

# The Edinburgh Reporter chats with Sandy Grant of Accommodate

☒ WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

My name is Sandy Grant, managing director of lettings agency Accommodate in Edinburgh, which has grown in the space of a few years to a team of five. We've also recently expanded by opening a second office, in the Borders. I'm originally from Ayrshire, but now live in Peebles and split my time between there and Edinburgh, where we manage more than 300 properties.

WHAT IS THE BUSINESS BOOK YOU RECOMMEND THAT EVERYONE SHOULD READ

I don't have as much time as I would like to read business books, although there are a few on my list that I am keen to dip into. Although business books can be extremely useful, I have always felt that the best way to learn about business is by doing it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOUR BUSINESS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

I believe my business strengths are my focus on delivering high quality customer service and having an in depth knowledge of property letting, gained through many years' experience. I don't know if I would describe it as a weakness, but I sometimes find it hard to switch off, as I am always thinking about the next goal for the business.

WHAT WAS THE DEFINING MOMENT ON YOUR CAREER PATH THAT HAS GOT YOU WHERE YOU ARE NOW

I always wanted to start my own business in property and redundancy provided me with the opportunity I had been waiting

for.

#### HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR SPARE TIME

My family are keen boaters, so any spare time we have is spent sailing, usually on the west coast of Scotland. I also really enjoy walking and mountain biking, both in the Borders and around Edinburgh.

#### DO YOU THINK YOU ACHIEVE A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE

I have lost count of the times my wife has told me not to answer my mobile phone, but I do aim for a good work/life balance.

#### WHAT MAKES EDINBURGH THE BEST LOCATION FOR YOU TO LIVE AND/OR WORK IN

I love Edinburgh because it is a beautiful city and there are great opportunities to build a successful business.

#### WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL AREA OF EDINBURGH OR SPECIAL PLACE IN EDINBURGH AND WHY

I have a soft spot for Leith, because that's where I first lived when I left home and started work. I really like the area and enjoyed living there.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE PINNACLE OF YOUR CAREER

My goal is to expand Accommodate throughout Scotland and once I've achieved that goal, I will consider that to be the pinnacle of my career.

#### IF YOU HAVE A MENTOR, TELL US WHO THAT IS AND ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

My father is my mentor. He has built two successful businesses and I value his advice, especially with regard to finance and marketing. It has stood me in good stead with growing Accommodate.

#### WHICH NETWORKING GROUPS IN EDINBURGH HAVE YOU FOUND PARTICULARLY USEFUL

I have been along to a few networking groups over the years, although I haven't attended as many meetings as I would like, due to lack of time in the first few years of building a business. I plan to attend more in the New Year though.

## WHO ARE YOUR BUSINESS HEROES

My two main business heroes are Richard Branson and Gordon Ramsay. Their hard work and success are an inspiration. They have shown business owners everywhere what you can achieve if you really put your mind to it.

## WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

We launched our second agency a few months ago and I'm hoping that we will open the third some time in 2012.

## DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY FOR US

No two days are ever the same in the lettings business, but usually my day includes viewing new properties to sign up and marketing these; liaising with landlords, meeting potential tenants and dealing with the many and varied property issues that can arise in the space of a day. There is never a dull moment! I am also spending an increasing amount of time working on business growth and achieving my next ambitions for the business.

Sandy Grant

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