

LIMELIGHT

A NATIONAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE, FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BY YOUNG PEOPLE

FREE

ENTERPRISE SPECIAL!

A top entrepreneur offers tips on starting a business

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How to go from

ZERO TO HERO

with your own business!



Sylvia Marshall, one of Britain's most successful business women, believes entrepreneurial young people who can't find work should consider setting up their own businesses. Here she tells *Limelight* about her journey from £0 to a £1m and offers some tips on how to become a business success!

By Cynthia Mosengo and Roxana Hall

Like many young people, Sylvia Marshall was unclear about her career path after leaving school and so ended up working in a range of different jobs before finding her niche as a trainer, with an insurance company.

However, despite her hard work, Sylvia was unfortunately made redundant and thought "I'm going to try it on my own (set up a business), until I find a proper job?". But Sylvia never looked back, going on to transform her company, Able Training - which trained employees in the insurance industry - into an international success, with clients as far afield as Russia, Poland and the USA.

Sylvia envisaged growing a business just in London and doesn't believe going global should be an aspiration.

"If you start a business and it goes no further than your local area, so what? If it's earning you a living, that's great," she told the *Limelight* team. "The only things you should be concerned about is whether or not it is making a profit and

if you're enjoying it, because if you're not, you're not going to make a profit."

Ten years after launching Able Training - which she eventually sold - Sylvia decided to buy the premises of a former high street bank and transform it into prestigious offices.

The bank's transformation was watched by thousands as Sylvia broadcast her exploits, at a time when video streaming was in its infancy. This ambitious under-taking was not without its challenges, as Sylvia ended up losing a lot of money, because, "the builders didn't know what they were doing and I didn't know what I was doing". But then she began taking classes in bricklaying, plumbing and other core trade skills and this inspired the creation of another business, *Cosy Homes Online* in 2002.

Sylvia was broke when she launched Able Training, her first business in 1992, so she really did go from £0 to a £1m. Now of course she's smiling all the way to the bank!

"At www.cosyhomesonline.com, we cover some major building rescues and if you want some inspiration from live projects in action, our video updates are the place for you," said Sylvia.

"Equally, if you want to tackle some work yourself, our sister site at www.bubsydogdiy.com, shows you how."

The *Limelight* team were eager to find out from Sylvia, the secret of going from £0 to a £1m. "Work hard and honestly. There's no magic formula," she revealed.

"I was born in Thornton Heath and left school at 16. There is

nothing special about me, [but] I knew what I wanted to do and I went out there to get it."

Sylvia is not only a successful business woman, but a motivational speaker, a business advice columnist for the popular national tabloid, the Daily Mirror and an author.

*The entrepreneur's e-book entitled Zero to a Mi££ion, reached the number two slot on Amazon's best-selling book list for small businesses. The e-book is available to readers at a reduced price of £3.04 (rrp £5.95) at www.cosyhomesonline.com/limelight, where every purchase triggers a much needed contribution to continue the work with young people at *Limelight*. So, hurry up and grab a copy!*

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Sylvia with *Limelight*



Sylvia with the *Limelight* team

Are you a born entrepreneur?

If building a business were easy, then everyone would be doing it. There are some people though, who were born to do business - they have the entrepreneur gene. Are you one of them? If you can honestly answer yes to six or more of the following questions then you have the highly desirable e gene.

1. Are you willing to take risks?
2. Do you have one or more goals you want to achieve?
3. Are you optimistic?
4. Do you make the most of opportunities?
5. Are you motivated and willing to work long hours?
6. Do you believe in yourself?
7. Can you bounce back after setbacks?
8. Can you stand by your actions despite criticism?
9. Can you make decisions?
10. Do you have the potential to lead people?

Narrowly failed the test, but have a passion you're eager to turn into a business? Then don't rule out pursuing your passion. Passion can drive you to build a successful business, according to one expert on entrepreneurship. Now that you know where you stand, read Sylvia's top tips for business success.

Sylvia's tips for budding entrepreneurs

- If you've got an idea for a service or product, find out if people want what you would like to offer, by doing your research
- Write a business plan - if your product or service is in demand - it only needs to be a few pages long
- Take risks, because without risk taking you may be stuck in the same place
- Use social media, if you want to grow quickly. Urge everyone you know to ask five people to follow you
- Learn something from everyone you meet. Often someone who has never done what you're doing, can come up with a brilliant idea you can use
- Don't spend money you haven't got and only buy the things you need
- Make sure your business is making a profit and you're enjoying running it, because if you're not, you're not going to make a profit
- If you start a business and fail, you are still a success because the skills you'll have learnt, will make you more employable