

Dare to be different

GO-WOMAN!

WEST MIDLANDS

ISSUE NINE | Autumn/Winter 2009

Outsourcing

Discover Smarter Ways
of Working

**The Go-Woman!
Women in Business
Conference 2010**

Read about Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2009 Award Winners

Dear Reader,

Welcome to issue 9 of the Go-Woman! magazine.

Issue 9 is packed with articles around stream-lining your business.

After the success of 'Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2009' we are in the process of developing 'Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2010' taking place on 11th June 2010 providing practical help and support for your business. Logon to www.wibconf.co.uk to find out more.

Read about 'Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2009' award winners; truly inspirational individuals women who are paving the path for the rest

Enjoy the issue and don't forget to send us your feedback at gowoman@go-woman.com

Yasmin Akhtar / Clare Hill
Directors - Go-Woman!

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GO-WOMAN!

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SUCCESSFUL *Telephone Communication*

Never try and get past the receptionist...

The receptionist is not an obstacle to overcome, but someone that can be key in helping you reach your target.

Build rapport with everyone you speak with...

The way they talk about you may make or break your efforts. You don't know the relationship between them and your target.

Always find the name of who you want to talk with...

...And their title... Even if you have to make a separate phone call first or you may be pigeon holed as a cold caller.

Ask Easy questions...

The receptionists or secretaries aren't asking you because they are interested, but because you are in their "filing tray" and they need to move you on. If you make it confusing, they will simply "field" you away.

Take responsibility...

Even if it's not your fault that you were put through to the wrong person, if you take responsibility the natural instinct is to help you. If you complain, the natural instinct is to get rid of you.

Be gently persistent...

No one minds people being enthusiastic, even excitable. No one likes someone who is pushy, or aggressive, learn the difference.

Use Voicemail as a tool...

Nowadays 90% of people that I call are on voicemail, if you spend your time trying to dodge it, you will waste your day and your phone bill. Learn how to use an enticing, exciting message and give people a reason for wanting to call you back.

Be completely prepared for your conversation...

When you reach the person you want, you have a limited amount of time to impress or depress! Even if you have to write down notes, ensure that your call is structured, and show them that you value their time.

Protect your brand...

Never lose your cool, or give a reason to remember you in a negative way, your brand is of paramount importance so keep it safe.

And the best, saved till last;

Move forward...

Always ensure that you have a next step before you finish your call. Make sure that you agree on what happens next whether it's arranging a meeting, sending a proposal, or putting in the diary. If you don't follow it up, it's like you never made the call.

Michelle Mills-Porter - **ETHOS**
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Business Link Approved Supplier (WMSR)



SMARTER WAYS *of working*



Blue Orange Marketing is a small business in the West Midlands built on the foundations of outsourcing - using our network of specialists in programming, public relations, communications, graphic design and printing to create a team to deliver websites and marketing projects for our clients.

We work with small businesses that need regular help in marketing but can't afford to employ someone full time. Whether it's one day a month or one day a week - we help businesses define their marketing strategy and create a realistic plan of action. And if they need additional help with graphic design, websites, PR, copywriting or delivering some of the marketing activities, we can do that too.

Marketing doesn't have to cost the earth... but you do need to use someone who understands the needs of small businesses. Call **Sharon** on **01902 845952** or email **sharon@blueorangemarketing.co.uk** to see if we can help you.

The secret to building a strong and a success business is to identify your strengths as well as your short comings. None of us possess all the skills needed to run a business. Identifying the shortfalls and utilising support from individuals who are experts in their field can be a step towards building a successful business.

Outsourcing certain elements of your business can also inject expertise into your business that can help it to grow, eliminating stress

and ensuring that you get the finest support to grow your business. This can also be cost effective; removing headache of permanent costs associated with employing staff.

Following business solutions can help you streamline your business allowing you to run an efficient, cost effective venture particularly through these uncertain times.



Website presence in 3 simple steps

First impressions are vital for winning more business. Increasing number of customers are now utilising the Internet as a first point of contact in searching for products and services; yet many of the small businesses lack the presence on the Internet.

There are generally two reasons why small businesses are reluctant to venture down this route.

They lack the know how or it's far too expensive

Being on the Internet need not be expensive or a mystery. We at Go-Woman! can help to simplify the process. Three page website to get you noticed in 3 simple steps...

- Choose from a sample of designs to suit your image
- Complete details on your organisation
- Get on the web!

Our basic package starts at £99.

Contact us on **0121 270 6133** or email us at **gowoman@go-woman.com**



Is admin weighing you down? Are piles of paperwork holding you back?

Then why not call Helen's PA Services and let me set you free.

As an Accredited Member of the UK Association of Virtual Assistants, I offer a confident, professional and completely confidential service to businesses across the UK. Based in Shropshire, I've spent over seven years in senior-level PA and administrative roles across a variety of sectors and am using this expertise to support businesses like yours with:

- Event and conference management
- Document and report writing
- Spreadsheet design and set-up
- Data entry and mail merge campaigns
- Audio typing and minute taking
- Internet research and Google map development

But don't just take my word for it, visit www.helenspaservices.co.uk to read some great testimonials, call **07971 530104** or email **helen.castree@btinternet.com**.



Is this a familiar scenario? **nuthatch**^{ltd}

You've been running your business for a while now and it's going really well!

However you feel that your "to do" list just gets longer and longer and you don't have anyone to delegate any of the tasks and projects too? Your stress levels are rising and you're ending up doing your books and VAT returns into the small hours of the morning? You'd rather be out there generating sales and income instead of managing the "behind the scenes" issues? You need some help, but in which area of your business? And you don't want the responsibility of an employee?

Nuthatch Ltd can help.

If you would like to reduce your stress with the support of an experienced, empathetic, freelance manager to take some of the strain and help your business grow - Then call **Clare Hill** on **07970 032 650** or email **clare@nuthatchltd.co.uk**. visit **www.nuthatchltd.co.uk**



Virtual Assistance from a very real assistant!

Independent business folk have never had it so good. Virtual Assistant, Kim Tennant, has more than thirty years experience of business administration and management and is now available to work alongside businesses to make them more effective and efficient.

Kim started her business because she realised that many small business owners are so busy doing what they do best that they don't have time to deal with the paperwork and day to day management or alternatively their businesses are often too small to support a dedicated administrator - so profitable work is overshadowed by the chores, whichever way they are running their business they are probably not getting their work/life balance right.

If you wish to find out more about Kim's business support services visit: **www.ktbusinessservices.co.uk**.



DEVISING A *Business Plan*

Devising a business plan can seem like a mammoth task and one that strikes fear into the hearts of even the most experienced.

Go-Woman! will be running a series of articles around formulating a business plan. Business plan can be a great way of developing goals and a focus for your business. A business plan brings together all of the ideas that you have formulated about your new business into a comprehensive document.

This is used for two main purposes:

1. helping you to clarify what it is that you are trying to achieve
2. acts as a marketing document for potential investors and demonstrates your professional approach and dedication

Essentially, your business plan will contain the following information:

- an executive summary
- basic information about your business idea
- details about your target market and how you hope to reach it

- information on your competitors
- basic information about you, and your business background
- basic information about your colleagues, and their business background
- financial information such as projected profit and loss account details, cash flows and balance sheets for 2 - 3 years

Your business plan is expected to change as time passes and you should update it as often as possible. Over time, you will be able to replace the projected financial information with actual data.

It can be very daunting to write a business plan and many people opt to turn to professional business plan writers.

However, you will need to have a thorough understanding of the underlying business concepts and business model that you are proposing as you will have to sell the idea to others.

In the next issue we will look at a template for a business plan, and discuss the relevance of each section.



10 QUESTION GEM

Sharon Rowe

What prompted you to start your own business?

I was working at Rentokil Initial as a regional HR Manager. The role consisted of a lot of travelling and also required some overnight stay. The role was very much operational. I wanted to utilise my skills and qualifications to the maximum and get involved in more HR strategic projects. Also, I wanted to ensure that I was getting the right work life balance between work and family life. Running my own business has allowed me to do just that.

Explain the nature of your businesses

001 Inspiration Ltd targets micro (1 – 4 employees) and SME business (5 – 100 employees) that does not have the luxury of having a HR department or dedicated HR personnel. I initially work on developing the HR infra structure which as a minimum focuses on complying with employment legislation. I then work towards management development which can consist of a combination of training and/or coaching on strategic HR and company development which is driven through the people. The type of areas that we help companies in are: contract of employment, induction programme, recruitment, HR policies and procedures, absent management, performance management, HR advisory service, workplace mediation, etc.

Golden Training Ltd is a registered training provider through EDI that provides training in:

- Business and Administration NVQ Level 2 & 3
- Customer Service NVQ Level 2 & 3
- Team Leading NVQ Level 2
- Management NVQ Level 3

- Contact Centre Operations NVQ Level 2
- Key Skills Level 1 & 2
- Equality and Diversity Level 2
- Disability Awareness Level 1

The business is aimed at any size company who needs to up-skill or retain talent management within their company.

What has been your driving force?

Knowing that there is a demand for HR services in the Micro and SME businesses. It is just a case of finding them and ensuring that they understand the concept of HR.

What were the qualities that helped you to succeed?

Tenacity - as I am passionate about the service and products that I deliver.

Achievement - seeing that the processes that I have put in place have made a difference in the companies.

Caring - I genuinely care about my clients and their businesses.

What have been your biggest challenges and how did you overcome them?

Knowing how to network - I did not understand the benefits of networking, but having good mentors I now understand the fruits of networking.

Giving free HR advice and services. I have been told to stop giving free information to potential or current clients....but I cannot help it. I really want my client's to succeed and grow, especially through their people.

What do you do in your spare time?

What spare time? Other than house-hold tasks, as a family we invest in the children i.e. violin, drum, swimming, and squash lessons. We go to church on a Sunday. Day trips, tumble, and going to the park are also activities that we do.

What is important to you?

To get the right work life balance between work and my family. I am passionate about my work and also enjoy the family life.

Where do you want to be in two years time?

A non-executive HR Director for about 3-5 companies.

What advice would you give to would be entrepreneurs?

If you have a passion or an idea; do not give up - go for it..

Ensure you know and prepare your strategy of success

Realise that you are responsible for the accounts, marketing, IT, sales, admin, and the list goes on...

Try to enjoy the journey (It is very hard but it can be rewarding!)

What key message would you give to businesses out there?

...Invest now or pay later



Invest Now..

And ensure that you have the correct HR infrastructure in place. i.e. getting the employment contract up to date, HR policies in place performance management, framework, etc.

Pay Later...

- It could cost you
- Legal Fees
 - Compensation
 - Low Staff Morale
 - Ruin Reputation
 - Time
 - Stress



Sharon Rowe owner of 001 Inspiration Ltd (HR & Management Development consultancy) and Golden Training Ltd (Training/ Learning & Development company)
Contact Sharon on 07932 680780 or 07947 921347

“Sharon Rowe of 001 Inspiration Ltd has been very instrumental in formulating policies, procedures and guidelines for Fagan Carpets Woodfloor and Beds. This has helped the company to deal with staffing issues more effectively and therefore helping the company to be more successful with a much more happy and achieving workforce which is creating better sales.”

Bobby Fagan, Managing Director, Fagan Carpets Ltd, Wednesbury

JARGON *Buster*

Issues 1 to 7 of Go-Woman! magazine were full of information introducing computers and email. Issue 8 contained test questions to allow you to see how you got on.

In the next few issues we will be breaking through the frustration of being blinded by science, with acronym and jargon surrounding computers by providing an overview of some of the jargon that you will come across in the world of computers.



Click - Pressing down once and releasing a mouse button, or other key.

Client - A geeky term for an additional piece of software that runs alongside your web browser, allowing you to use services like newsgroups and internet chat.

Clipart - A library of drawings or photographs that you can use in presentations, reports or in desktop-publishing documents. You must check whether there are copyright restrictions if you are intend using the pictures commercially.

Drop-down menu - A list of options displayed beneath a menu bar when you select a menu option, or when you click on a down-pointing arrow in a dialogue box.

Email - Short for electronic mail, a system of sending notes and memos between computers via internet.

Hard disk - A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store both applications and the documents and files they create. Hard disks are so-called because they use rigid magnetic disks to store data. Hard disk storage capacity is measured in gigabytes.

Hardware - Your computer set-up is split into two parts, hardware and software. Software covers the programs that run on your machine, while hardware describes the physical components, like the monitor and keyboard.

Hyperlink - A clickable link on a web page or in a document that takes you to elsewhere, like to another website or a later page.

Internet - Global network that links millions of computers, using phone and cable links. Users connect to server computers, which act rather like a local phone exchange. A modem connects your PC to the server from home, allowing you to become part of the internet.

Internet Explorer - Microsoft's internet browser. A program that allows you to 'browse' web pages, manage your favourite web sites, and so on.

Laser printer - A type of printer that produces high-quality text and graphics using a laser beam. The beam builds up characters and images as tiny dots on a rotating drum. The drum then attracts ink powder (toner) to these dots. This is then transferred and heat-fused to paper.

Launch - To start up a program, such as Microsoft Word or Excel, by clicking on its icon or selecting it from the Windows Start menu.

My Computer - Usually you will find an icon labelled 'My Computer' in the top-left corner of your Windows desktop. Double-click on this and a Window will appear, containing icons for any disk drives you have connected to your PC, as well as any printers you have installed.

Notebook - A portable computer, usually around the size of an A4 notebook. Also referred to as a laptop.

Online - The time you spend connected to or via the internet.

Pop-up menu - A menu that can be displayed on the screen at any time by pressing the appropriate key, usually displayed over material already on the screen. Once you have made a choice from the menu, it disappears and the original screen is restored.

Portal - A website that offers a variety of services, such as news, weather reports, stock information, email and so on. The information on offer may be personalised for your interests if you have registered with the portal. Most search sites are also portals.

THE MUST ATTEND *Event of 2010*

Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 11th June 2010

A day dedicated to supporting, empowering and honouring women in business

Feedback from Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2009

“Great networking opportunity”

“Lovely, warm environment”

“Very well organized conference”

“There were very powerful women at the event. I have at least 4 serious business relationships moving forward from people I met on the day. One of those relationships is being signed off today, so it's real business, not just networking!”

Read more about ‘Go-Woman! Women in Business Conference 2009’ award winners on pages 14 to 17.

Speed Networking to kick start the day.

Make contacts and utilise the day to continue the conversation.

Interactive Workshops

Attend range of interactive workshops; focusing on empowering women to take away the skills to boost their business! – Instant results for your business.

- ✓ Marketing your business
- ✓ Dress for Success
- ✓ Does your legal structure work for you
- ✓ Baffled by the Books
- ✓ Access to Finance for women entrepreneurs
- ✓ Cold calling made easy... and more
- ✓ Cold calling made easy... and more

See www.wibconf.co.uk for an updated list

Tailor the day to suit your business and to work around your schedule. Select from a range of workshops, set in small groups allowing you to get the best out of each session. Want to learn more or discuss your issues further? – arrange one-to-one informal surgeries with the experts on the day.

Set in a relax and an informal environment at the Pavilion, Moor Lane, Birmingham; the day is built around providing women with an opportunity to replenish their business and access information all under the one roof.

Advanced booking is necessary – don't miss out on early bird offers.

For more information log onto www.wibconf.co.uk

Raise the platform for extraordinary women who are leading the way

Nominate your inspiration

Award categories include:

✓ Best New Business

a Business that has taken the leap of faith and survived the first year of its journey

✓ Female Social Entrepreneur

for an outstanding social entrepreneur

✓ Best European Enterprise

A small business that is successfully doing business in the wider European Union

Check the website for an updated list.

The application process is simple, no need for hours of form filling and evidence gathering.

Download the application form from www.wibconf.co.uk

or email for more information: awards@wibconf.co.uk



BEST FEMALE *Social Entrepreneur*

Women in Business Conference 2009 saw the launch of Go-Woman! 'Women in Business Conference', awards.

We at Go-Woman! were overwhelmed with the response. The quality of nominations and the standard of entries was a great challenge for the panel. All the nominees and nominators are a great inspiration to us all.

Winner Best New Business Michelle Mills-Porter of Cherish Jewels whose business was born out of her experiences in the Asian Tsunami and her wish to build a business in a third world country to encourage self sufficiency and "Not only did Michelle meet our criteria most closely in this category but we felt she had particularly dedicated her time and expertise to helping to create opportunities for other women to advance, particularly in an area of the world where there are few." said Clare Hill of Go-Woman!

Winner Best Female Social Entrepreneur - Davinder Kaur - Sandwell Women's Enterprise Agency - Sandwell Women's Enterprise Development Agency [SWEDA] is a unique agency which has been successfully providing services to the community for the past 15 years. SWEDA exists to encourage enterprise, provide career guidance and business advice and promote the personal and professional development of people in the West Midlands.

"Davinder has shown courage, leadership and selflessness against challenging circumstances and was considered in particular to have been an exemplary role model inspiring those around her to fulfil their business ambitions" said Yasmin Akhtar of Go-Woman!

Read about all our winners and finalists - truly inspirational women that are setting the standards.



Above: Winner: Davinder Kaur

Davinder Kaur has built her career from extensive experience in managing commercial companies in the UK and Western Europe (Belgium and Holland) and through her management work in public and voluntary sector organisations in the West Midlands.

Davinder was one of the founding members and Directors of Sandwell Women's Enterprise Development Agency (SWEDA), a not for profit voluntary organisation set up in 1989 to support the development of women in business.

Since 1999, Davinder has pioneered the diversification of services in response to the aspirations and needs of women, men and young people across the West Midlands. Davinder manages a dedicated team of trainers and advisors to deliver:

- Career guidance and advice
- Personal improvement support
- A range of employability workshops
- IT training and mentoring
- Business awareness and skills training for pre-start and existing business owners, social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations.

For further information please visit the SWEDA website at www.sweda.org.uk



Finalist Female Social Entrepreneur

Two years ago Karen Tomalin gave up her job as an accountant to set up 2nd Skin Lingerie.

Initially an Internet based company; 2nd Skin Lingerie has grown into a bespoke personal fitting service, offering lingerie for real women of all sizes.

Inspired by a client who had undergone breast surgery, Karen saw a need for pretty lingerie and the personal fitting service that 2nd Skin offer to assist women with finding their self confidence again.

Never one to stand still Karen's next project is to encourage ladies to become self sufficient; giving them the opportunity to launch their own business by taking 2nd Skin into the home.

For further details please call 01527 570229



Finalist Female Social Entrepreneur

Developed by mum-of-one Jane Hopkins, the award winning Mumsclub is still the UK's only business club designed for mums. Jane's own experiences and need were what inspired her to create mumsclub, which is the source of daily inspiration for hundreds of mums across the country.

It provides a free service for any woman who wants to build, or is already building, a business from home whilst juggling family life. For many women, the forum is their second home, where they are able to make friends and network with other 'Mumpreneurs', safe in the knowledge that they won't be judged, and will be supported by those who understand the daily issues she must deal with. Jane has now launched National Business Mum week opening 3 October with the inaugural Mumpreneur conference & awards.

www.mumsclub.co.uk

Top: Finalist: Karen Tomalin

Bottom: Finalist: Jane Hopkins



Above: Winner: Michelle Mills-Porter of Cherish Jewels

Following her personal involvement in the Asian Tsunami, Michelle Mills-Porter was instrumental in raising £100,000 in just 6 months. With donations dwindling and other world disasters hitting the headlines Michelle found a way to marry her fundraising needs with a new found hobby.

Eventually closing the doors on her previous multi award winning company, and despite multiple serious health issues, Michelle embarked upon a new venture that was able to help to create sustainable incomes in third world countries and deliver meaningful, bespoke jewellery at the same time.

In addition to bespoke pieces, Michelle also runs workshops, and has various small retail outlets and also designs bracelets for specific charities with 100% of the profits going to those organizations. Michelle was chosen as Best New Business of the Year for her ability to overcome adversity and for her ethics and values.

For more information logon to www.cherishjewels.co.uk

BEST *New Business*

BSustained's services and work mainly focuses on providing training, workshops and support for people of all ages groups and abilities with regards to access to healthy eating and living.

BSustained has a particular interest in working with disadvantaged communities, via schools, community groups and individuals. Birgit provides courses such as '5 a Day on a Budget' and 'Fork to Fork' (organic gardening combined with turning the grown produce into tasty, healthy meals). Birgit also delivers 'Train the trainer' events for teachers and trainers for similar workshops.

Birgit is a perfect example of a woman converting her passions, hobbies, interests and values into a business that fulfils her own ambitions, but also greatly benefits others and is a role model to other women considering starting up – she has grown her business very quickly whilst staying true to her strong personal values.

Birgit's ethos is to work in a way that is ethically, environmentally, personally and culturally sustainable.

For more information see www.bsustained.co.uk

Sue Cartwright specialises in helping business owners improve their performance and productivity through project planning, policy development and staff survey facilitation. With over 20 years experience and research into motivational best practice, people management and corporate leadership, Sue is able to help leaders and business owners engage their people to work towards mutually beneficial goals and outputs.

Sue recently achieved gold standard as a SFEDI Business Advisor and is currently working with SWEDA (Sandwell Women's Enterprise Development Agency) in West Bromwich to



support individuals across the West Midlands to set up and grow their own businesses. As part of her Unisey Consultancy, Sue is developing a full set of policy, procedure and template documentation for small organisations to help them streamline their activities, comply with legal requirements and achieve quality standard accreditation and award recognition.

Full career profile and current work activities at www.linkedin.com/in/suecartwright

Above L - R: Finalists: Jo Haydon of Complete Kidz, Sue Cartwright of Unisey and Dr Birgit Kehrer of BSustained

Complete Kidz is run by a qualified PE Teacher who works closely with School Sports Partnerships in Birmingham and Sandwell. Jo Haydon who was a PE teacher for 9 years holds many sports qualifications as a wealth of knowledge and experience of both the National Curriculum and the PESSYP strategy for sport.

The company aims to improve the health and well-being of children by offering increased opportunities for physical activities that are fun safe and meaningful, providing professional sports teaching before, during and after school in children's Fitness, Community Clubs and curriculum teaching as well as Birthday Parties.

Contact Jo on johaydon@completekidz.co.uk www.completekidz.co.uk

ARE YOU WORKING HARD *or working smart?*



Do you feel overwhelmed because you have so much to do? Do you get stressed because there's never enough time, and work commitments are taking over your personal and family time?

You're not alone – more and more women are choosing to set up their own businesses, and feeling the strain of conflicting demands. The good news is, there are better ways of dealing with the pressures than working all day, every day!

What's stopping you from working smart?

Scenario 1: I've got so much to do, there aren't enough hours in the day

Is your diary bursting at the seams, and your 'to do' list in the 100s? The key to resolving this problem is knowing where to focus. Studies show that 80% of results come from just 20% of our time and effort. Equally importantly, 80% of our problems come from just 20% of sources.

Ask yourself:

Which 20% of my actions are creating my desired outcomes? How can I build on these strengths?

Which 20% are creating the most problems? How can I reduce them?

Scenario 2: I've got too many distractions

It's so easy to get sidetracked by incoming phone calls, emails, Facebook and office clutter! We can spend hours at work, and still feel that we're not getting anywhere. If this sounds familiar, here's how to change the pattern:

Cut out time-wasting activities: Note how much time you're spending doing non-important and trivial tasks like answering emails and sales calls. Then set a maximum time limit for these activities – and stick to it. Instead of answering messages immediately, set aside two time slots a day to deal with them.

Uncover what you're avoiding – and do it! Getting distracted is often a sign that we're putting something off. If we exaggerate the importance of certain business-growth activities, such as making sales calls or writing proposals, fear of failure can lead to procrastination. Instead, break down large tasks into bite-sized chunks, and remember – there's no such thing as failure, it's all just feedback! There's something to learn from any outcome, and there are always more opportunities.

Scenario 3: I seem to spend all my time dealing with problems, demands and urgent deadlines

The best way to break out of the chaos of crisis management is to set goals and priorities. Yes, goal-setting means time away from day-to-day business demands, but it will save you time and stress in the long run.

If your goals have become stale or seem unachievable, or if you've never even considered goals before, it's time to create some new motivating and inspiring aims for yourself and your business. Make them smart – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed.

Every day, choose a goal or priority and commit to completing it, regardless of what crises may arise!

When you're proactive and motivated, in tune with your values, and working towards meaningful goals, you're well on the way to working smart. Work no longer feels like work!



Joanne Ross is a Life & Health Coach, Trainer, and co-founder of Get Coached. Her goal is to inspire people to transform themselves for the better. She coaches women across the Midlands to overcome stress, worry and self-doubt, achieve balance and gain greater life satisfaction.

To find out more about coaching and how it can help you, contact Joanne on **0845 226 0082** or visit **www.getcoached.co.uk**

PANEL OF *Experts*

What would be the best printer for me to buy – an inkjet or a laser printer?

Laser and inkjet printers allow you to easily print professional looking documents, such as flyers, spreadsheets and brochures, from home.

When selecting a printer, you'll want to weigh your budget against a number of factors.

Let's first run through the basics of what each one is and then look at the advantages and disadvantages of each one to help determine which is the best option for you.

Inkjet Printers

An Inkjet printer operates by propelling variably size droplets of ink onto a target medium, which in addition to standard paper, can include craft paper, T-shirt transfers, and even printable CD/DVD discs.

Inkjet printers typically use the four basic CMYK inks (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black) to produce high-quality images. Some combine the CMY into a single cartridge whilst others use individual colour cartridges.

Some inkjet printers use more than the four basic CMYK inks to produce high-quality photos, so if you own a digital camera and spend a lot of time printing photos, you may want to pay a little more than a plain old inkjet will cost or opt for a second printer specifically for that purpose. The print quality is comparable to that of professional photofinishing.

Inkjet printers are also available as "all in one" devices, which typically encompass a printer, scanner, copier and even fax.

Laser Printers

A laser printer is a type of printer that uses photocopier technology. When a document is sent to the printer, a laser beam "draws" the document on a coated drum using electrical charges. After the drum is charged, it is rolled in toner, a dry powder type of ink. The toner adheres to the charged image on the drum. The toner is transferred onto a piece of paper and fused to the paper with heat and pressure.

After the document is printed, the electrical charge is removed from the drum and the excess toner is collected.

In addition to the standard monochrome laser printer, which uses a single toner, colour laser printers are available that use four toners to print in full colour.



Laser Printers

Today's monochrome (black and white) laser printers start as low as £100. Advantages of the laser printer include the following:

Speed: A laser printer can turn out pages more quickly than an inkjet printer.

Low cost: Over time, toner costs for a laser printer will total far less per page than refilling/replacing inkjet printer cartridges.

Quiet operation: A laser printer is generally quieter than low cost inkjet printers.

Best-quality text: No inkjet printer, no matter how much you pay for it, will ever turn out black text and line graphics as crisp as a laser printer.

However, colour laser printers can be a little expensive for individuals and small businesses in comparison to a colour inkjet. A monochrome laser printer is best suited if most of the pages that you'll print will be text and if colour isn't a requirement. You'll be glad that you chose that laser model after you've gone three months without changing a single toner cartridge!

Inkjet Printers

Inkjet printers are typically cheaper than laser printers. You can find an acceptable colour inkjet printer for under £100 anywhere in the UK, and they're still regarded the colour printing solution for the home PC owner. Other advantages include the following:

Versatility: A colour inkjet can print on many types of media.

Smaller size: This saves you space on your desktop, although the footprint of laser printers has also changed a lot in recent years.

Flexibility: An "all in one" device provides you with a complete home office solution and includes a number of additional features such as the ability to print directly from compatible digital cameras by accepting storage cards such as CompactFlash, SmartMedia, Secure Digital/MultiMediaCard or Memory Sticks.

However, inkjet printers are relatively slower compared to laser printers and the ink cartridges can be costly. Inkjets are best suited for home users and small businesses with light printing needs.



Summary

For a home user or a small business, the most flexible and low cost solution is a colour inkjet printer. Whilst the cost of ownership seems high with the need for ongoing ink cartridge replacement, the key is to match a printer to your individual needs. If you print very little colour document then select a printer that utilises four or more cartridges as the overall cost is lowered.

An "all in one" inkjet device is a good option and you can purchase one under £100, which encompasses a printer, scanner, copier and fax thus making it an ideal addition to your home office.

In addition to this, from a maintenance perspective, with some inkjet printers, changing the ink cartridge essentially means that you have a new printer as the print head is encompassed in the cartridge, whilst other manufacturers provide a user replaceable print head. Laser printers can be more expensive to maintain and require specialist assistance due to the nature of components involved (a laser)

For a small business primarily involved in printing letters or invoices, a mono laser printer is ideal.

One thing this article hasn't mentioned is the dpi (dots per inch) and ppm (pages per minute) comparison. The higher the dpi value, the sharper the image and similarly the higher the ppm value, the quicker the printer.

However, you will find that there is very little to choose between the two as typical inkjets can offer 1200x1200 dpi and 20+ ppm mono, which is identical with entry level laser printers which offer up to 31 ppm mono, and 1200 x 1200 dpi.

Although a number of different printer options are available, the choice quite often depends on your individual printing needs. Quite often, inkjet and laser printers will often complement each other, but if you have a budget which only extends to a single printer, consider an all in one inkjet printing solution. The cost savings made in not having to purchase a separate scanner and fax could go towards a mono laser.

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