

Seven Suphi



Four years ago, having worked as a management consultant with Coopers & Lybrand and as a salesperson, Seven Suphi abandoned her corporate career to set up her own freelance business, Odyssey Solutions Ltd, offering executive and life coaching and team facilitation to help people improve their relationships, confidence and emotional intelligence.

exciting and fun because you need to have a range of skills or at least have access to a network that does.

"Freelancers generally work in isolation. I previously underestimated the value of the interaction that takes place in an office; it was a hard lesson to learn, but now I have built a good network of contacts and colleagues. Networks are a vital lifeline for any business — and especially so for freelancers.

"Having access to expert information is important too; I joined PCG for its contract templates, on my accountant's advice, and have found it really helpful. So many organisations over-promise and under-deliver — PCG does the exact opposite."

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"I wanted my life and my company to be congruent with my core self," explains 35-year-old Seven. "My aim is to provide an exceptional service, helping people to transform their lives, and I wasn't prepared to compromise. I was going to be true to my values — integrity, excellence, empowerment, growth and fun. I couldn't find the kind of company I wanted to work for, and so I created my own."

She has valuable advice for people wanting to set up in business. "You need to think through it well; the more you invest in up front preparation, the more successful you will be and the more time and money you will save. You need to know what is important to you, why you want to do it, what it is going to do for you, what you will actually be doing, what can go wrong, how you will overcome obstacles and who can help you. Play out scenarios in your mind. Be your client, your supplier, your colleague, and run it all through until you are happy and have exceptional results."

Seven loves running her own business. "What I like is that the buck stops with you — you are ultimately responsible for everything. The structure of it empowers you. It also makes life far more varied,

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Seven Suphi, Managing Director
Odyssey Solutions Ltd

Seven is passionate about coaching and what it can do for her clients. "During my management consulting days, I had been fortunate enough to experience the benefits of one-to-one coaching," she says. "This helped me realise that I wanted to help people improve their lives quickly and effectively, and when I discovered Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Time Line Therapy™ (TLT) and hypnosis, I knew that I had found tools to utilise the power of the mind, and that I would be able to achieve my goal."

According to Seven, coaching can be beneficial in a number of different scenarios. It has helped many of her clients to give up smoking, for example, and saved one client from allowing his mid-life crisis to have devastating repercussions on his nearest and dearest.

Many of her professional clients are high achievers who want to achieve more, faster. "I help them to improve their emotional intelligence," Seven says. "When it comes to moving up the corporate ladder, technical competence will get you so far, but emotional intelligence is the key to progressing to the highest levels."

"Most senior executives who are being coached are trying to improve their emotional intelligence quotient. There's a whole variety of behavioural challenges — communicating with people, not having enough gravitas or confidence, being seen as 'bullying' or behaving aggressively, or being seen as too soft or not serious enough, especially for those in higher positions who still want to be the 'nice guy' and part of the team. One thing is certain — companies typically invest only in those people whom they value and want to be part of the future of the business, so it is a great privilege to be offered executive coaching."

Seven also provides coaching services for clients of Seventy Thirty, a business offering matchmaking, partner headhunting and lifestyle services to high net worth individuals. She particularly enjoys this work, a fact which she ascribes to her romantic nature. "People like this are often 'cash rich, time poor' and have difficulty in finding the right partner," she says. Both the company and Seven were featured in a Telegraph magazine article on 5 November 2005.

"Humans are not used to evolving and adapting at the rate we have had to in the last 100 years — our whole way of life has changed from what we do to how we do it and the speed at which everything moves on," says Seven.

"Even the dynamics between men and women have changed. Before, our challenges were more external, material and tangible, and we had limited choices, whereas now the challenges are mental and emotional, and we have far more choice. Our schooling and upbringing are simply not enough to help us cope, and in a way, coaching has become essential to living well in this day and age."

"Whether you self-coach through reading developmental books or you go to a professional coach, it doesn't matter, as long as you are taking steps to

develop the programming of your mind and emotions so that you can get the most out of life.

"Coaching can help you improve your business and personal relationships, achieve what you want quickly and effectively, through goal-setting and perseverance, and have more fun in life and not take things so seriously. It can help you to be 'centred' and happy with your life, to take control of, rather than being a product of it."



Seven writing her book, Unawatuna, Sri Lanka

Last year, Seven decided to take a round-the-world trip. "I wanted to concentrate on writing a book," she explains, "and also to adopt a daily habit of taking exercise, eating healthily, having no alcohol, meditating and using some performance techniques to improve my mind, body and eyesight."

Highlights of her trip including walking in the New Zealand countryside, which she describes as being the most varied and beautiful in the world, staying in a hut right on a beach in Thailand, eating delicious curries in Sri Lanka and — after a strict regimen of no drinking for six months — enjoying Chilean wines in the Atacama.

A visit to Machu Picchu, an Inca city high in the Andes Mountains rediscovered in 1911 by a Yale professor, also stands out as a high spot for Seven. "I had the most amazing experience while I was there," she says. "It felt as though my hands were glowing and throbbing with energy."

PCG believes that freelancers have a valuable role to play in the UK's economy, generating wealth and employment and offering some of the brightest and best talent around — consultants, advisers, contractors, engineers, specialists, professionals. This profile was originally published in PCG's Freelancing Matters, Issue No 7. Copyright © PCG 2005



Spectacular countryside in New Zealand

The tour proved to Seven that she could indeed write, and she has since been very pleased to secure a publishing contract with John Wiley & Sons for her first book, *More Than Men and Makeup: a woman's guide to life*, due out in September 2006. That was only one of the benefits though. "I learnt more last year than I have in any other single year of my life," says Seven. "We all know that when we push our boundaries and our comfort zones, we give ourselves the best environment in which to learn and grow, and that's exactly what I did."



Seven in Kandy, Sri Lanka

"I learnt about other cultures, and about myself. For someone who hated exercise before the trip, I managed to adopt a regime that shaped both body and mind fantastically. It was challenging and stimulating, and showed me that if you do a little, every day, working consistently to achieve a goal, you are sure to get the most amazing results."

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