

## Baby is the basis for a booming business



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The impetus behind Rebecca McLeod's business Made4Baby is a common one: when she couldn't find the products she was looking for in the shops, she decided to make her own.

What's perhaps not so common is the rapid success she and husband James have achieved since launching the Made4Baby range of hair and body washes, barrier creams, oils, and lotions at last year's Auckland Parent and Child show.

"The business really blossomed far faster than we expected. Right from the word go we had orders coming in every day," says Rebecca.

The Made4Baby range has since been picked up by Life Pharmacies, and is currently on the shelves of 29 outlets from Albany on Auckland's North Shore to Dunedin.

As a former environmental lawyer, Rebecca is more aware than most people of what some skin care products contain - and how those ingredients can affect people, particularly babies and others with sensitive skin.

When son Sam was born, Rebecca and James searched high and low for affordable, natural, baby-care products - then decided to make their own.

"I'd already decided I wanted to switch to a career that would allow me to be a full-time Mum, and this just seemed a perfect opportunity."

Rebecca says communications technology played a vital role in getting her business off the ground, and remains a key part of her day-to-day operation.

"When James and I were setting the business up, we did a lot of work with a local product design company, while the web designer we wanted to work with was in Christchurch.

"Thanks to broadband, we could email images and mock-ups backwards and forwards between us, and collaborate without having to get together physically."

Mobile broadband also helped get Made4Baby's sales off to a fast start, and even allowed the McLeods to take a family holiday without disrupting the business.

"At the launch, we had a laptop on the stand, so we could show potential customers our whole product range and how easy it is to order online," says Rebecca.

And the holiday?

"We had planned a stay with family in Tauranga, and we wanted to take our time getting there, so we packed enough product to cover a few days' orders in a chilly bin and arranged for James to receive an alert on his phone whenever an order came in.

"When we received an alert, we'd stop in the nearest convenient place, go online remotely to get the customers' details, get the products out of the chilly bin, pack them, and courier them from the closest Post Shop. Turnaround time was less than 24 hours," says Rebecca.

"And with a range of products in storage in Tauranga, we could operate as easily from there as from our office at home."

Three Key Tips

- \* Don't be afraid to take a new direction - the skills and knowledge you have acquired may have a broader range of potential applications than you realise
- \* Make technology work for you - mobile communications tools help give working Mums the flexibility they need
- \* Be prepared for success - make sure you're ready to back up your promises with good, efficient service

For more information, visit [www.made4baby.co.nz](http://www.made4baby.co.nz)