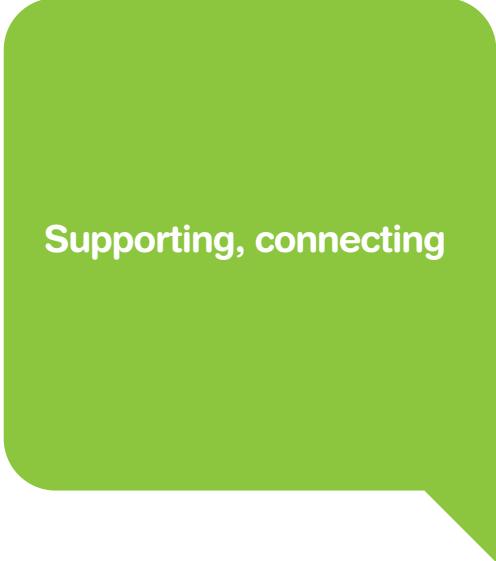




Project Report 2013





Supporting, connecting

Presented to:

Kent County Council
Canterbury City Council
Canterbury City Partnership
University of Kent
Canterbury Christ Church University
Canterbury College
Canterbury4Business

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**In 2013 StartMyBiz
organised 16 events in six
days across the city with
over 140 attendees, 67
unique attendees including
over 20 students.**

Boot Camp 2013.

Foreword

Loneliness isn't solely the dominion of the elderly. Entrepreneurs, of all ages, often feel lonely and isolated, unsure how to turn their business idea into an exciting reality; uncertain of where to obtain advice and guidance on a whole range of topics from marketing, finance, and writing a business plan to sourcing and connecting with suppliers.

Individuals contemplating setting up a business frequently need the opportunity to talk through their idea with someone who will listen and ask the right questions. The gap between concept and success can often appear impossibly wide. That's why in January 2013 *StartMyBiz* was launched. Its aim: to make it easier for anyone with an idea for a new business, make it happen in Canterbury. Its unique character: to actively listen and ask powerful questions that help entrepreneurs forge their way forward; connect business with business.

StartMyBiz exists to help every individual - whether a student, recent graduate, jobseeker or professional looking to embark on a new career - turn their dream of being self-employed into a reality.

**Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council,
Canterbury City Partnership, University of Kent,
Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury
College and Canterbury 4 Business fund StartMyBiz-
Canterbury.**

Initially a 12-month pilot scheme, *StartMyBiz* leveraged £92,245 in additional funding. This has enabled the programme to support 22 new businesses and 27 existing businesses, in turn helping them to create or safeguard over 40 jobs. Through its partner networks, key to the success to the project, *StartMyBiz* has been instrumental in enabling two local food producers, *Cheesemakers of Canterbury*, and *Fudge Kitchen*, to successfully place their produce on the shelves in *Selfridges*.

StartMyBiz can't do everything, more manpower and further development of the website, for instance, would help to move the scheme forward still further. But, taken as a whole, the response - from entrepreneurs and supporters alike - has been hugely encouraging.

In 2014 we will consolidate the tremendous progress made and continue to support budding entrepreneurs.

This includes an ambition to investigate the possibility of introducing the concept elsewhere into East Kent as a delivery area and develop *GrowMyBiz*.

StartMyBiz in year one has been active, eventful and encouraging, setting a positive scene for 2014 and beyond. We welcome and look forward to the exciting challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

Natalia Sukhram,
StartMyBiz Business
Development Manager
January 2014



“The Student Makers Market programme offers a half-day training session with Canterbury market traders, for an introduction to a market environment, and with Canterbury City Partnership for work on developing a sustainable business model”

Lisa Oulton, Future Foundry



When Selfridges were looking for a selection of Kent and South East products to sell in their food halls in the flagship store in London, StartMyBiz believed strongly in Canterbury based businesses: Cheesemakers of Canterbury and Fudge Kitchen were successfully chosen from a selection of over 10 businesses who attended a ‘Meet the Buyer’ event coordinated by StartMyBiz.

“If Natalia hadn’t initially taken us to the trade show in France, then continued with her hard work, this wouldn’t have happened. We were effectively delivered, free of stress to their door [Selfridges]. We are extremely thankful of her hard work.”

George Ward, Cheesemakers of Canterbury.

“Never underestimate the value of one introduction. Natalia’s commercial introduction has led to our branded products being placed in all Selfridges stores across the UK. This has in-turn led to the opportunity to produce their ‘own brand’ products in conjunction with the confectionary re-launch in October”

Sian Holt, The Fudge Kitchen.



“There are some very useful events that are happening with StartMyBiz, I have a finished product now which I am now selling.”

**Lavinia Gyamfuah, Managing Director.
University of Kent graduate**



Achievements in 2013

Summary

StartMyBiz-Canterbury had a very successful and encouraging first year. In the 10 months from January through to the end of October it received 432 direct enquiries, proving that demand exists for this type of new business start-up support. The initial proposal was very ambitious, especially in view of the limited resources available. Having said that, a huge amount has already been delivered against the initial proposal; funding is now being sought to build on an already well-known brand and online resource, to develop and formalise delivery and reporting processes, and to expand referral sources and relationships in order to increase the range of existing businesses and professional service providers that support the *StartMyBiz* delivery.

Activity

- 1. Comprehensive survey** – The sheer volume of information and services available online can be overwhelming. Working within Canterbury City Council's Economic Development Team, *StartMyBiz* is alerted to new initiatives and support services on a regular basis - both local and national.

Methodology

The audit commenced at the end of 2012. During the research period it soon became apparent that a great deal of business support activity/networks and resources exists within the district, the County, online and further afield of which we, and indeed new businesses, were not necessarily aware.

After an intensive research period there is now an online support directory with over 250 entries relevant to business start-up and growth.

These entries have been categorised to enable effective research when individuals are developing their business idea. The directory grows on a weekly basis as *StartMyBiz* becomes aware of new information. It is important to point out that whilst this online information is useful, and in some cases signposts to further support or funding, much of the information online is generic and people still want to talk to someone about issues relating to their own business.

Also included is a 'local offers' section allowing local businesses with a relevant offer for start-ups to be listed within the directory. *StartMyBiz* aims to build on this in 2014 to facilitate the support of new businesses by existing businesses within the district.

- 2. Marketing Strategy** – The marketing campaign has included PR, business exhibitions, careers fairs and events at the universities and college. *StartMyBiz* also worked with national campaigns, such as Start UP Britain/Pop Up Britain.

Social media has, however, been the most effective way of reaching and communicating with the target audience. Five months ago there was no social media presence but after a very intense and targeted campaign *StartMyBiz* now has 390 Twitter followers and over 170 likes on Facebook. We would therefore look to continue the social media campaign with a view to expanding engagement with students, graduates and schools.

- 3. Fill the gaps** – The initial proposal anticipated the local business community delivering business support through mentoring. It soon became apparent through initial triage 1:1s with the *StartMyBiz* project manager that people required focused 1:1s and workshops to develop business skills.

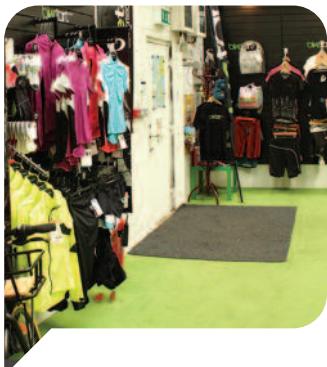
The assumption was that people learn these skills as they go along or find them online. However, the majority of business start-ups coming from employment or academia wanted to 'get it right'; to make sure they knew as many of the answers as possible and that these answers were specific to their business so that they didn't make mistakes that could have been easily prevented.

This was particularly apparent at a pricing workshop organised by *StartMyBiz* where 20 attendees struggled with the basic principles of costing a product or service. In addition, after attending workshops some people commented that their assumptions and business plan were unrealistic. This in itself is a positive outcome.

StartMyBiz has been successful in leveraging venues and business experts to deliver these workshops free of charge; and also signpost to funded services delivered by Business Support Kent, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and partners.

4. **Market School** - As part of *StartMyBiz*, two partners – Canterbury City Council (CCC) and Canterbury City Partnership (CCP) - worked with Future Foundry to apply to the Prosper Fund delivered by the *Canterbury Festival*, initially for £4,000 to pilot the *Canterbury Student Makers Market* (SMM) and then for a further £17,000 to fund further markets and develop SMM across east Kent.

The Student Makers Market programme offers a half-day training session with Canterbury market traders, for an introduction to a market environment, and with CCP for work on developing a sustainable business model.



Biketart is now happily pursuing rapid growth due to the support and contacts made through Startmybiz.

Access to grants, funding and training programmes has become much easier. Startmybiz has really been an invaluable resource and we would highly recommend the service to others thinking about going it alone!

Students also work with Jasmine Hodge, local creative entrepreneur, on product development and promotion, and with Lisa Oulton, Future Foundry, on the practical aspects of setting up a creative business.

The programme has now delivered:

Eight markets with free stalls for participants;

Makers Market at Lounge on the Farm Festival;

Exhibition of SMM work at the Horsebridge Centre, Whitstable;

SMM at Young Contemporary at the Turner Contemporary Margate;

Pop up shop for three weeks at Christmas in Tontine Street, Folkestone.

There are now 120 'makers' within the programme from all local universities, Canterbury College and other institutions, as well as people previously unemployed or older people looking to return to employment following redundancy by starting their own business. The funding for SMM from Prosper has now ended but SMM will continue through the partnership with *StartMyBiz*.

5. **Connectivity** – The *StartMyBiz* service is offered to anyone seeking to start a business, and the programme has participants and supporters from Faversham, Thanet, Dover, Ashford, Folkestone, northern France as well as international students.

In 2014 *StartMyBiz* is looking to open discussions on expanding the model to include other East Kent District Councils. *StartMyBiz* - East Kent would be a trusted brokerage brand to sit alongside the *Grow for it* inward investment campaign and Expansion East Kent (ExEK) loan finance scheme; *StartMyBiz* signposts to ExEK whenever funding is being sought and refers to local bank managers to support these funding applications.

6. **External evaluation** – *StartMyBiz* initiated interviews with 2013 project participants to fully understand its benefits, areas for improvement, the number of start-ups assisted within the year and actual and anticipated job creation resulting from this, including owner employment.

StartMyBiz – Canterbury was initially a pilot scheme. It is clearly evident from the volume of direct enquiries (over 430) and event attendees (over 400 including Bootcamp) there is a definite need for this programme. *StartMyBiz* has commissioned an independent evaluation of the service.

Headline achievements 2013

Engagement

		Leverage
Total Direct Enquiries	432	European funding through Business Support Kent £47,500
Local support - Businesses and other support organisations	119	Prosper funding for Student Makers Market £23,500
Twitter Followers	370	Canterbury City Council £10,000
Facebook Likes	177	Local businesses in kind support & venues £11,245
		£92,245

Categories of support requested

1:1 appointments	94	Event attendants
General business support	246	StartMyBiz events - Event Attendees 256
Accountants/legal	36	University of Kent Careers Fair 250
Marketing	42	University of Kent Networking 100
Accommodation/property	38	Canterbury Christ Church University - Careers 100
Finance	50	Canterbury College Workshops 60
Skills development	126	StartUPLIVE Exhibition 35
Business rates	7	B2B Exhibition 70
Business planning	25	StartMyBiz Boot Camp 143
		1014

Google analytics

Visits	4060	Direct enquiries from local students
Unique visits	2244	University of Kent 37
Page views	18230	Canterbury Christ Church University 6
Males	54%	Canterbury College 5
Females	46%	Students unknown 76
18-24	28%	University of the Creative Arts 19
25-34	34%	
	62% under 34	143

Indicative outcomes

Business Started	29
Business Supported	21
Jobs created	47



"I have learnt so much from Natalia and from the events. Advice & setting up the business. It has been a great springboard for me. The impact of Startmybiz has been so positive and a valuable resource."

Caron Ford-Wilson, Divine Days Tea Room

Telephone Evaluation Summary

You know an initiative is proving to be successful when feedback from contacts is so positive.

In December 2013, at the end of the first year of the project, an external agency, Green Parrot Market Research and Project Evaluation based in Faversham conducted a telephone evaluation survey of over 50 entrepreneurs of all ages who had contacted *StartMyBiz* as the initial point of contact when considering starting a new business. The evaluation, commissioned by *StartMyBiz*, was intended to inform future developments and to determine the extent to which the scheme has impacted on the lives of individuals considering starting their own new business in the Canterbury region.

Naturally, not all feedback has been complimentary, but without criticism there can be no improvement and the comments that have been received will be used to enhance the programme as we move forward in 2014. The overwhelming response from people trying to access the programme made it difficult to respond to enquiries in a timely manner. This is a resource issue which we are working on. Overall, however, the response has been enormously encouraging and positive.

To summarise, comments drawn from the evaluation show that most people found *StartMyBiz* to be an essential service and greatly needed by start-ups. Workshops are cited as having helped people enormously and are very popular, and Emma Jones's from Start Up Britain delivered a workshop which proved to be particularly successful. Many people say they are eager to attend more workshops in 2014.

BSK's help has also been invaluable in moving people forward in their own business development and those who got in touch with *StartMyBiz* were grateful for the contacts they were given to help in their business growth; contacts such as website designers and free legal advice.

The evaluation also revealed that *StartMyBiz* gave some individuals the confidence they needed to go ahead with their business idea, and one person realised after attending Bootcamp that his business idea wasn't as good as he had first thought and so is now developing another idea! Other people mentioned that they felt safe in the knowledge that if they needed to find out something specific, they knew they could contact *StartMyBiz* and be pointed in the right direction. And, as well as being "very informative", *StartMyBiz* is "also great for networking".

Natalia's help, advice and encouragement was greatly appreciated by the majority of people - from the 1-2-1 meetings, direct contacts given for personal introductions, and networking opportunities.

“We attended network meetings with StartMyBiz in June 2013 and it was a wonderful way to connect with other local businesses; and these local connections have since been invaluable to us - thanks StartMyBiz!”

Ruth Linklater, Club Burrito.



Gap analysis November 2013

Introduction

When the *StartMyBiz* programme was being developed the partners had a number of requirements. One of these was the creation of a comprehensive online database of start-up information and referral points. Once completed, a 'gap analysis' was also required. The following sets out key findings from the first 10 months.

Database

In May 2013 the website went live; the online database has been developed incrementally ever since, based on user feedback.



"They have been extremely supportive. When I started the business, I didn't realize how much I didn't know and as I go along I have more and more questions. Startmybiz have always been there to answer my questions, even stupid questions"

Mariam
Vossoughgunson

StartMyBiz has developed the most comprehensive database for start-ups and potential entrepreneurs in the county. Each category is populated with relevant sites and information covering start-ups - from market stalls to high growth business. There is very little information a potential start-up would need that is not available within this database.

'Gaps'

Having operated the *StartMyBiz* programme for 10 months, it is clear there are four elements currently missing in the market and which *StartMyBiz* has, to a greater or lesser extent, covered:

- 'Call to action.' The *StartMyBiz* brand has created a 'buzz' around start-up locally by being present at key events:

Kent 2020 Start-up Live.

East Kent B2B.

Careers Fairs at the University of Kent.

Business Futures at Canterbury Christ Church University.

This has generated considerable traction over the first 10 months of 2013, as evidenced by the number of followers – 263 - on Twitter, which is growing at around five per day.

- **1-1.** The key opportunity for anyone starting a business is the 1-1 meeting offered by *StartMyBiz*. This enables the individual to seek 'impartial/no strings/no fees' reassurance, support, a listening ear and encouragement or a reality check at an early stage; it is the single most important intervention *StartMyBiz* offers. 1-1 is resource intensive and requires additional follow up and as a consequence is often unavailable from any other source.
- **Skills.** A key stage is the opportunity to acquire basic skills very early on and to then properly evaluate the start-up proposition before applying resources to it. In fact, a number of participants at the pricing workshop have either abandoned their idea or modified it significantly having worked through the process.
- **Signposting.** While there is a lot of information 'out there', the personal referral or informed signposting makes a real difference for people starting out in an unknown market place. This is part of the process that began with the call to action, focused on the 1-1 and worked through the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

“It was great to get the opportunity to discuss my business idea with such a wide variety of experts in the business field. Not only did we learn how to put a pitch forward to investors but how to pitch your services to businesses that are going to use your services.”

Richard Murray, Pitching Den attendee



“This has been a fantastic opportunity to gain information very quickly, make contacts for further support and a great confidence builder.”

Helen Cumming, Pitching Den attendee.

Strategy in 2014

Some people felt that StartMyBiz helped them initially, but they felt a little let down when trying to get to the next level.

**Telephone Evaluation,
December 2013**

As a result of this feedback we are now looking to develop GrowMyBiz

For the continued development of the project, *StartMyBiz* plans to:

Activity 1

Continue to research and promote business support initiatives: training & development opportunities, premises, professional services, access to finance, mentoring and pro bono support and any other potential opportunities of relevance to people starting a business.

Outputs

- i. Develop a dynamic website to include user generated content. This would allow businesses and start-ups to engage and communicate with each other independently. This would also create a library of useful business support accessible to all.
- ii. Measure a range of website metrics to inform delivery.

Activity 2

Develop a marketing strategy that covers schools (Year 9 onwards), further and higher education students and staff, business and finance professionals and the *StartMyBiz* wider partnership network. This will generate leads and also new brokerage from across the city to support those interested in starting a business.

Outputs

- i. Stimulate activity by attending key events including *Start-up Live*, *East Kent B2B*, and Careers Fairs
- ii. *StartMyBiz* is the single point of contact for all delivery organisations and business support initiatives locally and has direct access to people on the ground. The aim is to expand this over the next 12 months to build a trusted brokerage brand.
- iii. Continue to deliver social media strategies to engage with and inform key audiences, to alert them to all opportunities across the County and beyond. We will carry out on-going and monthly reviews; measuring numbers of people engaging with the programme
- iv. Develop relations with a range of different faculties and departments within the universities and college to promote enterprise and engage with students and staff (e.g. humanities and sciences) – this will be an on-going process.

Activity 3

Fill the gaps. Whatever is missing, and whatever *StartMyBiz* clients say they need, *StartMyBiz* will find a way to deliver it. To achieve this *StartMyBiz* will draw upon the core resources: sponsorship, leverage and pro bono support. This information will form the core of the Start-up programme: leveraging what is already there effectively and in a targeted way.

Outputs

- i. Continue model of 'call to action'; 1-1 moderation of potential start-ups; skills development; onward tailored brokerage and referral of 800 new direct engagements.
- ii. Increase number of delivery partners, mentors and streamline brokerage process.
- iii. Host Start-up Boot Camp 2 Nov 2014. This will be a week's worth of events held during Global Enterprise Week. In 2013 *StartMyBiz* organised 16 events in six days across the city with over 140 attendees.

Activity 4

StartMyBiz does not directly create jobs but assists new businesses develop the capacity to find solutions to growing their enterprise. *StartMyBiz* helps people to start-up by putting them in contact with experienced business people, bankers and business support professionals, a service that is not available locally at present. By making these introductions *StartMyBiz* creates 'warm leads' which are followed up and evaluated in terms of benefit. In this first year there has been a very positive response to this service which now needs to be developed.

Outputs

- i. Monitor jobs created and safeguarded within the business assisted by *StartMyBiz*.
- ii. Track and continue relationship with start-ups and support growth

Activity 5

Market School: *StartMyBiz* will develop a school approach to helping people begin their business career at this foundation level. Enabling support, advice and guidance for aspiring market traders we provide them with a market nursery space to try their ideas, skill and expertise in a live trading environment which is also supported.

Outputs

- i. Building on the success of the Student Makers Market programme, *StartMyBiz* will work with Future Foundry to ensure that the programme continues now that the initial funding from Prosper has ended.
- ii. Links with Green Shoots Market.

Activity 6

Connectivity: *StartMyBiz* will continue to develop a network across the sub region as a catalyst for growth in this wider area; and will connect up with other centres of business innovation in London, the south east and Europe. *StartMyBiz* will also continue to leverage the strong connectivity of the education sector.

Outputs

- i. Open dialogue with other East Kent Districts to propose white-labelling website and branding and/or East Kent Makers Market.
- ii. If required, work with other councils in Kent to set-up and promote the project thereby sharing best practice.
- iii. Add value to existing schemes and projects by promoting them to *StartMyBiz* contacts whenever relevant including: *Grow for It*, *ExEK*, *Tiger*, *Escalate*, *BSK*, *Fusion*, *Success*, *Recreate*, *HGK*.
- iv. Social media has allowed *StartMyBiz* to connect with people outside the area, increasing geographic reach. Further development of the social media campaign, making use of new contacts wherever possible, will continue.

StartMyBiz: In the long term

1

2014
Deliver
StartMyBiz and
Students
Makers Market
and develop
GrowMyBiz.

2

Integrate
StartMyBiz into
the Canterbury
Business
Improvement
District – from
January 2015
(depending on
Business
Improvement
District
progress).

3

Work with
Canterbury City
Council to
expand the
service outside
of the Business
Improvement
District area -
after October
2014 (depending
on Business
Improvement
District
progress).

4

From Jan 2015
source
additional
funding to
develop start-up
and ‘maker
space’ in
Canterbury city
centre.

Develop ‘street
based business
training’ as part
of the Student
Makers Market
programme.

5

Embed
StartMyBiz and
GrowMyBiz into
the East Kent
Business
Support
structure.

Through
Business
Improvement
District funding
and sponsorship
create
Canterbury
Business
Awards.

“Alyson's (Keystone Law) advice was really useful, her detailed information on how to copyright your product and images were really helpful. I have also used the information she gave on where to find forms that can be used in the day-to-day working of your business. I have used forms and policy information on health and safety in the work place and small business employment law.”

**Tanniea Powell, Cook in your Kitchen
University of Kent Student who attended the
Intellectual Property Workshop**

Case Studies



"I have had 1:1 support from Natalia and Georgi Ivanov which I found to be very helpful in progressing my product. I've also attended one workshop on Selling Made Easy – again very helpful. I also had great help in market testing through independent retailers in Canterbury"

Sami Patel,
Slim Sam's Cakery

Annie Sparks

Journalist

Age: A lady never tells!

Work:

Chaleureuse. An online lifestyle magazine focused on French cooking, design, style, interiors and gardens. Selling vintage cookware and kitchenware.

Where:

info@chaleureuse.co.uk, Facebook: Chaleureuse and Twitter: @chaleureuseUK.

Started:

February 2012

Why?

I had a passion for France, cooking, vintage and design

Difficult part?

Keeping up with being a single mum with two teenagers while working days, evenings and weekends; and motivation.

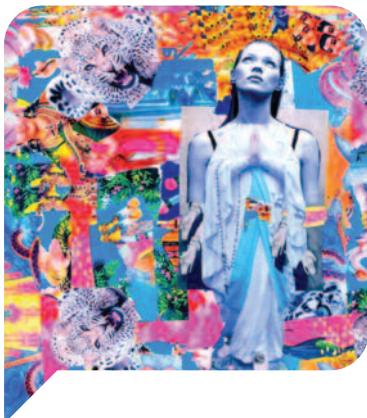
How has StartMyBiz helped?

StartMyBiz has been a great help to my business, both in terms of the 1-2-1-business advice I've received and the fantastic seminars they run.

StartMyBiz has helped me channel my ideas into a workable model and encouraged me to take Chaleureuse in exciting and profitable new directions by using my language and newfound social media skills to provide B2B translation and online marketing services. Established card payment through mobile devices.

What is it like doing business in the region?

Doing business in Kent is difficult for me sales-wise, as my market is definitely urban, but it's extremely handy for getting to France on a regular basis. I also hope to promote local restaurants, food companies and design via my website in a Canterbury Corner section. There is a strong link between where I sell in London (East, South East and North East) and East Kent. I sell to exactly the kind of people who either own second homes or come down to Whitstable, Canterbury, Deal and Margate at weekends. I hope by promoting other businesses they will help me spread the word about mine too! I also have plans to stage my work in a local Canterbury cafe, so they have some free vintage decor, while they return the favour in promoting my stock and me.



Erin Hayhow

Work:

I am an artist who graduated with a first class honors degree in fine art last year. Since then I moved to Berlin where I fulfilled a couple of internships.

Where:

I am now back in Canterbury and I am keeping up with my art – but I'm lacking avenues to sell it by. I have done quite well - doing markets with student makers markets and having a few exhibitions but I need something more constant.

Age:
23.

Started:

Started test trading- Dec 2012 through Student Makers Market

Why?

Had the opportunity to sell my artwork on the market so decided to give it a go.

Difficult part?

Found out that people didn't really want to buy my artwork on the market, it was more for galleries so I had to develop a line for the market specifically. I now have products that I place my art on rather than sell the actual artwork. I have recently started printing on silk scarfs. People have seen the designs and really liked them, the Turner Gallery was interested as well as a little independent shop in Whitstable.

What has been useful

All of the opportunities, especially to display at the Horsebridge and the Turner and to learn what works and doesn't work.

Tom Harvey, David Eve and Dave Carman

Work:

Harvey Woods Gardening. Local, independent gardening service at reasonable rates.

Where:

Around the region: Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Sturry, Thanet, Chartham, Chilham, Bridge, Faversham, and Sittingbourne.

Contact details

www.harveywoods.co.uk

Started:

January 2013.

Why?

Our core team, Tom Harvey, David Eve and Dave Carman, all worked on a Kent Enterprise Trust charity project, Appleseed Landscapes, in 2012. David and Dave worked as volunteers and Tom had a two-day a week part-time contract. In December 2012, Appleseed Landscapes was closed and Tom was made redundant. We have built up the business since January 2013 starting initially with Appleseed Landscapes customers.

Difficult part?

We were fortunate to have a small customer base we could build from but developing a marketing strategy for new customers is still an on-going conundrum for us. We have a very limited marketing budget and we are still learning new, efficient ways of advertising ourselves.

How has StartMyBiz helped?

The regular emails have kept us in touch with what is going on locally and we have booked a stand at the Herne Bay Showcase event in March 2014 which we hope will be a great opportunity to meet new potential customers and learn more about how StartMyBiz can support us in the next few years.

Contacts made through StartMyBiz?

Andrew Smith and Angela Furlong have been very helpful in replying to personal queries on StartMyBiz events such as training courses, business breakfasts and showcase events.

What is it like doing business in the region?

A lot of our business is with private residential gardens and we love working closely with our customers on ideas for their gardens etc. We also work with estate agents and housing associations and we have always found them to be very understanding and supportive in terms of prompt payments and regular communication, which is very important for a small company.

Jane Priston

Freehand ceramic painter and artist.

Age:

40s. Wife. Mother. Three children.

Work:

Plane Jane - A small-scale operation; hand-painted ceramics without the use of stencils, transfers or sponges. Intricate designs inspired by the sea. Jane is entirely self-taught and over time has experimented with her own techniques to create a new and unique style.

Where:

Herne Bay, Kent

www.planejane.co.uk

Started:

May 2013.

Why?

Jane discovered in 2012 she had an eye for detail and the steady hand required to paint the intricate designs in her head onto ceramics. At the time Jane needed to earn some money working from home and was receiving so many wonderful compliments for the ceramics she was painting that she decided to sell them.

Difficult part?

Knowing where to start. Painting pottery is one thing but starting a business is something else entirely. Jane wanted to do it right from the word go.

How has *StartMyBiz* helped?

StartMyBiz has supported me through every stage of starting a business and provided workshops on everything from tax and accounting to marketing and PR, as well as one to one sessions - and all for free.

But best of all is knowing I have someone to contact if I need help in anyway whether it is a silly question or a major decision. I know *StartMyBiz* will either give me the information I need or find me the person who can.

Contacts made through *StartMyBiz*:

Meeting really interesting people at the workshops. The best contact is Kent Creative Live who have opened up the 'art as a business' world to me offering workshops, meet ups and opportunities. Now stocking items at the Turner Contemporary, Margate.

What is it like doing business in the region?

Jane thinks the Canterbury area is a wonderful place for her to be in business.

It is bursting with artistic inspiration from the City to the coast and offers a wealth of opportunity for her within the art world.

'It is also a beautiful place to spend time in whether that is at a workshop or visiting a gallery or potential retail outlet. Most importantly, Canterbury has recognised the exciting talent that is out there and decided to do something about it by setting up StartMyBiz and helping people like me turn an idea into a reality,' says Jane.



Paul Babra

Local Caterer.

Age:

50s

Contact:

paulbabra@yahoo.co.uk

Started:

April 2013: Launched a food and drink company in Kent. Also, operates event catering and cross channel trade stall.

Why?

To introduce traditional home-cooked Chutneys and Sauces.

Difficult part?

Time and funding.

How has *StartMyBiz* helped?

Through workshops and courses which have helped me operate my business.

Contacts made through *StartMyBiz*:

2Seastrade, business contacts in France, environmental Health and Trading Standards, our accountants.

What is it like doing business in the region?





www.startmybiz-canterbury.com
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