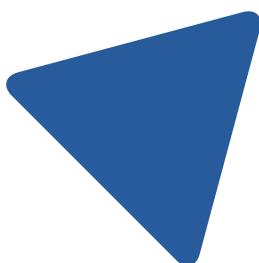
While researching our idea, we soon realised we would find ourselves in direct competition with the big hitters of our industry. This would have been a huge challenge with our limited finances, so we decided to specialise in the 50plus age range and we're so glad we did. Enterprise Nation has helped provide the tools, via the website and webinars, for our continued growth and having just gone live with our redeveloped website, being a member has proven to have been a tremendous benefit.

Our biggest achievement was establishing the business from a zero starting position with a limited budget and now we offer 950plus homes in 50plus countries.

Our advice for new businesses:

1. Never give up despite the frustrations and negative responses you'll receive
2. When going out to tender on a project of any kind, ensure you provide a detailed and tight brief for a supplier to quote on, and always get a quote from more than one party
3. Do what you're good at yourself and get help from others when you need it

"We decided to specialise in the 50plus age range and we're so glad we did."



Get in touch

- [@HomeExchange50](https://twitter.com/HomeExchange50)
- [HomeExchange50plus](https://www.facebook.com/HomeExchange50plus)
- [homeexchange50plus](https://www.instagram.com/homeexchange50plus/)

www.HomeExchange50plus.com



Jamie McCloskey LOVE CORN

**“Use your network.
You’re always only
one or two degrees
of separation from
someone who can
help.”**



We created the UK's first premium roasted corn brand, one kernel at a time.

Roasted corn is a delicious snack that's very popular in the Mediterranean and South America but not as well known here in the UK. That's where we come in. We're helping to fill the gap in the UK for a savoury, healthy and crunchy snack. Our mission is to make roasted corn everyone's favourite snack, one kernel at a time and put a smile on their faces while we're doing it.

Our biggest successes to date, without a doubt, are our launches with Sainsbury's and WHSmith. We're now available in 1,200 stores across the UK and Ireland and we're working hard to increase our distribution so our delicious snacks are available to everyone.

Our advice for entrepreneurs and new businesses:

Make sure your brand is filling a gap in the market. If people don't need or want it, there's no way you can make them.

Use your network. You're always only one or two degrees of separation from someone who can help you with whatever problem you're having. Enterprise Nation has been great at connecting us with potential customers and other businesses so we can share learnings. They've been great for us.

Be tenacious. There'll be a lot of setbacks, but you have to stick to your guns.

Be patient. Rome wasn't built in a day, and your business won't be either.

Get in touch

[@lovecorn_snacks](https://twitter.com/lovecorn_snacks)

[lovecorn_snacks](https://www.instagram.com/lovecorn_snacks)

www.lovecorn.com



David O'Coimin Nook

**Many workspaces don't allow for good concentration or privacy.
I knew I could solve this.**

Nook was born out of frustration. Many workspaces don't allow for good concentration, privacy for phone calls, productive collaborations, spontaneous little get-togethers, effective Skyping etc. And they really don't cater for the introverted aspects of our personalities. I knew I could solve this by creating something intimate but open, agile and modular, off-the-shelf but customisable, that would be affordable at all ends of the business spectrum.

I turned it into a business by combining a few savings from a previous exit with some R&D knowhow from my product design background, a lot of naiveté and tonnes of networking. The next most important thing was finding amazing supplier partners and then great supportive collaborative customers who were willing to take a chance on trialling Nook in return for exposure and field testing. That was August 2016 and it's been growing ever since.

I personally find it difficult to stay focused on the minutiae of the sales and admin process when there are exciting design developments to be worked out too. I'm a product and people guy at heart and businessman second so I've had to re-programme myself somewhat.

I've learned that sharing is a tremendous trust builder and catalyst. Find other hungry minds in fields of interest. Connect with supportive SME-centric organisations, such as Enterprise Nation in particular, which amplifies your message, puts you in contact with peers facing similar challenges but at different points along the road and brings enthusiastic expertise to your world. Local meetings in relevant locations, sometimes with guest experts, always mindful of the SME scale of the audience, not only helped increase our breadth of knowledge on important subjects, but also put us in touch with sub-contractors and delivered business opportunities.

Join meaningful programs such as the Export for Growth scheme which supports your efforts to expand your business overseas and embeds real and valuable expertise into your organisation. And hire or sub-contract people you connect with on a personal level and who complement your skills, not match them.

“I've learned that sharing is a tremendous trust builder and catalyst.”

Get in touch

-  [nook_pod](https://twitter.com/nook_pod)
-  [thenoopod](https://www.facebook.com/thenoopod)
-  [nook.pod](https://www.instagram.com/nook.pod)
- www.nookpod.com



Aaron Henriques

Handlr

I kept trialling different call answering services to keep my business running. Eventually, I decided to fix the problem myself.

Back in 2013, I bit off more than I could chew. I was working full time as a police officer and trying to run a franchise business on the side. I kept trialling different call answering services to keep my business running during my work shifts. But I kept getting let down. Again and again.

Eventually, I decided to bid farewell to the force, and fix the problem myself. With Handlr, I opened big business communications for start-ups and small businesses. Ever since, I've been looking at new ways to make remote customer service feel less remote, less annoying, and less useless. Everything I do tries to help the younger me that had just bought his first business and couldn't quite keep up with it.

Without a doubt, it's been a real challenge finding reliable staff who share my vision and passion. Initially I focused on hiring for skill alone. But my mindset was completely changed when I attended Enterprise Nation's ScaleUp 2017 event. Pip Jamieson from The Dots suggested hiring people for passion and not skill because you can teach a skill, but not passion for the task!

What I've learned:

Don't try to make your idea top secret.

You need to speak to people, share ideas, receive feedback and be open minded about altering your product or service. Don't just share with your family and friends. Make use of the help out there. You simply can't do it alone.

Be realistic about your business plan.

Get your accountant or mentor to critique it. Prepare for half (or less) revenue and double the costs that you projected.

Appreciate that being your own boss doesn't mean you can put your feet up.

Be prepared to say goodbye to your weekends and your social life. You have to really put the effort in for a long time to make it work unless you're super lucky!

“I've been looking at new ways to make remote customer service feel less remote, less annoying, and less useless.”

Get in touch

-  [WeAreHandlr](#)
-  [WeAreHandlr](#)
-  [wearehandlr](#)
- [www.handlr.co.uk](#)



Sally Marks TotsUp Ltd

Helping to make parenting a bit easier!

I came up with the idea for the Red Bus Reward Chart when my son was a toddler. Originally it was just something I made to help with potty training after he found the chart we had a bit confusing due to the lines and columns. After a couple of friends asked about it, I began to realise it had potential.

After much research, extensive development, input from an education psychologist and lots of parents, I decided to run a crowdfunding campaign to validate the concept and secure funding and pre-orders. It was a success and the feedback and interest was hugely encouraging.

I suppose I expected that once I had a fully functioning, packaged product, selling it would be easy. But getting a brand new product in front of the right people has been much more difficult than I anticipated and there's been a steep learning curve in terms of using social media, learning to sell and perfecting my pitch.

My tips for success:

Don't be afraid to ask for help

There's so much more help and advice available than I expected when I first started out. I've received a huge amount of support and expert input and realised that there's always someone who already has the knowledge you need and more often than not they're happy to advise and point you in the right direction. I've made great use of the Enterprise Nation resources on all of these topics and benefited enormously from being able to access them exactly when and where I've needed them.

Celebrate your achievements

It's easy to be continually looking at what you've got to do and what's next. There's always so much you could do that sometimes it can seem overwhelming, which is why it's really important sometimes to stop and take the time to celebrate how far you've come!

Perseverance

Keep going, keep at it and you'll get there!

"There's been a steep learning curve in terms of using social media, learning to sell and perfecting my pitch."

Get in touch

- [@totsupreward](https://twitter.com/totsupreward)
- [totsuprewards](https://www.facebook.com/totsuprewards)
- [totsup](https://www.instagram.com/totsup/)
- www.totsup.co.uk



Justin Jackson Digital Remit

Helping entrepreneurs dream, learn, and grow.

“Our clients tend to follow the same growth path: work out how to make the world a better place, then learn how to run a business to deliver it.”

We've worked with hundreds of firms over the last couple of decades - large and small, start-ups and family businesses, global and local.

A few years back, we sat down to see if there were any secrets of success for small businesses. Our clients are all very different, but they tend to follow the same growth path: first, work out how to make the world a better place and second, learn how to run a business to deliver it.

This might sound easy, even obvious, but in our experience, identifying the value you create for others isn't straightforward by any means. What's more, you then need to be a great manager in order to make the company a success and the last thing you have time (or money) for is an MBA!

That seemed like a huge gap in the market to us. So we married our academic background, the latest business school research, and our practical experience, to come up with our 'Dream. Learn. Grow.' training programme for busy entrepreneurs.

We're now several years in, working with a number of government agencies to help small businesses, and the feedback has been excellent. And we've partnered with Enterprise Nation to deliver business support to hundreds of small businesses across the country!

My advice to other small businesses is that you should always think about creating value for your customers, your employees, your partners, and yourself!

Get in touch

[digitalremit](https://twitter.com/digitalremit)

[DigitalRemit](https://facebook.com/DigitalRemit)

[digitalremit](https://instagram.com/digitalremit)

www.digitalremit.com



Chris Forbes The Cheeky Panda

Sustainable and skin-friendly tissue paper products made from Bamboo.

My partner Julie had had the idea to turn bamboo into tissue for over a year. But while I loved the idea, I said we would need to see the manufacturing process and see the bamboo before starting it.

So on a visit to see her parents in January 2016, we took a detour on the holiday to check out the bamboo and see the scalability of the forestry and the ethical modern manufacturing processes. The Cheeky Panda was born.

There were a lot of unknowns, like finding out if people actually wanted our product, funding the initial containers and working with limited working capital until we were able to start selling the goods. To overcome this, we downloaded a copy of the Harvard Start-up Business Plan and this helped us understand the hurdles, opportunities and milestones we needed to achieve to turn it from a concept into a successful business.

We did an initial Crowdfunder round as it helped us understand if there was demand for the product, helped us pre-sell half the first container and it created lots of great PR.

We're now selling on Amazon and we're stocked in hotels and airports. When selling to the hospitality, travel and leisure sector it's very important to understand the supply chain. We drove awareness of our products by getting in touch with the heads of procurement and sustainability at the major chains while also getting listed with the major janitorial supply chain companies. The big janitorial companies are always looking for innovative products that can solve problems and that was the key to us opening up the sector.

My keys to success are very simple:

1. Have a good product
2. Know your route to market. Enterprise Nation helped us at the Beauty Exchange in 2016 when we pitched live on stage to the buyers from Sainsbury's and Boots.
3. Plan well

"We did an initial Crowdfunder round as it helped us understand if there was demand for the product."

Get in touch

[@thecheekypanda1](#)

[@thecheekypanda1](#)

[@thecheekypanda1](#)

www.thecheekypanda.co.uk



Proud Member of
**Enterprise
Nation**



Nazia Nasreen Ibraheem Toy House

I set up the UK's first online Islamic toy store, within six months our product range increased to 100.

As a mother of two young children, I struggled to find good, educational, Islamic toys for my youngsters. When I became a mother I knew I wanted to teach my children through play and I wanted to make religious learning fun if at all possible.

It was difficult to take both of my children into shops to buy Eid presents. I was on my maternity leave and decided it was time to start my own business. So in 2014 I decided to set up the UK's first online Islamic toy store. I contacted suppliers from around the world and within the first six months our product range increased from four to 100.

Today we're the leading online Islamic toy store in the world with plans to expand to other European countries and the US. We work with many local brands as well as global brands and so far we've been featured in The Times, The Guardian, The Independent and on the BBC.

What I've learned:

Know who your ideal customer is and what they want. Speak to them and find out what they would actually like, rather than what you think they might like.

You can't do everything on your own. You need to hire people for different roles within your business.

Network whenever you can and learn from other entrepreneurs as it will open up many opportunities. I've met many entrepreneurs at Enterprise Nation networking events which has been a huge confidence booster for me. I've also ended up being on the front page of the BQ small business magazine after attending the meet the journalist event in Birmingham!

“Network whenever you can and learn from other entrepreneurs as it will open up many opportunities.”

Get in touch

[f ibraheemtoyhouse](https://www.facebook.com/ibraheemtoyhouse)
[ig ibraheemtoyhouseofficial](https://www.instagram.com/ibraheemtoyhouseofficial)
www.ibraheemtoyhouse.com

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Rachael Hurdman Arch Inspire

It has always been my ambition to help individuals reach their goals both professionally and personally.

After consulting with businesses and coaching individuals at all levels in organisations and SME businesses, I soon made the decision that I wanted to do it for myself.

The arrival of our identical twin boys prematurely in 2016 changed our lives considerably and after 20 years of working tirelessly in financial services, which I had loved and enjoyed, I decided it was time to take back control and realise my dream.

I founded Arch Inspire in May 2016 to inspire people and performance through coaching and consulting solutions.

20 months on Arch Inspire is going from strength to strength. I am privileged to work with many fantastic businesses and individuals. The biggest challenge I've faced so far is to keep all the plates spinning; running, growing and developing a business, being the coach, the consultant, the marketing and finance department and also juggling three young children, being a wife and investing time in my family and friends! Arch Inspire is growing quickly so my next business goal is to start to work in partnership with other businesses to reach more individuals.

My tips for success are:

Invest in a mentor. I had two when I started and their support, objective challenges and insight have been invaluable.

Set your business up for the business you want, not for the business you have when you start out. Ensure you have the right infrastructure in place, don't try and do tasks that you know you're not an expert in if you can afford to outsource.

Assume your position. Director, founder and key decision maker. If you don't believe in yourself and assert yourself, your clients won't see it.

Don't be afraid to ask for help from others in business. Don't just ask those who're currently successful, ask those who've struggled too. I attended an Enterprise Nation digital bootcamp very early on and found this session to be invaluable. I met some fabulous like-minded individuals and learnt a huge amount, which informed many of the early decisions I made.

"The biggest challenge I've faced so far is to keep all the plates spinning."

Get in touch

 @rachainspire

 @archinspireltd

 rachaelhurdman



Brontie Ansell Brontie and Co

I decided that I have just one life and it came first.

I spent 12 years qualifying and working as an international and commercial lawyer. It was well paid and involved a lot of travel and hotel rooms, but actually it was a really empty life. I missed my children and husband a lot and I didn't have time for social events, classes, or even fun. I decided that I have just one life and it came first! I redesigned my life so that I wasn't chained to a monthly salary. It wasn't easy.

I started to experiment with chocolate and especially alternative sugars and plant sweeteners. I sourced the highest quality, most ethically sound ingredients I could find and watched a lot of training videos.

I read blog after blog and found an old friend who had some experience with the process. My lovely little (not so little!) brother converted an outbuilding in my back garden into a mini chocolate factory and production commenced. Brontie and Co was born! A delicious vegan chocolate with soul.

Since then the company has gone from strength to strength while still staying with the original values and goals. We've won awards and grants, been featured in local and national press and we hope we're making our mark on the sugary confectionary world by offering customers something much healthier.

My advice to other entrepreneurs:

Make a plan for your business. But then be prepared to pivot on it and change at the most inopportune moment! Staying agile and flexible is the most important thing you can do. Don't get set in your ways and unable to flex into something new.

Learn to relinquish control and how to delegate. You have to bring collaborators on board as soon as you can. They may not do it quite as you like but at least they'll actually do it! Once you get busy and successful, if you don't outsource then so many things will fall by the wayside.

Stay true to your values. Write down a whole load of reasons why you're starting a business and whenever you struggle with a big decision, take a look at those points, and see if the decision will help you achieve those things or deviate from them.

“Learn to relinquish control and how to delegate. You have to bring collaborators on board as soon as you can.”



Get in touch

[brontieandco](#)

[BrontieandCo](#)

[brontieandco](#)

[www.brontieandco.com](#)





Dr. Yemi Shode

Yess Essentials

While working in an industrial research institute I discovered a unique skincare formulation.

As a graduate of applied chemistry, with a chemistry graduate father, brought up in an environment of cosmetic and toiletry manufacturing, the passion for starting my own cosmetic business has been in me since my youth. My journey to creating Yess Essentials stems from my extremely sensitive skin in my younger days, with eczema, rashes and pimples. I spent a fortune on skin products without results.

While working in an industrial research institute, I discovered the wealth of potential in the natural materials used by indigenous West African women to sustain their beauty, prevent skin irritation and how they could provide a lasting solution to my own skin problems.

I discovered the unique formulations based on the centuries-old traditional recipe of cocoa pod ash and unrefined palm kernel oil which gives a pure natural soap base, commonly known as African black soap. It's used in its pure form to relieve acne, rashes, scalp irritations, clear blemishes and various other skin problems. Traditionally it's used to give babies their first bath to prevent body odour and skin irritations.

Combining the benefits of this traditional ingredient with modern natural materials gives excellent, effective products for skin care recommended for the most sensitive skins, young and older, more delicate skins, with no adverse effects. From then on, my creative innovation began.

My advice:

Make sure it's a business you're passionate about

Passion is about the excitement you have in creating the business, the excitement to create power in you to do all things and overcome all obstacles.

Get a mentor and business adviser

Have someone you can talk to that will understand what you're going through and give you advice. Entrepreneurship can be a lonely business sometimes that can hinder your passion, and a problem shared is a problem solved. I had a great 30-minute meeting with an Enterprise Nation adviser, Carol Carson, on working with large cosmetics brands. Her advice was beyond expectation.

Be creative and innovative in every area of your business

Sometimes introducing a new thing can give you a surprising boost

Stay focused

Know that there's always a way out in every situation.

“Be creative and innovative in every area of your business. Sometimes introducing a new thing can give you a surprising boost.”



Get in touch

- [YessEssentials](#)
- [yessentials](#)
- [YessEssentials](#)
- [www.yessentials.com](#)



Esther Thompson Tea Huggers

I sell a range of wellbeing teas to make people feel fantastic every moment of the day.

Almost four years ago I developed a range of 'feel good' teas because I experienced huge health benefits after ditching my coffee addiction for herbal teas. I started sleeping better, my stress levels reduced and I got my glow back.

Since I started Tea Huggers, we've developed a range of premium and super-tasting, health-focused teas. Our range helps our customers with everything from helping them to relax at bedtime, to giving them an energy boost when they need it, or delivering a hike to their immune system.

We love to use ingredients that other UK companies don't, expertly blending our teas to create a unique and exciting experience. But don't just take our word for it; our teas have won 10 gold stars at the Great Taste Awards.

We're super proud of our army of fans around the world who buy from us every day. You can find our teas in shops everywhere from Canada to Japan, China to France and now, even in Antigua! Our goal over the next five years is to become the number one health-focused tea brand in the UK.

For anyone else looking to start their own business, I'd suggest:

1. Focus, focus focus!
2. Do what you're good at, then outsource the rest
3. Find a community (preferably more than one) and learn from them. Through Enterprise Nation I've met business buddies who I turn to for advice every week. It has been so inspirational for me to hear from business leaders who have already scaled the heights with their own businesses.
4. Find a mentor and use them regularly
5. Meditate!
6. Be goal driven
7. Try to enjoy the ride, even though it's a rollercoaster!

"We love to use ingredients that other UK companies don't, expertly blending our teas to create a unique and exciting experience."



Get in touch

[@teahuggers](#)

[teahuggers](#)

[@teahuggers](#)

[www.teahuggers.co.uk](#)





Joy Foster TechPixies

We upskill women with technology to help them return to work.

As a mum of two I'd managed to keep my career going by freelancing in digital marketing and web development. I thought other mums who'd taken career breaks would benefit from learning the skills that I could teach them.

We set up our first course with financial support from Better Broadband for Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council and the Government Equalities Office in November 2015.

Starting with a single cohort helping 12 women, we've now grown to six cohorts helping over 56 women regain their confidence and return to work. We've now set our sights on helping 1,500 women get back to work with new skills over the next five years.

We feel very lucky to have won the Enterprise Nation Female Start-up of the Year 2017. Emma Jones has also made introductions to key people in O2, Facebook and Frederick's Foundation which will help us grow and reach our targets!

My top tips would be:

1. Think through your revenue stream before you start.
2. Be flexible and change as needed in order to achieve your goals.
3. Have a goal and make it SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)

"Have a goal and make it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound)."

Get in touch

[TechPixies](#)

[TechPixies](#)

[techpixies](#)

[www.techpixies.com](#)



Sophie Bush Warehouse Home

An independent media and e-commerce brand providing inspiration for New York style loft living.

In 2012, I bought my home in a warehouse conversion in east London. Through the process of sourcing furniture and lighting to suit its original features, I realised the industrial look was absolutely everywhere and yet there wasn't a single premium media brand catering specifically for New York-style loft living. I knew I'd spotted a gap in the market and in 2014, I launched Warehouse Home.

We started with a website and blog, as a means of testing the market and getting to know our audience. Within weeks, that was proving so popular that we began work on the debut issue of Warehouse Home magazine.

There have been challenges, like our first printer going into administration just days before our first issue. It's a prime example of the kind of problem that can suddenly arise when you're running your own business. But sometimes you have to find a way to pay a little more for the very best results when the integrity of your brand and product depends on it. We found another printer at very short notice, and the issue came out as planned.

When you're running your own business, I think it's all too easy to forget just how much you've accomplished particularly as time goes on and you become busier and busier. The fact that each member of the Warehouse Home team takes as much pride in the business as I do is something that makes me feel very fortunate, confident and really excited for the future.

My tips for success are:

If you have a great idea for a business, go for it!
You'll always wonder what would have been if you don't.

Stick with it.

Running a business is exhausting and exhilarating in equal measure.

Try to make time for your family.

They'll miss you, and their endless enthusiasm for your venture will keep you going.



Get in touch

 [mywarehousehome](#)

 [mywarehousehome](#)

 [mywarehousehome](#)

[www.Mywarehousehome.com](#)

Proud Member of
Enterprise Nation



Alison Jane Reid Ethical Hedonist Magazine

I created a smart, aspirational luxury magazine that encourages sustainable ideas.

“Setting up a new business is tough. You will make mistakes, but don’t be discouraged”

I’m a journalist and creative thinker, with a track record of more than 20 years working on national newspapers. But everything has changed and newspapers no longer pay a sustainable salary to many journalists. So I needed to come up with a new way to sell my journalistic talents and I addressed that crisis.

Around this time, I also felt there was a gap in the market for a smart, aspirational luxury magazine that encourages sustainable ideas, but doesn’t preach. Ethical Hedonist Magazine was born!

As a newspaper journalist at heart, I’ve had to learn how to adapt and think outside the box. It’s been hard, confusing and painful. But I’ve now reached almost 35,000 fans across Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram, and got rave reviews from clients for my storytelling services. I also had a global hit (from just one tweet!) with an interview featuring the actor Colin Morgan, who champions nature and animals.

For the next steps, I want to get more help with marketing and find ethical investment. I’m also in talks to work with a big brand and ethical trailblazer. Winning this deal would be a fabulous way to start 2018!

Being in business can feel very lonely at times, so it’s great to feel part of a community. Enterprise Nation has helped me by offering effective ways to network, showcase our business and meet fellow entrepreneurs.

Setting up a new business is tough. You will make mistakes. But don’t be discouraged. Do your homework, and make sure you research the market you want to be in. Test your idea on family, friends and potential customers. And don’t be afraid to ask for advice and help. It’s great to find mentors and they can help you get past many of the issues you’re bound to face.

Get in touch

- [!\[\]\(539335c45e928dede1e17f9fe34e330b_img.jpg\) AlisonJaneReid](https://twitter.com/AlisonJaneReid)
- [!\[\]\(e8887df0320a64bf574f2ac0c051137b_img.jpg\) ethicalhedonist](https://www.facebook.com/ethicalhedonist)
- [!\[\]\(8717455abacec2f1b4ffcdf3deeb8578_img.jpg\) EthicalHedonistMagazine](https://www.instagram.com/EthicalHedonistMagazine)
- www.ethical-hedonist.com



Enterprise
Nation



We can help you start and grow a successful business.
Join today at enterprisenation.com/startmeup