

Karen Seage: Owner/Manager Snap Printing Underwood



What is your purpose in business?

My purpose in business is to offer excellence in all things to do with printing, design and websites.

Where are you based? Is your focus Local, National or Global?

I'm based at Underwood in Logan City, south of Brisbane. Our focus is local and I like to deal with all our customers personally.

I always offer work experience to local kids, and I sponsor local sports teams such as the Indigenous softball team.

I also sponsor local school sports

teams because I think sport is so important for kids.

Tell us a bit about your background.

I'm from a large, close family and I'm the seventh of nine children.

My mum Ethel was Indigenous from the Noonuccal tribe at Stradbroke Island. She was a custodian of the land and eventually became an Elder.

My grandmother was one of the Stolen Generation.

We never talked about Mum being Indigenous, but when I look

back on it, she had a really difficult time.

When she and Dad married they lived in Wynnum. Dad thought it would be safer for her to live in (then) working-class Tarragindi, and he wanted us kids to have a good education at the local Catholic schools.

My Dad was of Irish descent, a devout Catholic. Dad and Mum were devoted to each other all their lives. We had a really happy childhood overall.

Dave and I have been married for 30 years and have four children –

we've never been happier.

How do you celebrate 'Me' time?

I love to lock myself in my room and read a book. I also love to hang out with my girlfriends at their places – they're not demanding, like my family.

What is your #1 time management tip?

I start the day early.

I have a strict weekly timetable where I set a certain time aside each morning to deal with essential tasks like accounts, marketing and follow-ups with clients.

Once I've done those then I can get on with doing business for the rest of the day.

What book changed your life?

The book that changed my life was *The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island* by Chloe Hooper. It showed me the extent of racism against our Indigenous people.

Often they have been treated like animals; this book shows the human consequences of this terrible discrimination. It opened my eyes to their suffering.

This incredible book made me want to know more about my heritage and get a better understanding of my culture.

What inspired you to start your own business?

I was inspired by the possibility of independence.

I'd worked hard as a graphic designer and manager for other Snap Centres over the years and seen them make money.

I had lots of experience and I was really good at my job. I thought: why not do this for myself?

I hope I can inspire other Indigenous women to have the

confidence to think big.

I should mention that I have been assisted in my success by the support of the Snap Franchise team and Indigenous Business Australia.

What difference has being in business for yourself made in your life?

I'm much happier! I love my job – I'd always liked it but I really enjoy it now.

Being independent means I don't have to answer to anyone. I make my own decisions and I'm responsible for the consequences.

What have been your biggest turning points in life and how did you manage these moments so that they shaped you rather than break you?

I lost my sister Jen two years ago. She was only 59 and had a very tough life.

She'd been a nurse but after having a child she suffered severe post-natal depression.

She could never work again and got sicker and sicker. It seemed so unfair.

I felt I could grieve forever. But at that point I realized that I have a very privileged life.

Her death made me determined to be grateful for all that I have in my own life.

What is your greatest piece of advice that you would give others in business?

Customer service is the most important thing of all.

No customers equals no business. Customers are your business. That's why I deal with all my customers personally.

What have you found to be the most effective way to promote your business?

The most effective way to promote a business is through networking and word of mouth.

If you provide a service to a client and they are happy they'll come back, and they'll recommend you to others.

It all comes down to making customers happy by providing the most excellent service possible. This also means developing close relationships with my clients; they come to know they can trust and rely on me, and that I'll go the extra mile for them.

What has been your greatest success to date in life and business?

My greatest success in life has been watching my four kids grow up to be good people; good young adults.

My greatest success in business is finally owning my own business and watching it grow. It makes me so happy.

What one piece of advice would you share with your younger self?

I would tell my younger self to hang around people who make you feel confident, and start or buy a business early in life – don't wait.

I never thought that as a woman I could run my own business – most women I knew helped their husbands run their business, which is really disappointing because women have the capability, they just need the confidence to go with it.

Lastly, what's next?

My husband Dave and I want to travel overseas. We've never been able to because most of our money went on putting the kids through private education. Now they're old enough, we can take off.

*If the question is
print, design or websites
the answer is*

