

NEPA's top 20 under 40: Builds business on crafting skills

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Megan Calpin Hughes, 33, has never represented a product she did not believe in. She loves all the pieces she creates and sells. "My philosophy is to take inspiration and act on it," said the owner designer of Kiss My Style (www.KissMyStyle.com) an on-line boutique featuring unique handcrafted pieces by designers and artists across the United States and Canada.

In 2001, Hughes picked up her first set of knitting needles and began creating gifts. After getting numerous calls for orders, she has turned her hobby into a passion and business over the last seven years. "I hold a lot of respect for the handmade community and wanted to create a safe on-line boutique for artisans to sell their pieces," she noted.

She began showing her pieces at local craft shows a few years ago, and in 2005 opened a Web site showcasing her pieces. In 2007, Kiss My Style was born.

Hughes' background is in commercial interior design and medical imaging marketing. She spent the last 10 years in project management, marketing and sales, both locally and also in New York City, but she has always been a crafter. "Since my mom put the first pack of crayons in my hand, the bug bit and the effect was lifelong.

Opening a business that brings my passion together with my skill was an easy task; promoting and marketing it has been a challenge," she explained. "Being an on-line shop is more difficult than a brick and mortar, because people can't come in and see, touch and feel the product.

Local craft shows have been a fabulous outlet for local promotion, however, on-line advertising has been key to my continental success," she adds.

Hughes takes pride in her work and admires the artists' pieces she sells. Each day she is inspired to find new, eclectic pieces and meets amazing people.

She also works full-time for Advanced Imaging Specialists as a marketing representative, as well as maintenance and design for Kiss My Style, while also writing a weekly article for an on-line magazine and trying to be the best mom and wife she can be.

"I need to thank all of my family for all of their love, support and inspiration. Without them, my dream couldn't have been transformed into reality."