

HOT FAVOURITE

A DESIRE TO SOURCE AND SELL HARD-TO-FIND OBJECTS HAS LED ONE ENTREPRENEUR INTO A BUSINESS THAT'S KEEPING HER BUSY DAY AND NIGHT.

With her husband running a successful online store, Jennifer Barker didn't take long to decide she would also like to become a cyber retailer.

Having previously been a teacher at a boy's school in North Parramatta, New South Wales, she had decided not to return to work after taking maternity leave. "I have two young children and was loving being a mother – but I was also looking for another challenge," she says.

Jennifer's inspiration came after purchasing some hard-to-find items via eBay. "I thought that there must be other people like me wanting to purchase unique presents and gifts, so why not create an online store that offered a selection of high quality, hard-to-find items."

The result is two online stores: www.mummysfavourite.com.au and www.myfavourite.com.au, which Jennifer now operates from home and from a small warehouse in Norwest Business Park.

The two stores offer hundreds of products, including exclusive homeware, baby, maternity and gourmet items – and even products for men.

Sourcing products for the store was a big undertaking and one that Jennifer says took considerable time. "Initially it was hard tracking down particular products I had my eye on and then convincing the manufacturers that their products would be presented well on my sites. I also had to spend a lot of money to meet minimum purchase order requirements."

Making sure the websites looked good graphically, and were easy to navigate, was also a big job. "I still play around with the look of the sites to keep them fresh and update them daily with new information."

Jennifer chose to handle the maintenance of the websites herself rather than to outsource. "Although it is a lot of hard work I prefer to have control over this vital component of the business."

Two important lessons Jennifer learnt as an online retailer are to invest in advertising and promotions, and to have an outstanding delivery service in place.

"The first website sat out there in 'cyber land' for a while and I just expected sales to come in. Over the past 12 months I have spent a lot on advertising and promotions – from setting up an affiliate marketing program to advertising online and sending out newsletters. This has helped enormously.

"And in terms of our delivery service, our Australia Post account manager has provided invaluable advice in setting up a top-notch delivery solution. This really helped turn my business around with helpful advice and encouragement. Now all I have to learn is when to stop working at night!" ■

For more information visit www.mummysfavourite.com.au or www.myfavourite.com.au.



Jennifer Barker

POST ePARCEL

Jennifer's delivery solution came in the form of Australia Post's Post eParcel service. "Post eParcel makes it easy to lodge and track parcels online – which is ideal for my busy online businesses," says Jennifer. "In this competitive marketplace being able to let our customers know the status of their delivery by simply logging onto the Internet is a real bonus."

Post eParcel is a convenient freight management service that streamlines the parcel despatch process. For more information on Post eParcel please contact your Australia Post account manager.