



SMART  
WORKS

**When mother-of-two Samantha discovered Smart Works, she found the warmth, support and advice was invaluable.**

**After years of experiencing a toxic marriage and work environment, the charity proved a lifeline for her in more ways than one.**



## This is Samantha's Story

**Everyone wants to have a cheerleader in life but I am lucky enough to have a group of them, thanks to the Smart Works team who have had my back ever since I walked into their offices. They helped turn my life around after a very dark time.**

“Coming out of a mentally abusive marriage my confidence had been left in tatters. I had no self-esteem, financial independence or knowledge of the job market because up until I got divorced I had been running a restaurant with my husband. That all fell apart when we split up and what made things even more difficult for me was that having just turned 50 I was deemed unemployable.

After my divorce I started to try and apply for jobs, working for some of the suppliers of the restaurant and various other things, but as soon as employers took note of my age they seemed to instantly reject me. After using every strength in my body to remove myself from a marriage that was so abusive, I was already at my lowest ebb so not being able to get a job was so demoralising. And then when the pandemic hit I was out of work, comfort ate and was overcome by a real sense of self-loathing.

That all changed when I joined the government scheme Work Routes which helps unemployed people get back into employment. It was through their referral that I walked into the loving arms of Smart Works. From helping me with my CV (where they gave me the best

advice to remove my age!) to lending a sympathetic ear when they heard about my marital problems, every step of the way they held my hand. Having run my own business, I had never had an interview and was terrified I'd fail to impress anyone as I tend to waffle on so much but their job coaching was incredible.

I owe it to the charity that I got the job I am in now, working as an office manager of an agency. In fact as soon as I got the job they were the first people I wanted to tell, After so long feeling low, unconfident and useless they lifted my spirits and made me feel good about myself. As well as helping me with some career coaching, they introduced me to the world of clothes and how by dressing nicely, you can feel nice and by feeling nice, it can bring out the best in you. After so long being in an abusive marriage, it felt good to learn to like myself again and have someone reassure me I could succeed, after being made to feel like a failure for so long.

The charity showed me there is light at the end of the dark tunnel I have been through and I couldn't be happier in my new job, have amazing colleagues and most importantly my self-confidence back.”



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