

Mompreneurs

BALANCING CAREER AND YOUR FAMILY

By: Jennifer Weatherhead

For many moms, the first idea of heading back to the workplace after maternity leave makes them shudder. For any mom, whether it is a new mom, or one who has a couple of children already, the idea of spending more time at home with the kids is exactly what they want. Well, there is a new revolution happening among new moms, and it's happening right here in our own community. The idea... Mom-Preneurs.

A Mom-Preneur is a mom who is an entrepreneur and has come up with her own small business plan. Sounds simple doesn't it? Well, it means so much to moms that's turning into a phenomenon. The main concept—instead of returning back to that full-time job you had before starting a family, start up your own small business that allows you to work at home and still spend quality time with your family. The idea of a small business has been around for centuries, but for a mom it has taken on a new meaning and it's affecting our communities in many ways.

After spending 11 years in the corporate world in marketing and video production, Jennifer Percival and her husband started a family. After the birth of her son, Percival wasn't too keen on rejoining the rat race. She wanted the flexibility to stay at home with her new family, as most moms do. She knew flexibility wouldn't be there at work. So she started thinking of what she could do from home.

At first she thought her ideas were too high risk. It wasn't until she started making a video of her son as a Christmas present for family that she had an idea. She could do this for other people.

"Ninety-nine per cent of the people who talked to me said they had hours and hours of tape and didn't know what to do with it," Percival explains. "I thought to myself, hey, there's an opportunity here."

Soon friends were asking Percival if she could make them videos. She started Sugar Sugar Creative Videos, takes old video tapes, and makes it into a shortened video that families can enjoy. Her business has been live since March, and has taken off.



Evelyn Dufau

"I have moved from just doing home videos to recitals, weddings, anniversaries, and retirements," laughs Percival. "I go and video tape them and then make them into the film."

And while she can't say she will never return to the corporate world, her intent is to continue with her own business, even as her family grows older. She encourages others to give it a try.

"Really think about what your passions are and what you enjoy," she urges. "When you are on maternity leave you always think of things that can make your life easier. There might be something missing in the market that you can offer."

The main issue facing Evelyn Dufau was the desire to stay at home with her family, but to remain financially stable. Dufau says you need to discuss this before anything else.

"Make an assessment with your family situation," says Dufau. "My husband has a safe work position. You need to look at the needs of the family and decide if the risk can be taken."

After eight years with Hewlett Packard in sales and marketing, Dufau decided to look at what else she could do to bring in income. After she had her first child, she returned to work on a reduced week, something many employers offer now. But after her second child, a reduced work week wasn't an option. She talked to her husband about their financial situation, and whether they could start a small business.

Dufau not only started one small business, but two. Being from the South of France, Dufau took her knowledge of that area and began a travel service to France. The area in France she accommodates to isn't touristy and is a high end experience. It gives a highly customize vacation for individuals and small groups. The advantages were clear; she could stay at home with her family, give expertise on something she was passionate about, and for research, travel to the region. Children are in tow for these trips, a huge advantage and experience for her. What other business trip in the corporate world would allow children to go? Not that many.

Dufau also decided to take her French heritage and put it to use in the community. She started her own French summer camp for children. For two weeks kids get to enjoy a camping experience, while speaking and learning French.

Dufau's advice to women thinking of starting their own business is simple: "Do it well and do it with passion," she stresses. "Time is very precious, every minute

counts. We all wish there would be more part-time flexible jobs, but there aren't. Know yourself and understand your financial situation.

"The community has really helped me," she adds. "I get a great sense of community doing what I do, and they help me too."

Beginning with someone else's business is an option too as Kathy Richmond discovered. Richmond took over Mini Matinees, which rents out theatres to show movies for mom's with their babies. Richmond took her first child to the screenings and when she heard the business was for sale, she grabbed at the opportunity.



Jennifer Percival of Sugar Sugar

"Hannah (her first child) was only 7 or 8 months old and I wasn't sure if I wanted to go back to work. Plus we wanted to have another child, so I thought this could be great," explains Richmond.

Even though she wasn't sure how to set up a business, her husband helped and she had worked in Fundraising for nearly nine years. It's been a bright spot for Richmond and has been fulfilling in many ways.

"I was in Wal Mart and it was just so nice seeing a couple that came regularly to the movies," Richmond says with pride. "Parents email me and say thanks all the time. It's very fulfilling because I am meeting more moms in the community. It makes you feel like you are giving something to the community," she adds.

Unfortunately, the two locations Richmond used twice a week to show films, the Kingsway Theatre and the Roncesvalles Review will be shutting down in June. But that hasn't put a damper on Richmond's entrepreneurial bug. She's already thinking of two new business ventures that she hopes to launch this fall. In the meantime Richmond makes labels for Mabeled Labels. The labels are for parents to put on children's clothes, sippy cups, or other belongings when they go to daycare.

Richmond says it's a lot of multi-tasking but it's worth looking into for moms who want to stay at home.

"You can find that balance between your family and success. You can start small and go from there," she suggests. "Some people don't want to go back because of hours, or the work environment, but they still have an expertise from that job."

Antoinette van Speyk recently immigrated to Canada with her family. It was struggle to find a flexible job in her film industry background. She worked on numerous shows and films, but the hours were never steady.

"Going back to the job you had before is good if the hours allow for it," says van Speyk. "But 9 to 5? Never in the film industry, or other jobs."

After nearly 20 years in the film/TV industry van Speyk began sewing for a friend's company. Van Speyk's grew up sewing with her mother and enjoyed working with fabric. Soon, she developed her own client base and realized she could work from home. Last April she applied to the Self Employment Benefit Plan and in August was accepted. The government funded plan helped van Speyk get her business of designing and installing soft home furnishings (drapes, blinds, etc.) started. She attended a 10-week course to learn how to run a business and was appointed a business advisor. Once she got her business running, she realized the freedom it gave her.

"I have a child who has special needs," she explains. "This gave me so much more freedom to be with him and to be able to attend school functions with them. I can pick up my kids at school, attend parent gatherings at school, just be a more active member of the school and community. I don't work less hours than before, but I choose when I work them. Doing your own business gives you that control."

There are many options these days for moms who want to spend more time at home. Some employers offer flexible work weeks and hours. Or if you have the entrepreneurial bug, starting up your own business is not only possible, but rewarding and can be a success, as these fine women in our community have shown. It proves that moms can have the success that they want in careers and balance it with family life. Our communities are full of Mom-Preneurs, with businesses that are all useful to everyone who lives here. So the next time you need a video done, some labels made, a beautiful French vacation planned, or some new drapes for your home, look no further than right here in your own community and support those Mom-Preneurs. Check out the list of Mom-preneurs on the next page that has been compiled to let you know just where you can get great local services from Moms in our community.

Here are just a few of the Mom-preneurs that are in our community. There are many, many more ...

Marcia Boule

Pure Bliss Creative Design 416.762.7621 www.pure-bliss.ca

Works with clients to create customized/personalized cards, stationery and announcements to showcase all the special events in their lives. We also produce a retail line of cards that is in twenty or so stores in the GTA.

Jackie DeKnock

Gourmet Safari 416.238.9987 www.gourmetsafari.com

Gourmet Safari offers hand-picked authentic culinary vacations in key culinary regions of Italy, France, Spain and Morocco. Take in cooking lessons with local chefs using only the freshest of seasonal produce, visit local villages, restaurants, open-air markets & wine estates. We provide an authentic culinary travel experience that is unique and exclusive, with an orientation towards a highly personalized, independent service for the individual traveller.

Debbi Arnold

DA Consulting 416 762 9666 www.daconsult.ca

We often acts as a business mentor as many clients are self-employed and need to bounce ideas off someone. We motivate and encourage them to help grow their business. We offer a wide range of services, including marketing material design and editing, advertising, promotions (idea generation and execution), marketing plans, business plans, sales analysis, brand development (e.g. logo development), website design, business consultations.

Shirley Fairley

Freelance Photographer 416 763-7105 shirley.fairley@rogers.com

Specialize in photographing children and their families. We try to make the experience as fun and relaxing as possible which translates into lots of great shots

Diane Copoloff, M.H.Sc., DS Hom. Med.

The Homeopathy Clinic 416.604.7700 homeopathyclinic@rogers.com

Homeopathy is a gentle form of natural medicine with a 200 year history. A West-end Homeopath with strong community & academic foundation offers home visits, workshops and office hours at Roncesvalles & High Park clinics. Emphasis on children, moms and families. Diane's background in Health Promotion, counseling and wellness along with her open-minded approach, incorporates homeopathy along with all forms of healthcare (conventional, natural, etc.).

Evelyne Dufau

Expérience Authentique 416 760-9849 www.frenchsouthwest.com
Camp Baby Point En Français www.cpfont.on.ca

Focus on the design and planning of personalised travel experiences to the Southwest of France, my region of birth, for small groups and individuals who want to travel slow and well. I also organize and run a 2 week Summer camp in French, Camp Baby Point En Français, for francophone children and children schooled in French Immersion.

Antoinette van Speyk

Blinds, Drapes & Bedding 416.604.1412 www.blindsdrapesbedding.ca

At Blinds, Drapes & Bedding we custom design, manufacture and install high quality window coverings and soft home furnishings. The services offered include on site consultation to help clients and/or their Interior Designers determine their needs and evaluate their space. Products include: roman blinds, drapes, duvet covers, bed skirts, cushion covers, box seat cushions, crib bumpers and much more."

Nicole Lee

Nightshade Creations <http://www.geocities.com/nightshadecreations>

Nightshade Creations is your online one-stop shop for finding affordable and adorable personalized note cards, memo pads and business cards. Design your personalized stationery by selecting your choice of layout, colour, image and text. Personalized birth announcements and invitations are a great time saver!

Misbah Mukri-Tasci

Hoola-Hoop Kids Store 416-532-4142 www.hoolahoopkids.com

Hoola-Hoop Kids Store is a bright, cheery, and colourful childrens clothier where you can find truly original items for unique kids. From the receiving blankets that they come home swaddled in, to their first day of school outfit, hoola-hoop kids comes through with what you need. We also carry dance wear and ballet shoes in response to the community's request. It's a local favorite for the perfect gift whatever the occasion.

Sandra Miller

Wholeness and Growth 416.399-7421 www.wholenessandgrowth.ca

Individual and Couple Counselling and Psychotherapy, addressing emotional, relational and life transitional issues. Workshops include "From Maiden to Motherhood" - supporting women's transition to motherhood and "Night Vision Integrated" - exploring and working with your dreams.

Carolyn Burke

CBA Yoga 416.919.3407 www.cbayoga.com

CBA Yoga offers yoga retreats, weekly yoga classes, mom and baby yoga, prenatal yoga, on site corporate classes, yoga for kids and private sessions. Classes or workshops can be tailored to meet the needs of your group or gathering (ie. yoga for a party, wellness workshops).

Julie Henry

Buzz For Your Business 416.761.9939 buzz4yourbusiness@yahoo.ca

The majority of small businesses that fail, do so because of a lack of marketing experience. "Buzz For Your Business" helps small businesses succeed by creating unique marketing campaigns tailored to their specific needs.

Jenni Bolton

Walk With Me 416-621-8617 www.walk-with-me.ca

Walk With Me is a fitness program for adults of all ages and fitness levels. We offer low impact walking classes, combined with stretch & strength training. A Certified Fitness professional leads the classes and teaches the importance of day to day health & wellness, while you walk. Social, fun and motivating!

Tracey Capes

Tracey Capes Fine Art 416 763 3898 www.traceycapesfineart.com

We specialise in placing works of art within a diverse selection of home, business and government collections; organizing special events; coordinating juries, preparing catalogues; public relations activities and managing budgets. Everything we do supports efforts to promote the fine art community. We have over 20 years of experience working with corporate clients, government and non-profit organizations.

Tanya Willmott

Just 4 Kids Creations 416-504-8005 www.just4kidscreations.com

Our personalized books make a great gift for any occasion. Our books are hardbound with washable covers, colourfully illustrated, made and printed to order. Each personalized book becomes a valuable teaching tool, a unique family keepsake and a one of a kind gift.

Andrea Griggs

Griggs Associates 416.762.3270 andrea_griggs@hotmail.com

Andrea coaches clients who are seeking more fulfillment and passion in their lives. Some clients are matching their passions to a career, others are making a stronger commitment to a healthy lifestyle and others are devoting themselves to mastering English. Andrea believes that her clients are naturally creative, resourceful and whole. Her job is to help clients figure out where they want to go and how to get there by asking powerful questions, supporting, guiding, challenging and holding them accountable.

Gloria Czomko

Fun 4 Mums! 416.220.1784 www.fun4mums.org

The Fun 4 Mums mother's group is a west end mother's group dedicated to providing support, socialization, and community resource information to mums and their families. Fun 4 Mums offers its members monthly outings, an online event calendar, classified section and a weekly newsletter filled with helpful parenting information. Membership is Free & the Fun is Unlimited!

Rachael Giraldo

Salsa Babies 905.241.3834 www.salsababies.com

With little ones snuggled into baby carriers, new moms learn basic steps to popular Latin dances, while babies shake maracas and bounce along to the Salsa beat. Salsa Babies offers a great workout, a chance to socialize with other parents, and an opportunity to introduce one's child to music and movement. All levels of fitness and dance experience are welcome.

Jennifer Percival

Sugar Sugar 647.200.7290 www.sugarsugarvideos.com

Sugar Sugar offers home video editing for clients that do not know how to edit themselves or don't have the time. We can create any musical montage video (weddings, children, anniversaries, memorials, retirements, etc.) using all formats of home videos, photos and mementos. Sugar Sugar videos make great gifts for those 'difficult to buy for' people. They are guaranteed to be a big hit for any occasion, especially as a surprise for any Mom, Dad or Grandparent.

Nadine Crescenzi

Moulding Memories 416-761-1901 moulding_memories@rogers.com

It's mesmerizing to see how quickly your little ones change from the time they are born. Their tiny toes and little fingers will be a memorable keepsake. I take 3-Dimensional white cast of your babies hand/feet capturing all their tiny wrinkles. They are mounted in a beautiful deep rich wood frame using a background from a selection of lovely fabrics like silk and toile.

Linda Tommasino

2 Smart Cookies 416.819.7079

We offer freshly baked cookies decorated with milk chocolate or coloured chocolate for all occasions (eg: birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, Halloween, showers, baptisms and communions). Individual cookies are also available for loot bags and party favours. We deliver throughout the GTA.

Jackie Davidson

Boot Scootin' Baby 416-604-3833

Line Dancing lessons with Mommy and Baby. Babies are cuddled safely in a baby carrier while Mom has fun learning line dancing with other new Moms.