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opening  
doors

For Women in Business

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## A problem or an opportunity?

When MG Rover closed in April 2005, Dupé Adeoye found herself out of work. The natural thing to do was to find another job as quickly as possible. Gradually, however, Dupé found herself wondering whether she should accept the offers of work she was receiving or whether she should seize this opportunity to do what she had always wanted to do. A mechanical engineer, who had also worked in manufacturing, marketing, business transformation and continuous improvement, Dupé felt she wanted better control of her working life and that she should pursue her passion - to move into independent consultancy.

## Making the decision

Dupé chose to go it alone. As she explains, “I wanted to provide real support for businesses to enable them to achieve sustainable value-added improvements and competitive advantages through culture change”. With considerable business experience, an MBA and other qualifications including HR, Dupé began to take on assignments providing business advice and support, “driving through change and making a difference”. Dupé has also become a specialist advisor on a number of initiatives including the Advantage West Midlands Regional Skills Partnership’s Leadership, Management and Entrepreneurship Skills Development programme and she is an accredited service provider for the Department of Trade and Industry’s Inspired Leadership Development programme.

## Networking

Dupé is a lone parent with a daughter and an elderly mother. As Dupé admits, “It hasn’t been easy. In fact it’s been very tough. There are things I could have done differently and more efficiently. Working for yourself can become quite solitary and I have had to work hard to develop my network of contacts to counter this.” “Attending WiRE events and participating in the ‘Opening Doors’ programmes were invaluable and really positive experiences. I have found sharing information with others very beneficial. There is always someone who has been through similar things and that makes you feel reassured.”

## Social enterprise

Dupé leads a very full life with her family, self-employment and voluntary work. To ‘switch off’, Dupé turns to her hobbies, which include coordinating, providing and arranging flowers for Coventry Cathedral, “with help from some great individuals”. Dupé identified that this hobby could be developed to inspire others, and is in the process of launching a company to provide a high quality service for corporate events, weddings and other special occasions. “My key driver is to create a channel to allow a group of individuals to work independently, albeit it in a very small way, using their creative talents to earn extra income.” By linking up with flower wholesalers, Dupé is able to buy flowers at reasonable rates and supply them to individuals to work with. Together, the group provides large organisations with arranged flowers and displays - and everyone is benefiting.

## Sound advice

“If you’re thinking of setting up your own business, make sure there is somebody you can talk to who will offer you constructive criticism, without being judgemental. Listen. Act on it. Whatever you choose to do, do it well, enjoy it!”

The Regional Women’s Enterprise Unit  
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Backing Business in the West Midlands

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