



INTRODUCING Philip Carter

There are few people who know more about business in and around Ashford than Philip Carter. As a director of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Ashford Town Centre Partnership, he is well aware of the issues and opportunities facing local entrepreneurs.

At the same time his own business experience, gained in setting up and running a number of successful companies, makes him well qualified to help both new and established business men and women.

With wife Pauline and son Daryl now increasingly taking on the day-to-day management of his two thriving businesses, Philip is able to concentrate on something he has been passionate about for some time – helping other people get the most out of their companies.

Philip doesn't pretend to know all the answers, although his wide-ranging experience means he will at least have come across most of the questions! He is confident, though, that he can combine his background knowledge and Icon's tried and tested toolkit to help business people get more of what they want out of their investment - whether that is time with their family, money or just job satisfaction.

Philip started his business apprenticeship more than 30 years ago when he worked for a well-known and remarkably diverse Ashford family business that was mainly involved in retailing newspapers, office supplies, books and greetings cards. When the company changed direction Philip took on the challenge of buying one of its assets – a town centre shop in Ashford – and turned it into a successful Hallmark card and gift shop.

It was a brave move that involved a massive loan, a re-mortgage and the couple's life savings, but it paid off and was followed five years later by an even more ambitious move.

With many of Ashford's town centre retailers worried about the likely impact of the new out-of-town shopping development at the McArthurGlen retail outlet, Philip decided that "if he couldn't beat them, he'd join them!"

The result was China Place, a 1,300 square feet retail outlet at McArthurGlen that has since doubled in size and which remains the only family-run business on the site. While Philip describes it as "a very proud moment", it was also an ambitious step for a local entrepreneur and one that reflects both his retail skills and his vision.

As if that wasn't enough, Philip also supplies branded clothing and promotional goods to businesses through an on-line and telephone-based company that has also taken off in a big way.

Philip is confident that he can share his clear business skills with others in the Ashford area to improve the lives of business owners, provide them with step-by-step solutions, help them implement specific business strategies and, most importantly, achieve the financial and personal rewards they are seeking.

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