

SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 24, 2018

B4

Pinoy entrepreneurship

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There is no doubt about it, this is the age of *Pinoy* entrepreneurs.

There is a new thrust, an enthusiasm to make one's own ideas and effort work.

With *Business & Leisure*, the electronic magazine on TV and online, we meet young entrepreneurs every week and we have, in fact, dedicated a whole segment for them. I have not met most of them in the flesh, but since I make it a point to review each and every segment of all my shows before giving the green light for

airing, I can say I've "met" the successful young entrepreneurs who have detailed their individual journeys in their interviews. Some of them share one market, meaning they ventured into similar businesses like bag-making, for instance. We have had a number of them on the show, mostly young ladies who have an eye for fashion. What all of them have in common is that they were settled comfortably in stable jobs in banks or airlines

until the entrepreneurial bug bit them.

It was always that element of "something missing" in their career that led them to leave their stable, well-paying jobs to venture into their own business. That bold leap of faith earned them their own place in the sun, and today, we have many young entrepreneurs making a name for themselves.

While some go for the less risky, more conventional move, others are more daring. There's *Stylegenie*, for instance, founded by *Abby Victorino*. She honed her skills in an advertising agency where she worked since 2010 until she came across a novel idea – offering fashion styling services online. With two partners who shared her fashion sense, they brainstormed and before long, *Stylegenie* was born.

Because of the very nature of the business where they have to stock up on racks and racks of clothes, each of them had to shell out at least **P500,000** to fill up their warehouse. They maintain a website where customers can fit into their style profiles and offer clothes, of various sizes, colors and style preferences. Prices are competitive, starting at **P899** for one outfit, with the biggest box available for **P2,699** which includes five different outfits.

They source from local and foreign sellers, sell unbranded clothes that are not mainstream, hence not common. After a customer chooses her style, payment is remitted and the item is ready to be shipped out. No risks, no hassles.

Quite a few others have gone into skin care and cosmetics, all handmade from their homes. There are the two sisters, *Jonahleen* and *Aileen Sison* who started *Skin Potions*. *Aileen* was a stewardess for Etihad Airways, while her sister *Jonahleen*, who started *Skin Potions*, is a nurse by profession. Because *Jonahleen* had recurring skin breakouts, she wanted to formulate her own soap, and that was how it all started. The soap she formulated worked well for her and other friends who used it.

Aileen quit her high-paying job and joined her sister, and together they started formulating soaps, lotions and

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skin-peeling creams which were originally chemical-based until they decided to go a step further and started formulating organic products.

With intriguing names like *Tomato Serum* and *Strawberry Cream Sleeping Mask*, they were well on their way to making brisk business. They then ventured into cosmetics and they now have 54 products all in all, with more new lines to be launched next year. They now have their stores in popular malls.

Another one who went into the same line is *Jane Lacap*, owner and founder of *Neutra Organics*. This one isn't about cosmetics and skin care products only—she is into wellness and lifestyle products which Jane makes by hand from home. Jane is a graduate of AB Mass Com, major in Broadcasting, and has tried her hand at advertising, events planning and modelling (four years). She is also a licensed broker herself, so she has had her share of windfalls, but she was still restless. A deeply religious person, she tried to find answers in the Bible, as she narrated to us, and this was where her search led her to—a home-based business making her own formulations after careful research of at least a year.

What started out as a hobby four years ago, starting out with a capital of P200,000, is now a lucrative business that has gone beyond her website. She now has pop-up stores, and from the five products that she started out with, she now has over a hundred different products, all certified organic.

Her *Miracle Mud Balm*, she says, works well for eczema and psoriasis patients. Other products are favorites of asthma sufferers. Their eye care kits work like natural botox and her magnesium oil promotes deep sleep, ac-

ording to Jane. She recently launched her cosmetics line and will soon have refilling stations in her pop-up stores, which is an excellent idea. Not only is it environment-friendly, it is cost-friendly for Jane and economically viable for the end-users.

And last, but not least among the skin care entrepreneurs is *Sheena Bognot's Skinsicles*.

Sheena is a certified public accountant and used to work at a BPO company until boredom set in. She used to work the night shift, so she had plenty of time during the day to research and experiment, and this she did.

All of these ladies started out with soap-making, perhaps because it is the easiest to learn and do. Artisan soaps, says Sheena, is not yet a very familiar idea with Pinoy, but when she launched her soap line one Christmas season, the idea did so well with the market that she quit her stable job and decided to cast her lot with artisanal soap which is handcrafted from natural ingredients. She uses natural glycerine, unlike others, but she took her time to learn everything about making handcrafted soap. From plain-looking ones, she is now into more artful designs like pretty and colorful cupcakes. Like everyone else, she started out joining bazaars and has since started a national association of artisan soap-makers and cosmetic formulators. They join bazaars and fairs as a formidable group which is now seen as a backbone of the small industry they represent.

Kudos to these entrepreneurs.

Mabuhay!!! Be proud to be a *Filipino*.

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