

Sheila Casey



Business ideas often germinate in voluntary work that started in response to a personal situation

Combatting discrimination

What inspired your business idea?

I am a Coeliac. I run a branch of the Coeliac Association as a volunteer and know that all Coeliacs have the same problems. I can never eat in a restaurant; at functions I have to take my own food, it is the only way I can be sure it won't be contaminated.

What led you to the F50 programme?

I knew there was a real need for my business idea but I didn't know how to start.

What has been the impact of F50 on your journey towards self-employment?

F50 gave me the knowledge and hence the confidence to really

start believing that I could start this business and the F50 group's atmosphere encouraged me to have a go.

The course taught me the stages required to start a business. Taking things one step at a time and being able to ask questions without feeling silly was incredibly useful.

What tips can you pass on about starting up your business?

Seek expert advice. I investigated several ways to run my business but with the knowledge I gained from the course, I eliminated them until I reached an idea which was viable.

Remember that even negative comment can be helpful. A café owner said, 'there is no way that I am going to tie up a valuable asset for a few Coeliacs'. It was a good reality check.

Coeliac Ambassador

Sheila's passionate belief that 'Coeliacs'* had a right to eat out safely and enjoy a social life highlighted a gap in the market.



* those suffering from Coeliac disease – an acute auto-immune response to gluten in wheat & other cereals www.coeliac.co.uk

Research all your options as thoroughly as possible. Be prepared to discard ideas.

Where are you now in terms of planning your business career?

I had to rethink my business idea from the beginning and have now found an excellent solution which fulfils all my personal goals – to provide safe food for Coeliacs; set up a viable business; allow me a reasonable life work balance.

I already have a network of potential customers through the Coeliac Association.

What are your short and long term goals?

To encourage sales, I need to ensure that my products are easily available, taste good and are well priced.

I plan to franchise my idea as soon as I am able so that Coeliacs everywhere will be able to eat out safely.

I gave my notice in. It was very exciting, very scary, very challenging and very motivating. It was the only way to free myself mentally to concentrate on my business idea.

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