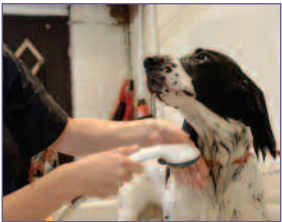


“Research your market and get a business plan in place. If the numbers add up, go for it, if they don't, re-think your plans, but don't disregard them!”

Valerie Corfield, Dorking Dogs



“For many years I wanted the challenge of running my own business but never ventured out of the safe corporate world. Then, I attended a pet owners' grooming course and loved it so much that I went on a Professional Groomer's course. I then heard about the 'She's the Boss' course run by Business Link Surrey. It's a course for women who seriously want to start their own business - and after the five weeks you are in a position to make a real go of it! It was fantastic because it gave me tools that were invaluable to promote my business. It included elements like doing a business plan and financial forecasts – and after doing these it proved on paper that my venture could work.

I began two years ago and am 'established but still growing'. The business has an optimum size - I want to maintain quality, so limit the numbers of dogs groomed each day. I like being independent and self-sufficient - and the flexible hours give me more time to spend with my husband.

Obstacles included the lack of an income during the first year and establishing a name for myself. My biggest challenge was promoting my business but I'm friendly and helpful, so that is what I try to sell – always answer the phone with a smile! Running a new business is hard work. Some days are better than others but I enjoy what I do. I'm a more confident person. Strangers see me as an expert on their dog's coat – on nutrition, exercise, aggression – even castration! I always knew it would all come good - and it has!”

For further information on setting up a business, contact Business Link on 0845 600 9006 / [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) or find your local Enterprise Gateway at [www.enterprisegatewaymagazine.co.uk](http://www.enterprisegatewaymagazine.co.uk)



#### ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS SUCCESS:

**STRENGTH** > knowing you can endure, having stamina, achieving and maintaining balance

Valerie Corfield, Dorking Dogs, Surrey  
[www.dorkingdogs.co.uk](http://www.dorkingdogs.co.uk)

Valerie Corfield has been working as a dog groomer since December 2004 but before that, she worked full-time for a large insurance company. During 2003 she trained to groom Springer Spaniels, simply to look after her own dog. Now she runs Dorking Dogs, a dog grooming business that combines high standards with friendly service.

# STRENGTH