



EWIF Inspires

#10yearsSTRONG

# Jenny Williams:

## AN EYE FOR OPPORTUNITY

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*Falling into the police force to avoid university led Jenny Williams to an inspired idea for a new business. One which ended up leading her into franchising.*

Many young women don't know what direction to move in when they leave school. Even though there seems to be an expectation to know what to do upon walking out of school for the last time. But, like many teenagers today, Jenny Williams had meandered through her teens without a clue about what she wanted to do. When she finished school, Jenny had a year-long placement in the police force. "I left school and ended up joining the police, initially for a year. Basically, I just wanted to avoid going to university," she laughs. "I've got a 17-year-old who's now in the same position, and I reflect how bad I was, not knowing what career to pursue. I really was clueless!"

Having joined the police, Jenny experienced the challenge of being thrust into a male dominated environment. But rather than shy away, it drove her forward, even to gain the elusive degree she had once tried to avoid, when she was ready to do it. "I felt as though I had to work twice as hard to be taken seriously by my colleagues. But I relished the challenge and quickly became comfortable in a male environment, where some women may struggle. So, I stayed with the police longer than the initial one year. A few years in, and I ended up, ironically, studying for my BSc (hons) degree in Policing Studies!"



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Jenny rose through the ranks, becoming a detective with the CID. "There were even less women in the CID, than there had been in the uniformed police!" Rather than feeling intimidated, Jenny firmly held her ground, earning the respect of her male colleagues.

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Jenny met and married her husband, a teacher, and took a career-break to have children. "The police offer a fantastic 5-year career-break scheme. During mine, I worked from home, for a network marketing company, which is when I realised I didn't want to be told what to do anymore! It was time to think about what direction I wanted to go in, for the rest of my career-life."

Whilst arranging a party for her eight-year-old, Jenny suddenly had a lightbulb moment! "I was planning a crime-scene themed party, and it hit me - no one else was doing this type of event. A crime-scene for kids, giving them a chance to explore and solve a mystery."

Children are naturally inquisitive. Being given the chance to think both logically and creatively, to use their observation skills, and by working as a team, they would have fun through the process. It could even inspire the next generation of the UK's detectives. The Detective Project was born.

Jenny shared her idea with her husband, and they realised this concept had legs, based on his knowledge of the teaching system, and her detective experiences. Jenny was confident The Detective Project could easily be adapted as a school workshop. "So, I started running school workshops during the week, and planning birthday parties at the weekend. I also ran after school clubs. As The Detective Project grew, we started branching out into corporate events, adapting the sessions for adults."

The business quickly developed as demand grew. Jenny was at a crossroads of what she needed to do next. "I was being booked all over the country, especially for school-based events. I started looking at how to scale the business up. My choices were to sub-contract to others or, 'franchising' kept coming up. But other than knowing McDonalds was a franchise, I had no clue about it!"

Franchising is an ideal way for business owners to expand their reach and increase their goal for national brand success. During the progression of adapting her business into a franchise, Jenny received the right support to guide her. "I joined a lot of women's networking groups, and was introduced to EWIF early on. It was a very supportive environment giving me the confidence to ask all the questions my detective brain could create. As a result of their advice and support, I started franchising in 2013, three years after The Detective Project had been born."

As a young woman leaving school, Jenny could never have foreseen where her career path would lead. She followed her natural instincts, and is on course for her national brand to become even bigger than she could have hoped for.



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