



Olga D'Silva

Case Study

The language of business

Fluent in Spanish, French and German and having taught English as a foreign language abroad, multi-lingual Olga D'Silva of Zen Languages decided to go it alone in 2007 after a varied and much travelled career.

Olga said: "Although I had a wealth of business experience and the language skills, Business Link was able to focus me on the areas I did not know so much about such as contracts, terms and conditions and VAT registration. It was this type of help which was invaluable and showed me what I needed to do."

Business Link Adviser Tony Logan said: "We encouraged Olga to use our Supplier Matching Service, a free database for suppliers of business-to-business services, as well as introducing her to Valerie Pondaven, Business Link's European adviser. Through introductions and Olga's extensive networking she has made many useful contacts.

"Zen Languages is a good example of where we can help with our business advice but also how we can be beneficial through introductions as well."

► Business Link continued...

Starting up

Extensive support and advice is available and particularly popular is an ongoing programme of free business start up workshops that are organised across Kent.

These 'Starting Your Own Business' events are held at convenient locations and times – including evenings and weekends – and are open to all. The half-day introductory 'Is it right for you?' workshop explores the pros and cons of self-employment and looks at entrepreneurial potential, explains all about a business plan and the need for financial planning and raises awareness of available support.

For those whose ideas are more developed, Business Link offers a modular course of three half-day workshops – including sessions exclusively for women and social enterprise – addressing the key areas of running a successful business: business planning and legal considerations, sales and marketing, finance and accounts, with a mix of tutor-led sessions and practical activities. On completion participants have an individual action plan detailing further steps to take before launching the business.



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