This initiative is based on the successful Ignite program managed and delivered by the University of Cambridge Judge Business School’s Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (CfEL)

Donna’s customers include hairdressers, engineers, lawyers, sub-contractors and women with home-based businesses. Anyone direct-selling products like Arbonne, Herbalife or Enjo find the product of real benefit. Donna says it has helped one lady running a small business prove to her husband that she really was contributing to the family budget. Donna says, “Hard Hat Bookkeeper doesn’t do wages, so it’s ideal for the sole trader and avoids the complexity of spreadsheets and traditional accounting software. There’s no need to do double entry bookkeeping. Invoices can be photographed or input as a PDF so it’s ideal for commission-based businesses, and those that do not generate a huge number of invoices over the course of the year. I’m currently targeting Uber drivers and direct-selling marketers, but it can be used by anyone and is so simple that some customers have said it’s so easy, it’s more like a game!” Users are even able to enter records via a mobile app, for greater flexibility and convenience.

Coming to Ignition with product already developed, Donna knew that her focus needed to be on sales and marketing but didn’t realise how much focus would be needed on these aspects of her business to make it successful. Donna is the first to admit she is not young anymore, but she has found her age to be an advantage. “My age means that I’m not afraid to approach people. Some younger people had a fear of approaching ‘suits’, but this is where I find my age has an advantage. I also have learned over the years that finding the ‘gatekeeper’ is most important – finding that someone who knows someone who may be able to help you go forward, and I’m no longer afraid to ask for contacts. Ignition made approaching the professional people less ‘scary’ and helped me know what to ask for when I met them. The contacts I made during Ignition were invaluable. I’ve also learned that building a trust relationship is most important. Ignition, for me, created an awareness of what needed to be done and the mountains I have to climb. I may only be part way up but my passion to drive Hard Hat Bookkeeper will carry me through to success."

For more information:
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A Curtin Ignition Case Study
Hard Hat Bookkeeper
Donna Vincent

"...I’m helping sole traders move towards the tax office directive of a paperless record-keeping system by the year 2020."

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**Donna Vincent**

**Hard Hat Bookkeeper**

Donna Vincent attended the 2014 Ignition. She was awarded a scholarship by the WA Small Business Development Corporation, and was surprised to find a program like Ignition! Coming from ‘old school’ thinking – that entrepreneurial education did not exist – she was not seeking to do a teaching program, and, in fact, did not know that entrepreneurial education was available.

As a woman with true fighting spirit, Donna did not take the easy route.

Already bearing the burden of a family trauma, she decided to compound the pressure by starting her own business. She came to Ignition with her product, Hard Hat Bookkeeper, a ‘one-stop’, easy-to-use bookkeeping package aimed at sole traders and contractors. The product was ready for market, but Donna had already discovered how hard it was to make that product a success.

Ignition proved to be a big learning curve – Donna openly admits that she didn’t realise a business plan might be needed to help drive her business forward. She says, “It was so intensive and full-on that I cried every day, but delighted in the fact that the people who I met through the program were ‘real’ people, who have real experience of running their own business. She says, “It was so intensive and full-on that I cried every day, but delighted in the fact that the people who I met through the program were ‘real’ people, who have real experience of running their own business.”

Donna Vincent is now moving her business into its second year and clients are renewing their subscriptions. Donna suggests Hard Hat Bookkeeper as a much simpler alternative to products such as Xero and MYOB. It is specifically designed for sole traders and small business people. It’s easy to use, anyone and is so simple that some customers have said it’s so easy, it’s more like a game!”

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**A Curtin Ignition Case Study**

**Hard Hat Bookkeeper**

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