

# A memo

from **Joanne Manville**

**AFTER 10 YEARS AS A SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVE PA, IN DECEMBER 2014 I DECIDED THAT I MIGHT LIKE TO RUN MY OWN VIRTUAL ASSISTANT (VA) BUSINESS. I HAD WORKED AT A SENIOR LEVEL FOR ALL OF MY EA/PA CAREER AND IT SEEMED A NATURAL PROGRESSION.**

I knew that leaving a job I did well with lovely colleagues and a good company was a big step. It meant becoming self-employed, with no guaranteed income, no surety of success and working on my own. I did a lot of research on becoming a VA but was offered another job as an EA in February 2015.

Perhaps I just needed a change of direction? I took the role but after six months, feeling that it wasn't right, I resigned, again.

Two months later 'Joanne Manville Virtual Assistance' was born. In between roles I had been living on my savings and without knowing that I had this security, it would have been much harder to take the plunge. I also had a supportive husband who kept me sane in my moments of self-doubt.

Running your own business is a different ball game; you are the only player and have to keep the ball in the air or join the 50 per cent

of businesses that fail in the first year. I've networked Exeter to death, telling people about my new venture and how I can help them. I've read more articles and blogs and watched more webinars in the last few months than I had in my entire life! I've met some amazing people who have inspired me to keep going when I have a low day but every day I know that how much work I put in has a direct effect on how successful I will be.

I have a lunch break (you know how rare that is) and meet clients for coffee. I decide who I work with, what I do, when I start and when I finish. I've had enquiries from photographers, arborists, training centres, mums' clubs, coaches, therapists, mortgage advisors and printers. Yes, I'm still living off my savings while I build a client base but there have been a lot of thrilling milestones already – my first enquiry, my first job and being paid my first invoice – there are many more 'firsts' to come.

Is there something in the back of your mind that you'd like to do? Make 2016 your year – step out of your comfort zone and try something new. I did and I've never looked back.