

## A longstanding career and a recent business success

### Janie Mackintosh MFIC gives an insight

**Q Congratulations on being a finalist in the *Association of Scottish Business Women's Most Enterprising Business Award (MEB)*. How did this come about?**

**A** I was doing a presentation at a business women's event and a fellow member suggested that I should enter. At the time the application and criteria seemed to be way out of my league and so I shelved the idea. Then some months later, I saw the advertisements for the Awards again and I thought "what a good opportunity for my business". So I took the bull by the horns and went for it and entered the Aberdeenshire MEB regional award.

Applicants were judged on the following criteria:

- Originality of business idea
- Marketing strategy/business development mechanisms
- Use of IT to promote /develop business
- Leadership/communication skills displayed
- Organisational and planning ability
- % growth in turnover since start up
- % growth in number of employees since start up.

To my amazement I was the finalist in the regional round. As the regional finalist I then went forward to the Scottish round. Then came the really difficult stuff! I had to submit a full business plan complete with marketing plan, financial forecast and referees' testimonies. A lot of hard work, but with hindsight, very focusing and well worth the effort.

I was one of seven short-listed candidates who were invited to Edinburgh to attend an interview and then an awards ceremony and dinner, in a very prestigious hotel in Inverness. None of the candidates knew who the winner was until the actual announcement was made. Even though I wasn't the ultimate winner, it was an achievement and a great experience. I met some really entrepreneurial people and I had lots of fun. Also my husband was able to enjoy the complimentary dinner and night's stay in the hotel with me.

**Q How do you think Image Consultancy has changed over the years that you have been practising?**

**A** For a start I think there are many more of us offering a wide range of services. I believe that the media and press have done quite a lot to raise the profile of Image Consultants, some of it good and some of it not so good.

Secondly, within the market place businesses are all vying for higher visibility in a very competitive business environment. Now, as never before, they are open to suggestions about how they can maximize their corporate brand through their employees.

Thirdly, we Image Consultants must be able to heighten our credibility by ensuring that we have attained accreditation and have the strength of the TFIC behind us. In almost all of the business I do now I get asked the question, "What are your credentials and how can we be sure of the quality of your delivery"?

**Q What is your definition of successful style?**

**A** Style is so individual, it's what sets us apart from everyone else – The way in which we put together the correct balance of colour, line, fit, fabric and proportion to announce our personality. My personal style is often dramatic, but I firmly believe that in business we should always dress for: the work that we do; the expectations of our clients; and the environment that we are operating in.

**Q Do you have a motto?**

**A** My motto and constant mantra is *investment in yourself will be returned through your success*. It's a constant reminder that I must keep myself *current* and pursue continuing professional development.