

FOSTERING BUSINESS GROWTH IN DURHAM REGION

DURHAM

Trade and Commerce

SPRING 2006

wonder women

*and the secrets of
their entrepreneurial
success*

*Super money
minder Kim Copetti*

FEEDBACK FUNDAMENTALS | TAX PLANNING TIPS
SPECIAL FEATURE FOCUS: GOLF

The turning point for one came when her commute time jumped from one hour a day to two and a half. For another, it was the prospect of another summer of aching feet and low pay from waiting tables. Yet another became disillusioned with her company's worker-bee mentality. Another followed her love of home décor. Their paths were diverse but their destinations were the same—small business. Four female entrepreneurs talk about the journey.

BY HEATHER M. O'CONNOR | PHOTO BY JOSEPH M. TAVARES

KIM COPETTI DOESN'T think of herself as an entrepreneur. A chartered accountant, she went into business for herself when working for a chartered accounting firm became overwhelming and unfulfilling.

"I'd had enough of all the hours," Copetti says. "I just didn't want to do it anymore."

Copetti also yearned for closer client relationships, an impossibility with her firm's production-line approach to accounting.

"I love seeing my clients grow. It's like a soap opera. They start off in one direction and then they head down another road." Copetti enjoys helping them find their way. The mother of two also loves the flexibility her job provides.

"When I had my first son, my clients would say, 'Bring him with you'. That's when I fell in love with smaller business. You develop a personal relationship. You're minding their finances; you're part of their business plan.

"We do everything from financial statements to business plans to tax returns. The majority of my clients operate small- to medium-sized businesses. Their earnings range from \$30,000 per year to \$15 million."

Business is booming. Bursting at the seams, Copetti and Company has expanded into a house near Whitby's Four Corners.

Retail treasure

Daphne Mitchell understands expansion. The Port Perry creator of Settlement House Shops thinks

back to 1978, when she opened a 600-square-foot storefront on Queen Street.

"Port Perry had no home décor store at the time," she says. Mitchell didn't have much experience operating a retail store, but she wasn't going to let that stop her.

"If you love product you either know how to put it together or you don't. And it's one thing to put wonderful products together and another to run a store."

Mitchell, it seems, succeeds masterfully at both. Her business savvy and eye for beauty grew the award-winning Port Perry landmark that now stretches over 14,000 square feet in to three adjoining buildings.

It wasn't easy, she admits. The biggest stumbling block was location. Attracting customers to Port Perry was the hard part. Getting them to come back was a cinch.

"It's been 28 years," Mitchell muses, "Quite a career."

Young success

Heather Frize hasn't been in business nearly that long—she's only 26. Her story starts the summer before her last year of university. Reluctant to spend another summer waiting tables, Frize discovered Summer Company, a federally funded youth entrepreneurship program.

"I'd always made jewelry and I'd always wanted my own business. So I thought I'd give Summer

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