

Pamela Kauten: Cosmetics job revealed selling knack

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE WHO AM I?

NAME: Pamela Kauten

TITLE AND COMPANY: Founder and president, [Florida CareerLINK](#)

YEARS WITH THE COMPANY: Nine

YEARS IN TAMPA BAY AREA: 25

NATURE OF BUSINESS: Employment services

EDUCATION: [Concordia College](#), Milwaukee

WHERE YOU GREW UP AND WHAT IT WAS LIKE: I grew up in Milwaukee. It was a great place to be a kid. We had six children in our family, and we were always outdoors regardless of the season. We'd have picnics every weekend -- even if it was snowing! We'd grill outside no matter how cold it was in the winter, and go sledding and walking in the countryside. Tips of the trade

How do you manage the information flow? I don't respond instantly to every e-mail or call I receive. I'll review calls and e-mails in the morning before the workday begins and again in the evening, and organize myself accordingly.

How do you generate new ideas? The best new ideas come from listening to my clients, my employees and my peer mentors. I also find that some of the best ideas come to me when I am working out.

What was your best business idea and what was the outcome? Without question, Florida CareerLINK is the best business idea I've ever had. My late husband and I started this business nine years ago in response to our customers' needs. We've been listening ever since, and our customers always lead us to the next success.

Who is your mentor and why? My late husband and business partner, Neil Kauten. Even though I can no longer go to him for his excellent advice and counsel, I try to think of what Neil would say or do in a given situation, and that helps guide me.
Background check

What was your first paid job? I sold Mary Kay Cosmetics and had a blast! I was a young mother, so the ability to sell from home and manage my time on my schedule suited me well. But I discovered I had a knack for selling. Pretty soon I was driving a pink car!

How did you get started in your current career? I was responsible for developing alternative revenue streams for the giant radio company Jacor Broadcasting, which is now part of [Clear Channel](#). I developed a job fair business for them, and it was so successful that I thought to myself, "Why can't I do this as my own business?"

If you could have dinner with one person you've never met, who would it be and why? Hillary Clinton. She's brilliant, tough as nails and has extraordinary perseverance.

If you weren't in your current career, what would you be doing? I'd probably be in the real estate business.

What is your favorite activity with your family? Hanging out with my sons, Adam and Nick, who both recently graduated from college and, happily for me, are living in Tampa Bay again. My absolute favorite thing to do is to go out to dinner with one or both of them and just spend time catching up. They are wonderful young men, and I am proud to be their mother.

What's a fact about you that few people know? My age! I'm 47. Now you all know.

Who are your heroes in the business world and why? Martha Stewart. While Martha's had her ups and downs, she built an empire on the strength of her personality and brand. She's an amazing businesswoman.

What trait of yours makes you the most successful? My marketing skills and ability to detect important new trends in my industry
Words to the wise

What advice would you give to someone starting out in your field? Control your own destiny. It may sound a little cliché, but you really should pursue your dreams and do everything you can to get yourself in the successful position you want to be in.

How could Tampa Bay change to be more business friendly? Let's work on our transportation problems. Traffic congestion is only getting worse. Solutions like public rail transportation would really help us a lot, and confirm that this region has really grown up.



Pamela Kauten
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