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Beth Reeber Valone

The Detroit News

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Posted by [Beth Reeber Valone](#) (The Detroit News) on Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 06:03 AM

Mom of five bakes her way to success (+giveaway)

I really admire women who run their own business. On the outside it seems so ideal - your business, your schedule, your terms, right? But if you are the boss, you are responsible for everything, all the time.



Enlarge

Sometimes it takes a a major decision to help us leave our comfort zones and follow our hearts. One such "momprenneur" is Pam Turkin, co-founder of Just Baked bakery and cupcake shops, which is based in Livonia.

Between nibbles of delicious and creative cupcakes, I chatted with Pam at her Royal Oak store and asked her how she got the idea for her business. Like many working moms, she was always on the lookout for the perfect job situation. Pam, mother to five kids ages 16-22, had a successful job in marketing but found herself worrying it would require her to move from Metro Detroit to Orlando and uproot her family.

During her work travels, Pam noticed cupcake shops popping up on the east and west coasts and decided to give baking a try. She was in her 40s, in the middle of a dismal economy and had no formal culinary experience - but she made it work.

"I began to experiment with recipes on the weekend and used my kids and their friends as critics," Pam said. "The cupcakes that disappeared quickly, I figured those were the best so I made more of those."

As word of her cupcake creations spread, Pam started baking for friends and family, quickly outgrowing her home kitchen. So she moved the operation to a vacant bakery in Livonia with a mixer and six pans in January 2009. The first day she opened her doors to the public she sold \$82 worth of cupcakes and double that the next day.

Today, Just Baked is making 60,000 cupcakes a month in dozens of varieties and selling out of four retail locations. Her first franchise store opens in Canton soon and Just Baked is also selling cupcakes inside a Swirlberry frozen yogurt shop in East Lansing. Pam and her husband (she's the creative one, he's the numbers/operations guy) employ more than 60 people (many of them local culinary students) and recently signed a licensing agreement with Faygo pop to make Faygo cupcakes to be sold at local grocery stores. "We plan to do \$1.6 million (in revenue) this year," Pam said.

The mom in Pam gives her lots of ideas and drives many of her decisions, such as setting up the East Lansing location so parents of students at Michigan State University could send their kids a birthday treat. Just Baked also discounts orders for military moms and ships cupcakes to bases around the world. And because some of her employees are vegans, Pam and her bakers have come up with some delicious options for vegans.

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Beth Reeber



Sarah Carlson

Birthday parties, weddings, you name it, Pam and the Just Baked crew do it all.

"I'm a marketing and advertising girl," Pam said, and she's done a great job spreading the word about Just Baked, employing Twitter, Facebook, giveaways, media, coupons and charity tie-ins.

So how does she balance work and home? Pam admits the work is tiring (but fulfilling) and she probably wouldn't have done this when her kids were little. "My family thought I was crazy to leave a good-paying job," Pam said. "But I encourage any woman to do her homework, then put the fear aside and go out and do it."

For more information about Just Baked, go to www.justbakedshop.com.

Now for the really good part: Just Baked is offering a lucky reader a dozen cupcakes for free. So send an e-mail to MichMoms with your favorite Just Baked cupcake flavor to enter a drawing. Deadline is Sunday at midnight.

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