



THE SECRET DIARY OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

An entrepreneur is someone who works 16 hours a day, so they don't have to spend 8 hours a day working for someone else – why!!

Actually, I started for several reasons. First, I needed a creative outlet. In the early 80's I spent several years working for someone else and making them rich, whilst I got nothing. As part of a small staff, I was involved in everything. My MD was a wonderful colleague and teacher, who generously let me run with my own ideas.

In 1989, I launched my own business (don't do it!)

Second, I wanted to be in charge of my own future. Perhaps this is a good time to mention that my life took a slight detour. Between leaving corporate world and launching my own company, I spent some time working as a masseur – yes really!

I've been fortunate enough to hold several positions that were challenging, fulfilling and fun. I've worked in stimulating environments and met colleagues who remain friends to this day. Like most people, I've also held the other kind. The jobs that drain your soul and leave you disgruntled at the end of the day. So my own company was the only way to go.

The big bonus, I would be my own boss. Having my own business would allow me to work my own hours. In the summer I could leave early on Fridays. Maybe even squeeze in a few extra long weekends. Yeah, right. Little did I know, that when you start your own business, the business becomes an integral part of your life.

Now, I can work from my home office. Which means I get up a little later (I wish) and get to work a little earlier. I'm generally sitting at my computer, wading through the emails at 7 or even 6am.

Those who write to my personal address will probably grow old waiting for a reply.

There is never enough time in the day. Working out of a home office definitely has its perks, no one knows if I'm wearing pajamas and have a puppy sleeping by my feet while I work,

though I do go to my other company which has an open plan office, several times a week and of course, I meet people from all over the country.

Like most entrepreneurs, I work lots of nights and weekends. I often discuss business ideas with my husband over dinner and while watching TV.- I used to even work with him but that was a disaster

In many ways I feel like I have become my company. Or maybe in truth it has become me. Either way, jo-haigh.com and the ATF Group has become an integral part of my life.

But, you know what? I love it. At least most of the time. Everyday I have the opportunity to work at something I believe in. I have managed to create something where there was nothing. I get the chance to help people change their lives. And, I'm even my own boss.

Yes, these days, I work long hours but I believe the possibilities are worth the price. Sometimes the man I married agrees with me.

A Day in the life of an Entrepreneur

4.45: Mind numbing alarm clock. Fall out of bed into the bath – bliss for 10 minutes

5.30: Quick cuddle with my little Yorkshire Terrier and mini Daxi, feed them and force them out into the cold for a wee!

5.35: Throw briefcase into the car and drive to the station to catch 6.20 train to Kings Cross

6.15: Abandon car in car park and catch train by slim margin – luckily I have a season ticket so no queuing to pay

6.20: Sink into my seat to catch my breath and drain a cup of tea kindly brought by the train staff. Pull out all my work from my briefcase to have 2 solid hours of catch up on emails and oh goodness everything else

9.00: Arrive at London office and rush to a Business Development meeting. Times are tough so we are all working hard to ensure every opportunity is maximised. I have my Iphone with me and can't help noticing the dozen or more emails coming through.

10.00: Monthly catch up with my managing partner

11.00: Various calls with clients re progress management on transactions.

Switching from one client to another takes concentration as its very important each client feels totally special.

13.00: Two hour working lunch with my mentee who is trying to set up a sustainable hotel in the Caribbean. Very exciting but I am aware that this is a huge project and is in danger of becoming all consuming.

- 15.00:** Presentation by a specialist venture capitalist to me and my team along with some fellow partners - take a quick sneak at my overflowing inbox on my iPhone, shouldn't have looked – but actually a very good meeting on specialist finance which is hard to identify.
- 16.00:** Spend a mad half hour dictating a load of replies to emails – I can talk quicker than I can type!
- 16.30:** Jump in a cab to meet a lawyer who wants to build a referral relationship. She takes me to a lovely tea at a private members club where I wish I could relax for a few hours!!
- 18.00:** Run for yet another cab and fly to Kings Cross to get 18.33 train back home.
- 18.33:** Catch it – phew! Quiet two hours. Sort rest of emails and listen to my iPod.
- 21.00:** Arrive home. Throw briefcase on the floor and husband welcomes me with a large G&T – bliss.
- 21.30:** Throw down some chilli thoughtfully made by my housekeeper and watch some mindless TV for an hour.
- 22.30:** Bed – ahhhh!! I love it. Coco my Yorkie thoughtfully kisses me on the nose and Angel my Daxi licks my toes, followed by a peck on cheek from my husband and then sleep - aahhh.