



Hannah Grinage, All Cakes, All Occasions LLC

It all started with my wedding reception a few years back. I wanted a beautiful wedding cake (something traditional for my wedding that certainly was not), but we couldn't afford anything nice, so I decided I would make it myself. After buying everything I would need I realized I should have just paid for a cake, I had no idea that this purchase would change the rest of my life. Our wedding cake was beautiful and delicious, and everyone was very encouraging, but no one knew what I had in mind. After my first large wedding cake I was hooked, and my ideas for cakes and for a business started to grow. I made cake after cake for practice *and* to eat! Yum! I worked hard on my recipes, since I believe in making everything from scratch. I started All Cakes, All Occasions small, out of my home, and our only advertising was a self made website. I had the supplies, the website, the motivation, and now all I needed were some clients. Slowly the phone began ringing, and I started to host cake consultations and tastings at my house. Everything was new to me, but I enjoyed every minute.

Honestly, I was not prepared for our big move to our new shop on Front Street. I thought I was, but thinking you are, and actually being prepared are two very different things. For months I had dreamed of expanding my business, and moving into a real shop where I would have the space and the commercial kitchen to work with. My dream came much quicker than anyone thought possible, because when I want something I make it happen. I searched for a location first, came up with a budget, got the funding we needed, and started to buy up all the used equipment I could find. We took possession of the building only 2 days before our scheduled grand opening. Now that is stress! With the help of my sister and a good friend we decorated the building, and prepared for everything down to making our own makeshift brochures at midnight before opening. We made it through those first few days; the free cupcakes sign serving us well. Then my helpers had to leave and it was all up to me. The past six months have been a whirlwind of emotion and work, work, work. I have missed my family dearly, while at the same time missing the shop in the few hours I get to be home a day.

In order to be and stay in business you have to be very motivated, you must believe in yourself and your business, and you must be and stay inspired. Who inspires me...my husband and son. I started this business in order to make some extra money for my family while getting to stay home and raise my now almost 2-year-old son. My business has morphed into something completely different than my original intention, and you have to be ready for that. My son Ryan is now in daycare (a wonderful daycare) but away from me everyday of the week. I miss him a ton and I struggle with the feelings that every working mom goes through on a daily basis. But my dream, and my goals keep me focused and Ryan keeps me inspired to meet those goals and change our lives forever. My husband supports me in all that I do. I can't believe how supportive he was of such a big venture (leasing a shop to make cakes...in our economy). He was and is behind me, and he helps in everyway he can even doing the dishes ☺.

The best part of owning my own business is I make the rules (this can also be the worst part, but for the moment we will focus on the good). I can make my store into anything that I want. I can be the best cake maker I can possibly be, and I am so very invested because it is my own. When you own your own business it is such a very different feeling than working for someone else. Work is no longer just work; it is yours, a part of you, and it is so much more important than any other job I have had because success or failure all depends on me.

Like me, what will surprise you the most if and when you start a business is yourself. I never knew I would be able to handle all the ins and outs of business ownership. When it is your business you find a way to do everything...and I mean everything. I had no idea how much would be involved in owning my own business; I continue to learn new skills everyday in business management, time management, and even sometimes cake decorating. Some days it feels like my passion, decorating beautiful and delicious cakes, takes a backseat to the business part of my job. My advice is to get through those days as best you can and to refocus on your passion, the part of your business you enjoy the most, because that is what will keep you going when three cakes that were ordered weren't picked up. This has been such a wonderful, stressful, hard, and happy journey. I can't wait to see what All Cakes, All Occasions becomes and how far we will go.