

'The advantage of owning a mobile franchise,' explains Cafe2U's Leeds' franchisee, **Tracy Peck**, 'is that I set the ground rules from the beginning. I chose my hours and location to suit me. I work Monday to Friday from 8.30am to about 3.30pm. If I need to leave earlier to do the school run, I can.'

Tracy, 40, previously worked in the NHS for 16 years until she took maternity leave. On returning to work, Tracy needed a career that would comply with a hectic home-life, particularly as her nine-year old son is autistic. And it was Cafe2U that fitted the bill.

This van-based franchise can also be operated from home, adding another degree of flexibility, as well as helping to reduce overheads.

It is this flexibility that has allowed Tracy to continue with the venture despite separating from her husband last year. 'It has been harder to maintain the balance. My husband still looks after the children as we have joint custody, so that helps, but what's so great about this franchise is that if I need to take a day off to look after the children I can.'

Tracy discovered Cafe2U in the autumn of 2005 through a friend and immediately knew it was something she could do on her own. In order to fund the franchise, she used positive equity from her property and persuaded her ex-husband

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to give-up his job as a gardener to become a stay-at-home dad.

She says: 'As the business took off, it really boosted my self-esteem. I enjoy my job because I am always meeting new people. When they are happy to see me, it makes me feel happy too.'

Entering the male-dominated business world, Tracy wasn't fazed in the slightest. She says: 'I am not intimidated by business people or those in high positions – I treat everybody the same.'

'I think women avoid business because there's a confidence issue. We need to overcome the stereotype that men go out to work and the female stays at home. We are a person in our own right, not just a mother, and we need something for ourselves too.'



Tracy Peck, Cafe2U