

Ania Norko goes from Skip Chick star to head honcho

IT'S difficult to imagine anything more thrilling than being named Skip Hire & Waste Magazine's Skip Chick of the Year.

But 2018 winner Ania Norko has topped even that – by launching her own waste management business.

Ania, 28, launched her broker's business Skipland earlier this year, taking orders from domestic and commercial customers and matching them with the most suitable operators, all while working from her London home at the peak of the pandemic.

Now she has her sights set on broadening her fledgling business beyond west London to cover the whole of the capital and, further ahead, running her own waste transfer station.

Ania, who came to England on holiday from Poland when she was 18 years old and decided to stay, said being Skip Chick in September 2018 and then being picked as our Skip Chick of the Year, gave her the confidence boost to turn her ambitions to be her own boss into a reality.

"My appearance as Skip Chick was up on the wall of the office where I was working at the time, and it felt pretty good," she said. "I felt really special. It did give me a boost.

"I had been thinking of starting my own business for a while. Earlier this year I decided it was time to branch out and work for myself.

"So far it's gone really well, and I am loving it."

Ania began working in the waste sector 10 years ago when she joined Gowing and Pursey Skip Hire in northwest London's Twyford Abbey Road. Having initially started in the weighbridge, she moved to the site office to assist the transport manager and then into sales where she was sales team co-ordinator.

The range of jobs gave her vital insight into how the waste sector works. She stayed until 18 months ago when she took up a new sales role with B&K Environmental Services in Ruislip.

"I'd been working in the waste business for a long time and had thought about running my own business for a while," she said. "While at B&K, I worked with a few brokers and decided it was something I could do too, giving me an opportunity to work closely with other businesses."

She saved hard to ensure she was in a solid financial position before unveiling Skipland in May and leaving B&K the following month.



■ Ania Norko

Launching at the height of a pandemic worked to her advantage, she added.

"It's been the ideal time to launch a business because of the huge demand for skips from people working on their homes while they are furloughed or in lockdown.

"A lot of my work now is with B&K and I have a great relationship with them. I'm concentrating just now on serving customers across West London, but I'm already getting customers from all over London.

"The five-year plan - if everything goes the way I want - is to have my own waste transfer station."

Ania's business partner and tip-top accountant, Joanna Tomczyk, makes sure all the finances add up. Her husband is a skip lorry driver, who has worked with Ania for several years now. The team is looking to eventually expand Skipland and take on more drivers to offer customers a full waste collection service in the near future.

Ania added: "I am looking forward to building up my own customers and seeing how far the business can go.

"It's exciting and I'm really enjoying being my own boss."

Skipland Waste Management is in Northolt, West London.

www.skipland.co.uk



■ Ania Norko (left) and business partner Joanna Tomczyk (right)