

LET'S - let seniors teach sense of initiative and entrepreneurship through innovative multimedia storytelling approaches



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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1. THE BUSINESS IDEA

1.1 Analysis

In the UK cases, the different entrepreneurs developed their business idea in their own unique ways, but they could be grouped under four general themes that have led to these new business ideas. These themes are: **passion, redundancy, continuation and accidents.**

Passion: Obviously, this is a characteristic that each and everyone of the entrepreneurs displays. Every entrepreneur is driven because he feels passionately about his idea. (**Sue Scott-Horne:** '...there was a wave of gang violence in London, and I was very worried for my teenage son. I couldn't just sit still, I felt I had to do something, so I started to scribble. And out of that scribble, Egar was born.') (**Penny Bond:** 'This

business idea is something very close to our hearts. This is the difference with previous business ideas that we have developed. We are really passionate about this!')

Redundancy: For some, the moment to live out their passion came when they were made redundant by their long-time employer. (**Allan Kingshott:** 'I have always had a passion for genealogy and it became a serious hobby many years ago. When I was made redundant and the company paid me off, I decided that the best thing I could do was to work for myself and that the time had come to turn my lifetime passion into a business!') (**Tim Gillham:** 'When I got made redundant two years ago, we decided to turn Mary's delicious Caribbean Sunday Rotis into a business. Now we're selling them from our trailer!')

Continuation: For many senior entrepreneurs, the 'new' business idea crystallises and brings together their years of experience in their given field. What is new is often the fact that now they're deciding to do it for themselves and to do it exactly the way they want to do. (**Anne Corry:** Now in my fifties, I look back on a career in counselling, with specialisation in grief support. I have worked within different organisations along the years and have finally come up with my own method, which is much less past-centered and focuses instead on the steps to implement and promote happiness in peoples' lives.')(**Angela Ricards:** 'Years ago I had trained and worked as a masseuse, so that's where the body work comes in, but I have also always been passionate about horses and dogs...So now I offer

Bowen Technique body work for dogs and horses!')

Accidents: Accidents, followed by long period of recovery, can mark a seizure in people's lives and worklives. (**Sue Scott-Horne:** 'I had an accident, broke my ankle and damaged my spine. All of a sudden, I found myself sitting on a sofa, little did I know, I was going to sit in that sofa for three years, as I underwent operations, physio, etc...') and mobility problems can make working difficult then. Sometimes, mobility issues dictate a career-change: (**Amanda Drake-Worth:** '...I decided to train as a driving instructor and have my own Driving school business. That went really well until eventually I had to give that up as well because of a leg operation. My whole life, or at least professional life, has revolved around my mobility problem...')

1.2 Conclusion

The new business idea, if it is to be successful and sustainable, has got to be a true passion, something one feels very strongly about. After their first career, people often feel stronger than ever that they want to realise an old childhood dream. Something in their lives (but not necessarily their professional lives) will have prepared them for this and they show competence in their chosen field. Just as important as their passion is a real existing need for what they have to offer. These elements put together indicate very clearly the nature of their ideal new enterprise: 'our calling is where our passion meets the world's hunger'.

2. THE PROFESSIONAL AND TRAINING PATHWAY

2.1 Analysis

The right course at the right time! Many people feel that they are not ready to embark on the adventure and leap into entrepreneurship because they don't think that they are an entrepreneur. But of course, all it takes is to do something, put things into motion and be enterprising and voila! A new Entrepreneur is born. (**Sue Sott-Horne:** 'I came across an article on a course at **London Metropolitan University's Center for Micro Enterprise**, aimed at women aged 50+, to help them start a business and redirect their lives. I went dragging my feet, not feeling up to the task, but was met with so much support and encouragement, the course helped me tremendously.) All the entrepreneurs reported benefiting enormously from these courses, in terms of learned skills and confidence boost. (**Angela Ricards:** 'One great help when I first was starting out was **PRIME**, part of Prince Charles' charitable Trust, they were a great help. I took every free course that was available, whether it was in computing, advertising, accounting,...'). (**Allan Kingshott:** 'I was greatly helped by **OUTSET** Plymouth, a EU funded organisation that offers intensive start-up support. I really appreciate how they offered support from the very beginning and still do so now! They took me in their arms and helped me along, until I was confident enough to say 'OK, I'm going to jump now, I'm going to have a go at this!'

(**Isabella Quigley-Moriarty:** 'I enlisted with the **School of Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)** and realised that this what was I was, a social entrepreneur!'). (**Penny Bond:** 'Support is sometimes hard to find, as invariably, banks and funders say 'show us that it is a success and we'll support you!'. There was one organisation which said 'Great idea, we'd like to see you try!' And that was UnLtd. They support 'Social Entrepreneurs' with start-up funding, but even more than the money, their confidence in our project was such a massive boost in confidence!')

2.2 Conclusion

All the featured entrepreneurs have undergone training and support programmes by specialised organisations. Some of these organisations included additional funding, some offered training courses, as well as mentoring over a long period of time. The organisations mentioned by our pool of entrepreneurs are the following;

- **PRIME** (www.prime.org.uk) national charity that helps the over 50s get back into work through self-employment.
- **Outset** (www.ytko.com) the UK's leading providers in supporting women's enterprise, and other under-represented enterprise groups such as ethnic minorities, disabled people and the over 50's.
- **UnLtd** (www.unltd.org.uk) UnLtd Engage Award is aimed at people who are over 50 who

have the ideas and commitment to change their community or wider society. UnLtd aims to find, fund and provide practical, personal, leadership and project development support to individuals with entrepreneurial solutions to the issues faced in an ageing society.

- **Centre for Micro Enterprise at Metropolitan University London.** (www.owle50plus.eu) (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk>) a programme of workshops and support for older women that enables them to play an active role in the community for the rest of their lives. OWLE50+ responds to each woman's needs through learner-centred upskilling so they can contribute to society, themselves and the economy by ageing wisely.
- **The School for Social Entrepreneurs** (www.sse.org.uk) The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) exists to provide training and opportunities to enable people to use their creative and entrepreneurial abilities more fully for social benefit. SSE supports individuals to set up new charities, social enterprises and social businesses across the UK.

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3. MOTIVATION/REASONS IN CREATING THE ENTERPRISE

3.1 Analysis

There are many reasons for starting a business. Money is one factor but not the only one: especially with people starting their 2nd career, their passion comes much more to the foreground.

Financial security is of course a prime factor: **(Tim Gillham:** ‘...the best experience is actually putting money in the bank! It doesn’t happen much yet, we’ve still a long way to pay off the debts, and we have a lot of costs for cooking every day, but each time we do put some money in the bank, knowing that we did it by ourselves puts a smile on our face!)(**Paul Jordan:** ‘I’d like to think that in ten years time I’d be financially secure, that I would work because I wanted to rather than because I had to in order to pay the bills, hopefully owning a successful company and enjoying the technology that comes with it...’)

Intellectual stimulation: Most entrepreneurs get bored without a good project to get their teeth in. The willingness to learn is a prerequisite for every entrepreneur(**Zandra Johnson:** ‘When I started my business two years ago, I had no experience, no business-knowledge. I had to educate myself: I took every free course I could and I read lots of books.’) It is worth noting that the two motivating factors of financial security and intellectual stimulation are both valued and come hand in

hand, to quote Paul Jordan again:('...hopefully owning a successful company and enjoying the technology that comes with it...')

Social Benefit: The drive to start something new, to provide a service or a product is dependant on an existing need for what you have to offer. People in the second half of their life are often much more community oriented and want to benefit society as a whole.(**Sue Scott-Horne:** ‘I felt like I just HAD to do something!’) (**Isabella Quigley-Moriarty:** ‘My main motivation lies in the tangible results I see around me: I have been deeply touched by the women’s responses to my courses, and am surprised by the impact this has had in such a short time. As a social entrepreneur, what more could I ask for?’)

Life experience: For some entrepreneurs, life brings experiences that place them in a situation where they have some knowledge or skill. (**Luke Daniels:** ‘ I became involved in this work when, after ten years of marriage, I slapped my wife: it shocked me so much and made me feel so bad about myself, I had to seek counselling.’) (**Mary Gillham:** ‘I was born in Trinidad and learned from my mother all the secrets of that spicy cuisine. It used to be a family tradition to prepare ‘roti’ on the occasional Sunday night.’)

3.2 Conclusion

The motivation to start anything needs to be genuine and strong. In the ideal case, there will be

several good reasons to start a business. **Financial security** is obviously a very worthy goal, but just on its own, it will most likely not produce enough enthusiasm. It is important to be truly interested in the chosen field and more important still, to be willing to keep on learning. **Intellectual stimulation** is an important reason for many older entrepreneurs, who recognise that ‘age’ is just a question of attitude... It is also important to view your project in the light of society as a whole. **Social benefit** is a win-win situation because as people benefit from whatever you’re bringing, you will feel the buzz and the energy from helping others. ‘Altruism is the ultimate form of egoism’. When the **life experience** that you bring with you puts you in a position to offer something unique, it is something very valuable and it is good to draw from that wealth of experience.

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4. THE NETWORK/ SUPPORT RECEIVED

4.1 Analysis

All the featured UK entrepreneurs have links with support organizations who have given them the assistance, training, and confidence boost necessary to start out in business. These are mostly the same organisations listed under ‘2.1.Training’, but in here they appear in another function – that of support

and network- which is important to highlight and distinguish from their other, more training oriented activity.

- **UnLtd:** Through its Awards, UnLtd funds social entrepreneurs, but it offers more than just money: with an award comes a package of mentorship, assistance, networking opportunities and project support. (**Penny Bond:** 'Support is sometimes hard to find, as invariably, banks and funders say 'show us that it is a success and we'll support you!'. There was one organisation which said 'Great idea, we'd like to see you try!' And that was UnLtd. They support 'Social Entrepreneurs' with start-up funding, but even more than the money, their confidence in our project was such a massive boost in confidence!'). What this support, at its best, can bring about is give the entrepreneur a fresh outlook on his or her activity. (**Luke Daniels:** 'Prior to this award from UnLtd, I have never considered myself a businessman or entrepreneur of any kind. UnLtd certainly shifted my perspective on this, I now think that if you have a certain skill or ability that will actually benefit society, it makes sense to try to 'sell' it and let as many people as possible know about it...')

Outset Plymouth: Outset offers intensive start-up courses and mentorship, enabling fledging entrepreneurs to develop their idea into a full-blown project. (**Allan Kingshott:** 'I think I have been very fortunate to come across Outset. It is one of these EU funded initiatives to help people in my situation. I was 52 and washed up, so I really appreciate how they offered support from

the very beginning and still do so now! They took me in their arms and helped me along, until I was confident enough to say 'OK, I'm going to jump now, I'm going to have a go at this!') (**Amanda Drake-Worth:** 'I received tremendous support from Outset Plymouth, a EU funded organisation that helps people to start their own business. They just really liked my story and said 'you have to get on with this, if you don't then we'll carry it through for you!')

I've been to all their courses: self-confidence boosting, tax issues, everything,... They also have been a great help for networking, I couldn't have done it without them...') (**Anne Correy:** 'And yes, you do need support! They have their 'Wednesday club' each last Wednesday of the month where you can meet other budding entrepreneurs, which is very encouraging and inspiring.')

PRIME: Helps the over 50's to get back into work through self-employment. (**Angela Ricards:** '... I took every free course that was available, whether it was in computing, advertising, accounting,... PRIME were a great help!')

- **Centre for Micro Enterprise:** (**Sue Scott-Horne:** 'One day, reading the paper, I came across an article on a course at London Metropolitan University's Center for Micro Enterprise, aimed at women aged 50+, to help them start a business and redirect their lives. I went dragging my feet, not feeling up to the task, but was met with so much support and encouragement, the course helped me tremendously.')

4.2 Conclusion

Starting out in self-employment can be a lonely business, and it is tremendously important to link new entrepreneurs to a community of like-minded people, enabling them to see that everyone initially starts out with the same self-doubts, and how they can be overcome. Courses ranging from accountancy and marketing to presentation-skills all give a feeling of being better prepared to meet the challenge and put the entrepreneur in a much better position to make the leap. There are a lot of organisations out there, this should be the very first step in seeking assistance. (**Allan Kingshott:** '...there are a lot of organisations out there whose mission it is to help and support you. Seek them out, go out and find them, don't wait for them to come to you...')

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5. ABILITIES AND COMPETENCES DEVELOPED/TO DEVELOP

5.1 Analysis

All 12 entrepreneurs, whether they had been in business for 6 months or 3 years, had learned a vast amount of new skills and abilities, which are universally needed in business. The main one, downfall of many a new business, was marketing. The second, linked to the first, was patience/

endurance, while waiting for the fruits of one's labour to ripen. A third was collaboration as a way to turn a 'one-man-band' into a real business with bigger impact. And maybe surprisingly, to make profit and to turn a passion or a good idea into an income stream.

Marketing: Especially for the older generation, the world of social media is sometimes daunting. Some embrace it wholeheartedly (**Zandra Johnson:** 'I now use social media to increase my company's visibility. I have a blog and regular newsletters, with games for children.') Others recognise that this area is not their forte and bring in collaborators who will take care of this side of things (**Anne Correy:** 'We had to learn the whole social media side of things, and this is where Chris comes into her own: she writes the blog, takes us onto Twitter,...')

Patience/Endurance: Many new business fail in their first year. There seems to be a threshold past which both visibility and confidence of the enterprise have reached a critical level. One thing all entrepreneurs had to learn was to wait and hang in there, for things to improve: (**Sue Scott-Horne:** 'The hardest thing in launching a business, in my experience, is breaking into the market. It took me six weeks to get the first customer, and once we had that first customer, I knew that Eggar was on its way...') (**Paul Jordan:** 'The biggest challenge for me was to recruit the first customer – because nobody wants to be the first with this sort of thing, the customer takes a risk in investing in you when asking to deliver a service or a product for them. (...) Once you've got the first client, the second

one comes easier.)

Collaboration: It is important to place the business in a bigger coalition of forces, to work with colleagues or similar organisations, or to outsource, all to improve visibility, outreach and impact. (**Zandra Johnson:** 'One thing that I learned is the importance of outsourcing. Throughout this business, I have outsourced expertise and expert help when I needed it. I have a sales agent who takes care of those dreaded cold calls, I've employed a person to find me a manufacturer in Poland, because I couldn't find anyone in the UK who could produce the scratch resistant surface these chairs needed. 'Team fairytale' now consists of myself, a marketing manager and a sales manager plus five people in the ware house. Apart from that, there are 17 other companies employed by my micro-company run from my little room!') (**Luke Daniels:** 'My approach is going to be to attach myself to a women's organisation already doing work around domestic violence: I will approach them with my manual, my training package, which will consist of 20 training days, which I will sell to them. Afterwards, they can always invite me back as a consultant if there are difficulties, and I will also offer them individual support, via skype or face to face, as they require or need...')

Making profit: This is the single biggest difference between self-employment and being an employee, where one has only to deliver one's task in a professional way. Being self-employed, one has to turn everything into a source of income, this is not always easy or obvious. (**Anne Caborn:** 'Once the

website was up and running and people visited it, the kicker-question was always: 'well how do you make money out of it?'). (**Angela Ricards:** 'The most difficult thing for me was actually asking for money for my services...Well in the beginning that is, I am getting better at it.')

5.1 Conclusion

One of the most striking characteristics of the successful entrepreneur is the willingness to always keep on learning new things and 'staying young', with a fresh approach to things and life in general. The 'entrepreneurial outlook' is very much about increasing profitability, making one's business sustainable, being there for the long haul. Patience and consistency are virtues that all of them brought with them and developed even further. It is important to recognise what one's strengths and abilities are, and if for example marketing skills are one's strength, to call to another competence, that of forging profitable alliances and outsourcing services.

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6. THE KEY MESSAGE

The key message that comes out of these 12 films is one of optimism, sense of initiative and empowerment, courage to follow one's passion,

and make life work despite all the set-backs and obstacles that life throws at you. Entrepreneurship is a state of mind, a certain courage of the heart, and if that energy can be transmitted through these films, this project will have reached its goal!

In the words of our 12 entrepreneurs:

- Take a look inside, have a self-aware check to see what's there now. Don't get stuck in what has worked for you in the past. See yourself as young in this new phase of your life! This is all about growing and learning...
- Life is an adventure, and it needs to be an adventure, and you need to have some fun! Imagine yourself at eighty, with your grandchildren asking you 'what did you do in life?' How does it feel if you would have to say; 'I played safe'. Wouldn't it be better to have a great story to tell them?
- Be kind. Be fair. Be honest. Business ethics are very important!
- Be patient. The customers won't be rushing in just because you launched your new business. Marketing is the name of the game. The hardest thing about setting out in business is breaking into the market...
- Believe in yourself! Really believe that it's possible and that you can do it. Hold a clear vision of the way you want things to go and keep working at it consistently, and you will achieve it!
- If there is an organisation in your area that will

help you, use them, because that's what they're there for. All the EU and government funds that are coming in are there to help you. Seek these organisations out, don't wait for them to find you...

- Keep reasonable records, even if you're not yet a formal company. And certainly good tax advice from the get-go!
- Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! Keep talking. You've got to tell people what you're doing, all those around you, make sure to always keep them on board and up to date, be very clear with everyone.
- Do what you know to start with, but be prepared to take different routes, because as soon as you start something, various doors open, and you tend to end up going down routes you hadn't expected. So keep an open mind, you could miss so much by just being on tracks going in one direction only...
- Realise that however much time you think you'll be giving to your business, you should quadruple it! And if you've budgeted it, at least double it, because it just snowballs...But if you have the energy, the drive and the passion, it is a wonderful life!
- Follow your dream! It's about loving to live and living to love...You get a great buzz from helping people and doing what you're doing.
- Just do it! If you'll sit there and over-analyse

it, there's a thing called analysis-paralysis, and you'; find every reason for not doing it. Take a leap of faith, put yourself in some stress and make it work!

- Follow your heart, don't give up. If you've got a dream, live that dream!
- You only live once, it's not a rehearsal, go for it: You'll always be left wondering if you don't try it, so...have a go!

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Profiles



'I had a car crash. During my recovery, I decided to turn my lifelong passion for genealogy into a business. When I was made redundant, I knew the right time had come!'

Alan Kingshott

I am 53 years old, I started my own business after being employed in the tyre industry for 28 years. In 2005 I had a car crash: two disks needed to be replaced in my spine, I had four operations on my shoulder...I was out of work for a long time and my company eventually could no longer support me. During my recovery, I used the time researching my own family tree. I have always had a passion for genealogy and it became a serious hobby many years ago. When I was made redundant and the company paid me off, I decided that the best thing I could do was to work for myself and that the time had come to turn my lifetime passion into a business!

THE BUSINESS that I started is called 'Roots and Branches': it offers family tree history and genealogy to people who want to find out more about their family. It isn't just about the dates when people were born and passed away, it's so much more. It's like painting a picture of how they lived: what did they do? How many children did they have? What sort of house did they live in?

At the time I decided to set myself up in business, I was on sickness benefits and was directed towards 'Outset', an organisation in Plymouth that offers help and support to people like myself, to get us up on our feet and start up a business.

I hadn't done a business plan, I had no experience or knowledge in this. With Outset, I had about 12 hours with an advisor, we drew up a business plan. As is usual with me, it was very wordy and long, so he helped me to tailor it down. Not long after, on the back of this business plan, I was given a 3000 pound loan, I decided to invest in some PR. I had my website professionally made, along with a brilliant

logo which gives me that 'company identity'...I also bought a huge banner with my logo on it, which I take with me everywhere I go.

I think I have been very fortunate to come across Outset. It is one of these EU funded initiatives to help people in my situation. I was 52 and washed up, so I really appreciate how they offered support from the very beginning and still do so now! They took me in their arms and helped me along, until I was confident enough to say 'OK, I'm going to jump now, I'm going to have a go at this!'

What I say now is 'well yes, I am a senior entrepreneur, isn't it great?' And I do hope I can inspire many others my age or older to come forward, because I see so many people in their old age feeling they have something to give to the general public, and go out and do it, no giving up on life! I now get up every morning and get to do something I'm passionate about, and that is probably the greatest reward!

The prospect of doing my accountancy was daunting at first, but I bought myself a piece of software, learned how

to use it and keep it up on a regular basis, so it's not that bad after all...

What's needed, for any beginning entrepreneur is tenacity, staying at it, not giving up at the first hurdle. I know I almost gave up at one point, when I got completely tied up in all the fine details of the process. Don't worry about the details, they'll take care of themselves, keep your vision in mind, the bigger picture.

MY FINAL ADVICE would be to say to people that there are a lot of organisations out there whose mission it is to help and support you. Seek them out, go out and find them, don't wait for them to come to you...





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWDy3cZMzqM>

'My advice to anybody thinking about starting up their own business would be to follow your dream: I love my life, I love helping people, and get a great buzz from doing what I'm doing.'

Amanda Drake-Worth

I'm 49 years old. I'm setting up a company called 'Happy signers'. The idea is a couple of years old, from when I first started British Sign Language. I have worked for Royal Mail for ten years, hating the job! I'm much too much of a people person to be working in that setting. Also, I had a problem with my leg and couldn't stand long hours anymore, so I decided to train as a driving instructor and have my own Driving school business. That went really well until eventually I had to give that up as well because of a leg operation. My whole life, or at least professional life, has revolved around my mobility problem...

MY COMPANY, 'Happy Signers' sets out to spread the practice of baby sign language. From 6 months onwards, Happy Signers can teach babies to communicate their needs to their parents. There are two main advantages to this: first, you don't get frustrated parents who seem to have done everything the baby requires and still it's crying and they don't know why. But more importantly, signing babies engage in communication before they reach the verbal phase, which stimulates their brain and results in a higher IQ at age five than non-signing babies.

On choosing this line of work I asked myself three questions: What can I do that would help and benefit others, that would fit in with family life and that I would enjoy doing?

I received tremendous support from Outset Plymouth, a EU funded organisation that helps people to start their own business. They just really liked my story and said 'you have to get on with this, if you don't then

we'll carry it through for you!'

I've been to all their courses: self-confidence boosting, tax issues, everything,... They also have been a great help for networking, I couldn't have done it without them...

'My whole life, or at least professional life, has revolved around my mobility problem...'

My husband Mark has been a phenomenal support in helping me achieving my dream; he reduced his hours at work to help me with my leg, the family, and now the business, he's even starting to train in Sign Language himself!

The greatest reward in this for me is having the knowledge that you're helping somebody, that is priceless.

My advice to anybody thinking about starting

up their own business would be to follow your dream: I love my life, I love helping people, and get a great buzz from doing what I'm doing.



'On choosing this line of work I asked myself three questions: What can I do that would help and benefit others, that would fit in with family life and that I would enjoy doing?'



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgiFMeELwDA>

'Do what you know to start with, but be prepared to take different routes, because as soon as you start something, various doors open, and you can find yourself going down routes that you didn't expect.'

Angela Ricards

I'm 55, this is my third year in business. I am a Bowen therapist; Bowen Therapy is a remedial body therapy to remove painful conditions, and what's a bit unusual about me is that I work not only on people but also on horses and dogs! Years ago I had trained and worked as a masseuse, so that's where the body work comes in, but I have also always been passionate about horses and dogs. I came to Bowen Therapy as a patient in fact, after an accident in which I injured myself. I found that Bowen Therapy was the one thing that seemed to help, so afterwards I set out to train in it, then adding specialised training for work with dogs and horses. I continue to attend professional development courses in my field and keep developing myself everyday!

THREE YEARS AGO when I realised that I could make this into my full-time occupation and that I wanted to be self-employed, I approached the job centre to see if they were able to help me set up in business. That was difficult because there wasn't anything they felt they could do for me. All my training was self funded. In the end, the job centre did help, they appointed me a mentor, who was a great help. He sent me on various courses and I took every free course that was available, whether it was in computing, advertising, accounting,...

One great help when I first was starting out was PRIME, part of Prince Charles' charitable Trust, they were a great help. I also joined a ladies networking group: we were all 'ladies of a certain age' just setting out in business, using each other's services...that was very helpful and encouraging too. In my experience, networking is an incredibly important and helpful factor in setting out.

Unexpected challenges along the way were many: I had expected for everything to fall into place. I think I was naïve: the website took a lot longer than I expected to be live for example...And half of the time I didn't really know what I needed: I thought I just needed a brochure and a business card, but there is much more to setting up and running a business that's going to be continuous, because after all, this is what I want to be doing for the rest of my life!

The most difficult thing for me was actually asking for money for my services...Well in the beginning that is, I am getting better at it. The greatest reward for me is to see people respond so positively to the therapy. Being able to help people, horses and dogs and bring them relief.

My advice to anyone thinking of starting a business would be this: do what you know to start with, but be prepared to take different routes, because as soon as you start something, various doors open, and you

can find yourself going down routes that you didn't expect. I think it's really important to have a goal, to know where you're going, and but to be flexible as to how you're going to get there.



I continue to attend professional development courses in my field, I'm also learning new techniques, and generally keep abreast of what's happening in the

health world, and in the world of dogs and horses. The aim is to be more experienced, to keep building on what I started and to be as happy as I am now!

You could miss so much if you were on tracks, going in just one direction. You could miss so much by not keeping an open mind!



'The idea to the business emerged as four friends gathered for lunch. The next morning, we bought the URL domain and the company was born!'

Anne Caborn

I am 56 years old, I co-founded www.makeitandmendit.com an online sustainability resource for people who want to make and mend more (and throw away less) as part of fun and enriching lifestyle. My earliest make it and mend it memory was helping my dad re-paint a second hand doll's house for me when I was really small. Sadly, I got bored and ended up throwing some gravel at the still tacky paint. Who knows, maybe it was an early attempt at pebble dashing? I have run my own businesses since the mid-1980s and believe anything is possible if you're prepared to take that first step "and occasionally scare yourself giddy."

I HELPED co-found a company called 'Make it and mend it', a web resource showing people ways to make more with what they've got rather than buying new stuff. The aim is to turn us more into participants in life rather than consumers of products.

The idea to the business emerged during a meeting of four busy women meeting for lunch, thinking 'wouldn't it be great to have a website that would tell you how to upholster a chair or what to do when your strawberry jam doesn't set, but that would also put you in contact with other people interested in tips and tricks in these areas.

The very next morning, we bought the URL for [makeitandmendit](http://www.makeitandmendit.com) and the company was born! Once the website was up and running and people visited it, the kicker-question was always: 'well how do you make money out of it?'

The idea is that the website shows people ways to make and to mend things, and would for example point out the right type of glue you'd need for a certain job. Then

there is a link from our website to an online shop selling that glue. A business arrangement between ourselves and the online shop would insure a small income stream from people directed from our website to the shop.

We've got about 3000 followers on Twitter now, 2000 on Facebook, more than 2000 are now signed up to our newsletter on our website, which gets about 1000 hits per week. We've got a large following in the US as well as Australia and New Zealand.

The way our team works is both virtually and physically. We use skype for most of our meetings, but will regularly get together all four of us, for a whole-day meeting. These meetings are always held using the make it and mend it ethics, lunch will be home-made bread or quiche prepared by one of us!

We never present ourselves as 'senior entrepreneurs', and make our website attractive to everyone, not just an older segment of the population. In our observation, the successful entrepreneurs we meet – the movers and



shakers of this world- are all above 40, 50 or even beyond!

We have received support from an organisation called PRIME which is part of Prince Charles' charitable Trust, their programme is set up to help 'slightly more mature entrepreneurs like ourselves'.

For me, the key of being a successful entrepreneur is just accepting that there's certain things you don't know, and then going and finding out! There's an awful lot of success out there and people will be very pleased to help. I'm surprised at the number of times I simply send out an email saying 'Excuse me, my name is Anne from Make it and mend it, I wondered how you managed to do ...[whatever] and how often I will get a reply.

My advice would be to take care of good bookkeeping and tax advice from the get-go, to be organised right from the start!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aE1WYXQh2gE>

'What we had to learn the hard way was that you need to go out and meet specific groups, talk to them, and your enthusiasm about what you really want to do will spread to them... But just placing an add in the paper, no, it doesn't work!'

Anne Corry

Now in my fifties, I look back on a career in counselling, with specialisation in grief support. I have worked within different organisations along the years and have finally come up with my own method, which is much less past-centered and focuses instead on the steps to implement and promote happiness in peoples' lives. All this was put to the test quite recently, when my son was left for dead in a 'hit-and-run' incident. He is fine now, but the experience has forced me to really live what I teach and has showed me that happiness is a choice.

MY BUSINESS is called 'The Life Detectives', I see people either on an individual basis or in a group, and I teach them about how to find happiness in every area of their life. I combine life coaching, counselling, psychology and positive psychology in my own 12 steps program which I called 'Who stole your happiness?'

I started out after winning an award from UnLtd, which supports Social Entrepreneurs. I received 2500 Pounds and started my business. I met Christine, my associate, shortly afterwards. She started out as one of my clients and she loved the work so much that we started to work together. I started out working in my own home, but more recently I have taken up working with big groups, running my 12 steps program to happiness, so I am now reaching people on a much wider scale. Christine and I joined an organisation called Outset, which offers intensive start-up support in Plymouth. And yes, you do need support! They have their 'Wednesday club' each last Wednesday of the month

where you can meet other budding entrepreneurs, which is very encouraging and inspiring.

'To me, age is not the real issue. It's all about your outlook and attitude, whether you're young, middle age or older.'

We had to learn about reaching out: we initially thought that all we had to do was to put an add in the paper and we'd be flooded with people interested in this work, but it doesn't work like that. What we had to learn the hard way was that you need to go out and meet specific groups, talk to them, and your enthusiasm about what you really want to do will spread to them...But just placing an add in the paper, no, it doesn't work! You have to actually go out and find these people, and that can be the hardest thing, especially if you're not trained in marketing...We had to learn the whole social media side of things, and this

is where Chris comes into her own: she writes the blog, takes us onto Twitter,...



To me, age is not the real issue. It's all about your outlook and attitude, whether you're young, middle age or older. It's all about how you see yourself, how you see others, how you see yourself in a

business. There are famous writers who started writing when they retired at sixty... You have a life experience when you're over 50 that you wouldn't have had at 20, and you can use this experience, you can use that confidence that you have when you've reached a certain age.

My advice to anyone thinking to start a business would be: go for it! You need to take that chance, or you'll regret it forever! Because life is an adventure, and it needs to be an adventure, and you need to have some fun!



'Menopause Selfcare was born out of my own experience of going through the menopausal years and watching other women experiencing the menopause.'

Isabella Quigley-Moriarty

I'm 62. Menopause Selfcare was born out of my experience of going through the menopausal years and watching other women experiencing the menopause. I started this business after my husband and I sold a Deli gourmet food shop in Penzance. I found out about the first course of the 'School for Social Entrepreneurs' in Cornwall and completed that course. The SSE empowered me to come up with something that was authentic and really new, so that I didn't have to rely on the skills I had before, and that was a great gift to me!

TWO THIRDS of women are 'symptomatic', i.e. suffer from symptoms of the menopause, which range from insomnia to hot flushes, and sudden loss of self-confidence due to hormonal changes. As I noticed, I was part of the one third having a really bad time, so I had quite an experience of that juxtaposition of how to function in the world while going through these drastic changes...

While in some cultures, women are supported to undergo this process of change and to come out bringing the fruits of their distilled wisdom, traditionally this hasn't been the case in Western society. But these days, we notice a growing awareness of the phenomena and the need for conscious support for women in that phase. It is very likely that while we lose certain faculties, we gain others, and in that respect, the menopausal years can be quite a 'vision quest', for a woman to come into her herself.

Menopause Selfcare is a 'Social Enterprise', supporting

women towards a new level of care, self-awareness and self-empowerment as they go through the hormonal changes of the menopausal years. I designed a series of courses and learning material that is available to all women, regardless of their financial capability. I created my business under the legal structure of a Community Interest Company (CIC), which ideally generates a mix of income through trading and public grants.

'I was encourage to come up with something that was authentic and really new, so that I didn't have to rely on the skills I had before, and that was a great gift to me!'

I am an award winner of a grant by UnLtd, a charity supporting Social Entrepreneurs. Their 'Engage'



program is aimed at the 50+, to enable them to set up businesses which will support them as their age as well as benefit society through the wisdom of the older person.

My main motivation lies in the tangible results I see around me: I have been deeply touched by the women's responses to my courses, and am surprised by the impact this has had in such a short time. As a social entrepreneur, what more could I ask for?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiYou2K0mj4>

'Communicate, communicate, communicate: you have to keep talking. You've got to tell people what you're doing, keeping everybody updated about your project.'

John and Penny Bond

John and Penny Bond are a couple from the Honiton area, who have set up a therapeutic farm. Having been farming all their lives, they recently took up their own farming tenancy on a beautiful piece of land, which is where they run their retreats for 'unsung heroes' (carers, returnees from the armed forces,...). John holds a degree in agriculture and has many years of experience in teaching. Now they came back to a much more 'hands on' approach of working on the land, inviting people to join them to benefit from working on a farm.

HUSH FARMS stands for 'Helping Unsung Heroes'. It is a therapeutic farm that allows people to come and have a break in the countryside and to work on a farm. This has been our dream for a number of years, and we are delighted to see the project grow. We both have been farming all our lives, for other people and for ourselves. John also holds a degree in agriculture and has been teaching at an agricultural college. Now we are moving back into a less formal side of things, concentrating on the farming aspect, and inviting people to join us on the farm to experience the benefits of working with animals and in nature.

'This is something we're really doing from the heart, and I think that's the difference with anything else we've done before.'

We combine the farming work with personal development work which helps these people to deal with the issues in their lives. This is an important aspect because the farm is all about empowering them to bring positive change to their lives.

This business idea is something very close to our hearts. This is the difference with previous business ideas that we have developed. We are really passionate about this!

Support is sometimes hard to find, as invariably, banks and funders say 'show us that it is a success and we'll support you!'. There was one organisation which said 'Great idea, we'd like to see you try!' And that was UnLtd. They support 'Social Entrepreneurs' with start-up funding, but even more than the money, their confidence in our project was such a massive boost in confidence!

But of course, the money did help, it meant we could invest in professional PR, and we have now a brilliant

PR film, which shows people in a professional way what we do. Because of course, we deliver in a professional way but we aren't professional enough to tell people in a professional way. Marketing and PR companies will do that for you and we have UnLtd to thank for that!



This project has the great advantage of being scalable: we're currently looking at spreading the model to other farms who can then deliver HUSH farms retreats, creating a brand name and a reputation across the UK. Activities often include home made food, and that could be branded too and be found in our supermarkets as 'Hush Farms Products', and each time you buy them you would be helping people to come out onto the farm...



<http://www.youtube.com/user/LetsEnterprise?blend=15&ob=5#p/u/3/4NN1EAPL8qg>

I'm very excited to be self-employed again and see my project push ahead and actually make a real difference in peoples' lives!

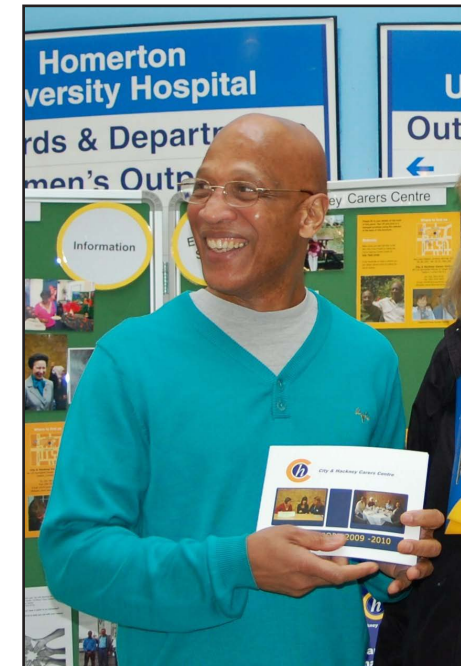
Luke Daniels

I'm 61 years old. I've worked in all areas in my time: as a mechanical engineer, doing construction work... But lately I have worked with 'Everyman's Centre' which worked with perpetrators of domestic violence. And this has become my passion, to end domestic violence. I became involved in this work when, after ten years of marriage, I slapped my wife: it shocked me so much and made me feel so bad about myself, I had to seek counselling. Through counselling, I understood the reasons for my violence and decided then that I would always interrupt men if I saw them perpetrating domestic violence.

I WROTE A BOOK called 'Pulling the Punches: Defeating domestic violence'. It took me ten years to write it, and I am very proud of that achievement, because I did it besides working in a full-time job and living a full-time life. Now that this book is finished, I have decided to get back to doing domestic violence work. I recently resigned my job so I can become self-employed again, and I'm very excited about the possibilities that exist at the moment. It is wrong for anyone to hit another person, and I think it is important to take some action in this area, which is why I am so passionate about this work.

Recently I won an award from UnLtd, who funded me to do work with men. I think there are not many skilled men delivering this work, and I've got the skills and the experience, so it's a unique opportunity for me. There are many men whom I have worked with whose lives have completely changed. Prior

to this award from UnLtd, I have never considered myself a businessman or entrepreneur of any kind. UnLtd certainly shifted my perspective on this, I now think that if you have a certain skill or ability that will actually benefit society, it makes sense to try to 'sell' it and let as many people as possible know about it. My approach is going to be to attach myself to a women's organisation already doing work around domestic violence: I will approach them with my manual, my training package, which will consist of 20 training days, which I will sell to them. Afterwards, they can always invite me back as a consultant if there are difficulties, and I will also offer them individual support, via Skype or face to face, as they require or need. My advice to anyone who's got a project or a dream would be to really believe in yourself, that you can do it, and keep working at it – consistently – it is achievable!





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmXNBuZvakY>

'I've always been frustrated by working for a big company and much prefer being my own boss. Also, being divorced and with three young children, I've got a fairly unstructured lifestyle to some extent and it's good to have a business that can fit around my life rather than just being a nine-to-five job.'

Paul Jordan

I have worked in IT all my life, initially as a software engineer, later as a project manager. I was made redundant in 2009 and decided to start Drumknot. I've always been frustrated by working for a big company and much prefer being my own boss. Also, being divorced and with three young children, I've got a fairly unstructured lifestyle to some extent and it's good to have a business that can fit around my life rather than just being a nine-to-five job.

MY COMPANY is called Drumknot, a social media and internet marketing company.

I started working for myself after having been made redundant in 2009 after a career in IT. It was a good opportunity for me to finally make the leap and work for myself. However, I did feel that I needed help with the process of setting myself up as a business, and that's when I found Outset, a Plymouth based organisation offering intensive start-up support. Their 6 week program was very useful and allowed me to get some new perspectives and ideas.

The biggest challenge for me was to recruit the first customer – because nobody wants to be the first with this sort of thing, the customer takes a risk in investing in you when asking to deliver a service or a product for them. My first customer had been referred to me by a colleague, he build up trust in me, I explained that we were starting out fresh, I was very open and honest about it with him. He liked that approach, and I think

he could see that I knew what I was talking about, so in the end he decided to take a leap of faith and give the business to Drumknot. We're still working with that client and we've got some new ideas that we're developing with him. Once you've got the first client, the second one comes easier.

My advice to anyone thinking about starting their own business would be: just do it! Because there is a thing called 'analysis-paralysis', and you'll sit there, analysing it inside out, and you'll find every reason for not doing it. Take a leap of faith, put yourself in some stress and make it work!

What certainly changed in my life is the perception of time: when you work for yourself you just don't know where the day went, it's very intense. With a nine to five job, it's very partitioned, you come home, forget about work, relax and enjoy your evening,...And what I notice now is that I'm getting up at six, going to bed at eleven, and constantly wonder where the



time has gone, there's just not enough hours in the day...So that's the biggest change I've noticed. Never a dull moment though...I really do love this way of living because I can sit down when I want to, work when I want to, if I want to

work at three o'clock in the morning I can do that...I can just fit my life around what I'm doing and still work long hours.

I don't really see myself ever retiring, because I think you do need passion and a reason to get up in the morning, and I like to be stimulated. I'd like to think that in ten years time I'd be financially secure, that I would work because I wanted to rather than because I had to in order to pay the bills, hopefully owning a successful company and enjoying the technology that comes with it...



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iGWF_HbvPU

'I started Egar at home, in my dining room. Three years later, I had filled up that dining room with Egar related stuff, there was no way my family could sit down and eat at that table anymore! Moving into a small office was the best move ever!'

Sue Scott-Horne

I'm 61 years old and I launched my business when I was 58. After a 25 year career in education, I had an accident, broke my ankle and damaged my spine. All of a sudden, I found myself sitting on a sofa, little did I know, I was going to sit in that sofa for three years, as I underwent operations, physio, etc...so I had to be early retired. It was a traumatic time, I felt as if I had no identity. At around the same time, there was a wave of gang violence in London, and I was very worried for my teenage son. I felt I had to do something, so I started to scribble. And out of that scribble, Egar was born.

EGAR STANDS for 'Educational Games And Resources'. We design and publish educational materials for schools, youth services, mentors, counsellors, parents... There are many applications and environments for these games. These 'games' consist of sets of discussion cards on various themes such as 'Gang culture', 'Alcohol', 'Knives', 'Sexual education',... They are all very serious tools to facilitate discussions around these issues.

In 2007, we lost 60 teenagers to guns and knives and gang culture, so this is a very serious area and at Egar we think that the single most important aspect of crime prevention is open communication, to be able to talk freely about all these things.

Nothing in my previous experience had prepared to me to set up and run a company, and because of my prolonged infirmity, my self-confidence was rock-bottom. One day, reading the paper, I came across an article on a course at London Metropolitan University's

Center for Micro Enterprise, aimed at women aged 50+, to help them start a business and redirect their lives. I went dragging my feet, not feeling up to the task, but was met with so much support and encouragement, the course helped me tremendously.

'Around that time, there was a wave of youth violence and we lost many teenagers to guns and knives. I felt like I just HAD to do something!'

I started Egar at home, in my dining room. By the time three years had passed, I had filled up that dining room with Egar related stuff, there was no way my family could sit down and eat at that table anymore! So I started looking for just a small office, and it was the best move I ever did!

We now have got 4 retailers selling Egar products, I'm



working with two universities, we're currently digitising the cards so that they can be used on the net and smart boards, we're also in touch with UK Trade and Investment and have had two international orders from Dubai and Malaysia.

The hardest thing in launching a business, in my experience, is breaking into the market. It took me six weeks to get the first customer, and once we had that first customer, I knew that Egar was on its way... We are now marketing this business by social media, sending out leaflets, presenting it at conferences, we get the word out there any way we can...

'At 58, I had to be early retired because of an accident. It was a traumatic time, I felt as if I had no identity.'



<http://www.youtube.com/user/LetsEnterprise?blend=15&ob=5#p/u/2/ZwQu4ai04tA>

‘When Tim got made redundant two years ago and the economical climate was low, we thought ‘hey why not do our own thing and sell Caribbean food?’

Tim and Mary Gillham

We are in our late fifties, the three children have left the house. Tim used to work as a manager in the construction industry and Mary as a midwife. When Tim got made redundant two years ago and the economical climate was low, we thought ‘hey why not do our own thing and sell Caribbean food?’. Mary was born in Trinidad and learned of her mother all the secrets of that spicy cuisine. It used to be a family tradition to prepare ‘roti’ on the occasional Sunday night. So now we out in our new-bought trailer every day and cook and sell roti, much to the delight of our customers here in Plymouth, who welcome the change....

Our business is called Timary spice, joining our two names together. And indeed we stand together at the cooker and in the trailer. We started on the idea of this business two years ago. We bought the trailer and the van, plus lots of cooking equipment all from our savings. Mary attended business courses with Outset Plymouth, an organisation offering intensive start-up support, while Tim still worked on various construction jobs. It took us about two years to take the actual business ‘Timary Spice’ out on the road as it were... But for the last three months, this has been our main occupation and we plan to make it a sustainable and hopefully growing enterprise. We have been very pleased with the response that we received from the people who come to buy from us, they welcome the change of having something different. And we strive to provide something of real quality: all of our meats are locally sourced, we strive to cook everything fresh, so as to offer people something really good, healthy and nutritious.

The main reward for me [Mary] is to meet so many people. I am a people-person, and I love talking to them, welcoming them again, even sharing a word of advice...

‘...we may end up with a string of trailers, or maybe one day our own premises to have a café, but we’ll cross that bridge when we get there, we’re taking one step at a time...’

or me [Tim], the best experience is actually putting money in the bank! It doesn’t happen much yet, we’ve still a long way to pay off the debts, and we have a lot of costs for cooking every day, but each time we do put some money in the bank, knowing that we did it by ourselves puts a smile on our face!

What’s hard about it is to deal with difficult days as your business can fluctuate, not to worry too much about

the end of the month...Bad weather also doesn’t help in our case, and packing up at the end of the day can take up to two hours, and then driving home. So it’s long hours, but we accept this and get on with it...

Our goal for next year and the year after that is to be able to cope with all the festivals we want to be present at, to keep meeting people, exchanging ideas...Who knows, we may end up with a string of trailers, or maybe one day our own premises to have a café, but we’ll cross that bridge when we get there, we’re taking one step at a time...





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFd24QYaiAk>

'When I first had the business idea, I had no experience, no business-knowledge. I had to educate myself: I took every free course I could I read a lot of books and I talked to a lot of people!'

Zandra Johnson

I am 67 years old. I founded my company, Fairytale Furniture Ltd two years ago. After being a full-time housewife all my life, I decided to create my own business. I am now an award-winning 'Olderpreneur' and thoroughly enjoy it! When I started my business two years ago, I had no experience, no business-knowledge. I had to educate myself: I took every free course I could and I read lots of books. I financed this business by myself, saving every penny for ten years, until I had saved 12 000 pounds. My office is my spare bedroom, it is from here that I manage 'team fairytale' which now employs and collaborates with 17 companies!

I AM 67 years old. I founded my company, Fairytale Furniture Ltd two years ago. I design and produce childrens' furniture that, rather than being miniature adult furniture, is designed for the child to play with and have fun with. For every piece of furniture, there's an illustrated storybook, which I write myself.

My office is my spare bedroom and my stock is held in a warehouse not too far away. I sell mainly via my own website, and I dropship to other websites, I also wholesale to retailers. My company is now two years old, and with the recession, things haven't gone according to business plan, but we're still here. We're still growing, and I still thoroughly enjoy it!

When I first had the business idea, I had no experience, no business-knowledge. I had to educate myself: I took every free course I could (business, marketing, IT, etc...) and I read lots of books. I had no money of my own, but I financed this business by myself, saving every penny for ten years, until I had saved 12 000 pounds...

One thing that I learned is the importance of outsourcing. Throughout this business, I have outsourced expertise and expert help when I needed it. I have a sales agent who takes care of those dreaded cold calls, I've employed a person to find me a manufacturer in Poland, because I couldn't find anyone in the UK who could produce the scratch resistant surface these chairs needed.

'Team fairytale' now consists of myself, a marketing manager and a sales manager, plus five people in the ware house. Apart from that, there are 17 other companies employed by my micro-company run from my little room.

One of the things I had to learn about running your own business is that you need to do a lot of networking. I now use social media to increase my company's visibility. I have a blog and regular newsletters, with games for children.

Everybody encounters doubts, in my case usually at five in the morning, and my way of dealing with them



is to tell myself 'ok so you've got a problem: what are you going to do about it? When you get up, what are you going to do to solve this?'

Being a senior entrepreneur has one effect in that it is the wrong end of

your life to mortgage your house, offer your house as collateral, because – to be franc – if it all goes wrong, you're probably not going to live long enough to get it all back again. But other than that I've found age to be no barrier at all: I haven't found that I need more energy than I've already got, that I need more ideas than I've already got, running your own company is just the most exhilarating thing to do, I love it!



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