

## You In Shape

WOMEN IN ACTION



# "I'M MY OWN BOSS!"

Discover how these women turned their dreams into thriving businesses—and how you can, too! BY ABIGAIL LIBERS

Alexia Brue, 39, and Melisse Gelula, 41, co-founders of Well+Good, a website devoted to wellness in New York City



**THEIR STORY** As seasoned health and beauty journalists, former co-workers Alexia and Melisse hardly went a day without being asked what new workout they should try or which weight-loss plan was really effective. **Once they realized there was no place where savvy New Yorkers could get up-to-date info about the fitness, nutrition, and beauty scene, wellandgoodnyc.com was born.** Since its launch in 2010, readership has grown steadily—they get an average of one million page views per month and have more than 20,000 subscribers to their thrice-weekly newsletter.

**LESSON LEARNED:** DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL. "We've never been scared to try new things," says Melisse. "If they don't work out, like the time we attempted to partner with a daily deals site, we learn from the experience and move on."

Vanessa Wauchope, 30, founder of Sensible Sitters, a national babysitting referral agency



**HER STORY** A babysitter since she was 15, Vanessa started Sensible Sitters eight years ago when she was just 22. She'd taken time off from school and began babysitting for some of her mom's friends. "At the time there were no sitting services that allowed employees to have steady, yet flexible jobs in pre-screened households," says Vanessa, who employs college students and recent grads with CPR training, references, and experience. **The business took off very quickly, expanding from one to seven cities in just four years—with plans for 12 more locations soon.**

**LESSON LEARNED:** SECURE A SOUNDING BOARD. "I set up a network of six moms who give me feedback about the company on a regular basis," says Vanessa. "Their advice is invaluable."

Angela Park, 40, owner of Sweet, a bakery in Hoboken, NJ  
**HER STORY** Six years ago, Angela didn't know the first thing about baking. "I'd always been a decent cook but I didn't have a sweet tooth," she says. But when her sister suggested she start her own business, she bit. **After tossing around a few ideas, Angela decided on a bakery since cupcakes were becoming a trendy treat.** She began researching recipes and neighborhoods to set up shop. At the end of 2007, she found the location, signed the lease, and hired two bakers. Since Sweet officially opened in August 2008, it has become one of the most popular dessert spots in Hoboken. Next up: a second store in New York City.

**LESSON LEARNED:** BE READY FOR ANYTHING. "When my two bakers quit within months of opening our doors, I had no choice but to roll up my sleeves and teach myself how to bake," says Angela. "The next two years were the hardest of my life."



## READY TO RUN YOUR OWN BIZ?

As the CEO of the supplement company Wellnx, Brad Woodgate knows a thing or two about being an entrepreneur. He and his brother started the firm in their parents' basement with less than \$30,000; within six years of launching, it achieved over \$100 million in annual sales. Brad's new goal: to help others pursue their passion via a reality TV show he's developed called *The Entrepreneur in Me*. **"Creating my own company has given me so much self-confidence and so many opportunities, and I want as many people as possible to experience that," says Brad. For more details, go to [theentrepreneurinme.com](http://theentrepreneurinme.com), where you can sign up to become a contestant.** Haven't come up with your million-dollar idea yet? No worries! Participants will be assigned one. Then they'll compete to make it a full-fledged company or product. The winner walks away with 25 percent ownership, plus the title of president.