

# making it

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS  
REVEAL THEIR SECRETS OF SUCCESS**

LOUISE GIMSON AND ALLISON MITCHELL

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**Lou Gimson** is an experienced and accredited business trainer and coach, working with businesses of all types and sizes. She specialises in bringing pre-start entrepreneur's business dreams to reality and has a particular interest in women-owned businesses. She is an accomplished mentor and inspirational speaker.

Lou is a founder member of the charity foundation 'Dream Buddies', which helps individuals to reach their full potential and realise their dreams. As a fellow of the 'Winston Churchill Memorial Trust' Lou is researching female entrepreneurship in the USA.

**Allison Mitchell** is an inspirational coach, trainer and author. She has spent her entire career in Human Development and is now a pioneer in the field of 'Mum Coaching'. Allison is an NLP Master Practitioner and NLP Coach. She is the founder of Mumcoach and author of *Time Management for Manic Mums*. She believes that with the right attitude anything is possible. To find out more visit; [www.mumcoach.com](http://www.mumcoach.com)

[www.makingit.biz](http://www.makingit.biz)

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*This book is dedicated to all women who have ever had a dream to create their own business, in the hope that after reading Making It they are inspired to go for it! Also to my daughters Lauren, Beth and Martha, may you always find the inspiration to follow your dreams.*

*'I dream my painting and then paint my dream.'*—Vincent  
Van Gogh

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A huge thank you goes to all the wonderful women featured in the book for their time, friendship and enthusiasm.

An extra special thanks goes to Allison Mitchell who has given of her time, energy, fun, laughter and all-round amazing attitude to help this book come to fruition.

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Emma Harrison is well known as the charismatic and respected chairman, owner and founder of A4e Ltd. She has succeeded in turning a small regional training provider, founded in 1991, into an international, multi-award winning company. Her philosophy is to 'inspire, encourage and elevate'. Her policy of business diversification has taken the company into new markets that enable the realisation of her overall goal to improving people's lives.

[www.A4e.co.uk](http://www.A4e.co.uk)

## 1 Steph Cutler - Open Eyed

Open Eyed is a leading influence in the area of disability consultancy in the UK. Founder, Steph Cutler, is a popular writer and professional speaker. Her articles have been

published by the BBC, Disability Now! and [Handbag.com](http://Handbag.com). She has a commercial background and worked previously in designing, marketing, buying and sales for companies such as Ted Baker and suppliers to Marks and Spencer.



[www.openeyed.co.uk](http://www.openeyed.co.uk)

[www.making-lemonade.co.uk](http://www.making-lemonade.co.uk)

## **2 Josephine LaVey - LaVey Corsetry & Clothing**



Josephine designs and manufactures unique corsetry and clothing that caters for all sizes.

Josephine overcame dyslexia and turned around a misspent youth to gain a degree, an award from Prince Charles, and has become a successful businesswoman creating and selling her products around the world. After trading for less than a year, Josephine began to export her original designs. Her business continues to go from strength to strength.

[www.laveycorsets.co.uk](http://www.laveycorsets.co.uk)

### **3 Sarah Pharo - Pharo Communications**

Sarah created a Public Relations company servicing the needs of the agricultural sector, based in Stoneleigh, Warks. She began the company while her family was still young, and built her business to great success. However, she feels she forfeited her family life in the process. Not achieving balance is a regret that she has addressed by spending more time with her grown up daughters and their families. To achieve this she has empowered her staff to make decisions and work with autonomy. Her company has recently expanded into South Africa.



[www.pharoweb.co.uk](http://www.pharoweb.co.uk)

[www.pharoweb.co.za](http://www.pharoweb.co.za)

## **4 Dawn Gibbins MBE - Flowcrete**

Flowcrete began as a partnership between Dawn and her Dad, for a £1 each. Dawn's father devised flooring which could not be eroded by sugar in the garden shed whilst Dawn sold the product to companies such as Mars. Flowcrete is now the world's leading specialist flooring and decking business, backed by a global support network of eight factories and 26 sales offices worldwide. Dawn recently sold the company for millions of pounds.



As Veuve Clicquot Business Woman of the Year, and voted 'Most Influential Person in British Manufacturing', Dawn was the youngest industrialist to be invested with an MBE for Services to UK Industry. A keen Feng Shui practitioner, she has devised a 'barefoot philosophy' which brings a holistic approach to UK lifestyles. She is now known as 'The Barefoot Entrepreneur' and has begun two new businesses.

[www.flowcrete.com](http://www.flowcrete.com)

[www.barefoot-floors.com](http://www.barefoot-floors.com)

[www.barefoot-laundry.com](http://www.barefoot-laundry.com)



## **5 Perween Warsi, CBE - S & A Foods**

As the founder of one of the UK's most successful food companies, Perween was originally inspired by the need to get better quality Indian food in stores. The company (named after her sons Sadiq and Abid) now employs 900 staff and has a turnover of £65m. It supplies major retailers in the UK and has now expanded into Europe. Perween was awarded an MBE in 1997, followed by a CBE in 2002. She won Woman Entrepreneur of the World Award in 1996, and was given a seat on the Confederation of British Industry's National Committee in 2002. S & A has been the UK's fastest-growing independent food manufacturer for five consecutive years. The company was a finalist in the 1997 Sunday Times Business Awards.

[www.sa-foods.com](http://www.sa-foods.com)

## **6 Deirdre Bounds - i-to-i**

From stand up comic to founder of i-to-i. When Deirdre founded the ethical travel company [i-to-i.com](http://i-to-i.com) her aim was to challenge traditional ideas in the travel industry. Her company works in partnership with hundreds of locally run projects around the world. The company has grown into an international organization with offices in the UK, USA, Ireland and Australia, with a worldwide team of 130 passionate, dedicated travel- lovers. i-to-i is now responsible for sending around 5000 people a year to support 500 worthwhile projects in Five continents and also trains a further 15,000 people as TEFL teachers. She has recently sold her company for several million pounds and has created a new role as a motivational speaker.



[www.deirdrebounds.com](http://www.deirdrebounds.com)

[www.i-to-i.com](http://www.i-to-i.com)

## **7 Karen Wilbourn and Fiona Oxley - Lello**

Lello is a UK-based design agency, set up by two sisters based in Leicestershire who create and sell handmade cards in the UK and abroad. They are recent winners of the

coveted 'Henries' award. Success to them is the family approach: bringing their sons to work, where they have set up an onsite crèche facility. They also employ many part-time workers, mainly women on term time contracts, and students. They have fantastic loyalty within their workforce.

[www.lello ltd.co.uk](http://www.lello ltd.co.uk)



## **8 Lynne Franks - SEED Women's Enterprise Programme**



Best known as a major figure in PR who ran her own agency from the 1970s to the 1990s. Lynne founded London Fashion

Week and started the British Fashion Awards. The character of Edina in the TV series *Absolutely Fabulous* is rumoured to be based on elements of her character. Lynne sold her business when she realised that she didn't like the person she had become and dropped out of the working world to discover who she really was. She returned to business to concentrate on women's issues. In 2004 Lynne adapted her highly successful *The SEED Handbook* (Hay House) into an in-depth training programme to teach entrepreneurial women how to start and sustain a business. The SEED Enterprise Programme is a four-month programme and the first of its kind. SEED is currently being delivered throughout the UK.

[www.seednetwork.com](http://www.seednetwork.com)

In addition to our model entrepreneurs, as listed on the contributors page, we are grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their assistance in compiling and illustrating this book:

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# Foreword

Emma Harrison Chairman, owner and founder of A4e  
Ltd

As a person who began my own company from nothing and built it into a multi-million pound business, I could be considered to have 'made it'.

'Making it' for me is more about what I do and how I do it. My motivation comes from the people that A4E helps to be successful in whatever they choose. We'll do anything that will improve people's lives but more importantly we won't do anything that won't. Satisfaction for me is knowing that we are nurturing others to succeed. Quality is about good health, time spent with my family and friends and making a living doing what I love.

As I have become financially secure I am able to share what I have learnt and mentor others to create the business of their dreams. My passion is inspiring and helping others to find their way.

This book uniquely shows you how to turn your ideas into reality and shares with you the wealth of experience behind the stories.

So get reading and look forward to your own success, remember it's you that defines it, enjoy!

With my very best wishes

*Emma*

Emma Harrison is a well-known, charismatic and respected entrepreneur and the Chairman, owner and founder of A4e Ltd.

Emma has a unique approach to leadership, seeing her role as being to 'Inspire, encourage and elevate'. It is this business philosophy that has seen her turn a small regional training provider, founded in 1991, into an international, multi-award winning company. Furthermore Emma has built a company that follows her principle of 'doing well by doing good' and has implemented a policy of business diversification that has taken the company into new markets that enable it to realise its overall goal of improving people's lives.

Emma is 42 and lives at Thornbridge Hall in Derbyshire with her husband Jim and her young family.

# Introduction

Why is it that some women create fabulous businesses, are financially independent and generally live the life of their dreams, while others sit on the sofa watching television and thinking how life could have been *if only*?

- *If only* I had a brilliant idea
- *If only* I had the confidence
- *If only* I'd been to business school
- *If only* I had a degree
- *If only* I had more time
- *If only* I had more support
- *If only* I was more talented

Are you a woman who has aspirations to own a business? Let's make sure that doesn't remain just a dream. Read on to ensure you are equipped with exactly the right attitude to go for it! The famous women entrepreneurs of today all started somewhere. What you may not realize is that there are many women out there just like you, who do own a business and are living their dreams, successfully juggling their family and work lives and feeling fulfilled. You may not want to be famous or to own an empire - you may want to be responsible for your own destiny and to do something you love to create an income. Wherever you want to position yourself in business, we are here to help you by inspiring you to live your life as you choose and to have no regrets.

When I first began working for myself I thought I was prepared. I took it upon myself to learn all about the practical side of running a business, made sure I was