

From researching your family tree to finding you a reliable window cleaner – Pam Beale is a godsend for people with too much to do and too little time. She talks to **Linda Strange**

Helping hand



Pam Beale (left) discusses jewellery samples with client Helen Mahan who needed research help when setting up a business. Picture: Allan Williamson

While Pam Beale was perusing the stiltons in a cheese shop in Bath, an idea popped into her head.

She'd been searching for the ideal wedding present for her brother, and this was it. Not just a basket of cheeses, but a year's supply. So Pam became the shop's first customer ever to request vouchers, and her brother and his new wife are still enjoying their monthly cheese fix. It's just the sort of idea that went on to form the basis of Pam's business, Mission Accomplished, in Lichfield. Through talking to friends, she knew people loved giving (and receiving) unusual presents with a bit of 'wow factor', but didn't have time to spend searching. That's where Pam steps in: "I really like thinking through what would make an interesting gift for someone – I'm good at lateral thinking!" she said. She extended the idea to tackle all sorts of tasks that busy people can't find time for. Like searching for a reputable cleaner or setting up a filing system to tame the unruly paperwork which seems to swamp many people's houses. Even filing CD collections into alphabetical order to save all that cursing when your favourite music goes missing. Some of her other services involve more detailed

work, as with helping people find their ideal holiday venue. After determining a broad idea of what her clients are looking for, she comes up with two or three different choices for them, using the Internet and other sources. "I check out climate, find out what local attractions there are, and can research flights and car hire if needed – as much or as little as requested," said Pam. One family recently posed her the problem of finding the ideal weekend break venue to fit in with the demands of three generations. Of the options Pam came up with, they chose a rural spot in the Peak District and enjoyed a weekend's walking. "We had been trying to organise a weekend away for our extended family and were quite busy. I thought it would be nice for someone to plonk some choices in front of me without having to do the donkey work myself," said Ann Schwerzenbach. "It was all quite painless." As a former information manager with a London law firm, Pam enjoys the 'thrill of the chase' when it comes to fact finding, and admits she is always

collecting ideas and useful information wherever she goes. She will even look into your family tree, but this can obviously prove more time consuming than her more usual jobs. "Some days you find out lots and then there are days when the trail goes cold. So instead of charging my usual hourly rate of £20, I suggest the client buys a

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'block' of time at a reduced rate," she said. She recently spent time researching jewellery suppliers for a client who planned to set up a new business. "She wanted ideas to help her decide what style of jewellery to go for," explained Pam, "I found various options, and she is now using suppliers in the Far East, Brussels and Mauritius, and having pieces designed for the high-end of the market."

At the other end of the spectrum, Pam offers a housesitting service, she can organise the laundry, or will even valet your car. And then there's the bane of everyone's life – waiting in for the delivery men. She does that for people, too. A more unusual request came from a lady who wanted Pam to empty her loft of clutter: "She is afraid of heights, so couldn't climb the ladder, and her husband is very tall and found the loft space too cramped to climb into!" Talking to Pam, I was really envious of two of her clients, a professional couple who often entertain at weekends. She goes into their home on a Friday to tidy up, arrange flowers, change the beds and put out clean towels. Popping an M & S dinner in the fridge along with bottles of wine to chill is all part of the service, and Pam will preprepare fresh food if required. It sounds wonderful, I commented. "I know – I wish someone would do it for me," she laughed. "Perhaps I should mention it in the right quarters before my next birthday!"
Mission Accomplished can be reached on 01543 250953.