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Connecting Mothers. Creating Entrepreneurs

ANDREA OPOKU Accidental Franchisee

*10 Questions
for Cath Kidston*

*Would you
Buy an Existing
Business? Why Not?*

*The Business
of Intuition*

*The Power of Words
Poetry Business*

Whose Definition of Success are you Living by?

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My
journey
into
franchising

I didn't go into franchising deliberately. I actually came across this particular franchise while I was looking for ways to expand my network and grow my existing business.

It was July 2010 and I was trying to get my business (www.GreenBeanMarketing.co.uk) back on track after having my second son in February. I was on the Motivating Mum mailing list and one of Alli Price's e-newsletters (Alli Price is the founder of Motivating Mum) said she was leaving the country to go to her native Australia and was looking for a franchisee to run the UK business.

It was one of those things that just caught my eye and I thought would be a great to do. Before I could talk myself out of it I was emailing Alli for the proposal. I loved the Motivating Mum concept – supporting Mums in business, and the fact that it was so flexible, you could bring your baby along to the events too.

The first proposal I was sent was for the whole business, so as the UK Master Franchisee which meant running the website, looking after the local franchisees and also running the events in the Wimbledon area. On reading the proposal I realized how big a deal this was. I was actually considering buying a business! At the time I felt that it was too big a job for me to take on, my youngest was only a few months old, I had a two year old as well plus I really wanted to grow GreenBean Marketing. So I turned down the offer to take on the business.

I'm a firm believer that things happen for a reason and people come into your life for a reason. So my deciding not to take on the business was not the end of it. A couple weeks later Alli emailed me to see if I would consider running just the events in the Wimbledon and Wandsworth area. It was then that I thought this was meant to be. So I said

yes and was sent through the proposal which was very comprehensive. Even though I live in Beckenham I was still keen to take on the franchise – it was already an established local network who were familiar with Motivating Mum and the events, so for me it would be much easier than if I were to start from scratch in a new area.

What happened over the next few weeks was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing sorting out contracts, reading through manuals, training, and finally me attending a few of the events to see how it was done. It was in attending the events that I started getting very excited about what I was taking on.



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Alli finally left for Australia at the beginning of September 2010 and I was left to run the business. I organised my first event for October, a social media workshop run by me, aarrhh! I had nothing to worry about, it was really well received – I had quite a number turn up and had some great feedback afterward.

From then on I ran events pretty much once a month. They ranged from Networking Lunches



Alli founder of Motivating Mum and Andrea with their little ones

where I get a successful female entrepreneur to come and talk to the group of mums. In July I had the wonderful Emma Jones of Enterprise Nation and Start Up Britain along to speak. The other types of events are workshops on subject areas like Branding, SEO, Blogging and Social Media for business; and Brainstorm in a Teacup which brings together up to 6 women to help each other resolve a business challenge.

One year on, on the 20th September, I'm launching Motivating Mum Beckenham & Bromley which I will be running alongside the Wimbledon & Wandsworth events.

A bit about Motivating Mum the Franchise

Motivating Mum is an organisation that supports and advises Mums in business and those that want to set up. This is done through a number of resources on the website as well as local networking events and workshops. Events are currently being run in Wimbledon & Wandsworth; Clapham, Battersea & Balham, Blackheath, Crystal Palace, Kingston & Chiswick; and starting September 2011 Virginia Water and Beckenham & Bromley.

Motivating Mum is also in Australia with local events for mums in business there.

Why franchising?

Well my main business (GreenBean Marketing) is helping small businesses market themselves and grow, and apart from just loving the Motivating Mum concept, I thought it would be a great way to expand my network and get to know other small businesses. And that did happen – I now know so many fantastic business women who do amazing things through their businesses – its really opened my eyes firstly to how great the small business community is and has reaffirmed to me how amazing women are with the various hats we wear and how we manage to keep so many balls in the air!

Why did I choose Motivating Mum franchise?

I didn't go out looking for a franchise and didn't do any research really before I came across the Motivating Mum opportunity. But even with the benefit of hindsight I really think I'm involved with the perfect franchise for myself. Having been around for a little while now I've got to know many of the different franchises available, and I'm so glad this one came across my path.

Some advice mums looking to get into franchising.

I would say definitely do the research, talk to other franchisees and choose wisely. Even though this was the best franchise for me and my circumstances I still spent a considerable amount of time in the first 6 months or so getting to grips with everything and organizing the events. In that time I spent a lot less time on my own business, GreenBean Marketing. So if you are running another business alongside your franchise, be prepared to possibly put that on hold for a little while, particularly if you have young children. You can only do so much in a day!

How it fits around my family life.

The Motivating Mum franchise perfectly complements my business and my family, I can fit the events I run around my childcare arrangements and other business commitments and can run them pretty much as often as I like. In addition if I need to I can bring my youngest to the events, and most often than not, will find at least one other mum in attendance with her child.

