



How Your Family Drives Business Decisions

For many of us, working a regular day job is a means to support our families and loved ones. We trade our time from nine to five for a paycheck; we invest the money from that paycheck into our private lives and family. We trade our time for money, and use that money to improve our quality of life. But many working parents are beginning to realize there are alternate arrangements that might work better for their families -- and for themselves professionally.

This has given rise to a new breed of family oriented business owners and entrepreneurs: call them the "Parentpreneurs." They are working individuals who have adapted to the changing demands of the working world by creating a business that allowed them to trade in their daily grind in an office or cubicle for the ability to set their own work schedules and spend more time with their families.

Starting a Business for the Family Pet

Most businesses are starting to meet a pressing market need. Sometimes the market need might be identified through extensive research to find that unique opportunity in the market that no other product can fill. Other times your business starts out as a personal passion - perhaps even a quest - to solve a problem you or your loved ones might be facing.

Take [Roxy's Remedies](#); the company is an example of what can happen when a personal passion becomes a family business. The company was founded by Marianne Cronin and Vito San Filippo when their dog Roxy was experiencing allergies and itchy skin that did not respond to multiple medications and treatments. Marianne was desperate to help her beloved pet, and called on her background in the cosmetics industry to develop a treatment for Roxy's itchy skin that contained East Indian Sandalwood Oil, an essential oil known to be soothing to human skin.

The remedy worked and also turned out to fill a market need for natural products for dogs with sensitive skin. The company has since gone on to develop a line of all-natural, soothing pet care products that includes shampoo, conditioner, spray relief gel and cleansing wipes. "We were really lucky to partner with TFS, who has the only sustainable source for our active ingredient- East Indian Sandalwood Oil," says Vito San Filippo. "We've been amazed at the number of pet parents who are open to a natural solution for their dogs." It also answers the growing demand in the market for natural, sustainably sourced and produced pet care products, one of the fastest growing segments of the pet care market.

Putting the Focus On Family

Personal passions are one way a business can be born; other times a business might get started because of an actual birth. That's what happened to Doug and Marta Stein when the impending birth of their daughter prompted Doug to leave his demanding, high-travel job in the restaurant business to start Mad Style, a Chicago-based fashion and lifestyle business.

Many self-employed business owners have made the choice Doug did, to trade in their demanding careers for a more entrepreneurial lifestyle that allows them to spend more time with their families. Although most entrepreneurs still work long hours - studies indicate that the vast majority work more than 40 hours per week - as an entrepreneur they enjoy more control over when and where they will work. For individuals in high-powered jobs that require a lot of time away from home, where parents leave home before their children wake up and miss out on important milestones because of work obligations or travel, the appeal of having more control over the time spent working and being able to work in closer proximity to their family can be very attractive.

The attraction of a home-based business can be especially attractive for those who want to spend more time with their families. Although Mad Style has expanded to several retail storefronts and a thriving online and wholesale business, in the beginning it was a home-based business operating out of the Stein family's basement. Mad Style has grown their brand from 35 items to over 3,500 and from just a few retail customers to servicing over 6,000 retail stores across the country.

For Doug and Marta, Mad Style has enabled them to successfully balance family and home life, while also building a business that supports their family very comfortably. While the company is no longer based out of the Stein's garage and involves more travel than it did in the beginning, Doug Stein believes that trading in his job in the restaurant business for the opportunity to spend more time with family as an entrepreneur was the best decision he ever made.

"While we don't work from home anymore and travel a bit more than we would like to, we have been able to realize our dream," says Doug Stein, CEO of Mad Style. "Our daughter is now 12 years old and our son, who graduated from college a few years ago, has joined the business as Vice President of Operations. We've never missed an important family milestone or event in all this time."

Choosing the Balance that Works for Your Family

Family has always driven our business and work decisions; from deciding what careers we will pursue to the kinds of businesses we want to build. As the proliferation of the internet and mobile devices allow workers to be more flexible about where and when they work, many are turning towards entrepreneurship to build businesses in markets they might not have been able to reach in the past.

They are exploring business opportunities in fields that excite them, pursuing innovative ideas that help others, or just building a business that allows them to spend more time with family doing the things they truly love.

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