

Virtual assistance business becomes successful reality for young Ottawa entrepreneur

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

Citizen advertising features

Back when Erin Blaskie was 16, she had an idea to start a business doing administrative tasks for many businesses.

"I had the idea of them coming to me and giving me variety," she says.

The vision stayed in the back of her mind as she graduated from Willis College in business administration at the age of 19.

Before she'd even finished the Willis course, she'd been hired by a human resources management firm as an administrative assistant. She then worked for another company in Kanata, and returned to Willis College doing public relations and teaching.

"When I was 21 I recalled my big idea, told my sister, and two weeks later launched my first website and got my first client."

Then in 2004, six months after starting the virtual assistance business, she had enough clients to quit her college job and move to the business full-time. That business celebrated its fourth anniversary in July.

"Studying what I did gave me the foundation in terms of skills," she says. "Also, the environment at the school was that anyone at the school could accomplish anything. It was a really nice environment and they gave you opportunity where you might have thought it didn't exist. I looked up to the Willis CEO Rima Aristocrat and I saw a woman with a successful business to emulate. It's where I started and where I grew up. It felt like a huge family."

Many of her relatives are also Willis fans and relatives, beginning with her great grandmother, Beryl, now deceased, who studied typing at Willis College.

"My mom did her studies in the mid-1990s, and I graduated from the four-month program in January 2002." Her aunt and sister went there too, studying the same field of interest, office administration.

"I now have three Willis graduates working in my company," she says, "and highly recommend Willis College to anyone who is serious about their career success."

Erin's company, Business Services, ETC, now has a team of 15 including herself and



Willis College graduate Erin Lamarche-Blaskie launched Business Services, ETC four years ago when she was just 21.

her sister, Trina. They all work for the business from home. "One of my own personal goals is to be a millionaire before I'm 30, and retire young. My goal in starting my business was to help as many businesses as I could. We now get diversity and variety, which I love, and we get to help people."

Erin assists some of the top internet entrepreneurs and business owners with their administrative and technical needs. She provides a wide variety of services and acts as a business partner to her clients instead of just a task-based provider.

She also has a separate coaching business called The VA Coach, which coaches virtual assistants. That business was recently featured on ABC News.

For more information on Willis College programs, call Willis at 613-233-1128, or visit www.williscollege.com.

For information on Business Services, ETC, view www.bsetc.ca.