

CASE

insight

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Angie Coates and Monkey Music



UK

Motivation and risk

Angie Coates' mother was a teacher and her father owned a small engineering firm. At the age of 11 she won a scholarship to study the oboe at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, graduating with a music degree in 1988. She went on to become Head of Music at Thomas's London Day Schools. So, when she had a baby daughter it was only natural that she would want her to share her love of music. However, she was not happy with the baby music classes she found locally, so in 1993, with her daughter only a few months old she started her own business, Monkey Music, based in London. Monkey Music started out offering music classes to infants and pre-school toddlers from a church hall in Dulwich, southeast London.

I was a young mum and ready to change my lifestyle completely. I wanted to stop having to get up at 6am every day to then leave my baby with a childminder before travelling to work. I wanted to do something fresh and exciting, for my daughter and for me.

By 1998 she was struggling with the huge demand for her classes and was teaching more than 500 children a week, so, on the advice of her lawyer brother, she decided to franchise the music curriculum, taking a percentage of the fee charged by the franchisee (Chapter 8). The Monkey Music programme is divided into four stages, each tailored to a specific age group of babies and young children from 3 months: Rock'n'Roll, Heigh-ho, Jiggety-Jig and Ding-Dong. Each class will take up to a maximum of between 10 and 15 children. Class fees average around £7.50.

We take children through a very specific and progressive curriculum which comprises a vast repertoire of especially composed songs and musical activities. Our curriculum supports all aspects of child development and classes are led by highly trained Monkey Music teachers. We start children very young



Logo courtesy of Monkey Music Ltd

so we support their social and emotional development as well as physical and language development ... Creativity is the most exciting part of Monkey Music.

Monkey Music is widely recognized by the British franchise industry as an award-winning business. It was winner at the British Franchise Association Franchisor of the Year Awards in 2005 and was a finalist in the same awards in 2010 and 2013. National parenting awards include winner of the Best National Pre-Schooler Development Activity in

2010 and 2013 and Best Toddler Development Class in 2008, with Monkey Music teachers winning numerous other parenting awards on a local level. Angie has decided not to dilute the product offering and to keep the product range simple and focused, with the website and teachers selling merchandise that extends the class experience: the soft Monkey and Baby Mo toys, class CDs and T-shirts.

By 2014 the business had nine staff based in Harpenden, just north of London. The network was generating sales of over £3m. There were around 50 franchises with more than 100 teachers running classes in more than 300 venues across the UK. The most successful franchise reported a turnover of £180,000 and profit of £70,000, and a significant number of franchises have remained under the same ownership for more than 10 years.

On top of all this, Angie now has five daughters.

Visit the website: www.monkeymusic.co.uk

Questions:

- 1 What was Angie's motivation in starting up Monkey Music?
- 2 How did she keep the costs of starting the business down?
- 3 How much of a risk did she face in starting and then growing the business?