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Position: Director, Simpson Packham Services Ltd

Between the ages of 20 and 30, I had a succession of bookkeeping/accounts clerk roles for small local companies. This was back in the late 80's recession and working in accounts departments always meant being the first up for redundancy when larger organisations acquired these businesses. In total I was made redundant 4 times; luckily I always moved on to new and more interesting roles and was never out of work for any length of time. Working for small companies has been a huge benefit, as not only did I carry out the accounting functions but got involved in all sorts of other areas such as customer service, reception and secretarial support. This gave me a great understanding of how small businesses operate and has held me in good stead in my current position as director of my own business.

I became a self-employed bookkeeper 15 years ago when my son was young. I needed a job that I could do from home with flexible hours to fit in around my family. As my son got older and I had more time I took on more and more clients and now run my own bookkeeping practice along with my co-director, and fellow ICB member, Janis Simpson. We currently employ 6 full time bookkeepers and have over 150 regular clients.

I see myself as having two completely separate roles. As a company director I thrive on the challenge of running a business, it is rewarding and exciting as well as being unimaginably hard work. My other role is as a professional service provider working very closely with my clients making sure myself and my staff are giving a top class service. The services we provide cover all aspects of bookkeeping including VAT, payroll, management accounts, tax returns and credit control. Whilst these are our core services, working with small owner-managed businesses inevitably means turning our hands to all sorts of other roles within our clients' companies. As well as having great technical skills we need to be excellent communicators and be prepared for total flexibility in our approach.

The downside to being a self employed bookkeeper are the sometimes long hours and pressure involved in constantly having to meet deadlines, I have had to work evenings, weekends and right through the night on more than one occasion to meet a VAT or tax return deadline for a client. On the up side I love the variety of work and the satisfaction of completing a job to the best of my ability. Travelling around the many different companies I work for I meet so many new people and have made some great friends along the way.

I love working with other small companies, I find it so interesting to learn about different industries and my clients really appreciate all the advice I can offer through my many years of experience. Although I've been in this business for over 25 years I can still learn something new almost every day, it's what keeps me jumping out of bed every morning!