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ENTREPRENEUR: Serena Ross

It's a great thing when you can combine what you love with your job. Serena Ross is one of those lucky people who enjoys going to work every day. Sharon Green reports.



By [Sharon Green](#) on Jan 21, 2010.

Serena Ross is the business savvy girl behind the company Dressed Up, an online fashion store that rents out garments and designer label clothing. The concept came to life when Serena thought hard about how she could combine her love of fashion with her Bachelor in Business Administration. "I have always been a shop-a-holic and my wardrobe is testament to that. There were so many beautiful dresses in my cupboard that I had only worn once but could not bear to throw away because I had spent so much money on them. I knew there had to be a better way," she said. After investigating the market, Serena found that there were no other companies providing designer dress hire, and so she took the plunge and started on the path to creating her own business based around this idea.

After graduating from university, Serena carefully considered what she wanted from her career.

"I always knew I wanted to have my own business and thought long and hard about what job I knew I could do for the rest of my life and be happy going into work every day. This job is definitely one I am happy to do day in and day out,"

She admits that her business degree has provided her with the foundations needed to help run a successful company, including knowing how to set up a website, creating systems and effectively managing the accounting side of things. "Without my degree I think I really could have been lost," she said.

Half Armenian, half Canadian, Serena moved to Australia from Canada with her family when she was just three years old. Growing up in Dural, NSW, Serena was always surrounded by her hard working parents. "All through my childhood they spent late nights working at their business. I was taught from a young age that you need to follow your dreams, have direction and work hard to achieve them. They taught me a lot about business and still mentor me every single day in my own business," she said.

Serena says that her parents have always been supportive of her and have encouraged her to work hard towards launching Dressed Up. "I had the idea for Dressed Up almost a year before I decided to do anything with it. It was actually my Mom who pushed me over the edge and told me: there are people who watch, and there are people who do. Don't be a loser and watch your idea pass you by," she said. Once Serena decided to launch her business, she took care of most things herself but has always had the support of her parents to guide her if needed.

Despite her recent success, there have been a few challenges along the way for Serena and a lot of learning curves. "The website was a massive challenge for me. I had some big problems with my website designer and ended up paying a lot of money for it. My advice to anyone who is setting up an online business is to make sure you have some referrals from your web designer and make sure they are a reputable company you can rely on for years to come," she said.

As with most businesses in the early stages, a lot of trial and error is required to learn from mistakes made.

"It's important to do a lot of research and planning, not only in the beginning stages but throughout the every day running of the business. If you don't know where you're going and what direction you will be taking day by day, you could end up somewhere you never expected to be,"

On the flip side though, Serena admits that there are some advantages to running her own business. "The best part of running my own business is knowing that everything that is being achieved is by my own doing. Whenever I speak to women out there who know Dressed Up, I am proud that my company is becoming so well known. A perk of the job is that I have no boss to tell me that I was five minutes late this morning!" she said.

And it seems there is plenty of room to grow and achieve goals without the common corporate world restrictions. In the coming year, Serena plans to add international designers to the Dressed Up range and beyond that would like to extend her business to branches in Montreal and New York City.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, Serena advises to take the time in doing the adequate research and planning needed and then to go for it. "Don't wait and watch life pass you by, because one day you're going to look back and regret it and wish that you had taken that leap of faith. The worst that can happen is that you fail, and even that is a lesson on its own," she said.

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