

Who Run the World? Mompreneurs

Written by Kyley Warren

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Success looks different to everyone. For some, it's dependent on the level of entrepreneurial success that you've garnered and the visible opulence within your life – whether it be in personal fame or finances. For others, their lives are simply defined by the quality of people around them – both in the families that they're born into, and even more, in the families who they create. For us though, we don't see these things as being exclusive to one another. Behind every diligent worker is a long list of figures whose loyalty, love and commitment to seeing greatness blossom, has served as a source of motivation for some of the world's greatest leaders. And as any affluent person will tell you, success means nothing if you don't have the right people around you to share it with.

The Valley alone is bountiful in business trailblazers, enthusiastic entrepreneurs and world-changing leaders, each maintaining no shortage of inspiration. In particular, there's a refreshing number of "lady bosses" around the state, whose love for life and self-expression translates seamlessly into both their work and personal lives. We had the opportunity to speak with a few of these ladies – i.e. our favorite Arizona "Mompreneurs" – about their business dreams, the importance of family and how each one is helping to shift societal stereotypes by proving that you really can do it all.



Amie Alonzo

A native to Arizona, a doting mother and a loving wife, Amie Alonzo really has it all. She pursued her passion for healthcare at a young age – meeting her husband in the process – and from there, the two welcomed a darling daughter to their growing family. Though she'd long "sworn off" adopting the role as a stay-at-home mom, Alonzo found that her priorities quickly shifted from her job to her family. She just simply didn't have the time to work as a nurse and to give the attention she wanted to her growing baby girl. After quitting her job, she tried settling into her new routine only to find herself utterly bored. As she jokingly summarizes it: "She took so many naps, I was like, 'What am I gonna do? I can only vacuum the floor so many times.'" But, after stumbling upon her mother-in-law's sewing machine, Alonzo began tinkering around with the machine and trying her hand at different crafts. With the help of YouTube tutorial videos, she began making headbands and other crafty, Pinterest-inspired accessories for her daughter. From there, Briabay was launched – the clothing company now specializes in much more than Amie's initial headband product. Shoppers and fans can obsess over every Etsy-centric clothing item, from rompers to cardigans and leggings to shorties, all fit for their free, fashionable and growing daughters. Amie and her company are continuing to grow alongside what was the major source of inspiration for the brand: her daughter, Bria.

How has your life changed since finding this creative outlet?

I kind of started meeting moms locally and have grown these friendships. I also have other women – who I've never met before, but that I talk to almost every day. Great friendships have grown from there. And it kind of just ended up being this hobby where friends were buying from me and then it ended up turning into a business that I genuinely love. Along with that, I've found this new love for fashion and designing and sewing. And it works just because it's flexible, and I can work from home.

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Summer Hartman

As any woman might argue, a healthy obsession with babies certainly isn't anything out of the ordinary. But the ability to dedicate your life to taking care of babies, while still caring for children of your own – now that's a commitment. But that's Summer Hartman's story. She has catered her career to quite literally center around babies and assisting the needs of new parents. She started in the world of babysitting – caring for her siblings and the children of neighbors from as early as 8-years-old. Later in life, in 1996, Hartman was recruited to work as a nanny in Washington D.C. Fast forward a few years, after meeting and marrying her husband, she welcomed two beautiful children of her own. A family move to Arizona inspired Hartman's next career choice, to work as a newborn care specialist. Then, she found her long-term love when she started working as a sleep consultant. For over 13 years, Hartman has dedicated her life to families (who have become friends) and their growing children. Her work has impacted thousands within both the United States and abroad through in-home and virtual sleep consultations. While her schedule is anything but ordinary – often working night shifts and finding herself to be a more visible presence within the homes of others, rather than her own – she understands that this is her life's work. Recently, Summer also launched an app - Baby On Call - that works as a first-response system for families. The app allows parents to find advice quickly, as they manage any crisis situations with their newborn babies. Looking into the future though, Hartman is excited to take a bit of a step back from her work and to focus on her family. She's also refocusing her efforts and energy on a new passion project: a book, written entirely by her and inspired by her years of working as a sleep consultant.

How have you really found the balance over the years of being able to manage being both an involved parent and wife, as well as being a full-time business woman too?

I'm going to say honestly, it was really hard. It's still very hard. And I think part of it is just shutting my phone off. Because I am so in-demand, I get text messages 24 hours a day. So, I have learned to put on my phone that I am going to be out of the office for a certain amount of time, and then actually follow through. Of course, people still know how to get a hold of me because they will email me and then my computer will ding. If I know that it's a true emergency, I'll answer. But finding balance in this world is really, really difficult. People are high-maintenance and they tend to want to have that answer immediately. Working in this industry is really intense, so I've found that I just have to turn my phone off. I also go to the spa, get massages and regularly meet with my doctors. Amid everything in my life, I have to remember to also take care of me.



Photo courtesy of Tiffany Eckroth Photography.

Beth Schutte

Elle Smith once said, "All the forces on this planet, will never beat that of a mother's love." And this quote is never represented more perfectly than in Beth Schutte's life. In fact, her love for her children is so deep and apparent that it was the guiding force that encouraged her to launch her business, The Little Monkey Company. It all started when Schutte started feeding her daughter baby food. As everyone knows, babies are understandably messy eaters and thus require items like bibs. What Schutte ultimately discovered though, was that while the bibs helped to manage the resulted mess of feeding time, they often left irritated marks and rashes on her daughter's neck. After spending nearly a year researching different bib options and the materials that are present within each of them, she realized that there was nothing on the market that matched the standards of what she wanted for her daughter. In that moment, her business was born in early 2017. The Little Monkey Company

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now has an environmentally-friendly bib line – which launched late last year – with each bib being non-toxic and free of things like PVC and latex. And the cup attached at the lower portion of the bib is made from 100-percent food-grade silicone. The product is also unique in its high-neckline structure, which helps to capture all of the free-falling food before it makes contact with and irritates the baby's skin. The company is the first of its kind to sell a patented design like this. While her company's early success has proved to be one of her most daring adventures yet, Schutte takes the greatest pride in her family – she is supported by her wonderful fiancé Levi, her incredibly smart and beautiful bonus daughter, Bella, and her free-spirited and fun-loving, Penelope. No part of her inspiring and impactful journey would be the same without all of them by her side.

What would your advice be to any moms who have business or creative endeavors that they might want to pursue, but who feel discouraged because they also want to enjoy and invest in being a mother?

I think I would say that if they really have an idea, to just start the research on it. Start reaching out to people, start asking questions, and see if it is an idea that could really manifest into something. I know for me, what really helped, is that sometimes it's hard because you get so wrapped up and it's completely overwhelming. Where do I start? Where do I go? So, for me, just writing a to-do list and focusing on one step at a time, really helped. Before you know it, you've gotten pretty far ahead of the game and you've learned so much along the way. My honest advice would be to just go for it and to just try one day at a time, and see where you go.