

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

Holding down a high-profile job and starting your own company is all about organisation.

Name: Peita Mages.

Job title/s: Publicity executive at Sony Pictures, co-founder of Smitten.

How do you manage your two full-time roles?

It's all about being organised. In publicity, there's a lot of after-hours work, so it's not a case of being able to work on Smitten every night. My day job pays the bills and is a priority, but I manage to find time to spend on Smitten.

I've heard you're a whiz in the kitchen. Did this inspire you to design your kitchen couture?

In actual fact, we started the business because I burnt my hand on an oven mitt that I had paid a lot of money for in a department store. When I realised what was on the market was either poor quality or pretty ugly, I thought there must be other women out there looking for good quality kitchenwear that is also fashionable.

Do you have a design background or formal business training?

My business partner is a brilliant designer and we took a small business course. I have a degree in communications/public relations and my partner has a masters in education, and teaches design.

What's the toughest part of running your own business?

Organising my time. Having two full-time jobs means there isn't a lot of time to relax.

And the easiest part?

Seeing trendy young women embrace our products. It's so satisfying to see that they're making women really happy! Every time I get lovely feedback from customers, it makes all the hard work worth it.

Can you tell us about any of your business misadventures so far?

There are probably too many to mention, but that's the fun part as long as the mistake is fixable (which, luckily, ours have been.)

What about business highlights?

We've launched a line that has garnered lots of interest and received some great publicity. We've also launched a successful website (www.smitten.com.au).

Have you got any advice for anyone who wants to start a business?

Educate yourself with a small business course before you invest



your money into an idea. Research your competitors and be realistic about what you are about to risk. Poll your friends and host focus groups. Start slow and let the business grow.

What are the differences between working for Sony Pictures and running your own company?

Smitten involves my money! I am not working with a massive budget, so I need to stretch my funds. Also, at Sony it would not be acceptable for me to work in my pyjamas.

How many different Smitten designs do you currently have?

We currently have nine signature Smitten apron and smitts sets. We also have other smitts (oven mitts) and aprons designed to flatter the female form, which are very sexy. We want customers to be able to put them on display, not hide them in the drawer! Our smitts are the two-handed style (more effective) and are equally as cute as our aprons!

Interview: Kristy Meudell ●

PEITA'S 9TO5 DAY

6.45am Get up and get ready to work at Sony Pictures.

8.30am Start work.

12.30pm If I am busy at work, I will work through lunch so I don't have to stay too late in the office.

5.30pm-6.30pm I travel home with my husband, so we can catch up on each other's day.

7pm Arrive home for gym, kickboxing or Pilates.

8.15pm Have dinner and catch up on a bit of trashy television.

9pm Check Smitten email, bank account and orders received during the day. Quick call to my business partner.

9.45pm Walk our beloved dog. In the summer months, a

time walk is very peaceful.

10.30pm-11.30pm Go to bed. I need my sleep for the busy day tomorrow!

