



A Day in the Life of a Jersey Entrepreneur

Alex Morel – ALX Training

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

The first thing I do every morning is check my messages and deal with those that arrived overnight. Often it's those first communications that have big implications for the day ahead.



What does your normal day look like?

Before arriving at the office and all the way up to the start of the day's lessons, I work with the trainers and our admin team to make sure everything is set for the day ahead. There's always a flurry of activity before classes start. We can have up to five classes beginning at the same time in different venues across the Channel Islands. It's only once they are in progress that I can turn to dealing with new bookings and projects that are coming in, with my colleague Steve.

Most days, I have to head off to a client's for a meeting, to advise on a project or to provide some very tailored training. I always catch up with the office before the end of the day for an update to make sure we are on track with all our Client commitments.

How did you get to where you are today?

I've worked in private, public and charitable education for nearly two decades and so I've come to know the field and the main influencers pretty well. When you're starting a business, it's vital that you have a strong network and there's no doubt that mine has helped me every step of the way.

The fact that I started working for myself on a part-time basis from the very beginning certainly helped make the transition to full time self-employment, a lot easier.

I also believe that being young helped because you have a lot less to lose in your twenties than in your forties. I think it would be harder to make the jump now, with responsibilities like a mortgage and family.

What couldn't you live your life without?

The Internet. All of the systems at ALX are based in the cloud which means that I can access anything from anywhere, which is brilliant.



Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

Without doubt my husband. He has encouraged me from the outset and looks after most of the domestic responsibilities so that I can focus on the business. I'm also really grateful to those trainers who have been with us since the very beginning. Their loyalty has enabled us to have a core of stability. Our Company Secretary, Catherine Swemmer has also been a vital part of the business, helping us navigate the worlds of finance and compliance.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Losing a member of staff is always difficult but in a small team you notice it more acutely. Thankfully we've not had many staff changes over the years and when it has happened, the team has done a brilliant job learning new skills to cover any gaps.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

Try not to worry about the future and have patience – it takes time to grow a business.

Website [ALX Training](#)



Jonathan Ruff

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

I am more of a night person, I like to work late into the night, so generally I am not very springy in the morning! There is nothing specific that makes me look forward to the day ahead! I just enjoy what I do and the daily challenges you face in business keeps things interesting for me and gets me out of bed in the morning.

What does your normal day look like?

Juggling many balls, I have several businesses so every day can be very different, my daily focus depends on what business needs my attention.



How did you get to where you are today?

By working hard! Not believing in the word impossible, and learning from your mistakes.

What couldn't you live your life without?

My children inspire me to carry on fighting when things are not going my way or there are bumpy roads ahead.

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

There is not a single person / business who has inspired me or helped me to do what I do in business, but there are many people / businesses I have met and done business with over the years who have all played a part in my business life and enabled me to do what I do.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Starting, growing businesses is a great challenge in its self, but the biggest challenge for me has always been funding businesses, coming from a not so well off family, leaving school without any qualifications

does not put you top of the list when you need to borrow money from the banks to fund a business especially when you are a teen or in your early 20's!

If you find yourself in this situation, then start small and dream big! Build your business based on your means and not on a dream, work hard keep your costs low and stay on top of your cash flow, reinvest



your profits into your business instead of taking them out and with time you will get to where you want to be and the banks will come to you.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

That's a hard question to answer, but if there was one thing it would be to get the work / fun / family balance right.



Julian Box - Calligo

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

I love to run first thing in the morning, I work out 6 days a week. I use the time to think through the day ahead and what I need to focus on.

What does your normal day look like?

I get bored very easily but I'm lucky that my role is so diverse I get to do new things all the time, no day is the same. It will though involve working with the various parts of the business, I'm a techie at heart and believe you have to truly understand how everything works and how it interacts with your clients, I also meet with clients and prospects most days. Finding new technology that can make a difference to our clients is something I spend a lot of time on so I also get to travel a lot looking for new technology, partners and inspiration.



How did you get to where you are today?

A lot of hard work; building a business is 7 days a week but you also have to have total belief in what you are doing and the desire to be the best at it.

What couldn't you live your life without?

My family and running.

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

Building a great team of people is the most important aspect of any company, you need to know your own weaknesses and hire people who are better than you at delivering these things. Always be honest and treat people how you want to be treated yourself and you will build a network of contacts that will support and help you grow your business. I've been lucky enough to have met and worked with some truly great people across the world who have been very supportive of my businesses as I've built them.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Developing a way to find, recruit and retain as many "A" people as possible. Working in a start-up is very different to an established business, it takes a certain type of person, one interesting attribute about these types of people is that once they have worked at a start-up they are very likely to go onto start a business themselves or go and work for another start-up. I have quite a few people working for me now that have worked at several of my previous companies.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?



Spend more time on finding and building the right team, when you get this right is when you will see your business flourish.

Website [Calligo](#)



Ed Prow – The Potting Shed

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

A combination of 3 things: 1) The creative project that I happen to be working on that day. 2) The slightly more complex problems that will need my cerebral attention to solve. 3) The amazing staff that work for The Potting Shed who continue to challenge and amaze me every day.



What does your normal day look like?

I don't think there is a normal day in our industry / company, it's why we love it. In any one day we can be working on one of many colourful projects, be it a financial client in Jersey, a beer label design in Switzerland, an infrastructure project in Saudi Arabia or a Californian criminal law firm website...just to name a few. These are just current examples but we are privileged enough to have such an interesting group of clients both locally and internationally so no one single day feels normal as such. If a sequence of days did become normal I am sure we'd seek to change that.

How did you get to where you are today?

99% perspiration, 1% inspiration. It sounds cliché but it really has been through hard work mainly. Having said that we have a philosophy that "there is always a better way". So I work hard to keep that in mind and always try and be better each day...to that end it also requires a lot of inspiration and creative thinking. This has ultimately driven me to get where I am today. If a day passes where I feel I haven't progressed or learnt something for the better of The Potting Shed then I'll try and address that. The beauty of being an entrepreneur is that you get to tweak and adapt your approach at your own discretion to be better and happier.

What couldn't you live your life without?

It sounds contrived but it is the people around me. My fellow company owners who support and challenge me daily. I have mentioned all the other staff members already but also my friends and family. Access to amazing technology which enables me to visualise all the creativity in my head. Finally, my immediate access to Jersey's awesome coastline at any point in the day.

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

Professional Services would definitely be our accountants. As an ownership of 4 creatives we attempted running our own accounts for 2 years as we were much smaller. In our third year we outsourced this and 5 years on from that it was clearly the best decision we made.



Mentors – 3 people beyond my fellow business owners that have really helped us to be successful are Greville Mitchell, David Stearn and Stefan Sagmeister.

Greville and David have both acted as Non-Executive Directors for us and have inspired and advised us as a company and me personally to always be better and maintain a positive and professional outlook. Stefan is a world leading creative and I am lucky enough to call a friend. Since university he has always inspired me in his work and he continues to do so for the better of our company and reminds us that creative happiness is beneficial not only for our people but for our clients.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

There are 2 that stand out. Firstly, landing a big bank as a client 8 years ago that went into administration. In our first year of business, we were confronted with a hefty financial hit because of this but in some ways it taught us a very positive lesson very early on in our business lives, which even now we keep as a profound lesson to remember. Starting a business in a recession was also challenging but positively echoes into our business disposition today. Secondly, and more personally, it was managing lots of people. You have this vision that running your own business will mean you get to focus on yourself and define your own days. This is true to a degree but you also have responsibilities to help lead all your staff. This has been an incredibly rewarding process over the years and an area of business that I have vastly improved in.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

I would tell myself that whilst we are the sum of our failures and not successes it's important to accept and celebrate those really positive achievements in business. We can become so busy that we forget to give ourselves the true pat on the back we deserve. Also, never underestimate the importance of saying no sometimes! Oh and to put all my money on Blazing Riley at the 14:00 at Aintree in 2008.

Website [The Potting Shed](#)



Jenni Liddiard – Field Farm

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

A sense of purpose and knowing how much I have to do!

What does your normal day look like?

Managing the animals, the land, the business, the customers and the emails. Every day is different!

How did you get to where you are today?

Sheer determination and a passion to produce Top quality products from animals that enjoy the highest quality of welfare.

What couldn't you live your life without?

Communicating by email!

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

Certain Politicians that offered a great deal of support and time through all the Planning appeals and hoops that I had to jump through - and my husband.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Finding a farm to either buy or rent was an impossibility at the time so the 7 year struggle through the Planning process was a huge challenge.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

Believe in yourself and your passions and you CAN make it happen!

Website [Field Farm](#)





Penny Downes – Pennyfeathers Beauty

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

The sociability of my column. Knowing that I'm doing something everyday that I love, still have a passion for and makes a difference in someone's day. I've been in the beauty industry since I was 16 and still love it as much as when I started and I'm 17years into my career.

What does your normal day look like?

I'm always up early getting myself organised for the day ahead, whether that's getting things done at home, or preparing my salon for the day. I love to ensure my day is organised so I'm prepared for whatever life throws at me. When I come home, it's time to relax and spend time with family and friends. I was diagnosed with a chronic illness three years ago so I am also constantly aware that I need to take care of myself, too prevent a relapse as these sometimes stop me from living my life the way I want.



How did you get to where you are today?

Apart from a lot of hard work, support from loved ones and focusing on achieving my goals. I made sure I had the tools needed to run a business. I also made sure I worked with people I liked and had the same ethos as me. We all spend a long time at work and having great people around me helps make it a fun and a trustworthy environment. Staff are the key to success in such a personal industry, I firmly believe Pennyfeathers is only as good as its team. Being organised also helps me keep on track. I love to push myself professionally and it has really made such a positive influence on my career. Listening to my clients in addition to utilising my intuition has led me to a much more dynamic salon.

What couldn't you live your life without?

My husband Sean, my Mum and Dad in the UK and my friends here and back home who love and support me no matter what. They have always been so understanding, great listeners and very proactive in helping me through my career.

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

There has been plenty of outside help starting from my neighbour who told me about the business opportunity, to my husband, parents and friends who have always believed in me. I started the salon from savings and didn't take a loan so had business guidance from My mentor, Mel Slatterly, at what was



Jersey Enterprise. Her guidance was invaluable through my early years and the expansion in 2011. I now build my business further by Jersey Business and their help and support. Other services I use are My account managers from my in house brands, they guide me through ideas and motivation, all have been therapists but have vast business knowledge so that helps with in salon promotions. Finally clients who come to see us have helped grow and develop the business. their opinions, ideas and demands have made the salon what it is today. Our annual salon questionnaire always grounds me on what too work on, as listening is the key to a good business.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

I've faced 3 major challenges through my career which have all paid off. My first being My move from Essex to start a new life in Jersey. My second was then leaving the great salon job that brought me here. I left there without a job to go too as I thought about changing career this was a gamble that then presented itself as a new challenge when I was offered the opportunity of starting my own salon from scratch. The risk that paid off luckily. Finally, the third challenge is living with Crohn's disease and the influence it has on life both professionally and personally. It's a huge challenge when running a business but through educating as many people as I can about it and running regular fundraising events in salon the awareness of the disease is heightened and people become more understanding.

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

There's Lots and lots and whether I would of taken it is another question!

Always take risks, nothing is set in stone and can be adapted. Keep focused without taking advantage of others and have faith in your intuition. Be organised and get your work-life balance right and everything else will fall into place.

Website [Pennyfeathers Beauty](#)



James Filleul – Connect Magazine / Bailiwick Express

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

Lots to do, with, usually, too little time to do it in. So it's the fear of not getting cracking, and so letting something slip, which gets me moving.

What does your normal day look like?

I start at 0600 every day, deal with urgent e-mails and check and update Bailiwick Express website to make sure it is right. Then it's family time, before I arrive at my desk at 0800. I have a lot of plates spinning between then and when I leave at 1900, so the day is always judging which one is closest to the ground. I try and take 90 mins at lunchtime to go to the gym, four days a week, as otherwise the day can get very intense. After seeing the kids before they go to bed, I then make sure client work is completed, and the website is ready for the morning, before switching off from it all about 2200. Knackered.



How did you get to where you are today?

It's impossible to say. Take your pick: a great upbringing, a good education, exceptionally supportive family & friends, talented colleagues, intense focus & drive, desperation to do well, a bit of brain power, a bit of luck, fear of failure, stickability, love of doing something different – delete as appropriate, or mix them all together.

What couldn't you live your life without?

Stickability. Building businesses is a hard road. And being an inveterate questioner of why something has to work as it does.

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

All of those mentioned have an important role, and I've been lucky to work with some great examples of each one. But fundamentally, it comes down to yourself, and your family. Do you have a good attitude? And do you have the family to make it all worthwhile?

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

People and complacency. People not having a positive attitude creates so many unnecessary problems, and I'm lucky to now have two great teams. Secondly, there is still a lot of complacency in Jersey, and that's a shame, as it really holds us back.



What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

I wouldn't. At that age, I was never the type who listened much to advice, I wanted to find out for myself. I'm also contrary, so I would want to prove myself wrong! Finally, I like ripping things up and doing them differently, so if you told me things were going to work out one way, I would automatically do the opposite.

Website [Bailiwick Express / Connect](#)



Alana Mann, Mainmann Group

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

I generally am looking forward to the challenges of the day! I spring up, so I can get as much done in a day as possible (a strong flat white helps!)

What does your normal day look like?

I work from home and although I rely on emails and the internet, most of the interesting big things happen over phone calls with London and Brazil. I am more of a 'night worker' than morning I seem to crank up by 4pm and am checking emails in the evening from my sofa or bed



How did you get to where you are today?

Asking a lot of questions, listening, never thinking I know it all, using the skills that are my strengths and working with others whose strengths are different to my own. Always being driven to 'do well' at anything rather than being driven to be 'successful'! You have to put a lot of hours in and forget about your social life.

What couldn't you live your life without?

My man! My Family! Holidays! Coconut flavoured anything!

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

My mother for encouraging me to be independent from a young age and making me believe anything is possible. My dad for his entrepreneurial ways and no-nonsense approach, which rubbed off on me. My Nonnon (gran) for always believing in the power of imagination and make-believe, expanding my little mind.

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Maths! Developing my unorthodox approach that works a treat!

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

When a tall dark handsome man approach's you about a business opportunity – don't take it!



Fiona Kerley, Ommaroo Hotel

What makes you spring out of bed in the morning?

Usually the children are our alarm clock and not the greatest early morning person by choice!

What does your normal day look like?

Get children ready for school & do school run then head to the hotel. Catch up with the Team, meetings & day to day work, then school run and home to crash!

How did you get to where you are today?

I studied languages and European studies at University before returning home to Jersey and taking my accountancy qualification ACA and then decided after qualifying that I would venture into the family hotel business taking the valuable accounting skills with me.



What couldn't you live your life without?

My family and friends

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

My father - for allowing me to get involved and supporting my ambitions to modernise and change the hotel, my mother for putting up with my father and I! my husband Robert for supporting my move from finance, my friend and interior designer Louise Boardman- for her fabulous designs that have transformed the hotel to where we are today and her patience with my decision making, my marketing consultant Karin Wery for changing the hotel's image and public perception and very importantly my great team for their unending loyalty and providing a warm welcome to our guests at the hotel not forgetting our fabulous maintenance team!

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Introduction of GST / Refurbishing the hotel / Dispelling the myths that the hotel was for sale despite the massive investment over the past few years / staying in the business while all around you are packing up!

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

Try not to take on the world alone, accept support and advice offered and seek it where necessary!

Website [Ommaroo Hotel](#)



Roger Le Maistre – Fort Adventures

What does your normal day look like?

Weekdays always starts by dropping my two children off to school, checking in with staff, processing daily emails and paperwork, reacting to daily issues, always thinking about how to enhance current activities, offerings and new ideas, trying to get home at a reasonable hour and kissing my children good night.

How did you get to where you are today?

Hard work, always being approachable & responsive, grabbing opportunities when there and a bit of luck



What couldn't you live your life without?

Family support, a computer and an iPhone

Which outsiders (professional services, investors, mentors, family etc.) have been most important to the success of your business?

My parents for instilling a positive mental attitude, my wife for her unending support, my Father for work ethic, my Uncles for time and support, my accountant for words of wisdom and my bank managers for being understanding!

What have been the biggest challenges you've had to overcome?

Over-regulation and some peoples lack of open mindedness when it comes to change

What advice would you give to your younger self before embarking on your business journey?

Invest more into property. Look and understand the bigger picture. Concentrate more on core businesses at an earlier stage. Apple is not only a fruit. Google is more than just a funny word & put a lot of money on Trump becoming President one day!

Website [Fort Adventures](#)