



Wales pips London when it comes to female creative business ownership

- Wales' 4,400 small creative businesses contribute £120m to the economy
- 28% of small creative businesses in Wales are owned by women; ahead of London, which is at 27%
- 50% more self-employed women in the UK today than 10 years ago, fuelling growth of creative businesses nationally
- Notonthehighstreet.com Partners growing faster in Wales than any other region of last five years, up 75% to £3.6m annually

A new report by notonthehighstreet.com and Oxford Economics has shown that the changing world of work is seeing more people than ever before turn away from traditional '9 to 5' roles in favour of more flexible and independent ways of working. As a result, there has been a 27% increase nationwide in self-employment over the last ten years, bringing current numbers to 4.8 million. The 50% increase in self-employed women is particularly notable, now standing at 1.5m.

This movement is fuelling female entrepreneurship, particularly in Wales, which, at 28%, boasts an above average number of women creative entrepreneurs, beating London at 27%. This is compared with the 21% of female-owned small businesses in the UK.

Today, there are 134,000 small creative businesses in the UK, employing 192,000 people and contributing £3.6 billion gross value added to the UK economy. In Wales, there are 4,400 small creative businesses contributing £120m to the Welsh economy.

This 'creative attitude', which has emerged in the last ten years, is seeing more and more people find their own way to make work 'work' for them. They are seeking choice and freedom, and thousands are building successful businesses and setting their own work/life agendas as a result. With a record number of two-parent working households, which now stands at 3.6m, people want flexibility.

The findings of the report reveal that two thirds of creative entrepreneurs are benefitting from greater flexibility and freedom, with nearly half citing this as the main motivation for starting their own business. 95% of those surveyed feel a greater sense of achievement and 90% enjoy life more and feel happier as a result of starting their own business.

A ticket back into the world of work for mums

The shift to a different way of working is particularly empowering women entrepreneurs and parents with children living at home. In fact, for one in ten of the notonthehighstreet.com Partners surveyed, starting their own business was their ticket back into the world of work after a period of



unpaid leave to care for young children. And this movement is happening nationwide with small creative businesses driving prosperity and economic growth in every single region of the UK.

These new ways of working are being driven by a number of macroeconomic changes:

- an increasingly connected and online world where physical location is no longer a barrier to the reach and success of a business
- advances in technology enabling more of life's functions to be carried out digitally, at any time and in any location (e.g. shopping on the move and outside '9 to 5' hours)
- post-financial crisis environment forcing people to re-evaluate their careers and working lives
- the increasing number of two-parent, or carer, working families looking for ways to juggle work and life, and the reluctance of many workplaces to adapt to this change
- the refusal by many to fit their increasingly diverse lives around traditional work structures which, because of the above changes, are no longer deemed fit for purpose

Simon Belsham, CEO of notonthehighstreet.com, said: *"In the last ten years, thousands of small creative businesses have emerged in the UK but Wales, in particular, has emerged as a real creative hot spot, demonstrated by the 75% increase in revenue by notonthehighstreet.com Partners over the last five years. These creative entrepreneurs are creating jobs, driving wealth creation and contributing significantly to both the region and overall UK economy. They also highlight the huge change underway in the UK workforce; a transformation that is seeing more women in work and more people turning to self-employment and flexible working as they shun the traditional 9 to 5 model."*

Wales case study:

Dust and Things: The pull of doing something more creative and rewarding prompted Caerphilly-based Dust and Things to set up their design-led gifting business in 2013. Speaking about the business, co-founder Mike Chamberlain said: *"I'd always had a passion for building and design but lacked a creative outlet in my finance position. When Sian-Louise completed her environmental degree we decided to take a leap of faith and establish a business that allowed us to be creative and personally fulfilled. Running your own business is not without its stresses - it's unpredictable at times and there are always challenges, but to know that we are in control of an ever-changing and always progressing 'thing' is also really exciting."* In just four years Dust and Things has grown rapidly and now employs a team of 13 in an area that is challenging for employment and where there are few prospects for creative jobs otherwise.

Further Wales case studies below.

Other report findings:

Positive impact of running own creative business

When notonthehighstreet.com partners were asked to compare how they feel now relative to how they felt before starting their business:



- 95% now feel a greater sense of achievement
- 90% enjoy life more and feel happier
- 88% feel the industry they contribute to is worthwhile
- 87% feel more fulfilled when they wake up in the morning
- 80% enjoy the responsibilities that come with running a business
- 52% of the Partners surveyed were employed by another business before setting up on their own, and nearly three quarters of those have undergone an entire career change in order to start their own creative business

Empowering women

Small creative businesses are more likely to be owned by women. 27% in the UK are female-owned compared with the UK average of 21% for female small business ownership. Some 89% of notonthehighstreet.com Partner businesses are female owned. Small creative businesses are retaining women in the workforce and encouraging other women back into it; 10% of the notonthehighstreet.com Partners surveyed were looking after children at home and were not in paid work before they founded their business.

Empowering parents

55% of creative entrepreneurs working with notonthehighstreet.com have children living at home, compared with 41% of working households nationally. When considering the rise in the number of two-parent working families - up 14% in the decade to 2016 - and the need to work flexibly around childcare, it is not surprising that this industry is attractive to, and supportive of, working parents, particularly as we know that two thirds of notonthehighstreet.com partners work from home, meaning no time or cost is spent commuting. Nine out of ten partners with children at home ranked freedom and flexibility in the top benefits of starting their own business.

Employment on the rise

Total UK employment has risen 9% from 29.1m ten years ago to 31.7m today.
UK employment for women has risen by 1.4m to 15m over the last decade.

Self-employment on the rise

4.8m people were registered self-employed in 2016, compared with 3.7m ten years ago; an increase of 27%. The increase in self-employment amongst women is even greater, growing by 50% over the same period, from 1m to 1.5m. Male self-employment has risen from 2.7m to 3.2m in the last ten years.

Flexible working

In the ten years to 2016 part-time work has increased from 24.9% to 26.4% of all employment, and full-time work has decreased from 75.1% to 73.6%. The majority of notonthehighstreet.com partners work full-time but flexibly, fitting working hours around personal life and other commitments.



Case studies – Wales

Tillyanna is an ethical business based in the Monmouthshire Hills that makes personalised or locally influenced cushions, homeware, bags and clothing from high quality ethically sourced materials, printed using classic typography design. Helen Parker founded the business in 2012 when her youngest son was due to start school and she was worried about finding the money needed for Christmas that year. She had to make a decision on whether to return to work after parental leave or try to earn enough income on her own. She chose the latter and, following a number of evenings of research, made her first cushion. Within six months Tillyanna was part of the notonthehighstreet.com community and is now one of the best-selling businesses on the site. Tillyanna was also the winner of the Ethical Business award at the notonthehighstreet.com Make Awards 2015.

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Notes to Editors

For a full copy of the report, infographic, and national and regional versions of the press release, please go to: www.notonthehighstreet.com/workthatworks

About notonthehighstreet.com

Notonthehighstreet.com is the leading curated modern marketplace connecting the best small creative businesses, with the world. The brand has gained the trust and loyalty of its customers through offering an alternative to the High Street: a curated product selection with unique designs, high-quality craftsmanship and inspiring stories behind the people that make them.

Customers choose to support small creative businesses and therefore contribute to building the great creative talent and community of artisans across the United Kingdom. Shopping with Notonthehighstreet.com is an opportunity for customers to be a conscious consumer, bringing human values back into retail and enabling the things they buy to say something about who they are.

Founded in 2006 by Holly Tucker MBE and Sophie Cornish MBE, the brand has experienced exceptional growth with gross sales (TTV) in 2016 reaching £158 million and delivering a compound growth rate of 135% since launch. Under the leadership of newly appointed CEO Simon Belsham, there is renewed energy and focus on building a brand that will captivate customers for decades to come by supporting Partners' growth and innovation.

With a team of over 200 at its headquarters in Silicon Upon Thames, South West London, Notonthehighstreet.com is Chaired by retail veteran Darren Shapland and backed by media and technology company, Hubert Burda Media and venture capitalists including Index Ventures, Industry Ventures and Eight Roads Ventures.



About Oxford Economics

Oxford Economics was founded in 1981 as a commercial venture with Oxford University's business college to provide economic forecasting and modelling to UK companies and financial institutions expanding abroad. Since then, they have become one of the world's foremost independent global advisory firms, providing reports, forecasts and analytical tools on 200 countries, 100 industrial sectors and over 3,000 cities.

Available for interview:

- Simon Belsham, CEO, notonthehighstreet.com
- Andy Logan, Associate Director, Oxford Economics
- Ian Saxon, Senior Economist, Oxford Economics
- Ella D'Amato, Chief Commercial and Partner Officer, notonthehighstreet.com
- Any of the case studies mentioned above. Other case studies also available.

Photos of case studies listed also [available here](#).