

From an uncertain beginning to 200 fully certified products

EMMA THOMPSON TELLS LOCAL WOMEN HOW SHE WENT FROM A HEAD BUZZING WITH ACRONYMS TO A BUSINESS BUZZING WITH HUNDREDS OF HANDMADE PRODUCTS.

Hello lovely readers! Welcome to my November column. I'm Emma Thompson, also known as @missbeehaven123 on social media.

I'm an ethical beekeeper with a social media following of over 90,000 and the proud founder of Bee Haven Bodycare®.

I'm thrilled to announce the launch of our Christmas gifting range! You can find these delightful gifts at our shop in Ballygowan or on our website, www.beehavenbodycare.co.uk. Keep reading for an exclusive DISCOUNT voucher!

IF I'D KNOW FROM THE BEGINNING WHAT I WAS GETTING INTO, I MIGHT HAVE HESITATED!

Let me tell you a little story about the challenges I faced when starting my business. If I had known from the beginning what I was getting into, I might have hesitated. I'm grateful that I didn't know about the complexities of compliant cosmetic manufacturing in the early days! It would have been quite discouraging. So, I'll take you back to how it all began and how I discovered that I wasn't operating within the legal framework.

I started my skincare range in my kitchen. It all started with a balm that miraculously healed my acne (The Beekeepers Intense Skin Balm®).

I began marketing and selling it to my small Facebook audience. I made a few sales, but luckily,



someone locally who made soap warned me to stop and become compliant.

This person pointed me in the direction of the EU CPR (EU Cosmetic Products Regulation (EC) No. 1223/2009). I must admit, I find this kind of stuff boring, and as a dyslexic person, reading anything 'wordy', let alone boring, can be quite challenging. So, you can imagine how overwhelmed I was.

I wanted to run away and forget about the 'magic balm' I had just created. But something

When moving a hive within a very short distance, say 20ft for example, it is advisable to move the hive 3ft a day (or every time you visit). The foraging worker bees will come back to the old site and quickly re-orientate themselves to the new location without too much drama or stress.

This is what we are doing in our apiary at the moment. A tree has got in the way of a hive and is blocking out the sun. A new location 20ft away will be perfect, so we move the hive 3ft each week.

A distance under three miles? In this case, a beekeeper must move the hive further away (over three miles from both the new and the old location). Then after a few weeks, close the bees up again and move them to the required location.

The bees then orientate themselves without running the risk of remembering their old home. Flying bees retain a memory of their surroundings and the location of the sun relative to their hive to find their way home, so you run the risk of confused, homeless bees if you don't adhere to this rule.



AT THE HIVES – Moving Bees - the 3ft or three-mile rule!

You might think you can just move bees, but it's a little more complex. If a beekeeper is moving hives a distance, say to another apiary over three miles away, then they close the bees in first.

This is undertaken when all the bees are in the hive – after dusk or before dawn is perfect! You block up the door to avoid escapees, then you can move the colony in full without leaving any bees behind.

inside me told me to stick it out. And I'm so glad I did because we now have over 200 certified handmade products, a shop, website and app.

And, to top it all off, I have Brooke, my daughter, as my business partner - which is especially meaningful to me, considering I was a teen mom. It's truly incredible!

My first step was to get the product certified with a cosmetic product safety report, which is undertaken by a chartered chemist. Back then, it cost £180, so you could say I started my business with a £180 investment.

However, the challenge was only starting. Little did I know that I needed to wrap my head around formulation percentage rates, INCI (International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients) names of the ingredients and their CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service) numbers.

For example, honey is known as MEL and its CAS number is 8028-66-8. It was like speaking another language!

I should note that certification is not the only thing you need to do to become compliant. There is also navigating the Cosmetic Product Notification Portal (CPNP), Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Product Information Files (PIFs), batch paperwork, compliant labeling, and craft insurance to mention a few!

Luckily, I wasn't (too) put off, as we have since replicated that process over 200 times, and compliance is Brooke's full-time job, along with managing the finances.

It seemed quite a lot of work for selling 10 or 20 units per month and I have often wondered whether it was worth the effort. The answer is a resounding 'yes'!

A few units have turned into a healthy business where we help minimise the effects of skin issues, such as acne, eczema and psoriasis.

Emma x

A festive Christmas promotion banner. At the top, it says 'SAVE 15% CODE: XMAS15'. Below that is a product image of a 'Christmas Cookie' jar, wrapped with a blue ribbon. The background is decorated with colorful Christmas lights and ornaments. At the bottom, the word 'Christmas' is written in a large, golden, cursive font. The website address 'www.beehavenbodycare.co.uk' is at the bottom. On the right side, there is a vertical yellow banner with the text: 'online or instore, one use per customer, Christmas gifts only, cannot be combined. Exp 31.12.23'.