

MY BUSINESS

KIRSTY STAFF FROM SOUL MOTHERS EXPLAINS WHY SHE STARTED HER ONLINE BUSINESS

Paediatric nurse Kirsty Staff has met many mums who've had trouble with breastfeeding. Experiencing similar struggles with her own kids, Kirsty wanted to provide them with easier access to a great range of breastfeeding products to help make the journey that little bit easier. That's why she created online store Soul Mothers in 2007.

Tell us about your products

The Soul Mothers' philosophy is "helping to bond mother and baby closer together". We specialise in providing the best in breastfeeding products and accessories, but we also have a fantastic range of other items such as baby slings, blankets, organic baby skincare and nappy bags. I don't sell anything that isn't high quality or that I wouldn't personally use.

What's new at Soul Mothers?

We've just launched the Rumparooz G2 cloth nappies in our store, which are a fantastic new cloth nappy range. We've also received the new Fuzzi Bunz nappies and are hoping to add more to our cloth nappy range during this year. They're great for the environment.

Kirsty's top tip

Don't be afraid to follow your dreams – life is too short for regrets! Even though it's hard work, I'd do it all over again. I encourage anyone with an idea to just go out and do it.

Image Baby K'Tan Baby Carrier, \$89.95. See soulmothers.com.au.



MC LOVES

Hullbullu, based in Sydney's funky Newtown, creates garments that are the epitome of cool, and this gorgeous embroidered flower dress is no different. Made in Australia from 100 percent pinwale cord cotton, it's available in sizes 0 to 4 for \$44.95 and sizes 6 and 8 for \$49.95. So be sure to snap one up – and take a look at their fun, stylish retro-inspired range for boys and girls. Find out more at hullbullu.com.au.



FIVE FAVOURITES

PAULINE SU AND REBECCA YEO FROM THE PARTY STUDIO TELL US ABOUT THEIR TOP FIVE PRODUCTS

Sister duo Pauline Su and Rebecca Yeo from The Party Studio, an online store that specialises in gorgeous party packs, became huge fans of online shopping because it meant they could make better choices without having to try and shop with the kids in tow. These are their favourite items – all available online:

1 LOLLYBOXES A beautiful party addition. With gorgeous packaging to suit any theme or colour scheme, they're a versatile way to decorate the table. At \$4.50 from thepartystudio.com.au.

2 ENCHANTED FOREST TREE We love the look of this product. Get yours for \$350 from cocooncouture.com.

3 HARNESS BUDDIES Perfect for parents with an energetic toddler who has just learnt the art of walking and loves to explore. Valued at \$34.95, visit goldbug.com.au for stockists.

4 LUCKY BABY SLING A quick and easy way to transport baby; it fits in a baby bag and is easy to wash. Priced from \$79.95, see queenbee.com.au.

5 ROSETTE CLIPS Not only do they keep hair out of your little girl's face, they're beautiful to boot. From \$5.45 at fairyflosscreations.com.au.

WHAT A GREAT IDEA!

Ideal for mobiles, keys, sunglasses, change – even keeping drinks cool – Mocks (mobile socks) have taken Australia by storm. This Photo Mock, \$14.95, can be personalised with an image of your bub. See mymocks.com.

PURCHASE OR PERISH?

IS A BABY MONITOR AN ESSENTIAL ITEM? VICTORIA ATKINSON FROM CHILDPROOF.COM.AU TELLS ALL

Advancing technology has led to a great evolution in baby monitors and the sheer number of features now available can leave parents overwhelmed by choice.

The essential components

To make a monitor useful, it must have the following:

- Good volume and clear sound transmission with minimal static interference.
- More than one channel for switching in case of static interference. Some, such as the Tommee Tippee Ultimate Reassurance monitor, have three channels, while others like the Avent DECT series offer 100 channels. As a rule, digital rather than analogue monitors have less interference, but are more expensive.
- Indicator lights so that baby sounds can be “seen”.
- Good range of transmission which, depending on the size of your house, may mean greater than 100, 250 or 300m.
- Good battery life with an AC adapter alternative, and a low-battery indicator to protect against unrecognised shut-offs.

The optional extras

Most monitors offer the essentials, albeit to varying degrees of quality. The optional extras, however, cater to each parent’s specific needs (and fears):

- Some models, such as the Angelcare AC 301, monitor movement or apnoea (breath holding). These have pressure plates that are placed under the mattress and sound a piercing alarm when no movement is sensed for a prescribed period. However, there is no scientific evidence that apnoea monitors reduce the risk of SIDS, and as babies get older they can roll off the sensor pads, triggering the alarm incessantly.
- The recommended nursery temperature is 16 to 20°C and, as overheating is a known SIDS risk, baby monitors with a built-in thermometer, such as the Tomy Walkabout Classic Advance and the Avent DECT 520, make sense.
- If you want to keep an eye on baby while he sleeps, monitors like the Swann Premium Digital offer a night-vision camera in the nursery unit and a 2.5 inch LCD screen in the mobile unit.
- Looking for the Rolls-Royce of monitors? Try the Avent DECT 530, with temperature and humidity monitoring, an intercom so you can talk or sing to your baby, built-in lullabies and a night-light. The only feature missing is an extendable hand to pat baby to

sleep... perhaps on the next model!

Image Philips Avent DECT SCD530 baby monitor, \$329.95. See bpmchildcare.com for more information and stockists.



OFFER!
20% off your
first order *



My Mini Moda offers a select range of babies’ and children’s clothing, shoes, toys and accessories from newborn to 8 years of age.

* excludes Millie Melisse & Deux Par Deux

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RETAIL THERAPY

THIS FAIR IS OVERFLOWING WITH ORIGINAL, QUALITY AND STYLISH PRODUCTS AND IDEAS

Forget your local mall or going online – markets and retail fairs are the hottest new way to shop for bubs and kids.

What's the deal?

Magnolia Square is a boutique retail fair that has been operating for four years. It unites over 150 talented craftspeople, artists, designers and gourmets to bring together a unique range of body products, womenswear, jewellery, childrenswear, art, stationery and homewares for your shopping pleasure.

What gives it the edge?

It's different to the everyday, mass-market retailers as it caters to the contemporary tastes of the modern consumer. Creator Nic MacIsaac says, 'I wanted to create a platform that people would want to come to, and wouldn't consider to be a daggy market.'

Where and when is it?

Having had huge success at the Brighton and Malvern Town Halls in Melbourne, it's heading up to Sydney's Royal Randwick in July and November this year! For more, see magnoliasquare.com.au.

Image Raggidy Rag Dolls, from \$89. See magnoliasquare.com.au.



WEBSITE REVIEWS

BEAUTY HEAVEN

With so many beauty products on the market, who's to know what to buy? To find consumer reviews on the products that catch your eye, log onto beautyheaven.com.au. While you're there, read up on the tips, interviews and articles on everything hair and beauty.



CRYOSITE

Thinking about storing your child's cord blood? Here's where you'll find a wealth of information about cord blood and stem cells. Cryosite.com.au even provides information on adult stem cell storage and a news archive for recent activity in the field.



IMPRINTABLES

Nathalie Rivet – the woman behind the beautiful range of Imprintables invitations – has started her own blog on imprintables.blogspot.com. There's some fantastic party tips on decorations, games and themes, and loads of yummy recipes to try.



SNUGABUB

Looking for a sheet set for bub that's created in line with the safety recommendations of SIDS and Kids Australia? You'll find it on snugabub.com. Promoting Snugabub Baby Bedding – created to reduce the risk of SIDS – the site explains why this product will help.



THE HIP INFANT

Take a look at thehipinfant.com.au the next time you're stuck on gift ideas. With handy price categories to suit everyone's budget, you're sure to find the perfect pressie. Plus there's over 70 brands to choose from. Try Bobble Art, Teeny Me and Dwell Studio.



TALKING TEXTILES

DISCOVER THE SOFT, LUXURIOUS FEEL OF BAMBOO

One hundred percent biodegradable and renewable, bamboo is the fastest growing plant on earth, and doesn't require pesticides or fertilisers. The use of it as a fabric – it's typically developed into a fleece, jersey or terry towelling – is a more recent development on its thousands of uses. Jayne Miller, owner of Nurture Nappies, says, 'What we love is its use as a sustainable solution for the textile industry. Plus it actually retains mild antibacterial and antimicrobial qualities, UV protection and durability.' Check out their Bamboo Terry Flat nappies (\$12 each) at nurturenappies.com.au. Looped like traditional cotten terry, they're much finer, with a cashmere-like texture and significantly more absorbency.



COMPILED BY SARAH FRIGGERI. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE



GET TO KNOW

HERE'S HOW THE CREATORS OF KOOLAMAN DESIGNS ESTABLISHED THEIR BLOSSOMING BUSINESS

Sisters Lisa O'Keefe and Stacey Clayton created Koolaman Designs in 2007. Lisa lives on Koolaman Station, a huge farming property in the far south-west corner of New South Wales. Stacey also lives on a rural property, but in Victoria. They wanted to create an income as well as have the flexibility of working for themselves.

'We were looking for something we could do together despite the fact we live 450km apart. That's when we came up with the idea of the Ma Ma tag... Something different that featured our children's names and birth dates,' says Stacey, who manages customer and wholesale enquiries, as well as the financial side of things, while Lisa deals with marketing, advertising and product design. 'We loved the idea of creating something unique and not mass produced,' they say, 'especially as we've grown up watching our mother and grandmother sewing or painting.'

They offer a range of unique silver pendant designs customised according to their client's specifications, with each character individually hand stamped.

Lisa & Stacey's advice

Go for it! Create your business plan, be realistic with your cash flow forecasts and ask questions. Surround yourself with positive, supportive people and take their constructive criticism to help make your business better. Research your product, find a point of difference and include a marketing budget to get your products known. And remember, a business takes time to grow its brand and reputation, and for people to recognise it.

Image Eliza pendants, \$120. See koolamandesigns.com.au.

three little trees

www.threelittletrees.com.au

boutique children's clothing

photo: www.lumin-essence.com.au

