

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

CAKES FOR YOU



Steve and Angela Tranter established *Cakes For You* in Alice Springs in July 2000, working out of a converted single garage in the backyard of their home. Leaving the security of full time employment, the Tranters opted for the opportunity to utilise their skills and passions and achieve their vision of becoming financially independent, this guaranteeing their children a sound and prosperous future. Five years on, the business is planning a move into commercial retail premises and employs four part time employees. Above all, it has become a respected and well patronised business within Alice Springs, and by Indigenous communities within the region. *Cakes For You* has demonstrated the value of ensuring quality product service and continuously seeking ways to differentiate itself within the marketplace.

The Story So Far...

Steve Tranter is an Alyawarre man, trained as a sound engineer. His wife Angela is a qualified Chef. Both had full time employment, yet they envisioned a future of self employment. They continually explored a variety of enterprise options, but constantly came back to their creative desire to use Angela's skills in baking and Steve's unique ability to create 'hand crafted chocolate coloured pictures' which could be used in the decoration of cakes.

Steve and Angela did extensive research in and around Alice Springs. The results confirmed the need for the creation of a specialised cake business, with a particular focus on supplying the retail market with quality cakes for all occasions and the provision of a

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home delivery service. They also discovered the importance of simple customer demands - fresh pure cream and quality fruit fillings!

With this information, Steve and Angela set about creating a unique range of birthday, wedding and anniversary cakes. With the support of the local council and Northern Territory Government business development services, they launched their business from a home based kitchen facility.

With an ATSIIC grant of \$12,500, the Tranter's refurbished their garage to appropriate health standards and purchased basic refrigeration and baking equipment. From these humble beginnings, *Cakes For You* was born. Initially Steve stayed at work to guarantee regular cash income, while Angela started work in the bakery, achieving the creation of tantalising cakes of all shapes and sizes.

It did not take long for the word to circulate around Alice Springs about *Cakes For You*, and the business began to evolve. *Cakes For You* quickly achieved an enviable reputation for consistently providing quality cakes, resulting in a variety of retail outlets using their products. This, combined with the support of Indigenous Communities within the Alice Springs region, has enabled the business to grow into an economically viable operation.



Angela and Steve

time staff, and wherever possible, focus on the employment and training of Indigenous people.'

However, as Angela confesses – *'It wasn't all smooth sailing. There were nights when I just wanted to cry my eyes out. If it wasn't for Steve's constant encouragement and support, I'm not sure how we would have survived. Finding the right staff and creating that 'fun' work environment has not always been easy. It has been a case of trial and error. Today I am happy to say we now employ four part*

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As *Cakes For You* grew, their first challenge related to their discovery that they were working more and more *'in'*, rather than *'on'* the business. They spent little or no time for planning, Angela was working seven days a week, with Steve giving every spare moment of his time assisting Angela.

Early in 2005, the Tranters recognised the need for outside advice. They were sceptical of professional business advisors, but they then discovered the Enterprise Development Centre in Adelaide. This service offered a dedicated, comprehensive business advisory, mentoring and training service to Indigenous people throughout South Australia and the lower part of the Northern Territory. It was a service with no strings attached and was free of charge. The Coordinator of this service was Roger Green. Roger has become an incredible support, mentor and trusted adviser to the Tranters.

A second challenge for *Cakes For You* related to the need for continuous product innovation. Steve and Angela have developed a new range of muffins, including in recent times their *'Diabetic Muffins'*. These have proved particularly attractive to Indigenous people, given the high level of diabetes in Indigenous communities. Likewise, they have developed a unique range of bush food muffins which are of particular interests to tourists.

Recently, the Tranters began planning their first significant expansion of the business to move away from their home into commercial premises. This, together with the need to purchase additional and more efficient baking and refrigeration equipment, has caused Steve and Angela to start work on a new and expansionary business development plan, and a new application for financial loan assistance from IBA. As Angela says – *'When you first think about moving from your own back yard, the thought is a little daunting. There is so much to consider; but as Roger has shown us, by attacking each of the issues at hand in small bite size chunks, the whole task becomes much easier to achieve. I know the move will be good for us, but most importantly it will give Cakes For You the real opportunity to grow in a controlled manner.'*

The Impact

Cakes For You has grown steadily since its inception, mainly through word of mouth and a passion for creating cakes and muffins which are memorable in design and simply tantalising in taste and appearance.

The business has evolved into one of Alice Springs most respected 'niche' businesses, and today enjoys the respect of local retailers and personal clients alike. Orders for cakes and muffins are constantly on the increase, now resulting in the decision by Steve and Angela to take *Cakes For You* to the next stage of development – redeployment to a retail commercial environment.

Steve and Angela have adopted a policy of employing, wherever possible, local Indigenous people and today are proud to have four part time employees.

Success Factors



The Team -Amity, Angela, Louise & Sarah

Great and Loving Partnership

Steve and Angela enjoy a great business partnership, but of greater importance is their personal commitment to each other, and the love and care they share. The quality of this relationship is claimed to be the most important element in their success.

Passion and Commitment

Without passion and commitment, the Tranters would not have survived the challenges of five years of business life – *‘Every business has its good days and its not so good days. Always remember the good days, and particularly the happiness and pleasure that comes from all that hard work and commitment,’* reflects Angela.

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Great & Loving Partnership
- Passion & Commitment
- Good Advice
- Quality Control
- Points of Difference

Good Advice

According to the Tranters, there is simply no replacement for good, sound professional advice. The consistent back up, support, advice and mentoring of Roger Green has been invaluable – *‘It is great to be able to ring Roger at any tim, and know that he will always offer us advice based on his past experience as a business owner and professional consultant,’* says Angela.

Quality Control

The Tranters have been tempted several times to pursue opportunities of quick expansion, by using mass production methods, but at the end of the day, they have realised their reputation will suffer and have decided to never sacrifice quantity for quality. All recipes are subject to strict weight and quality control.

Points of Difference

There is a need to continually differentiate the business from possible competitors. The Tranters have discovered that it is the range of simple actions that ensures support from the customers, such as –

- use of quality fruit fillings and fresh pure cream,
- provision of a home delivery service, and
- maintaining an up to date photographic portfolio of products.

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As part of the new premises, the Tranters are planning a separate 'homely' room to enable customers to view their portfolio.

Standing out as a business requires *Cakes For You* to continuously research, identify, implement and promote innovation and quality service.

Advice to other Indigenous people contemplating the enterprise option

Angela and Steve's advice is simple – *'In a nutshell, get great mentoring advice, and find someone like Roger Green who you can feel comfortable with, who will help you crunch the figures honestly, to make sure your projections and costings are realistic. There is absolutely no replacement for good, honest and sound advice.'*

For Further Information

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