

TRUE STORIES

Mom Entrepreneurs Strive for a Family/Work Balance

BY SANDY DOUBLEDAY

Mothers who start their own businesses are often driven by the need for personal control of their time and the flexibility necessary for balancing family life with professional demands. Nobody can “have it all,” but being your own boss often provides a gift of freedom and control that outweighs the added responsibility of running a profitable enterprise.



Darlene Richert chose a business that her girls would enjoy.

“For 25 years, I was working in corporate America and traveling 40 weeks a year,” says Darlene Richert, who recently opened Avery Lane, a home consignment store named for her two girls Avery, 9, and Delaney, 13. Richert enjoyed her corporate career, but she also likes being a mother and wanted more control over her schedule so she could spend more time with her family. “I grew up on a ranch in Montana, and I also wanted a way to create a work ethic for my kids living in Scottsdale,” she says.

Richert meets her family, personal, and professional goals by guiding her business with a well-thought-out business plan, carefully scheduling the store’s staff to allow family time, including her children in the work of the business and getting up at 5 a.m. to do yoga.

“Growing up, I never learned how a business really worked,” Richert says. Delaney puts the store’s purchases on a spreadsheet that is teaching her that “you buy a product, mark it up, and when you sell it, you see a profit.” Delaney and Avery also dust, vacuum, tag, and help decorate the store.

A more mobile business – Mamma Toledo’s – answers Scottsdale’s hunger for pies, chocolate éclairs, cakes, and cupcakes. “We sell our flakey, tasty treats at farmers’ markets and other food truck venues and festivals,” says Tonya Saidi, aka

Mamma Toledo. Her son Cody, 23; daughters Jordan, 18, and Sarah, 15, plus her daughter’s best friend Ty Dahlstrom, 15, all have been an integral part of making Mamma Toledo’s a success.

“I wanted to start a business 17 years ago, but my children were so young and needed so much attention that I didn’t think I could do it,” Saidi says. “As teenagers, I quickly realized they needed more attention now than when they were young.” From the beginning, she has kept her children involved so they know how to run a business. Cody contributes as Saidi’s mechanic and photographer, Jordan is known for working with farmers’ markets and networking, Sarah loves baking, and Ty brings a talent for sales.

Saidi has to keep to a fairly rigid schedule to meet the demands of Valley events and to prepare special orders on time, but she has flexibility in the different demands of her business. “I try to eat right, sleep

right, and exercise,” she says. “When I take care of those essential needs, I am emotionally available for my children, and I am able to help get their needs met.” She also is an advocate of keeping a list of resources for her family and asking for help when they need it.



Tonya (L), Ty, and Sarah prepare crusts.

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Ty (L), Tonya, and Sarah share food truck tasks.

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