



## Tara Cardwell

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### **1. We would love to hear about your background story! What made you start a paper crafting business?**

I've been crafting for as long as I can remember - I made leather jewelry as a kid back in the 80's and moved on through embroidery, beading, silversmithing, and millinery, even having a tiara making business for a while (Tara's Tiaras was too good a name to pass up!) but I was always drawn back to pens and paper. I loved nothing more as a kid than getting new pens to start the school year so once I discovered Copic markers and stamps around 12 years ago I was in crafter's heaven.

I started to follow some US craft bloggers and was finding it hard to find the stamps they were using so wondered about opening a store to sell them in the UK. That's when I found "Make the Day Special" and realized someone was already doing it. So I shelved my idea and became a customer, then later joined their Design Team when an opening came up. When the owner had to step down due to family issues, I bought the business and took over.

I was working as an HR and Office Manager for a software company at that time and didn't really think "craft" would ever be my full-time job, so I ran

the store alongside full-time work for a year but as it grew, I went part-time and eventually had to quit as I was working 18 hour days to fit it all in. I quit the day job in February 2016 and have never looked back and now my husband runs the business with me full-time so we love that we can spend more time together too.

**2. How long have you been in the business and how many team members are there currently (if applicable)?**

I bought the business, which was much smaller then, back in December 2013 and opened it (alongside a full-time day job) in January 2014. We've grown the business massively since then but still run it just between my husband Rick and I with some part-time packing help from Liz a couple of days a week.

**3. Do you have a business motto or a mission statement you live by?**

Our aim is to stock the widest range of US goods in the UK and to become the go-to store for quality craft products with service to match!

**4. What brought you to Altenew and made you carry our products in your store?**

I've always followed a lot of the big US craft-bloggers and as soon as I saw them using Altenew stamps, I knew we had to get your products in the store. We always try to keep on top of the new brands in the US market and bring them to the UK for crafters who hate the dreaded import fees we have to pay!

Altenew was just so different from other products on the market at that time and I think we were the first store to bring them to the UK and Europe. I'm thrilled that Altenew continues to innovate and bring out such interesting and fun products and I know my customers and I can't wait to see what's coming next!

**5. If you can choose, what is the biggest joy you have by running the business?**

We love the feedback we get from our wonderful customers - we really are building a lovely community around our online store. We recently lost our cat to ill health and the warmth and support we got from our customers was just amazing. I also really love opening each new box of stock when they arrive - it's like Christmas morning every day!

**6. This is just for fun, please share your all-time favorite Altenew product with us!**

I have LOTS of favorites, but if pushed I think I might choose the [Layered Floral Cover Die A & B Bundle](#) as it was the first layered die set I used and I just love the results you can get.



This is my favorite card I made with it - adding alcohol marker coloring to bring the layers to life (before the matching stencils were available, which now makes it much easier!)