

# Boxer & Co

**Gwen Blake** came to Australia seven years ago on her honeymoon, and loved it so much that she stayed. It gave her the perfect opportunity to follow her passion, building up her own design agency that specialises in creating eye-catching packaging that really sells products.

**W**hat were you doing before you started Boxer & Co? I was working in-house in various companies in London in Marketing Management roles. I came to Sydney on honeymoon 7 years ago and we accidentally stayed! Now I am a fully-fledged Aussie with an Australian business and two Australian kids. It doesn't look like I'll be going back to the UK anytime soon!

**How did the idea for Boxer & Co come about?** I was always interested in working agency, rather than client-side and saw moving from London to Sydney as an opportunity to have a total life overhaul and make the flit to the agency world. I got a job for a design agency relatively quickly. When the owner of that business decided to close her company down, I saw it as the opportunity of a lifetime and decided to stick my neck out and start my own business. I approached and picked-up some of the old company's clients, as well as gaining some new ones. I created a new name and vision and found a fantastic and talented business partner to come along for the ride!

**What has been the most difficult challenge you've had to overcome?** Finding great staff. People don't realize how specific the skill of packaging design is. It has its own set of rules and processes, which are very different to the general graphic design world. I need smart, savvy designers who understand marketing and the role that their work has in making products fly off shelves for our clients. It's not just about making packs look pretty. I'm lucky enough to have found a fantastic team, but it's a constant work in progress, advertising, interviewing and hiring, as we gain more clients and grow our business.



Gwen Blake

**What has been the most effective form of advertising for your business?** Nothing beats word of mouth. Doing a job really well for our clients, who then talk about us or move on to other companies or start their own enterprises. Networking is important to me too. I define networking as widening my contacts,

and helping people with their businesses wherever I am able, in the knowledge that what goes around comes around, but not expecting instant gratification from it. It's a longer-term thing than that. Making sure we constantly churn-out work that's ground-breaking, award-worthy and gets talked about in the media is important.

**How important is social media to your business?**

I'm dabbling in all areas of Social Media. We have a bit of fun and engage with our friends and followers on Facebook but I think Linked-In is probably where we'll end up getting business from. It's important to stay front of mind to your network, so that they recommend you to their network. I can do that by making the odd post or tweet without going over the top.

**What do you think the Federal or State Government could do to help make it easier for small business?**

Hailing from the UK, I think small businesses get a much better deal in this country. Not just from the government but also from the Aussie mentality that believes in giving the small guy a fair-

go. If I had to pick something it would be the amount of paperwork involved. If it could be simplified and reduced, so that business owners could spend less of their precious time on it, that would be amazing.

**What are your plans to expand the business?**




We moved into a beautiful studio which is too big for us right now, in the knowledge that we'll be growing. We have a five year plan in place, which we're successfully one year down the line of. We want to grow the business to a size that is more exciting, more fun and more profitable whilst we two owners can still keep our fingers on the pulse and continue to be involved in the roles and projects we love, rather than purely managing the business. It's a fine line.. 



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