

Building boss on the challenges of 2019 and the struggles ahead

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Zoe Gabriele has been operations manager and co-owner of Rhino Building and DIY Supplies for eight years.

Based in Acle, Rhino is an independent builders merchant with an absolute commitment to customer service and a "knuckle down approach to every job".

In a conversation with Chris Sargisson, chief executive of the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, Ms Gabriele talks about the challenges they faced this year.

You've mentioned the foundations of your success is the dedication and drive of your staff, what is it that you look for in a great team and how do you keep them?

When I recruited each member of the team it is important to me that regardless of role they all have an appreciation of sales. I look for particular character traits in each person that understands the importance of delivering an outstanding level of customer service. I am pleased to say that has resulted in a team that appreciates what we are trying to do and what they can do to influence that strategy.

Each person is unique and wants different things from you as a manager, for example some want to be left alone to get on with the job in hand and others like to be consulted with and checked in on. In order to do this you need to really get to know your team and what is important to them, what



makes them tick.

The building and construction business has been predominantly within the male arena, what advice would you give to women who are interested in this field?

The reputation of the trade tends to be one of a rough and ready nature but this is changing, and is rather a tunnel view of it as there are many positions within the trade and certainly in builders merchants that females can tap into. I am an ambassador for the



Inside the Rhino Building and DIY Supplies store in Acle. Inset, Zoe Gabriele

PHOTOGRAPH BY GOOGLE BUILDING AND DIY SUPPLIES

Builders Merchant Federation and we talk to many looking to find a career in the sector, both male and female, to educate them on the opportunities that exist.

My advice to any woman considering coming in to the trade is don't be scared of it. Females often bring a different view on things such as problem solving, building rapport, are quick to learn and have a level of creativity helpful to any business.

With uncertainties politically and economically at the forefront of every business owner, what challenges have you had to

overcome in the past year?

The largest challenge over 12 months and going forward is the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and what it means, but also the impact of the internet and social media that continues to develop at pace is at times a struggle to keep up with and adjust to. In a small business you don't have the luxury of a department dealing with the multi-task and fit it in to our already busy working day.

That said, I wouldn't have it any other way!

Angling Direct open 34th store



Angling Direct has opened its 34th store

Chief executive Dawn Bailey