

and realised that when it came to tools, there was nothing out there specifically for women,” 44-year-old Dobbin says. “Yet we know from industry stats that the female of the household is making or instigating more than 70 per cent of hardware purchases in Australia.”

“Many women today are home owners by themselves and do their own DIY, yet most of the tools on the market are big and heavy with hard-to-understand instructions. I figured that there had to be tools that women would like to have specifically designed for them.”

Dobbin designed a range of attractive-yet-practical tools especially for women, and although she has met with a lot of opposition - especially from men in the industry - the diywoman™ brand has shown impressive growth.

The brand’s range of hardware and garden products and tools are sold through a growing network of stores nationally, including Mitre 10, Bunnings and, in a significant development, diywoman products are now available nationally through Coles. It’s also a Gold Partner of the National Breast Cancer Foundation; with a percentage of every product sold, Dobbin raises a minimum of \$60,000 for breast cancer research each year.

When asked about the future of diywoman™, Dobbin has a clear focus. “Global DIY domination isn’t my ultimate goal,” she laughs. “But I want to do a really good job in our home market first, and build up a comprehensive range of tools with unique selling features before branching out anywhere else.”

STARTING OUT
Aimee Gullotto, Sweax™

A common personal hygiene problem afflicting many people provided the inspiration for Aimee Gullotto’s fledgling business. “I was going to a Christmas function in 2007 with my husband Davide and, as always, I was getting bothered about what I was going to wear,” she explains. “I had a beautiful grey top in the cupboard, but decided I wasn’t going to wear it because of armpit sweat stains, which are so obvious with that colour.”

Twenty-six-year-old Gullotto says that, like her, most people aren’t “big sweaters”, but suffer from the odd sweat patch under the arms as a result of being nervous, excited or busy. “I wondered what I could put under my arms to stop the sweat from showing,” Gullotto says.

“So I experimented with panty liners and ended up going out that night with a pair stuck to the inside of my top, under my armpits. And that’s how my idea for Sweax underarm liners was born.”



Starting a new business has been no sweat for Aimee Gullotto.

Perth-based Gullotto launched Sweax™ in June this year and the product was quickly snapped up by over 2000 stockists including Priceline, Franklins and Woolworth’s.

Before launching her own business, the mother-of-two says she held a dream of owning a glamorous party planning business. “When our first son arrived, however, I planned on being a full-time, stay-at-home mum,” Gullotto says.

“Then I fell pregnant with our second son but by the time Kai was four months old, I was getting mentally bored and frustrated. I have always had an entrepreneurial streak, as I love to develop, plan and bring to life new ideas, so it was inevitable I would do something.”

Gullotto’s goal is for Sweax™ to become an indispensable everyday item. She is planning to develop the brand with new products and has an eye on overseas markets.

She also describes the learning curve of self-employment as “massive”. “Every stage of the business has brought a different challenge and a different hurdle to jump over,” Gullotto says. “I am sure we are yet to face more challenges, but we have a ‘bring it on’ mentality that seems to work for us.” ■



AIMEE’S TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Find and surround yourself with people who know more than you do, who have “been there, done that” and can give you unbiased opinions, thoughts and mentoring.
- Keep learning and be open to learning – even when you think you know it all, you don’t.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses. You won’t be an expert on every aspect of your business, so if you want to do it properly, draw on a professional to do what you can’t.
- Build and maintain good working relationships with people you rely on and the people that rely on you. Don’t underestimate the power of loyalty and gratitude.
- Be passionate and love what you do – if you’re not passionate about your business, how can you expect other people to be?