

PHOENIX Business Journal

03.12.10

Ann Siner

Founder and CEO, Eco-Chic Consignments Inc.
(dba My Sister's Closet, My Sister's Attic and Well-Suited)



HOW DO YOU STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION?
We continue to market ourselves. ... We have also stayed true to our principles, paying promptly for items and making it easy for customers to consign and shop our stores.

Just for fun

WERE YOU ALWAYS A CLOTHES PERSON? I was. I have two younger sisters, and I was always in their closets. They are much neater than I am, and I would always find something that was beautifully pressed and ready to wear.

HOW DO YOU RELAX? I am not good at sitting still, so I love to go and take a hike or cook. I like to find any new recipe and try it.

DO YOU READ FOR PLEASURE? I just finished "Shanghai Girls" by Lisa See.

PERSONAL GOALS: Pets are very important to me. I don't know if it's doable, but I want to help end the euthanasia of pets in our county, which is why I am so involved with animal welfare organizations.

DREAM VACATION: I have been lucky to be able to travel. My husband and I went to the Antarctic, and we will soon go to Africa on a safari. This business has made a lot of my dreams come true.

— Lynn Ducey

Professional

ANY LESSONS FOR OTHER WOMEN IN BUSINESS?

As a woman, I have learned to listen to my intuition.

ANY PROFESSIONAL BOOKS YOU LIKE? I find Larry Winget's book, "Work For a Reason," to be really helpful as a business owner. I ask that all my managers read it.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Our goal is to make this as easy as possible. If we have sold your items in our stores, we will give your money for those items on the spot at any of our locations. If I have a sold an item of yours, I believe that money is yours, not mine.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TO START YOUR BUSINESS?

I had been with PetSmart for three years and really was with the company as a

startup. But sometimes, something just calls you and you say, "I've got to go and try this."

HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE HELP YOU DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS? PetSmart taught me the "category killer" approach, to dominate the marketplace. And it also gave me the "cookie cutter" approach — duplicate successful business methods.

BUT IT HASN'T ALL BEEN EASY: We closed Small Change, a resale shop devoted to children's clothing and items in Scottsdale, because of some of the new (federal) guidelines about lead content. We decided that the regulations would be too time-consuming and too much for us as a small business.



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL
Ann Siner collects clothing in My Sister's Closet's electric car.

Ann Siner is founder and CEO of My Sister's Attic, a resale and consignment shop devoted to helping women build their wardrobes while going easy on their wallets.

Since the first store opened in 1991, the concept has expanded to encompass women's clothing, home furnishings and men's apparel. Siner now oversees 10 locations across the Valley.

She founded the business on her own dime, with help from her younger sister, Jennifer, who holds a management position in the company. Siner says she continually monitors activity at her stores and travels to all the locations. But don't expect her to announce her arrival. She says she likes to keep a low profile and hide among the racks.

"I think it's important to hear what customers are saying to each other and see how they are shopping in our stores," she says.

Personal

FAMILY: Husband, Larry Morgan

PETS: five dogs, two cats

RESIDENCE: Paradise Valley

EDUCATION: MBA, Thunderbird School of Global Management; Bachelor of Arts, Colorado College

CHARITABLE CAUSES: Friends of Animal Care and Control, Helping Animals Live On, Sojourner Center, Fresh Start Women's Foundation