

Building your personal brand, planning for PR success

For this guest post, I had a pretty simple remit: to write a short piece on some inspirational women in business – no shortage there! But as I started to make my list, I realised that the sheer number of incredible women in business that I'm inspired by today would make for a very long post.

I realised I needed a stricter theme, so I took my lead from Twitter's 'Follow Friday' trend and came up with these five criteria:

1. Female
2. UK-based
3. Friendly
4. Inspirational to small business owners
5. Rocking Twitter and genuinely engaging

1) Anna Kirby – [@atkirby](#)

Anna is a journalist. More specifically, she is Online Editorial Co-ordinator at BHP Information Solutions, the company behind three amazing resources for SMEs: [@marketingdonut](#) [@startupdonut](#) [@lawdonut](#).

I've chosen to put Anna on this list because she's one of the most visible faces of the Donut on Twitter, but also because she engages consistently with other users, shares their blogs and news, supports their ideas and generally encourages good business practice.

2) Nikki Pilkington – [@nikkipilkington](#)

Nikki is the owner/founder of NikkiPilkington.com, an internet marketing company based in the UK and France.

If you follow Nikki on Twitter, you'll know that she is one of the most prolific producers of straightforward internet marketing advice around – and it's of a consistently excellent quality. I can't think of a business owner that wouldn't benefit from following and engaging with her.

(Disclosure: Nikki is now a client of mine, but I was impressed and inspired by her long before we started working together, so she very much deserves mention here.)

3) Liz Carnell – @[bullyinguk](#)

Liz is a journalist and the woman behind Bullying UK. Liz and her son set up this charity in 1999 using some of the £6,000 out of court settlement that John received after taking legal action against North Yorkshire County Council following persistent bullying at school in Harrogate.

This is inspirational in itself, but I'm also impressed on a daily basis with the way Liz interacts with other Twitter users – crowd sourcing opinions during the most recent website overhaul, sharing ideas and keeping the charity's message in the public mind – superb.

4) Heather Townsend – @[efficiencycoach](#)

Heather is the founder and leading voice of The Efficiency Coach, a business that offers careers and management coaching to 'help you achieve more for your time, effort and money'.

Business owners are constantly being bombarded with marketing and media messages that tell them to fight through hard times, strive for new targets and push for higher profits. The silent implication for many is that if you want to make it, you will need to be working every single minute of every single day.

Heather is inspiring because she's part of the new breed of business advisers/commentators that advocates efficiency, not running yourself into the ground.

5) Sam Pearce – @[mumstheboss](#)

Sam Pearce is co-founder of Mum's The Boss, a networking and support group for mums in business.

I first connected with Sam when I was getting back into networking again following the birth of my son. I found the Mum's The Boss concept immediately uplifting: mums in business can bring their babies along to meetings and put them in a specially arranged crèche on site. It's a simple but wonderful idea.

For her consistent message that women can work and be good mothers, and her efforts to support them, Sam is truly inspirational .

- Emily Cagle

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