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How I Became an Entrepreneur - Step One

Waheeda Harris 

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How do you become an entrepreneur? Does that a-ha! moment just happen? Is being your own boss the best thing ever?



femMED

According to Canadian businesswoman Shawna Page, become an entrepreneur has a been a roller coaster, but one that she is glad she decided to pursue.

As a senior executive in capital markets, Page was at the top of her game - but she wanted more - a different work challenge, and more time with her husband and three children. So Page decided to take the leap and make a change.

So how did she become an entrepreneur? Was it a series of lucky breaks or did she follow her heart?

At age 40, Page decided to leave her financial career of 20 years and focus on the family. But she realized that although she was at home, none of her friends were. "Everyone was at work and within weeks I was going stir-crazy, trying to adjust from being in an office with all its demands to being at home alone, with my husband at work and my kids at school."

Page realized she had to find a focus, and with her husband's encouragement, planned a trip to California in spring 2007, in hopes of finding a health-related company that she could bring to Canadian consumers as a distributor.

But Page's research led her to realize there was a missing niche in the marketplace - a need for supplements for women that focused on their specific health needs. As someone who was taking 33 supplements herself, Page realized that single ingredient supplements was the standard, and formulations targeting health concerns such as pregnancy, menopause, stress or energy wasn't to be found.

So with her head buzzing about ideas, Page luckily landed a meeting with a Shoppers Drug Mart category buyer - without a business plan, samples, packaging - just an idea to create a line of supplements for women. "The buyer listened to me and said that I had a great idea, and gave me a month to bring her something tangible for her to consider," explained Page.

In 30 days, Page worked with an advisor, developed formulations, figured out a brand name, developed an advisory committee of medical professionals and found financial support for her idea. femMED was born, and Page soon was learning something new every day as she established her new company.

Starting with five formulations, femMED Menopause, Hormonal, Bone, Weight Management and Breast Health began distribution in Shoppers Drug Mart across Canada, and created a new niche in the women's health category.

Part two: Step two - How I became an entrepreneur - learned about distribution, competition and grew my business.