

Case in Point

Boots 'n' suits to shoots 'n' roots

Gardening Service is launched

When Caroline Jacobs swapped 'suits and boots' for 'shoots and roots', she had no idea that within five years it would lead to her setting up her own business.

In 2002, after working as a facilities manager for 10 years – the last one spent commuting from Farnborough to London – Caroline decided to quit the rat race.

While contemplating her options, she visited RHS Wisley and had a 'eureka' moment when she realised that she wanted a future in horticulture.

She spent the next two years working in garden centres while studying part-time at Merrist Wood Landbase College, near Guildford, achieving a distinction in the National Certificate in Horticulture.

This was followed by three years gaining valuable practical experience while working with a ladies gardening team.

When she decided to start up her own gardening business she adopted the same level-headed approach to acquiring the necessary skills.



First step Business Link

So her first step was to contact Business Link and attend three business start-up courses.

This had a very positive impact, helping me to understand the financial implications of setting up and running a business,' said Caroline.

The business link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start maintain and to grow a business.

For more information call 0845 600 9 006
or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast



Networking

It not only gave me the necessary skills and reassurance but had the added advantage of enabling me to network and make excellent contacts.'

Although Caroline only launched her business at the end of 2007, she already has an impressive client list and earns a good wage.

'It's a steep learning curve,' she admits. 'Things like negotiating costs and managing sub-contractors are learned on the job but thanks to organisations like Business Link I am able to tackle this with confidence.

'One of the biggest anxieties is knowing that you have sole responsibility for the business and no-one to share your worries with.

'In fact, this isn't the case because I use Business Link's advisory service. 'It means I always have somewhere to go for advice and someone with business experience who will talk me through any concerns. It's a real lifeline.'

Company overview

Established in: 2007

Sector: Gardening

No. of employees: 1

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