

# EWIF

ENCOURAGING WOMEN  
INTO FRANCHISING



## OVERCOMING FEAR TO EXCEL IN BUSINESS

**JULIE MAXTED**

*The Pets, Homes & Gardens Company  
(PHG)*

**The idea of turning a business into a franchise can highlight fears which you need to overcome. But like Julie Maxted, you can do it, and others benefit from your expertise.**

Stepping out of your comfort zone is a scary, and exciting prospect – once we've plucked up the courage to do it! Some women think about how good it would be to try something new, but then hold back before they give it a try. Not so with Julie Maxted, who not just pushed herself out of her comfort zone, she flew out!

Julie and her husband Peter, decided to franchise their pet-sitting business, The Pets, Homes & Gardens Company, in 2009. "We started our petsitting business in 2002, and because of the increasing demand we were receiving, we saw we had potential to franchise the business. So, we sought out professional help to guide us through the process, which meant writing an operations manual and creating a training programme. However, when it came to meeting with the franchisees to do the actual training, I started to freak out, and my lack of confidence caused some anxiety which threatened to overshadow the transition."

Having never undertaken public speaking before, the thought of standing in front of people was very daunting to Julie – as it would be to most people. "Peter and I did

a trial run with known colleagues, to help me feel confident about what I was doing, but I was incredibly nervous," she explains. "Someone suggested I attend our local business networking meeting to help overcome this fear. So, I did, and each time it became easier to stand-up in front of everyone in the room to give a five-minute talk about my business. I felt my confidence start to grow and the nerves start to diminish.

As franchisor, Julie is now perfectly comfortable delivering the training to her new franchisees, having battled her initial fear – one which has held back too many women from reaching their potential. "Now, I actually relish and enjoy delivering the training!" she says. "So, it just goes to show how any of us can overcome our barriers – just by acknowledging what they are, and taking steps to work on ways to deal with them. The process isn't an easy one, but in time, you'll look back with a smile, knowing how far you've come. The best thing about it is knowing how our network of over 20 franchisees across the UK have also benefitted from me tackling my fear, as they run businesses they love!" 