

Would I advise someone to set up their own business?

it depends on the business and the person
 – for me this is a life decision.



Q Tell me about your business.

A Sweet Mandarin is a restaurant in Manchester's Northern Quarter. I'm in partnership with my sisters Helen and Jane. Obviously we want to be a high quality restaurant but Sweet Mandarin is about more than that. We're keen to put something in to the community, for example, we run enterprise sessions for young people here at the restaurant.

Q How important was your time at University?

A I wouldn't be here now without doing my degree. I chose MMU because I wanted a mix of practical and theory and the course at MMU really stood out. I think any business degree would be useful but the projects we did were so realistic and we did a lot of case studies that really made me think. The skills I picked up at university are things I need and use every day. When we decided to take on placement students I purposely went back to MMU because the quality of their students is brilliant. I know that straight away they add value – they care and they want to do it well.

Q What are the advantages of running your own business?

A Well, for a start it's the most fun thing I've ever done. A definite advantage is that job satisfaction is high. If you work for someone else you only see one bit of the picture but if you work for yourself you always see the end result. There are no limits – you can stretch yourself as much as you want, but you have to be motivated because no one else is going to push you.

Q And what about the disadvantages?

A Long hours are a down side and to some extent you have to sacrifice your social life. You're always expected to know all the answers and you have to be strong at everything – one weakness can pull everything else down.

Q Any plans for the future?

A We've just written a book about the business that is coming out soon. It's called Sweet Mandarin and it's a family autobiography about us and what all this means to us.

