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THE
SUCCESS
EDITION



STARTUP STARS
MEET A LOCAL MOGUL

YOUNG GUNS
UNDER 40 & TAKING
ON THE WORLD

PLUS
FOOD & WINE +
WATCHES +

SECRETS OF MY SUCCESS

LISA MESSENGER • JOHN BERTRAND • CAROLYN CRESWELL • HAROLD MITCHELL

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DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE

LISA MESSENGER HAS BUILT AN EMPIRE BY UPSETTING THE STATUS QUO

Lisa Messenger admits that not only has she plunged several times headlong into a new business without knowing much about it – she revels in doing it.

Take her “entrepreneurial and lifestyle” magazine, *Collective Hub*, launched in 2013 into a challenged publishing environment. Lisa knew little about magazines and had never worked for one.

“I had no idea what I was doing,” she says. “I had three staff under the age of 25 and I was going into a market that people said was dead or dying. So it was an interesting time.”

It was likewise with her website, collectivehub.com, which features eight to 12 new stories each day. “I had no idea about online or digital,” she says. “I learnt the mechanics and put a team in place.”

Lisa’s instincts proved to be excellent. The idea of launching businesses without multi-page business plans encapsulates her notion of what she calls “failing fast” – just jumping in and doing it.

Lisa, 45, now oversees a media empire that includes the magazine (now sold in 37 countries), website, books, events and even homewares. She oversees every arm of the business, describing herself as the “brand architect”. She has written (or co-written) 16 books, one of which – *Daring and Disruptive* – will be released in the US in September through the major publishing house Simon and Schuster.

We meet at *The Weekly Review* on a day when Lisa is down from Sydney with a diary packed with Melbourne engagements. She is a media darling who is invited to hang out with Sir Richard Branson on his private Caribbean island and, more recently, spent five days on Branson’s Makepeace Island near Noosa.

The day before our interview, she says, John Cleese rang her. One another occasion American *Vogue’s* legendary editor Anna Wintour’s office rang asking if she could meet Anna

when she was in New York. “People asked me what I was going to wear. I said, ‘I don’t care what I’m going to wear, I’m worried about what’s going to come out of my brain!’”

Lisa started out in marketing and public relations before launching The Messenger Group, an independent custom book publishing operation, in 2001. But it’s with *Collective Hub*, a publishing operation she calls “a global community of entrepreneurial and creative minds who have an appetite for changing the status quo”, that she has made her mark.

Under its banner she runs 18 business arms including a multi-media business comprising the monthly print

turn an ending into a beginning. Geared towards the positive but not afraid to confront the negative, it says a lot about Lisa’s outlook on the world and goes a long way to explaining her crash-or-crash-through multi-platform success.

She reflects on that time. Her previous book *Life & Love* had just gone to number one on Booktopia, the magazine was doing really well, “things were starting to move, then this break-up came out of the blue and dropped me to my knees. I couldn’t brush it under the carpet. It’s really inauthentic if I didn’t say, ‘Actually, I went through tough stuff too.’”

She says writing about the break-up was “kind of hideous

“IT’S ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR, LIVING MY LIFE OUT LOUD, SHOWING THAT ANYTHING’S POSSIBLE”

magazine, online news site, an event company, a custom publishing unit, an online store offering products such as candles, towels and diaries as well as links to Lisa’s speaking engagements and conferences or festivals.

Lisa likes to go out of her way to do things differently, such as arriving at business meetings without supporting material because it makes connecting on a human level easier.

Her philosophies on life and business are neatly encapsulated in her latest book – her 16th – in which she writes of a devastating break-up. “I thought my next book might be entitled *Marriage and Motherhood* but life had other plans ... Clearly the universe didn’t get the memo.”

The book outlines the break-up with “the man of my absolute dreams” who walked out “six days after we had just moved into our dream apartment together”. The book’s title needed to change, and it did, to *Break-ups and Breakthroughs*:

and kind of extraordinarily cathartic”.

“I made a decision when I launched *Collective Hub* that I would live my life out loud. I’m strong enough and very confident in myself that whatever comes at me I will talk about and try and empower other people on that journey.”

Central to her philosophy is non-conformism, doing things differently, testing an idea without fear of its failure. “I’m purposefully counter-intuitive,” she says. “I look at how something’s been done and I purposefully flip it.”

She is a personification of another company’s brand motto – just do it. And do it fast. She has vowed to live her life “daringly and ferociously”.

“For me it’s about being an entrepreneur, living my life out loud, showing that anything’s possible. And that will not change until the day I die.” ●

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THE SECRETS OF HER SUCCESS

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALISE YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL?

When things started flowing in a fairly natural form that started to mean success. I began my first business on October 22, 2001, at 31. I had 11 years of really nothing, churning along in business, over-servicing, under-charging, being everything to everyone, comfortable but not excited every day – 11 years of that slog. And finally I got to a point where a light bulb dropped and I thought, ‘This is what I want to do’.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS?

You need to know what your weaknesses are. I am terrible at detail so I surround

myself with an amazing team. But I also know what I’m good at: being a visionary and pulling together teams and looking at things differently. Don’t expect that you can do it all; surround yourself with amazing people.

HAS YOUR IDEA OF SUCCESS CHANGED?

Before *Collective* I used to buy a lot of stuff. When you’re not completely fulfilled in your life – this was true for me – you go out and buy clothes or shoes or whatever and it’s instant gratification. The funny thing is now, every single day as an editor, I get sent probably 10 to 20 free things – clothes, shoes, all the stuff I used to buy – and now I pretty much give it all away to my team. I

don’t need stuff any more. I used to think I was going to work to be successful to buy more stuff, and now as I’m getting a level of success I actually don’t want stuff. I’m living more and more simply now that I’m more fulfilled in my work.

HAS SUCCESS CHANGED YOU?

I hope not. I don’t feel any different. I feel this is the start of a very big vision and I don’t want to get complacent or egotistical. It’s not why I started. The moment we forget why we started something, then it can all fall apart.

TOP TIP?

Have an unwavering self-belief. You might

knock on 80 doors and all but one will get slammed in your face. You’ve got to have that tenacity to keep going. Have a really clear vision and understand your “why”: why are you doing this? That’s the one question I ask myself every day. And hustle. You’ve got to get out there and work your butt off.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS IN OTHER PEOPLE?

My biggest measure of success is seeing others use their talents and step into their own purpose. Once they do that, I view them as successful because they’re living their best life and following their passion. That is true success in my eyes. ●

SECRETS OF MY

(LISA'S MAKE-UP \ CATERINA PULEIO)



JOHN BERTRAND

Since he famously skipped the wing-keeled Australia II to victory in the 1983 America's Cup, breaking 132 years of American dominance, John Bertrand has become one of the country's most admired leaders. In business he has built companies in the marine industry, property development and digital media. He is chairman and president of Swimming Australia, chairman of Sport Australia Hall of Fame and chairman of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

(SCOTT McNAUGHTON)

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALISE YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL?

I'm still trying to prove it – but clearly the America's Cup. No one had achieved that before. The America's Cup started before the US Civil War, to put it in context, and no other nation had been able to win it until we put a program together to beat the Americans.

SECRETS FOR SUCCESS?

You've got to have passion. Without passion it's very difficult to achieve. And dedication and hard work. But invariably success comes from people, from a team environment. Yachting and swimming are very much team environments. I'm very much into team building.

HAS SUCCESS CHANGED YOU?

It has given me a sense of great contentment. With the America's Cup I, had nothing more to prove in the world of sailing. Contentment is a wonderful thing for someone who's so driven, like myself. The big challenge for someone who's achieved something on the global stage and climbed their own Everest is to find the next passion in one's life, because to go back and keep duplicating it is a little sad in many ways.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS IN OTHERS?

By what someone has achieved in their field, and what sort of balance they have. There's the opportunity to give back. The higher a person achieves, the more opportunity there is to give back, and I see that as a responsibility.

TOP TIP?

Success requires good people around you. It requires people support, mentoring, expertise. Very rarely is it a one-man or one-woman show. ●

**NEXT PAGE **
HAROLD MITCHELL & CAROLYN CRESWELL'S SECRETS