

MEET THE BUSINESS GUARDIAN ANGELS

By Sophie Cross
STAFF REPORTER

FOUR West Midlands business-women are joining forces to offer budding female entrepreneurs advice and guidance as they begin their journeys on the road to riches.

Entrepreneurs Pam Neaves, Clare Whalley, and Esther Woolley, of Sutton Coldfield, and Sharon Louca, of Tamworth, want to share their experiences and encourage other women to follow in their footsteps as they launch their businesses.

The friends, whose firms are thriving despite the tough economic climate, believe their business tips for those just setting up, or for businesswomen feeling the effects of the recession, could mean the difference between success and failure.

They will be staging a business advice drop-in session at The Royal Hotel, High Street, Sutton Coldfield, from 10am to 12.30pm on Thursday, June 10.

Pam, owner of Mint Creative Solutions, said: "Inspired and motivated in part perhaps by the high profile successes of entrepreneurs and TV business shows such as Dragons' Den, more women than ever are considering establishing a business.

"Statistics show that one in three start-up businesses fail, so what is it that drives these women, makes them so career obsessed and keeps them driven to achieve their goals more so than ever before?

Barber hits road

A BARBER who lost his business when the economy slumped has set up shop at the side of a major road.

Father-of-two Ben Martin is cutting hair in a trailer parked in a lay-by off the A6 near Luton, Bedfordshire.

"We want to share our experiences to give other women a great start on the road to success."

Meta4's Clare Whalley, a business and personal coach, said: "Having clearly defined goals and not letting anyone talk you out of them is vital.

"Keep yourself surrounded with positive people and ditch anyone who doesn't believe you can do it, or restrict the amount of time you spend with them.

"Focusing on your end goal and putting the steps in place to achieve this will ensure your success. Along with keeping an open mind, be adaptable and open to any opportunity that comes your way – as they don't all come with a big neon sign."

Clare works with a variety of clients whose goals vary from growing their business and improving their presentation skills, to changing their career to one they can love.

"I've always known what I want to achieve, and being totally focused towards achieving it has helped me get there, and stay there," she added.

Sharon Louca, owner of Your Local PA, said: "Having a passion for helping other businesses is the secret of my success. I set up Your Local Pa – a virtual secretarial support company – during the recession having recognised a need to support small businesses with all aspects of their paperwork, admin and organization during this very difficult period."

Esther Woolley, of Esther Marie Make Up and Beauty, believes attitude plays a major role in determining success or failure. Since establishing her business in 2006 she has learnt a lot of valuable lessons.

"It's not easy going into business for yourself, it requires a lot of ambition and dedication. It's a steep learning curve, but one which is very rewarding.

■ For more information visit www.mintcreative.co.uk/mintnews.php.



Helping hand: Sharon Louca (front), of Your Local PA, with fellow entrepreneurs Esther Woolley, a make-up artist, (left) and Pam Neaves, of Mint Creative Solutions.