

The Prince's Trust - Marco Paolini Case Study

Former army recruit, Marco, 30, from Wrenthorpe Vale, Nottingham, was finding it hard to readjust to life after serving four years in the forces. He lived with his partner and provided the lion's share of childcare for their three children, but craved more independence. Previous experience as a stonemason prompted Marco to weigh up the pros and cons of starting his own business.

Marco says: "I'd worked as a stonemason for six years before I joined the army. I'd like it. I needed the flexibility to juggle my family time with work and I thought I stood a good chance in stonemasonry because I was the only qualified memorial fixer in the East Midlands at the time."

Marco attended [Enterprise, a Prince's Trust programme](#) that helps unemployed young people start their own business. With little overheads to get his business off the ground and several quotes for work under his belt, Marco perfected his business plan and successfully made an application to The Prince's Trust for a loan. He also received a business mentor and went on to launch [The Luxury Craftsman](#), a stonemasonry company specialising in hand carved and sand blasted headstones, memorials, gilding and repairs.

Marco says: "The Prince's Trust gave me a loan to buy the equipment I needed to start my business. I built a workshop in my back garden so I could work from home at the same time as looking after the kids, and with the help of my mentor, Roy, I made a good links with other organisations that would help my business grow in the early days. I can't believe how well it's gone down."

Although things were initially slow, Marco was encouraged to keep the faith and remain patient; and when work started to come in, it didn't stop.

Marco now works seven days a week fulfilling word of mouth referrals; he is also taking on a member of staff so he can build the business in other areas. He has been approached several times by Nottingham's leading funeral director and is contemplating an offer to collaborate with his old employer on larger projects.

In October 2015, Marco was named runner-up for the [NatWest Enterprise award](#) at The Prince's Trust and Samsung Celebrate Success awards.