



Social Butterfly

Renée Wallen, recently awarded CEO of the Year 2017 – London, for her role as founder and CEO at Imaginative Training, is a renowned specialist in effective communication skills. She outlines her thoughts on social media marketing, business growth and making the most of working in the UK's capital city.

Founded by Renée in 1998, Imaginative Training grew from a company specialising in plain English business communications to the global social media business it is today. It has two main strands: training, obviously, mainly in social media marketing and related topics; and actual social media marketing – for businesses that are too busy to do it themselves.

It is for both of these aspects that the firm and its Director, Renée Wallen, have been recognised by Corporate Vision for its Executive of the Year awards, as well as the UK Independent Business Honours List, which honoured the firm for training and coaching.

Working with an eclectic range of companies to provide them with a more effective on-line presence, Imaginative Training's clients include mid-sized corporates in professional areas such as accountancy and law, to specialist companies including those in hotel hospitality and engineering. With bespoke packages for smaller clients, as well as comprehensive services for larger firms, the business offers an ideal social media marketing solution for every size and type of company wanting to get ahead.

One of the firm's recent success stories was its work promoting a client's 'meeting-up app.' Renée has worked with them on previous projects so she was their first port of call for promoting this new app on social media.

Initial meetings, held over coffee and cake in a favourite Shoreditch café, ensured that she and her team understand the product completely. Together, they then nail down the target market and client's vision in order to create a marketing strategy going forward.

So, what marks out this social media company from its competitors? "We're business people," says Renée. "Many of our competitors are fresh from university with bag loads of enthusiasm and a natural talent for tweeting, but often they have no business acumen. We offer the whole package! And with a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics, I am able to ensure that clients' communications – whether tweeted, posted or emailed – are correctly spelled, punctuated and grammatically or colloquially accurate. It's a cliché, but first impressions count – and with prolific social media, mistakes don't go away."

Renée loves the training aspect. She works with businesses in group sessions or – as she prefers – on a one-to-one basis, teaching them the specifics of social media marketing for their particular industry. "I used to teach in adult education, and I've lectured and presented for years. This is how the social media side of the business came about. People would attend my sessions then call me a few weeks later to say they understood what to do, but simply didn't have the time, energy or copywriting skills in-house to handle the demands of on-line marketing. We can step in

and take all that pressure away from them, which leaves them to do what they do best, and us to tell the world about it!"

Social media is a vast and ever growing industry. New platforms naturally bring different challenges for businesses. Issues such as keeping ahead of the search engine algorithms, being creative with regular blogging and pushing through the increasingly-limiting unpaid reach of Facebook mean that small to medium-sized businesses often can't cope alone. This has led to the rise in firms such as Imaginative Training. As Renée comments: "Not all businesses need to be on every platform. Some clients are more suitable for marketing on LinkedIn, while others enjoy the camaraderie of Twitter and interaction on Facebook. It's about targeting it in the most appropriate way."

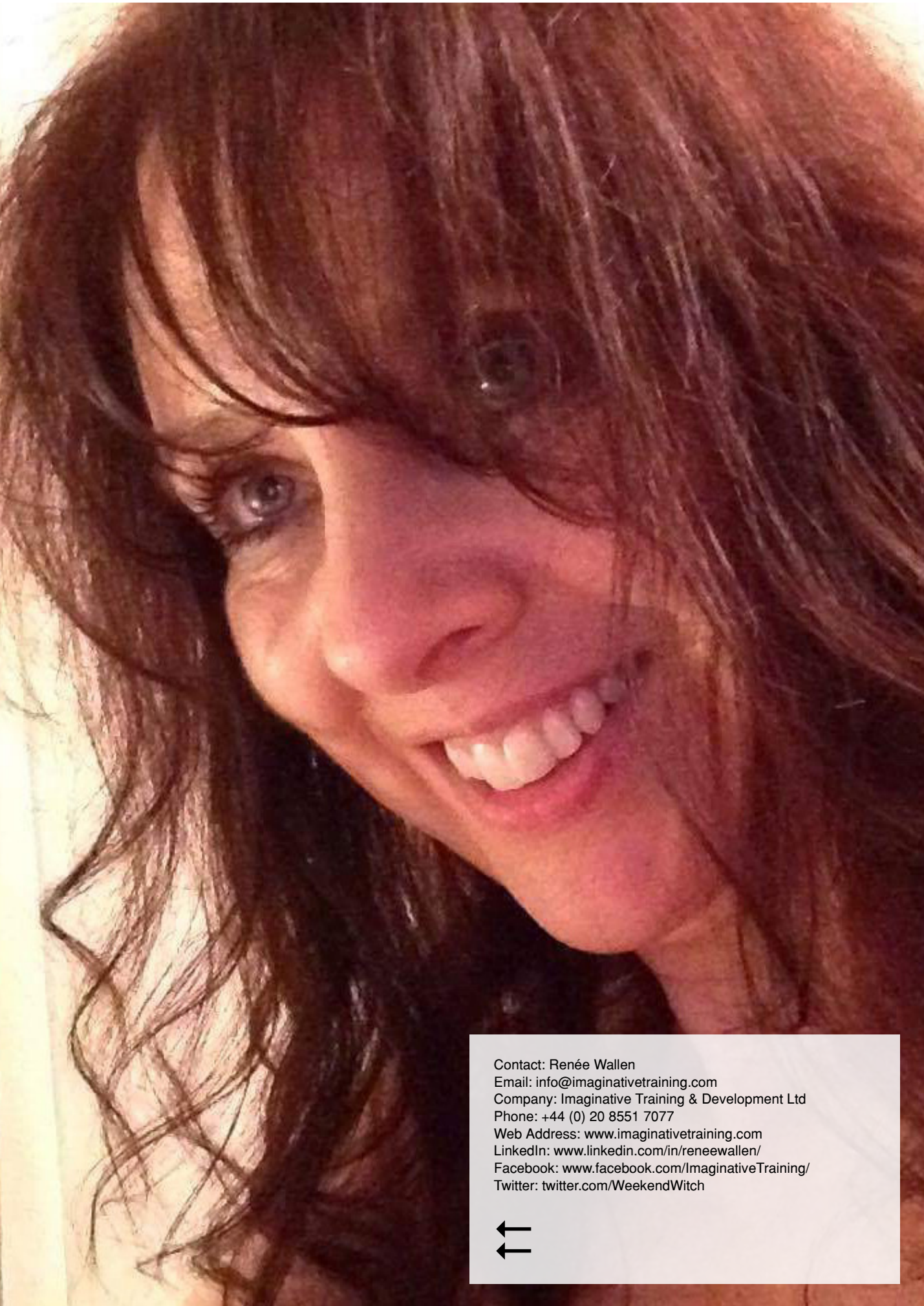
"We work with clients across the globe, from America to the Netherlands, Ukraine to Australia. Different target audiences in differing geographical environments can require diverse tones of voice, so we cater for whatever our customers need." With its global reach, the majority of Imaginative Training's clients are based in and around London, allowing Renée to spend a great deal of time building solid business relationships at city-based networking events and in the capital's finest cafés and chocolate shops.

Imaginative Training's internal culture is relaxed yet

professional. Renée reveals that "the nature of the business means that the team can be dispersed yet cohesive. Social networks help of course!! With Facetime, Skype, simple email and the reams of communications apps available, everyone working on a particular project can be easily kept in the loop. But nothing beats a good old face-to-face catch-up, which is why we are taking a few days out for a team holiday in the beautiful Isle of Mull later this spring."

The team is well equipped to ensure clients receive the best possible service. A systemised business approach and constant contact to become enmeshed in each client's individual culture allows everyone to feel part of the wider team picture. "We don't advertise who our clients are, as we think of ourselves as an extension to their own teams." Renée works closely with those clients' business owners and is delighted to be included in their team events. In the past couple of years, she's been to several awards dinners and celebrations (having copywritten their successful award applications) plus trips to Paris and various beautiful hotels and day trips around the UK.

What does the future hold for Imaginative Training? A solid business strategy and a lot of satisfied clients! If you'd like to find out more about the services offered, please call Renée on 020 8551 7077, email info@imaginativetraining.com or connect on social media!



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