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Amy Trelenberg and Megan Healy created Shopmamiе.com.

Breaking out of the entry-level position

Local fashionistas create online site for trendy home shoppers

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Amy Trelenberg studied accounting at Pennsylvania State University. After, like most college graduates, she settled for a desk job.

Megan Healy majored in merchandising management at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, but she, too, found herself in an entry-level medical sales position.

After succumbing to a routine they never imagined they would be living, the two decided they wanted to go into business by themselves.

"We have been best friends since the age of 14," Trelenberg says. "We never really had to decide to go in to business together - we both knew it was a perfect fit."

Trelenberg says since freshman year in high school the pair has been fashion conscious, feminine and trendy. They spent endless teenage hours dreaming of the fashion industry and their favorite designers - Carolina Herrera, Catherine Malandrino and Monique Lhuillier.

In March 2008, Trelenberg and Healy finally left their day jobs behind in an effort to fulfill their dreams of owning a trendy boutique.

The best friends turned entrepreneurs searched Wilmington for the perfect piece of real estate to house their business. After searching and not finding the right fit, aesthetically or financially, they decided to move their business online to Shopmamiе.com.

"Switching our whole idea from a storefront to an online store was huge," Trelenberg says. "We don't regret it."

The simple Web site is like a meticulously organized closet. Divided by category, it has tops, skirts, dresses, sweaters, outerwear and accessories from brands such as Tulle, LAmade, Kersh, By Boe, Miss Me and more. The pair says the brands mainly originate from the West Coast and Los Angeles area.

The site does not, however, sell an abundance of similar looks or a surplus of pages from which to search.

"We do not carry basics," Trelenberg says. "We buy carefully at market and try to find items with unique accents."

Trelenberg says choosing a refreshingly modern Web page over a windowed storefront seemed to be the smartest way to make their products available to the public. Without having to worry about the cost of rent, Trelenberg and Healy can keep costs affordable for their customers.

"All of our merchandise is priced under \$100 and we strive to keep our prices as low as possible," Trelenberg says. "The concept of our store is to make great style available to all."

The two also emphasized their desire to keep it simple, which is reflected in their Web site. Each item is described in detail and paired with at least one picture to aid customers in their shopping.

Online shopping boutiques have become increasingly popular over the past decade for their convenience and ease. Yet in the past few years, another method of shopping has entered the race - at home purchasing parties. From jewelry parties to sex toy parties consumers of all ages now have the ability to host, entertain and shop from their living room.

Trelenberg and Healy, who say their educational backgrounds in accounting and merchandising management have proved useful in starting their business, were keenly aware of this concept when formulating their business plan.

"We offer fabulous trunk show parties available to all customers," Trelenberg says. "The host invites friends and family to view, try on and shop the Shopmamie.com line in person."

Trelenberg says they can set up a viewing in any space. They previously hosted a university party with the Alpha Phi sorority in which 10 percent of the profits were donated to the sorority's philanthropy.

While the girls may have left their desk jobs, they insist their new lifestyle still requires a lot of work.

"We still get up really early, like a normal nine-to-five job," Trelenberg says. "The first thing we do is pack our orders and get them ready because they have to be shipped out by two, then we spend a lot of time doing e-mails, booking parties and that kind of stuff."

After a rough start out of college, Trelenberg and Healy say they are now able to combine their love for fashion and their education into a successful business.

"We both feel so fortunate to be able to follow our dreams," Trelenberg says.

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