



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
**State Examinations Commission**

## **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme**

**Link Modules**

**Case Study 2017**

## AMY'S CHOCOLATE

Amy graduated from college with a languages degree and went to work in the marketing department of a large multinational company. She was very successful and was promoted several times. However, after a number of years she felt the need to reassess the direction her career was taking. Amy had always wanted to run her own business and drew on her lifelong hobby of cooking and baking for inspiration. Over the years, she has sold her produce at local country markets. Her chocolate and fudge confectionaries consistently proved most popular. Keen to explore new options, while still working, Amy completed a "Start Your Own Business" evening course which provided her with invaluable insight into running a business.

After extensive market research, she decided to leave her marketing job and embark on a new career, thus "Amy's Chocolate" was established. Initial financial support was provided both by her family and her own savings. Amy decided that working in her home was not a feasible option hence a suitable premises in her local town was found. This new premises allows for both the production and sales of her products on site.

"Amy's Chocolate" has won many awards both for the success of the business and the top quality product itself. Amy has diversified into different areas to develop her business: personalised gifts and hampers, children's chocolate making parties, Easter egg making and decorating etc. She has put a lot of thought and research into her styling, packaging and presentation. Many of her ingredients have been sourced locally, thus supporting the local community and economy. She has recruited staff from a nearby college of further education and trained them in both production and sales. Amy prides herself on her positive approach to staff development. She considers herself and her staff to be a team that works well together ensuring a high quality final product. From the knowledge gained on the "Start Your Own Business" course Amy has come to realise that there are many elements to a successful business and each must be developed and strengthened.

To further increase sales, Amy has approached a large retail outlet offering to supply her speciality chocolate; should she be successful she will have to expand her business. The existing premises would not be adequate to cope with such large orders. In addition, extra staff and equipment would be needed. A unit in a local enterprise centre has become available that would suit the business requirements. Further finance will have to be sourced if the business is to expand. She is presently looking at various options available to her, has started to prepare a new business plan and has talked to two agencies that help and support businesses and entrepreneurs.

Amy has taken full advantage of the opportunities presented to her. She has tailored and personalised her approach to recruitment and training of staff and has been duly rewarded for this. Having built a loyal team, everyone employed by Amy delivers the highest standard of work and of produce thus helping the business reach its goals.

The chocolate market is very competitive and this brings its own challenges. However, despite the hard work related to the management of a business, Amy never regrets moving from being an employee to owning her own business. This career change has given her personal and professional satisfaction despite the risks and challenges involved. Amy has developed new skills and is aware that she must continually develop both personally and professionally to ensure future business success.