

TTN Member-Entrepreneurs



Amy Epstein

Amy creates and sells one of a kind unique, handmade object over the internet (pintreedesigns.com) "This is an opportunity for me to use my creative energies, not a full-time occupation. It's a work in progress, not full-time."

Amy's first business was called **Straight Edge**. Straight Edge created and sold educational placemats for children as well as puzzles and games. As an architect, her interest was in design. "I wanted to hold to certain principles. For example, some items in my first business had to be produced in China but I was determined to keep some production locally. I wanted to keep jobs in Long Island City. At some point knockoffs became a problem, but her husband wrote a "cease and desist" letter and that slowed down competitors a bit.

Pintree Designs, her current business, was born out of serendipity. "After Straight Edge was sold, my husband died and I moved from my long-time residence in Brooklyn to the upper west side, where I had the new apartment renovated. When the project was done, I noticed a box of marble tiles that were left over from the kitchen installations. I painted designs on them, assembled them into decorative treasure boxes and offered them for sale. Now I do vases and pillows, etc."



I market them on the Etsy website. When I make a sale, I pack the item up, package it for shipping, and carry it to the post office. I'm using a whole new skill set for this business. This business is more like a hobby; it will never be big like Straight Edge. I don't want it to take over my life.

"After my husband died, and I started writing a blog about my experiences as a widow (widowinon.me). For the first time recently, I mentioned my Pintree web site. At first, the blog was an outlet for creative energy and a way to cope with my new status. Now I may use it more to promote my business."



TTN-NYC Newsletter May 2016

Her biggest current challenge? To learn how to use social media as a marketing tool. Amy, a Barnard graduate - speaks to young women students there about entrepreneurship. "I'm a big believer in entrepreneurship. I tell them it can make it possible for them to chart their own destinies."

Amy's advice to budding entrepreneurs :

"If you're creating a product, start out with something small that doesn't require major storage demands." At first, my office and warehouse were on the 4th floor of our brownstone home. After the first year of real success, we had to move it. City regulations did not approve of the fact that three tractor trailers were picking up orders on my street in one day.

One key to my success was that I was creating something that I needed. I needed something to distract my son, who was a slow eater and an educational placemat was the answer. I decided it was better to keep the child at the table.

Don't let the legal issues slow you down. The best thing that protects you is your creativity. You have to keep moving ahead.