

Case study 1: self-employment

Cecile (50) had a background in the TV and film industry but wanted extra stability for her five-year-old son. She initially set up a support website for those trying to adopt internationally, something Cecile is passionate about. Although this succeeded as a project, the site had too few members to become the basis of a profitable business. Cecile therefore decided she must look elsewhere to find an income. “I set up criteria for what I wanted to do. I wanted to work from home. I wanted flexible hours so that I could be with my son. I didn’t want a boss breathing down my neck, and I wanted to do something that made people happy.”

Cecile searched for a job that fitted her requirements, and came across an advert for the Top Match franchise on www.workingmums.co.uk. She said: “I immediately thought, ‘that’s what I want to do’, and started to get excited.”

Once Cecile decided to buy the franchise, she looked for ways to raise money. She spoke to her bank and found that the chances of getting a loan were minimal.

So she turned to Zopa-PRIME loan. Cecile knew about Zopa from previous research, and liked the fact that the money was lent by ordinary people, instead of a big corporate bank.

“They were very thorough, but really good. It focused my mind. I realised that up until now I had been very fuzzy, but the Loans Manager asked for everything to be really detailed and precise and I thought that was fantastic, and very helpful.”

Within three days she got offers for the full amount. With money now in the bank, Cecile can get on with launching the business.