

Case Study: Monika Steinke & grafikamia

Monika Steinke set up her graphic design company in 2012, after finishing her BA degree in Graphic Media at the Colchester Institute. Now in its second year, *grafikamia* offers a wide range of design services - from commercial booklets, brochures and greeting cards, to personalised logo and website designs. Some of her designs can be found in various gift & lifestyle stores in Essex, Suffolk and London.

Working part-time from home, Monika's business is typical of the many micro creative enterprises across the Eastern region. Homeworking brings several advantages, not least the environmental benefits of less commuting; but it can also prove challenging, especially when it comes to accessing knowledge, networks and markets.



"I had a lot of pitfalls at the beginning. When I secured my first orders and clients, I wasn't aware of standard contract forms, payments schedules, or other contractual details. I also realised that I really needed to improve my negotiation and marketing skills to retain my clients and attract new ones."

In July 2014, Monika received an invitation from Culture Change to participate in the programme. Monika has attended several workshops – in Cambridge and other locations. They have re-connected Monika to a network of support and guidance and invigorated her approach to business overall:

"All of the workshops have been extremely helpful. I have significantly improved my social media skills and made so many new connections and potential clients. The workshops and speakers have also been great inspirations for the development of my business: from new products to funding opportunities, I have so many new ideas in mind!"

Culture Change also had a pronounced impact on Monika's approach to environmental sustainability. While Monika already had some understanding of environmental issues and good practice, her discussions with Julie's Bicycle had a genuinely transformational effect and have transformed the way she understands and positions her business.



Notebooks designed by grafikamia

"I learned how to market Grafikamia distinctively, focusing on the environmental roots of the business. Julie's Bicycle gave me a lot of confidence and practical ideas. This has helped my business to position itself, reach new markets and also communicate awareness to my clients."

Monika improved the insulation of her workspace; she switched to green printers and boilers, and also adopted a 'green sensibility' in her designs.



Case study: Kris & The Frogs' Chorus

Kris or 'Coco' for children - offers entertainment, education and therapy for children across Eastern England. With a degree from Roehampton University and an ongoing position as a 'Giggle Doctor', Kris founded her music group for children in 2008 and started working with local nurseries and schools. In 2011, she also took over The Frogs' Chorus. Now, all of her work operates under her business umbrella "Wonderfuel Productions". She is also a singer/songwriter and performs as Cicero Buck.

For Kris, Culture Change has helped her to share ideas and concerns with other businesses; to meet new interesting people and potential clients; to gain confidence; and to 'think bigger'. For instance, Kris plans on hiring an intern next year:

"There was this fantastic Culture Change workshop on how to get an intern and train him/her. They explained where I could advertise the job or look for universities to find a student. That was really helpful and now I hope to bring in someone in the coming months, to train him/her and to share my knowledge with him/her."



www.cicerobuck.com
www.frogschorus.com
www.wonderfuelproductions.com

Kris also made great connections, and is pretty confident that she will use them in the future:

"It's great to go to these events and hear the experiences and stories from other businesses. You realise that you are not alone, and that you could

exchange very valuable tips and information with other businesses. At the same time, they could also be potential clients and collaborators."

Kris has also started to develop her next business idea: producing a TV music series for children. She tells us that the lectures and case studies at Culture Change gave her the push and confidence to go for it.

Culture Change has helped Kris to plan and visualise the next stage of her business. However, she tells us that there is a need in the East of England to formalise and develop these types of programmes and events:

"Many people agreed that these Culture Change sessions are a great way of networking and finding possible collaborations, and even new staff. However, we know how very often the business-cards get forgotten- and nothing arises from it. Me and so many businesses in the East of England would definitely appreciate a formal business-opportunity and peer-learning platform for eventually hiring people and exchange ideas, questions and actual solutions. To secure work and collaboration."

Bee Springwood & the Eastern Tree Training and Therapy

Bee Springwood's "Eastern Tree Training and Therapy" has evolved from an independent practice into Norwich's local hub for art therapists - providing studio space and meeting rooms for a wide range of clients and specialists. Now, Bee has moved on to being an artist, where she has the opportunity to include more of the insights of Culture Change and Permaculture to her artistic practice.

With a strong emphasis on sustainability, Bee's practice "The Eastern Tree Training and Therapy" has gained real momentum across Norwich. Bee saw this as the perfect opportunity to sell the business to friends and follow her aspiration to become a full-time artist. With the freedom of being a bit more political on environmental issues, Bee started to focus more on her Permaculture training, trying to raise awareness and engaging other practitioners in the region.

When she first received an invitation by Culture Change to attend the conference at Covent Garden, she was not very convinced about the potential benefits, as she thought she had a quite established business profile and was in no real need to get either additional business support or training on environmental sustainability.

"Then, I received an outstanding response from Julie's Bicycle, giving me an individual 'free coaching session' about how to improve my LinkedIn profile. This did definitely exceed my expectations and the support was really useful."

It's hard for Bee to define one specific thing that she learned at Culture Change. It was more the overall range and mission of the programme that inspired and encouraged her.

"It's very reassuring to sense the major mission of Culture Change and to realise that environmental sustainability is not a no-go for creative businesses. It gives legitimacy on the subject and also inspired me personally to continue with Permaculture and develop new ideas in my artistic practice. Now that I am shifting into a new role as an artist, I feel I can get a bit more political on environmental issues and defend the greater mission."

Bee hopes to attend a few more events of Culture Change, and hopefully meet more businesses and opportunities from across Norwich and the region which share or complement her approach.



Bee Springwood
(i) Panel of reversible tree. (Part of group installation by Pomegranate artists).
(ii) Gathering the threads...a story of my mother, me, and sewing. (Installation for performance piece)