

Growing places

Working mum Jo Bennett invested in a Dublcheck franchise in 2009. Today she runs a business that turns over £13,000 a month and employs 32 part-time staff

Jo Bennett is one driven woman. Talking to her about her success as a Dublcheck franchisee is done between appointments with an existing client and a possible new client she is pitching to, after which she is going back to her Edinburgh home to deal with "a bit of admin" before her daughters - aged 11 and nine - get in from school, when she will be able to spend some quality time with her family.

And this is one of the reasons she moved from her previous job in the financial services sector - a difficult event in Jo's life a few years ago made her realise she had to get her priorities right and that spending more time with her family had to be number one.



Complications

Jo takes up the story: "I was 35 when I had my second child and there were complications after the birth, when I was really quite poorly - in fact, I could have died.

"It made me re-evaluate my priorities in life. I took a long hard look at what I was doing and where I wanted to be in the future and realised that for me to be more fulfilled the future was being self-employed and managing a team of people in a role that would allow me more flexibility as a working mother."

Jo was already familiar with the concept of franchising, having done her research and spoken to two friends who had found success with franchising. But it was at a government funded Business Gateway seminar in Edinburgh, where she learned more about what franchising entailed, that her mind was made up - it was just a case of finding the right franchise for her.

"There were a few options open to me and I was certainly aware of Dublcheck, but I didn't make my mind up to buy a franchise with the company until I met the team," Jo explains. "Then it all made sense. At a franchise exhibition in 2009 I talked to the people behind Dublcheck and decided this was where I wanted to be.



Jo Bennett: "I'd love to double my monthly turnover"

"I want to be as big and successful as some of the other Dublcheck franchisees"

"Here were people who were proud of their business, many of whom had been working for the company for a long time, which clearly indicated this was no fly-by-night operation. Plus, the Dublcheck business model really appealed to me."

With Dublcheck, new franchisees can choose a guaranteed initial turnover, which means they benefit from the security of a guaranteed gross profit. Initial investment varies from £9,950 to £190,000 and after an initial training course franchisees receive ongoing training and support, plus access to branded uniforms, products, sales and marketing tools and stationery.

Skills

Having spent years in operations and change management in the financial sector, Jo knew she possessed the skills that would enable her to move forward with running her own business.

Jo says: "I knew I was a good organiser and had the sort of skill set that would enable me to build my own business, as long as I had a little help in the one area in which I had least confidence - sales.

"Dublcheck said their head office team would be able to help me in this respect and that I would have a guaranteed turnover, so

THREE ACTUAL AUDITED DUBLCHECK FRANCHISE ACCOUNTS

Case A (this business is managed with 95 per cent of the cleaning done by employed cleaners)

	Turnover	Net Profit	% Profit
Year 1	£63,000	£17,000	27%
Year 2	£104,000	£33,000	31%
Year 3	£128,000	£54,000	42%

Case B (this business is 50 per cent managed and 50 per cent hands-on cleaning)

	Turnover	Net Profit	% Profit
Year 1	£25,000	£6,000	24%
Year 2	£38,000	£20,000	52%
Year 3	£45,000	£25,000	55%

Case C (this business is 100 per cent hands-on at the start, moving to 95 per cent in year three)

	Turnover	Net Profit	% Profit
Year 1	£17,000	£8,600	50%
Year 2	£18,200	£9,500	52%
Year 3	£25,000	£10,300	41%

in 2009 I invested in a Dublcheck franchise. I started with a turnover of £2,400 a month and was able to recruit staff very quickly."

Jo now manages 32 part-time staff and has a monthly turnover of £13,000.

"A lot of the growth I've had has been down to customer referrals and the feedback I've had has been very positive," she says proudly.

Jo says she benefited hugely from Dublcheck's mentoring system, which helped her grow her franchise in its early years.

"With the Mentor Support Programme, franchisees can contact any other existing franchisees with questions about how their businesses work," Dublcheck founder Carol Stewart-Gill says.

"People starting out or moving up in the business can be allocated an experienced and successful franchisee to act as a guide in their progression. Jo subsequently became a mentor herself and is gearing up to hear soon from a couple of new franchisees who recently joined the network."

Jo is also full of praise for an initiative started by Dublcheck around 18 months ago called Kickstart.

"Once you've settled into the role, there are lots of things you can do to continue to grow your business and this is what I learned on the Kickstart course I did last December," she says. "Dublcheck gives you lots of pointers and ideas for progression - it was so helpful."

What's next for Jo? "I'd love to double my monthly turnover," she says. "The only question is how quickly I can do that - what slows me down is that I can't do everything, although I try. So my next step is to create a structure that allows me to delegate a bit more and take on more of a 'helicopter' role. The business model works, that is clear, so it's all down to me.

"Personally, I want to be as big and successful as some of the other Dublcheck franchisees - and I can't see any reason why I shouldn't achieve this."

Confidence

Jo's confidence is backed up by the fact that, since becoming a franchisee, her commitment and ambition has shone

through. And Jo readily admits her optimistic outlook counts for a lot.

"I want my business to look and feel successful and what's to stop me?" she asks.

One gets the feeling there won't be many things that could stop this woman from achieving her goals. **WF**

THE BENEFITS OF DUBLCHECK

- 22 years' experience.
- Low cost entry.
- Invoicing and cash collection.
- Recession proof utility business.
- Low overhead requirement - can operate from home.
- Dublcheck is a UK company that's wholly owned by its founder and chairman.
- Dublcheck has been awarded the 20th fastest growing private company in the UK by Virgin Fast Track and The Sunday Times.
- Professional white collar management franchise or operational franchise.
- Everywhere you look buildings need cleaning.
- Over 100 franchisees in the UK.
- 90 per cent customer retention rate.
- A massive market that keeps on growing.

HUGE REWARDS CAN BE REALISED

Founded in 1993, Dublcheck is the UK's leading franchised commercial cleaning company and has been recognised as the 20th fastest growing private company by Virgin Fast Track and The Sunday Times.

With over 100 franchisees in operation, Dublcheck remains a wholly owned British company. Founder and chairman Carol Stewart-Gill says: "If you put in the effort and follow the Dublcheck system, huge rewards can be realised. Franchisees can look forward to a safe and secure future and a great opportunity to create a large business and a valuable asset."

Dublcheck is a franchise where you don't need to do any selling, unless you want to. All the business is obtained on behalf of franchisees, so they know exactly what their turnover will be. You can start with a minimum turnover of £9,950 per annum if you want to run a hands-on business, starting small while retaining the security of your current employment, or you can purchase a franchise worth £500,000

per annum by operating a management business. And opportunities are endless, as there is no upper limit.

The variable investment levels offered by Dublcheck allow franchisees the flexibility to operate a hands-on venture, a partly managed enterprise or a completely managed business. These tiers enable franchisees to operate a successful business according to their personal skills, ambitions and lifestyle requirements.

Whatever your background, investing in a Dublcheck commercial cleaning franchise can make you a success. Having been in the business of setting people up in the commercial cleaning sector for 22 years, Dublcheck knows how to deliver. When you invest in a franchise, the company's committed head office team will not only walk you through a comprehensive training course, but will also go that extra mile by obtaining cleaning contracts on your behalf.

