

Women BUSINESS OWNERS TODAY

Celebrating the success of women entrepreneurs in Canada

Meet 45 Amazing Women Entrepreneurs

Women
ROCKING
Business History

A look at the
21st Century
Momprenneur

WHAT
SHE
SAID

COVER STORY

FIONA WEBSTER MOURANT

Acute business acumen runs in the family



In this photo: Fiona with brother John Webster

| COVER STORY |

Fiona Webster Maurant acute business acumen runs in the family

by: Susan Portelance

One in nine Canadians with health problems has received an incorrect dose or drug from a health care professional, according to The Canadian Institute for Health Information. That's a staggering statistic. Imagine the possible ramifications. Simply knowing about the problem doesn't stop the errors. What does? A better medication delivery system and one exists right here in Winnipeg.

Manrex Limited opened as a family business in 1973. At that time, prescriptions for residents in nursing homes were administered by nurses from vials dispensed in pharmacy. Picture a 100-bed nursing home with residents taking an average of eight different medications, three times a day. The nurses spent huge chunks of their time just opening and closing vials. This was an error-prone and time consuming system.

Fiona Webster Maurant, who now co-helms Manrex, says her father saw a need for improvement in the medication delivery system. He had an ingenious idea and The PCI Controlled Dosage System was born.

Manrex soon expanded to a customer base across Canada and now spans the globe. Fiona and her brother took over the business and today they continue to work to improve the delivery of medical care. Their mantra is to promote health by preventing error. Manrex dominated their industry for the first 20 years, but rapidly changing technology and increased competition have kept them hopping

Fiona and John realized that it was important to diversify their product offerings and to get involved in other markets, while still staying within their area of expertise, which is health care. Expanding into the community care market with compliance packaging for the elderly has been extremely successful, as has targeting the acute care hospital market with high end automation and robotics. We are now the leaders in medication error prevention products across three key markets.

In order to be successful, Fiona says they must be able to adapt quickly to changing needs while offering innovative solutions. There is often a dearth of pharmacists and nurses to treat patients, so new efficiencies must be found to deal with shortfalls. Automated technologies are always in high demand.

In addition to launching a new logo for the company, one of the latest technologies for Manrex is the Smart Sink, a new product they are introducing to Canada. The Smart Sink is an alternative to using a toilet, regular sink or garbage can to dispose of unused drugs. Using our plumbing system to dispose of medications pollutes our water with dangerous chemicals. This advanced new machine securely captures waste and renders it unrecoverable, preventing environmental damage and ensuring the medication is disposed of safely.

Introducing new products like the Smart Sink keeps Fiona busy with her business. Married for 22 years to Ken Mourant and the mother of two teenaged boys, Chet aged 17 and Wade 16, keeps her busy with her family life. But despite the juggle, Fiona still finds time to volunteer on several boards. She believes it's important to contribute to her community and set a good example for her children and staff. She doesn't think a "perfect" balance is realistic, but she swings her time to where it is needed the most. She even finds time to jet around the world for business, including Europe, Asia and Australia.

Fiona's father passed the business torch to her and she now passes her skills along to her sons. Her youngest recently worked with her on a short-term project and he managed to out-negotiate both his mother and her general manager regarding his wages. It appears good business acumen will continue to be a family affair for the generations to come at Manrex.

“Don't be afraid to think outside the box and be outrageous.”



Photos: Photography by Michele

When asked what advice she would give to other women thinking of starting a business she said, "DO IT, if you want to be extremely busy and have no time for yourself, and also if you want to have control over your destiny, the freedom to make your own choices and have the opportunity to grow and learn from exciting new experiences every day while working and interacting with other dynamic, driven, and intelligent business people." She added, "I would also recommend you not restrict your thinking about opportunities or possibilities. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and be outrageous. There are far fewer people out there to compete with."

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