

Successful You Awards recognize businesses that go the extra mile

Three semi-finalists demonstrate that profits are just one way to measure success

By Bo Gembarsky

All businesses seek to make a profit, but some aspire to reach further. It is some of these enterprises that **Small Business BC** will recognize at its ninth annual Successful You Awards on February 28 at the Pan Pacific Vancouver.

Hundreds of businesses were nominated for six categories: best company, best concept, best employer, best green business, best online marketer and best community impact.

Voters on Small Business BC's website then chose the top 10 in each category. **Laura Patrick** founded **Kids Physio Group** as a solo operation in 2006, then opened a studio on Fraser Street in October 2010 as a private clinic designed exclusively for children and youth.

Increasing demand sparked an extensive renovation and expansion of the existing space, doubling its footprint and ushering in new equipment, new services such as occupational therapy, creative dance, yoga for children with needs, and seven new staff.

Patrick is being considered for best community impact.

"Winning this award would mean the realization of one of our core values: advocating for positive change in the lives of children and youth in our community," she told *Business In Vancouver*.

Starting the business was the easy part, according to Patrick.

"The need was there and I



Laura Patrick, founder of Kids Physio Group: "winning this award would mean the realization of one of our core values: advocating for positive change in the lives of children and youth in our community"

wanted to fill it. But as a registered physiotherapist without any formal business training, I have faced many obstacles including financing, cash flow and the risks that come with being self-employed."

She overcame those obstacles by getting connected with other entrepreneurs, finding answers to her questions from people she trusts, and staying true to her values.

Sticking to core values was one of the reasons **Marcie Weinstein Smith** started **Lovey's Body Products** in 2009. Weinstein Smith found that many commercial creams and wipes constantly

gave her son Sam rashes, even those products which advertised themselves as "natural." She soon discovered that marketing terms are not as important as ingredients.

"[Many] contained chemicals or other irritants," she said. "So I set about creating my own solution and I used it in a spray bottle with a cloth wipe."

From this effort she developed one of her cornerstone products, nominated for best concept: the Tushi Stick. Launched last January, it's a diaper ointment in stick form and composed of all-natural essential oils with no artificial fragrances or



Marcie Weinstein Smith, owner of Lovey's Body Products, with her son, Sam: "I feel very strongly about making products that are chemical-free and safe for babies and their fragile immune systems"

preservatives. "The beauty of it is that it saves moms from getting messy hands," Weinstein Smith says.

"When you stick your fingers in diaper cream, you get it under your nails and in your hair. This is a nice, clean way to do it."

Before founding Lovey's, Weinstein Smith worked in the high-tech sector in sales and marketing for 18 years. Though she didn't have knowledge of business initially, she had some core skills and the drive to make it work.

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babies and their fragile immune systems."

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- Marcie Weinstein Smith, owner, Lovey's Body Products

Lovey's products are available in 50 retailers, mostly children's boutiques in B.C., but in March 2012 the **Whole**

Foods chain will begin featuring the company's lines in its four outlets.

While winning at the Successful You Awards would be "a real honour," Weinstein Smith said the important part is to keeping learning and growing.

"Unless you have that one-in-a-million overnight success, really it's about putting one foot in front of the other, continuing to develop good products and to spread the word, to let people know what you're doing, and holding on to your vision."

Having vision takes strength, and **Mhairi Petrovic** knows that all too well. She founded **Out-Smarts Marketing** as a sole proprietorship in 2002 because "I wanted to be in control of my own destiny."

As Facebook and other social media arose, Petrovic recognized that companies would need help to take advantage of these new opportunities to spread their messages.

Petrovic incorporated Out-Smarts in 2009. Among other activities, she conducts information sessions and classes for Small Business BC and other organizations in how to leverage the power of social media, which is still very new and considered by some to be a passing fad. She appreciates the attention Out-Smarts is getting from being named as a best company semi-finalist.

"It's an honour to be short listed, so [in a way] it already feels like a win." ■ news@biv.com

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