

LOS ANGELES

MAY 2010

Family

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AMAZING MOMS

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"I LOVE WHAT I DO"

ERIN BROCKOVICH
STILL FIGHTING FOR YOU

MOTHERS OF INVENTION

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Mothers of Invention

Mom Businesses Inspired By Family Needs

WHO

hasn't thought, "I wish someone would invent something to make my life easier." We bring you moms who did just that. We asked them to share their journeys, what it takes to make a business viable, and the best advice they'd like to pass along.



At the post office one busy morning, Lily Winnail juggled her newborn baby in his carseat, as well as a box to be mailed out, and her two older girls. As she became sore from the carseat handle digging into her arm, an idea struck: invent a product to cushion her arm and look great. Padalily was born: a plush and stylish cushion that wraps around the car seat handle making it comfortable and easy to carry.



Michelle Herbert and Amy Wright wanted a bag that was fashionable and practical, with separate sections for their stuff and for baby, that could go from the park, to work, to a night on the town. AmyMichelle bags are exactly that.



Maya Churi, along with three other moms, wanted to teach their families about the planet in a fun and entertaining way. They produced a kids' album called My Changing Planet, which features favorite musicians and actors performing songs and stories that do just that.

Erin Rosen and Laila Bowden conceived of Crazy Ketchup when their toddlers decided to give up vegetables. These moms started playing hide-the-purees-in-the-macaroni. Realizing that kids love dipping everything in ketchup, they started slipping pureed veggies into the ketchup. Then they decided to go all the way, making their own ketchup with organic carrots, sweet potatoes, squash and agave nectar.



When Kelsey Clark first became a mother, front carriers (like Baby Bjorn) were everywhere. She wanted more style and function, so she created a slipcover with colorful designs on the softest recycled chenille, with a pocket for keys, phone or pacifier, and My Little Roo was born. The washable slipcovers gave her baby carrier new life, and Kelsey has used her carrier for all three of her boys.

(and the best advice for starting your new business!)

We asked all of them what motherhood skill is most useful in business, and they were unanimous: multitasking! Here's what else they said:

ALL MOM SKILLS APPLY

Amy & Michelle: Negotiating with the kids is much more difficult than negotiating with large company buyers. By 8 am, we have negotiated for lunch money, appropriate school attire and the benefits of protein at breakfast. By our first conference call, we are warmed up to negotiate budgets, ad space and promotions. Being a mom has helped us understand that everything does not have to go exactly the way we want to be happy. Many times we give a little so that everyone is happy.

Lily: Being a mom requires multitasking, time management, problem-solving, putting out fires, communication, organization, delegating and cleaning up other people's messes. All these skills have been used regularly in my business!

DO WHAT INSPIRES YOU.

Erin & Laila: We feel a great amount of support from consumers who are hungry for a healthy product, especially families who have special dietary needs. We didn't realize how important having a healthy ketchup is to all kinds of people. It sounds weird but we are constantly being thanked by people who can now have ketchup again or who have wanted to change their diet for the better.

Amy & Michelle: The best advice we can give is that if you want your own business, make sure you have a complete passion for it. You will be in your business 24/7 and you need to love what you do.

ASK QUESTIONS.

Lily: People told me to "Start small" and "Ask lots of questions." I clung to these at the beginning. I had no background in running a business, and wasn't sure if my idea was as good as I thought it was. I received a lot of feedback from other moms and from

retail stores. I asked and continue to ask tons of questions to those who have gone before me, or who have expertise in an area I know little about.

SET DEFINITE TIME LIMITS.

Maya: The most important thing is to set aside time—especially if you work from home. When the kids are in school or the babysitter is there, work on the business—don't clean the house. Then, when it is time to be with the kids, you will be relaxed knowing you took care of the most pressing business items of the day. During the times when business is very busy and I am stressed, if I take 20 minutes to stop and play a game of Go Fish with my five-year-old it makes a world of difference, for both of us.

Kelsey: I'm very hands on with my kids and want to be there for all their activities. That's the beauty of a stay at home job. I tend to do my work late at night when the family is asleep and when the older two are in school and the baby is sleeping.

Amy & Michelle: Simple changes such as ordering groceries online save us over 2 hours per week. We have had to make a conscious effort to delegate responsibilities that do not negatively impact anyone in the family. For example, it is important to my daughter that I attend every event at school, but instead of baking the cookies, I buy them. Also, I am an early bird and many times I get a jump start on my day while the kids are still sleeping. I stop at 7 am to wake them up, make breakfast and drive them to school. At 3 pm, I shut down my computer and spend the afternoon with the kids. Most nights I work after the kids are in bed. To keep myself on schedule I only use the laptop battery and when the battery dies, I know it is time to stop and go to bed.

PERSEVERE.

Lily: The original name for my product was opposed by another company for trademark reasons. I was devastated, having spent money on trademark filings, website costs, labels, hangtags,

and all my marketing materials. I learned to roll with the punches. I had to count my losses, change my name and move on. Humbling myself when I really wanted to fight was the best decision I could have made. It forced me to channel my energy into being more creative and think of an even better name. The name Padalily is better suited for the product, and it's now officially a Registered Trademark.

Erin & Laila: The best advice we've received is to grow slowly and don't give up! We are passionate about our product and the health of families so that keeps us going!

Maya: We hired someone to help us bring in talent to perform on the album but they didn't bring us a single act. After a brief mourning period we picked ourselves up and found another way. We were all so passionate about this project, we loved the music and were determined. That determination helped us through it.

It's important to be okay with failure, accept it and try again, maybe in a different shape or form. There is a quote written on the chalkboard in my dining room that says, "Everything is possible, again." It reminds me on a daily basis that if I can't get something done one day, I can always try again the next. This is true for big, life changing goals and the small day-to-day goals.

GIVE BACK.

All of the women and businesses we profiled give back to charity. Kelsey Clark creates special My Little Roo covers like the "pink ribbon" style, for which 100% of profits support breast cancer research. And Amy Michelle donates up to 5% of profits benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Denver.

Questions about how to start your business? E-mail us at: editor@familymagazingroup.com & we'll find an expert to answer you.