

Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises) – MUPYME Project

Case Study

Outline for the Case Study Performance

The plot of this outline is showed hereafter, and aims to create a story about the enterprising experience of the invited person, so in this sense the outline can be used as a guidance, since the dynamics between the invited woman and the participants goes beyond the guidelines herein explained. Because of that it is made a reduced sentence from the questions that are considered necessities to analyse and develop; they're substantial and common elements in each of the cases.

THE CASE – Marlene Cristina

1. Identification

Marlene has 37 years old, divorced and at the moment she lives in Porto city (but she born in Barcelos) and her office is located in the center of Barcelos.

As businesswoman she works as a hairdresser in her establishment, at the moment she has 5 more persons that works with her and the customers are varied: children, men and women (80% of its clients are women).

Marlene decides to open their own business at 8 years ago, the services provided are: hairdressers, beauticians, sale of products and image consulting.

2. The beginning

It's her first own business, and she make the decision of starting this new business experience at 8 years ago. The determining factor to create their own business is was *“want to learn more and develop more”*. She always worked in this area, before she open their own business she work 14 years for others persons, she gained experience and learned a lot as a hairdresser, but it was not enough... so after 14 years she decide open the hairdresser – Marlene Cristina Unipessoal LDA.

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The main difficulty it was the management of a company, but she sought to fill this gap through formal training, and she hired an accounting office to support her in the financial management. The most important decision it was to believe in the business and don't be afraid to fail.

3. The consolidation

The determining factors for the consolidation of the project were: *update knowledge, have a stable approach and services and always put the customer first. Every day I have to have the strength to face the day, reread my goals and focus on tasks, and have confidence in those who work with me. At the beginning should have given more attention to the part of the business management, I did not know it would require so much of me ... and have to go looking for knowledge and strategies to overcome the difficulties that appeared was quite exhausting ...*

The most important decision was: *not give up! It is always a constant struggle...* In moments of incertitude and the perception of an error and obstacle appears, I view it as a learning and always try to *learn and improve.*

4. The future

My business is directed for every person, as I said before 80% of my clients are women, they are determinant for the growth of my business, I always try better serve the customer, giving the best level of services, each person is unique and deserves a special and individualized treatment. The determinant factors for the success are: *will to win; be aware of the difficulties and strength to fight.*

The decision on the future depends on my willingness because *I can always change the circumstances of situations.* The changes that have taken place recently and which I consider influencing my business are: *the changes of the market and successively changes in people's lives, because select where the best way how to spend their money.*

In this new phase, the knowledge that emphasize as the most important are: *knowledge of the market and have the real perception of the country's state and with the specific needs of home person.*

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5. Enterprising women

In this project we can find my sensibility as a woman. And It is possible to establish a parallelism between household life and the management of my business as regards the *time management; planning*. It is not easy to reconcile family life and the work, but the secret is *not take the job for "home", take time to family and enjoy moments*.

My familiar experience help me to solve many problems related to my business, help me to *discover how to find solutions for the problems, and be calm when I have to making decisions*.

In the business management both men and women can be good managers and entrepreneurs, the difference is that the woman have to give more of itself, it requires a greater effort on our part in terms of affirmation in the market that most often is run by men's.

The recipe to be an enterprising woman is: *have defined objectives and be fully aware that being an entrepreneur is not easy and we have to give a lot of us, especially if we have employees that working with us*.

The aspects that should be strengthened are: *better time management; enjoy the time we spend at work and never take work home, always separating the family life and personal life*.