

THE POWERHOUSE



Since our 10th edition of StartupTV, Penny Power has been with us as a regular columnist – giving out free to our subscribers each month her pearls – OK poor attempt at a techie joke – of wisdom about the use of social media and online networking to a business' best advantage and her observations about doing business in this exciting digital age.

The beauty of a digital magazine is of course that we can utilise videos. So, our regular columnists – who are all experts in their fields – feature each edition in short video clips, in which they give a different pointer. Our filming sessions with Penny are an absolute pleasure – and testimony to what a complete professional she is and how well she knows her stuff.

As the founder and owner of Ecademy, the immensely popular online networking and learning environment for business people, Penny's diary is usually jam-packed – so once we get our hands on her we usually get her to film a series of clips in one session. Penny always does each of her pieces to camera in one take – and although she may have thought briefly about what she was going to say on the way to the venue – her fresh, relevant and riveting snatches of advice are generally off the top of her head. She never repeats what she's covered in previous editions, and each time presents something that a business person can listen to, engage with, and then use to further their and their business' online presence and build their base of followers, who are of course potential customers.

Penny has been in business since she was 19, when she joined the fast growing PC industry in 1983. Penny founded Ecademy in 1998, and was

an early pioneer in the world of social networking for business people. In September 2010 she launched the Ecademy Digital School to teach business people how to adapt and grow in the digital world.

Penny is a strong advocate of making relationships online. If all you do is broadcast yourself and your services – in a 'Hey! Look at me!' fashion, no-one is going to trust you or care. Rather, the right approach is, as Penny puts it, 'know me, like me, follow me'. If you engage with people online, and give them some value instead of trying to suck them in with sleazy sales pitches, you will build 'social capital' into your business and make stronger connections – which will translate into sales and recommendations in time.

Although she is a powerful and determined business woman, she is also a proud matriarch. She and husband and fellow Ecademist Thomas have three children, and a couple of canines who she jokes demand as much if not more attention than the children. "We are a close family, we laugh a lot together, we travel a great deal to meet members all over the world and we love our family time," Penny says. "I think the greatest aspect of Social Networking and the online world for us has been the aspect of working from home a great deal, allowing Thomas and I to be close to the children as they grow up. I am sure that is something that many of Ecademy Members have experienced and it is an enormous benefit of the new online world."

Something Penny is quite excited about at the moment is the

Boardroom – an Ecademy invention that had its Business Startup Show debut at the London ExCel event in May. The Boardroom is a peer to peer mentoring exercise for startups and growing businesses, where participants can share, discuss and engage with each other in a boardroom meeting-type format, with assistance from a trained facilitator. It was a popular feature at the show, and the organisers are hoping it will become a regular one.

It was nice to get the opportunity to have a proper chat to Penny this edition, rather than making her do the usual staring down the camera lens routine! Hear about what makes the Boardroom so special and other golden nuggets of advice from StartupTV's very own powerhouse – Penny Power. Hit play!