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## solo profile

Monica Graves  
glamjulz

Monica began glamjulz in 2000 while she was in her 11th year of a secure job with Canada Post. At the time, Monica thought she was desperate to climb the corporate ladder in sales but once she began her ascent, the view wasn't what she had thought. Monica, a hard working, spirited and entrepreneurial 'fire cracker' knew she had to make a big change so she took her passion for jewelry design and launched glamjulz. Today, glamjulz is Monica's full-time gig with a colourful and trendy studio in Burlington, Ontario, North American celebs adorning her product and sales all across Canada. Monica shares some tips about the challenges and rewards of becoming the driver of her destiny and imparts some wisdom she has gathered along the way.



### Reflections:

I can't say I ever had a lucky break. Hard work and belief in what I was doing just kept meeting opportunity. I was never sure how I would do it but I knew glamjulz would one day become my full time gig.

### A backward glance:

I remember feeling like I had learned everything I could in my sales position. I knew that I had to make a change and I was starting to feel more powerful and I had a lot of clarity at the time on what was going to make me happy in my life's work. I took the obvious risks – a regular paycheck, a pension, guaranteed employment and medical coverage.

### Lessons learned:

But what I came away with was more valuable than what I walked away from. The lessons I learned are invaluable and endless gifts. None of us are truly experts on anything without trying and failing or trying and succeeding. None of it is right and none is wrong. Having your own business is one adventure after another so it's best to check your ego at the door and just listen, listen, listen and learn! We all have the tools to do it – but sometimes we need help learning the tools.

### Number one business tool?

Networking. We all want to help each other. Networking is still the number one way I grow my business. People love to talk and tell a great story. Get as many people as possible to tell your story.

### The road ahead:

By continuing to believe in what I have done and continue to do, my excitement and hype about glamjulz will translate into sales and continued success. Attitude is everything

## The Power of Networking

Building your business through word of mouth  
by Jacqueline Parker

Starting up a business isn't easy! For me, it triggers thoughts of horrible math equations and accounting nightmares. So I hired an accountant to help. Until I learned the truth—dodging the math gods wasn't going to be my biggest problem. I needed to work with the right people and learn how to work with a limited budget. I quickly discovered I couldn't learn this stuff online or take a crash course in business. So I started asking questions from like-minded individuals. That's when I realized the most powerful tool would be networking.

For most people, small to medium-sized business ventures are a labour of love. You have to know how to bring your dream to fruition and realize you're not alone. By asking questions and talking to the right people you soon discover a valuable network of resources and support.

Carissa Reiniger, President of Women Entrepreneurs of Canada and Founder & President of Silver Lining Ltd, shares insights on networking and why it's the most important business tool you'll ever need. It could turn your small business into a big success.

When starting a business, check out your surroundings. It's funny how the people you're already connected to are also a network of resources. "When I started the business, I got every one of my first clients from my network – people I had worked with in a different capacity. There were people who believed in me and wanted to support my new initiative and they literally launched my business," says Reiniger.

To use networking as a tool for success, Reiniger recommends these best practices:

- *People will always see through someone who is only interested in what they can acquire for themselves.*

- *Fake intentions will quickly end any potentially strong contact. "I don't take someone's business card and call them the next day and sell them," says Reiniger. I believe in people so I send them something I think could help them. I get a joy out of meeting new people and I genuinely think about how I can help people I know, not how they can help me."*

- *Effective networking is a two-way street. Helping others with their business objectives will help you with yours. Referrals are good, but Reiniger warns that, "you are as good as your network. If you have a series of people doing bad work and building poor reputations, it will reflect poorly on you too. Guard your contacts and their time the same way you guard yours."*

- *Respect is critical when it comes to establishing a network and helping others to build theirs. "Only create connections or referrals that are mutually beneficial, based on a good personal experience and not random exposure."*

The amount of work it takes to launch a successful business is still a surprise to Reiniger. "Starting my own business was harder than I ever expected. It challenged me in ways I had never seen before," says Reiniger, reflecting on the inception of Silver Lining Ltd. "It took a lot of confidence and really made me evaluate my strengths and weaknesses. I am a million times better for it now, but it was rough in the process!"

So avoid the heavy lifting on your own. Be aware of the network around you. And allow others to help you turn your dream into a success.