



Case study: Boveda Hair & Beauty

DONNA McArthur's 30 years as an entrepreneur slip from her mind each time she opens up the doors of her latest enterprise, Boveda Hair and Beauty, in the north of Glasgow.

The former John Paul Academy pupil bought the former Royal Bank of Scotland building at 1944 Maryhill Road for the venture, where she employs six stylists and make-up artists, some modern apprentices which she has taken on since they left school – and all from the local community.

"It is funny when I open the doors of this place. My first thought isn't: 'This is my business', it is the memory of coming here with my granny with my blue plastic piggy bank filled with half pennies when I was a kid.

"I never thought I'd end up buying the building to create a new salon."

Supported by Royal Bank of Scotland's business banking team, the development opened in September 2017 and is the latest chapter in Donna's career as a hairdresser, mentor, stylist and property developer. The consistent part in her story has been staying hungry for new challenges – and keeping community and family at the heart of what she does.

"When I first started out in hairdressing 30 years ago I was happy just to be working but after a few years I began asking myself: 'Where do I want to be?', 'What do I want to next?'. I was fortunate that I had a landlady who became a mentor to me and encouraged me to take steps and look for opportunities," she says.

Keeping an eye on opportunities saw her send some of her first hairdressing salon staff in the 2000s – not to new hairdressing classes but to MAC make-up lessons to allow her to offer clients full treatment sessions.

And it was the same attitude that saw her investing in residential properties at her

salon sites too to create a good mixed portfolio.

"I've always tried to think about other

services for clients and gaps in the market – it is about spotting opportunities and finding the right support."

Support is important to Donna, especially family support and business support. Her daughter works as a business development manager for the company.

She has recently applied and been accepted to join the Royal Bank's Entrepreneur Accelerator programme to help create a staff development programme to allow her



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apprentices to reach their own goals. "It isn't a cliché. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than seeing my staff move on to greater things," says Donna.

"It is also why I like opening businesses in my own area – if businesses stay here then it is good for the community, it keeps money here and improves morale."

That commitment is shown with her support of Eastpark School, where she is leading a fundraising drive in October. She has supported the school since an being apprentice herself, when she used to cut pupils' hair voluntarily once a month.

Her local business acumen hasn't gone unnoticed either. She's shortlisted for Entrepreneur of the Year at the Evening Times' Glasgow Business Awards later this year too.

"It is nice to be shortlisted. It makes the days of hard work worthwhile. But if you want to set up in business on your own, whether you are male or female, you need to have that inner strength. No matter how hard the day, you need to get up and do it all again the next.

"That's why you need to find the right mentor and get the right people behind you. They will make all the difference."

of both male and female entrepreneurs can be realised. "We offer up to 18 months of fully-funded office space and a collaborative community," he says.

"They have coaching with one-to-one acceleration managers who challenge them to take their business to the next level – and the price to stay in the hub is proven progress," he says.

I resigned from my role in August 2015, when I had my first prototype. I had no clue about the industry I was entering, the programme helped me understand what I didn't know I didn't know. This was achieved by talking with fellow businesses in the programme, with mentors and a great support was my enabler. I was challenged and made accountable, this really helped. There was also great access to women mentors, which was great as they totally understood my product! As a result of the pitch practise I was able to secure investment and pitch my business to buyers.

What is the one thing you would say to encourage other women to apply?

There are great networks of women entrepreneurs where they all support each other in business. Some women want to work for themselves and are happy to just provide a wage for themselves, which is great as we have an economy built on this type of business. However if you want to scale or franchise a business then this programme is ideal as you will have access to individuals and organisations who do this day in and out.

