

Mary Johnston, watermatters

Although Mary Johnston attributes her success in business to being at the right place at the right time, there is no denying the research and work she put into developing her business [water matters](#).

Five and a half years ago, when Johnston was planning to sell water treatment devices from her home, she realized that she knew very little about the local water she was intending to improve.

“That moment of insight established the defining niche for my business. I started educating myself on what makes Vancouver’s water unique and soon enough became an expert in my field,” says Johnston. “There are no other businesses who address local water from the bottom up, the way I do.”

Within the next couple of years her knowledge about local water issues became her competitive edge as the topic of water safety developed into big news and journalists started knocking on her door.

“Due to the increase in public awareness and new dominant consumer trends, my income-earning product has shifted dramatically. I’m now operating out of a retail space selling water filters, shower filters, water ionizers, etc. that specifically address Metro Vancouver’s water conditions.”

When she launched watermatters, Johnston didn’t know any professionals or people with high levels of business expertise to ask for help. She called Women’s Enterprise Centre and connected with a Business Advisor who has been able to give her the business counselling she was looking for.

“My Business Advisor has been incredibly helpful. She’s been available to me over the past three years when I need someone to talk to who understands business,” says Johnston. “I’ve been able to phone her up and she gets the problem, recreates it and gives me some quality input. I always walk away with a restored sense of confidence and knowledge.”

Johnston’s experience with Women’s Enterprise Centre has also allowed her to further connect with her community. “Being involved means being offered opportunities to gain local recognition. I was a storyteller at a Women’s Enterprise Centre workshop and had the chance to give back to my community of women entrepreneurs by sharing my knowledge and expertise. It’s a very rewarding experience.”

In order to continue offering her expertise, Johnston is always at the leading edge of the water industry. “I stay on the front wave of innovation and it’s a pretty exciting wave to be on! Water quality issues are on the increase as pollution, water scarcity and health issues related to water become more of a concern to people. I continue to source out solutions as we go into the future and water becomes more compromised.”

Johnston adds that the biggest strengths in running her business are her passion and knowledge about water, strong relationships with customers and her credibility within the community.

“Your passion for what you are doing will carry you past all obstacles,” says Mary. “If you don’t love what you are doing and it’s not something you can put your heart into, it might be better to cut your losses and do something else sooner rather than later.”