



JANCE AND HER 16+ YEARS OF BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

The Party Girl World was established in October of 2004 and is nearly 17 years old. Jance has plenty of experience in starting and running her own business and here is how that happened.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING BEFORE THE PARTY GIRL WORLD?

Before starting The Party Girl World, I was working fulltime in an administration role for Kwik Kopy Printing. I met my husband, Christian, at this job and before I knew it, I was married and had two energetic boys running around at home. I had started a few different degrees at university, but I never really found my groove.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE THE LEAP AND START YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Christian had a job that meant long days and the simple fact was, we needed at least part of a second income for our household and as much as I loved (and still do) being a Mum, I needed something more. But it needed to be super flexible, something that I could dictate my own hours and days so I could work around all of my boys including Christian!

I was still searching for something when I came across a man busking in Melbourne, he was sculpting balloon animals. To me this was so fascinating, I didn't really have any friends with kids and so I hadn't been exposed to the world of children's entertainment. My mind was buzzing, and I decided to buy a balloon from this busker, I just wanted to learn how to make them myself. He made my eldest son, a dog, and I fiddled with it, deconstructing it for hours until it was just about flat trying to teach myself and eventually, I figured it out. I also found an interest in face painting, it was almost a lightbulb moment for me seeing these two skills come together, a service I could provide for children.

HOW DID THE PARTY GIRL WORLD DEVELOP INTO THE NATIONAL BRAND IT IS NOW?

The Party Girl started with just one girl – ME! There was no plan to grow or expand, no plans to employ staff and no plans to have Party Girl operations in 13 major cities across Australia. I booked my first face painting gig by calling the local race club about their family day that I saw in a 'what's on' newsletter. It was incredibly early in the piece that a client asked if they could book 2 face painters for their next event, then 3. Then I was turning away bookings. And that is when it all really began!

It became evident to me that there was a space in the market for reliable and professional children's entertainment. The Party Girl World then branched out to workshops and shopping centre activations and we had developed a great reputation locally. So much so that a client from Lara arranged a flight and accommodation for two

of our staff to go to an event in Bombala because of their confidence in the business. From then on, I knew there was opportunity and means to expand interstate and I decided to start satellite Party Girl branches in Canberra then Hobart and then the Gold coast, Brisbane, and Perth. I would fly into each state with my team and we would meet with clients and conduct interviews for possible Party Girls.

Licensing was next for us, I had built a network of national clients and my two boys were getting older, their final years of high school, and I had this kind of reflective moment. I had been able to attend every school concert and every swimming lesson while also earning a fulltime income and I wanted to be able to offer this opportunity to other parents. A fun, flexible and rewarding business model that was 100% family friendly. I knew I was not the only young mum who needed a flexible work environment and so Party Girl World licences were born. We had five licensees sign up in the first six months and two more in the following six months.

WHAT WERE SOME CHALLENGES THAT YOU HAVE FACED AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

When first starting your own business there is a lot of thinking on your feet and learning as you go. For me this was a challenge as I didn't have any experience in business management but to overcome this it just meant using the support systems that I had and teaching myself so that I would be able to understand and do things myself. I am not the type to stick my head in the sand when things get tough, and just had to work a little bit harder initially so that I could be confident in my business skills.

Another challenge happened as The Party Girl World grew, it was my business and had taken all my hard work to set up so in the beginning it was awfully hard to delegate because I knew my own work ethic and professionalism. I almost had a heart attack when I sent the first Party Girl to a face painting event without me. But I did have to let go, I learnt that for a business to grow you need to find the right people to be a part of your team and from then I think accepted but also thrived working in a team.

COVID-19 is another challenge that we as a business had to overcome, it meant restrictions to our events and many new COVID-19 safety plans. However, I think that for us, a company that is entirely events based, COVID-19 really cemented my confidence in the business. The fact that we saw 5 licensees through lockdown with another 2 coming on board is really a testament to the business plan as a model that is supportive and reliable despite any unforeseen challenge, COVID-19 being a good example! I think that it also proved to me that we are business that can be flexible when needed in order to stay relevant! We were able to come up with many alternatives to our norm, such as our virtual parties and at home craft video series to keep little ones entertained while in lockdown.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS?

In the next year I hope to go global, to sell licences to Party Girl bosses internationally. It isn't called The Party Girl WORLD for nothing! And in the next 5 years I would love to see 50 licensees internationally, that is the goal! I have also always joked about moving our office to a warehouse that is large enough for a flying fox, now that's the dream!

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST PROUD MOMENTS IN THE LAST 16 YEARS OF YOUR BUSINESS?

Something that I really pride myself in is my tenacity. I am not afraid to ask the hard questions, because if you don't ask then you will never know, and I don't like what ifs.

I am also really proud of the work environment that I have created for so many of my employees but also licensees. My office staff as well as licensees are more often than not mums that need flexible hours, I am so excited that I am able to provide that for them so that they are able keep connected with their children, choose their own hours and contribute to the household finances and still attend school assemblies, help in the classroom, and manage school drop offs and pickups just like I was! I believe that The Party Girl World is also a place that is perfect for university students as the hours are accepted by employees based on their availability. As well as being mostly weekend hours and school holidays it suits perfectly for the typical university timetable. We have had so much positive feedback from students over the years. A highlight of mine was hearing one of my Geelong Party Girls tell a new employee that they would really enjoy the work because 'it doesn't feel like a real job'. We just get to be kids and hang out with kids all day.

WHAT ARE THE TRAITS YOU LOOK FOR IN AN EMPLOYEE?

I look for someone who is great with kids, dependable and reliable and professional. The rest we teach.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP BUSINESS TIPS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS?

1. **Buy a Party Girl World Licence!** - with a licence comes the support and resources that everyone could use when starting a small business.
2. **Stay organised** - without this how do you expect employees to know where they need to be and what to do! One strategy we use in the office is to print out bookings and other important documents so that they are directly in front of us as well as have shared diaries, so we know where everyone is at any one time.
3. **Follow up with clients** - when things are checked and double checked you eliminate the risk of any mix ups happening ensuring a smoothly ran event.
4. **Train employees well** - with proper training you can rely on employees to represent the business in the best light helping build a good reputation! As well as trusting them completely with tasks that you delegate, meaning less stress.
5. **Find the right people for your team** - when employees are professionally trained, and you know they are a right fit for your company you will be able to trust them to represent the brand to the highest standard.
6. **Give clients an experience to remember** - make sure clients leave stress free and with a smile, they are more likely to rebook with a business they feel reassured with and can trust.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?

I couldn't say! Everyday is so different, the one constant is the school drop offs and pick-ups. And the drum lessons.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST PART ABOUT BEING A PARTY GIRL?

Every job and every day are different. There is not one job brief that looks the exact same, so there is no risk of getting stuck in a routine.

We also get to be a part of some amazing events. Some of my highlights for the business is the activities we coordinated, hosted, and ran at the Avalon Air show as part of the kids' zone (might I add we were trusted with about 12 walkie talkies! It was a lot of fun). The Sydney Mardi Gras which we attend every year with Vodafone to cover everyone in glitter as well as face painting at all of the Geelong Cats home games. A personal highlight of mine was taking part in the Gala Parade with my son in 2007 with our home-made trolley to hold the bubble machine! And the charity work we have had the opportunity to be a part of over the years.

PICS OF THE PARTY GIRLS IN ACTION.



Get Glitz'd at the Sydney Mardi Gras in 2018



Jance and her son Jack in the Gala Parade in 2007



Party Girl's at a client's end of year celebration in 2019