

Tails are Wagging about Yaletown's The Dog & Hydrant

Two years ago, Tanya King was in a comfortable job working for a photographer full-time. Although she loved her job, in the back of her mind existed the dream of owning her own store that catered to the needs of dogs. Every time she saw a business similar to the one she dreamed about, the urgency to make that dream a reality increased.

"I love dogs and always wanted to open a dog boutique. Whenever I would see a new dog store pop-up I would look at it and think; that could be me," says King. "I had always worked for other people and put a lot of hours into making their businesses successful, so I got to the point where I wanted to make money for myself."

And that's exactly what King did. Following her dream, she worked on a business plan for two months straight while turning to Women's Enterprise Centre for business advising and a business loan to make her vision a reality.

"Women's Enterprise Centre has helped me a lot. When planning for my business, they pushed me to really prepare myself with market research and financial planning. I've learned a lot from being involved with them and meeting with my business advisor. It's been really great and I feel like they care about my success," acknowledges King.

The Dog & Hydrant was introduced to Yaletown in September 2006. Now tails are wagging all over about the great dog toys, accessories and treats that can be found at King's boutique. In fact King has received a slew of media attention not just about the boutique but also the facet of her business that separates her from the competition.

"When I opened the business I wanted to add my own aspect to make it stand out. That aspect was dog photography," says King. "Last February I decided to really focus on promoting the photography so I set the goal of doubling sales from last year. I put that goal out there and I've already done even better than double."

King notes that her volunteer work with the Vancouver Animal Shelter has helped increase business. "The photos and bios of the available dogs at the shelter and the success stories of the ones who have found homes are in my store window and on my website so people can look at them. There are a lot of people who support adopting dogs, so they come in and thank me and discover my services. It's a great ice breaker," says King.

Every Saturday a featured dog is brought into her store so people can come and meet the pooch in person. As if that's not enough, King recently took pictures of the dogs at the shelter for a calendar to help raise money. King's dedication to helping the Vancouver Animal Shelter has played a helpful part in finding 80 dogs new homes.

Looking back at the past two years King says that she couldn't be happier with everything that she has accomplished in her business. Her advice to women out there who have a business dream but aren't perusing it is to take the leap. "You can do it, if you want to do it. If you have an idea, then do your research, plan it out and go for it!"