

Australian Women Online

Spiritual Business: Creating a Business from the Heart

October 7, 2008 by [Deborah Robinson](#)

Australian entrepreneur, Kate Forster (pictured), has always believed the link between spirituality and business is more prominent than people think. But it wasn't until Kate's own design business began to experience a difficult period and the pressure of running the home and family threatened to overwhelm her, that Kate began to question the traditional approach to business.

"Most of the business books were just so vicious. The 'art of war in business' and 'cutting your peers off at the knees' and all this sort of thing and that just didn't sit well with me," Kate Forster said in a telephone interview with Australian Women Online.

So when Kate's design business began to experience financial difficulties, she decided to explore both modern and ancient spiritual practices in an effort to turn her life and her business around.

The 35-year-old mother of two, set up a Spiritual Business Blog as a 12 month experiment. Kate devoted herself to a year of learning and shared her daily experiences, the good and the bad, on the blog.

"I wanted to trial the esoteric approach, but I also wanted to really work on getting my ego out of the business. So when I started the blog I didn't tell anyone about it. I thought if it's going to have a life, it will find it's own life and slowly people started to come and then a few articles appeared in newspapers about it."

At the end of the year long trial Kate's design business had grown by 50% and Kate and her family were all thriving. The popularity of the blog also inspired Kate to share her new found knowledge through the creation of a new book '*Spiritual Business – Creating A Business From The Heart*', giving advice on how to successfully combine work and spirituality for a better way of life.

Kate's experiences do suggest that the rewards of practicing 'spiritual business' go way beyond just having a healthy balance sheet. I think most of us would agree that the heart and soul of any business has to be the people who populate the physical work space and in her book, Kate Forster devotes whole chapters on creating a positive work environment and working with the right people.

"Culturally our business is the best it's ever been and I have the best team I've ever worked with," said Kate. "I believe there is a direct relationship between the culture of a business and the economics. If the culture is right, the rest will come."

"To get good staff you do have to pay more money and you have to acknowledge that. But with that you get this incredible level of loyalty and commitment, shared vision and inspiration. I encourage our staff to treat the business as their own and to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to each part of the business they're responsible for."

The chapter about creating a positive work environment also discusses the importance of the physical space where you do business. In her book Kate Forster writes, “A workspace with the right design, colour, storage and even signage permeates every part of your business” (page 110).

But not surprisingly, the chapter of **Spiritual Business** that receives the most attention is *Creating Prosperity*. Kate says she receives more emails about this section of the book than any other.

“The prosperity actually comes at the end because you have to do the work first. But prosperity can be a fridge full of food or just paying your bills on time and not having to worry about money at that base level. That in itself is a form of wealth,” Kate Forster said.

For Kate and her business partner, husband David, prosperity was buying their first house. “At the end of all this I actually got to buy the house I wanted to buy. I could have bought a house before, but we couldn’t afford to buy where we wanted to live. For me this was a massive symbol of actually having enough faith that the business can actually help me to pay it off.”

Although a business needs to be profitable to survive, business owners also need to take note of the first chapter of **Spiritual Business** which talks about discovering your values and how these will guide you towards achieving prosperity and wealth *on your own terms*.

Kate explains, “I started with a discussion on values in the book because if you have those then you’re half way there because every person that you hire needs to understand and share those values.”

“After I established the values for our business, we basically had to restaff because most of the staff we had working for us didn’t share those values. They were nice people but they didn’t really share the vision that David and I had for the business. Most people feel bad about restaffing, but it is your business and it’s okay to change your mind.”

Kate says she relies as much on her intuition when recruiting staff as she does on what is written in the candidate’s resumé. “When the person talks in terms of ‘we’ instead of ‘I’, for me this is a pretty good indicator that they share the values of the business.”

Spiritual Business: Creating a Business from the Heart by Kate Forster is published by Dogma and is available now from book retailers and from the website www.spiritualbusiness.com.au for RRP \$49.95

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