



MY BUSINESS

BRONWYN O'LOAN FROM SHOPHOUSE TALKS ABOUT THE UPS AND DOWNS OF STARTING AN ONLINE BUSINESS

Already operating for just over two years, Shophouse has had to face many challenges – the biggest two were cash flow and becoming known. 'I knew Shophouse was going to do well right from the start, but taking the business to the next step – the "I'm really serious and I need to start employing people" bit – was difficult,' says Bronwyn, acknowledging that she wouldn't be able to do it without the help of her team members.

Stocking a great range of products from Australian and international designers for parents and children aged up to six years, her key focus is on kids' clothing. 'We just love our Oobi Baby & Kids range, as well as Mill & Mia and Pure Baby, and we're really proud to now be offering the entire range of pieces from Osh Kosh B'Gosh,' says Bronwyn. 'One of our points of difference is that we work on offering a full range for each of our designers – we try to "tell the whole story" as this gives our customers a fantastic selection of their most-loved product lines.'

With a website that's easy to navigate, buying online at shophouse.com.au is a breeze.

Bronwyn's top tip Be ready to put in mega hours and you'd better make sure you are passionate and in it for the long haul. Creating a successful business takes time, patience, diligence and a little luck. Surround yourself with supportive people but, most importantly, have confidence in your abilities.

Image Strawberry Crochet Cardigan, \$44, Red April Skirt, \$39.95, and Hairclip (two-pack) \$19.95. All by Oobi Baby & Kids.



sweet tooth

Specialising in producing beautiful cakes for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and more, Cake Occasions design delicious cakes to your specifications. No matter what size or style you require, your needs will be fully catered for. Plus you can choose from heaps of different flavours – chocolate mud, banana, coconut, carrot, praline, orange and poppyseed, white chocolate or orange and almond. Prices start from \$200, so to make your event a memorable one, be sure to check out cakeoccasions.com.au.

THE WRITE STUFF

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE GORGEOUS INVITATIONS

• Sisters Siobhan and Vanessa say the trick to wow your guests is a carefully co-ordinated theme, stylish invitations, a gorgeous tabletop, creative take-home favours and a special thank you card. Plan ahead at detailsdetails.com.au.

• Enchantedenvelope.com.au is the distributor of special invitations for birthdays, weddings, holidays and even moving house. Picture Perfect is just one of the brands topping the extensive list of those found on this site.

• Every stage of childhood is a milestone so why not visit cards4me.com.au to celebrate each step? With invitations for showers, christenings and more, this site has all of your baby stationery needs covered.

• With over 100 designs to choose from, take a look at inviteme.com.au for beautiful invitations. They're a one-stop-shop for christenings, hens' parties, kitchen teas and birthdays – offering thank you cards and much more.



ECO LIVING

These days we break the bank to eat organic and avoid chemical-ridden produce to keep our organs healthy... but we often neglect our biggest organ: skin. What we put on our skin is absorbed into our bloodstream. For a brand you can trust, try an organic skincare range like Cherub Rubs – which contains no nasty toxins. With shea butter and lavender oil, Cherub Rubs offers baby products priced from \$9.95. Visit cherubrubs.com.



PURCHASE OR PERISH?

HIGH CHAIRS ARE ESSENTIAL, BUT WHAT TYPE IS BEST FOR YOUR NEEDS? AMANDA JEPHTHA FROM PLANNING FOR BABE OFFERS SOME SUGGESTIONS

Fixed. Folding. Table-clamping. Convertible. High chairs cater for every scenario imaginable. So which do you actually need?

Plenty of space Fixed high chairs tend to be more stable, durable and comfortable than their counterparts, but can be awkward to move around. Most can be height adjusted and recline to accommodate newborns, such as Bloom's Fresco (bloombaby.com). Others, like Stokke's Tripp Trapp (stokke.com) morph into adult chairs. However, not all have trays.

Short on space Many high chairs fold flat for easy storage. Cheaper models tend to be flimsy; double check the legs are well splayed and lock in place. Again, not all have trays. Table-clamping high chairs provide comfort with a space-saving design. Without legs, this type of chair attaches to the side of a table with strong clamps. Chicco's Quick Adjust Table Seat (chicco.com) has rubber table clamps to protect your table and the entire seat can be removed for washing.

A growing clan Some high chairs are durable and designed to be long lasting... others aren't. If you plan to expand your family by two or three, it's better to spend more in one go and get a good quality chair than spend less on many cheaper imitations (which will probably work out more expensive anyway). The award-winning high chair from Svan (below) is crafted from bent birch wood and can hold up to 110kg. Plus the safety bar and seat space are adjustable in both a vertical and horizontal direction – handy for when your baby grows.

The travelling nomad Lightweight versions of the table clamp, such as Phil And Ted's Lobster (philanteds.com) are a breeze to transport and wash, yet supportive enough for regular use. High chair harnesses strap your babe to almost any chair, although they're not as supportive as the table clamps. Snazzy Baby's Travel Chair (snazzybaby.com.au) fits easily into your bag.

No matter which throne you choose, make sure it's simple to clean. Don't even consider a high chair without a crotch strap/bar and safety harness (ideally, five-point). Your baby will learn and grow in the high chair, so consider your decision carefully before taking the plunge!

Image Svan Highchair, \$450. Phone 1300 663 034.



clothing

Clockwise: 'Aeroplane' tee, \$37.95; Grey 'Bow' dress, \$45.95; Green 'Cameo' dress, \$45.95; 'Paper Dolls' tee, \$29.95 and pink 'Lily' cord skirt, \$34.95; 'Caravan' tee, \$29.95; Lace ballet shoes, \$54.95 (available March); Blue 'High Top' sneakers, \$12.95; Pink 'Bo Peep' shoes, \$12.95.



nursery & room

Wall decals – 'Cupcakes', \$39.95 and 'Aeroplanes', \$24.95 (available in March).



Wooden pink tea set, \$49.95; Magnetic traffic puzzle, \$18.95.

toys

Visit the babylush boutique at
www.babylush.com.au
'Shop anytime – we never close'

TALKING TEXTILES

THE BEST IN COTTON? MARQUISE HAS GOT YOUR LITTLE ONE COVERED

The latest craze in cotton these days is Pima. Previously known as American-Egyptian, Pima cotton was renamed to honour the Pima Indians who once grew the fibre. Products made from 100 percent American Pima cotton fall under the trademark Supima, which is an abbreviation for Superior Pima. The fineness of Supima cotton allows more fibres to be spun into a yarn, enhancing the softness, drapeability, colour, durability and lifespan of each product. Now Marquise has caught onto this trend and is currently the only childrenswear brand in Australia that has the license to use this superb fabric in their products! Be sure to visit marquise.com.au.



WEBSITE REVIEWS

4 MY EARTH

Trying to find environment-friendly substitutes to even the simplest items can be a struggle, so make the purchases a little easier by logging on to 4myearth.com.au. This site sells bags, lunch bags, T-shirts, wraps and handy reusable pockets.



MONKEYS UNDIES

Here's an auction site that's tailored to mums who like to buy, sell or even give away second-hand goods. Associated with the Bub Hub parenting site, monkeysundies.com covers everything from children's clothing and shoes to books, jewellery and more.



ICKLE KIDS

Specialising in age-specific activity packs for kids aged from birth through to 10 years, icklekids.com.au has just what you need to keep littlies entertained. Plus they offer travel tips for flying and driving, and a fun range of toys such as card games and brain teasers.



ONE ON THE WAY

Lee-ann Sandler's belief that just because you're pregnant doesn't mean you need to compromise on your sense of style led her to launching her online maternity fashion store. OneontheWay.com.au brings together the best brands in Australia to your fingertips.



THE BABY SHOWER SHOP

Stuck on where to start when planning your baby shower? Thebabyshower.com.au is at your rescue! Supplying invitations, decorations, tableware, party favours and more, you can even create a registry to make sure you don't receive 50 onesies and 32 bibs.



WHAT A GREAT IDEA!

With Easter just around the corner, Bed Bath N' Table has got you covered with beautiful items that can be used as sweet gifts or added to the Easter table for that special touch (or use them any time throughout the year). Rabbits made of felt and recycled wood, humorous, adorable bunny families dressed in their Sunday best, little bunnies and chicks in racing cars, decorative eggs and fabric chooks are just some of the items you can purchase. All pieces are reasonably priced, making them not only a lovely collectable to own but they're also guaranteed not to burn a hole in your back pocket. Standing chooks (large), \$29.95, standing chook (small), \$12.95, and seated chook, \$16.95, are all available from any Bed Bath N' Table store. Call 03 9387 3322 for further information and stockist enquiries.



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GET TO KNOW

LOUISE DALGLISH SMITH FROM CINNAMON BEAR EXPLAINS HOW SHE WORKED HER WAY UP

In 2006, with no experience in wholesale or retail and halfway through her postgraduate studies, Louise decided to create Cinnamon Bear – a company named after the bar where she and her husband first met. What began as a small business representing a T-shirt label has now developed into an exclusive distributor for well-known brands Babylicious and Fleurville as well as Dirty Laundry, Fig Kids, Karma Baby and more.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU?

Having had a baby and moved cities, part-time contract work was losing its lustre. I wanted something that offered more permanent but flexible work arrangements that would allow me to spend more time with my son, while still being enjoyable and allowing me to grow professionally. The only real option was self-employment. I had seen some products that I loved while we were celebrating my son's first birthday in Canada and found out when I returned home that they were not available here. A few emails later, I had started a business.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PRODUCT?

That is an impossible question – a bit like asking a mother to name her favourite child! I use the Fleurville Sling Tote every day as the attention to detail is amazing – my favourite being the fleece-lined pockets so I don't scratch my glasses! The Get Messy Bib from Babylicious has saved many an outfit while my son was learning to feed himself, and again now that he has graduated to a budding artist. I use Giddy Giddy ponytail holders for me as they're cute, colourful and make me smile. And I love the cool range of bedding by Pixel Organics.

Image Giddy Giddy Owl Pouch, \$34.95. See cinnamonbear.com.au.