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## Ten questions in ten minutes

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**Denise Hosty, founder of The Costume Studio Ltd, has been making costumes for 23 years, and in that time there is not much she hasn't made, from pirates to potatoes, popsicles to penguins. She won the 2008 Westpac Enterprise North Shore Best New Start-Up Business Award for her business.**

***Northern Focus*** - What Inspired you to start up your business?

***Denise Hosty*** – In short, I needed a job and couldn't really find one to suit! So I made my own. It's that simple! I had no business background, purely creative, so I have had a lot to learn.

***NF*** – Who has influenced you the most professionally?

***DH*** – Although he doesn't influence me (as such!), my partner Martin helps me hugely. He has worked in larger organisations and has a lot more knowledge about business than me. I am trying to catch up though, its amazing how quick you pick things up when it's your own business.

***NF*** – How would you describe yourself as a businessperson?

***DH*** – A year ago, I would have said I was stumbling along! Now, I think I am quite a strong business person who knows what she wants. I have a clear vision of where I want the business to go and where our growth areas should be.

**NF** – What do you consider your greatest achievement?

**DH** – Our greatest achievement without a doubt was winning the Westpac Enterprise North Shore Best New Start-Up Business Award last year. It was such a fantastic achievement and also a fantastic acknowledgment of how other professional business people looked at our business.

The most creative achievement was making 45 squirrels for the Cadburys Moro Gold TV ad. We only had a few weeks to make them all. I had to take on extra people, more space and find new resources so we could achieve the deadlines, and within budget.

**NF** – With hindsight what is the one thing you would do differently?

**DH** – I never thought the business would grow as large as it has, so with hindsight, I guess I would have put the processes and systems we now use daily, into place a lot earlier.

There is no guidebook to tell you how to run a niche business so it takes a long time for certain things to fit into place. They are really helpful and as we grow, they make my life so much easier.

During the last two years I have attended many of the business courses run by WHK Chapman Gosling. I would advise anyone to attend these courses to help learn the basics.

**NF** – Who do you find inspirational and why?

**DH** – There are lots of people who have inspired me throughout my life in various ways. They include my parents, my work colleagues and the hundreds of creative people I meet every year. However, the person who pushes me and makes me want to succeed is Liz Fuller, who interviewed me for my first job at The Contact Theatre in Manchester, when I was 15! She is a very clever lady and I want to be like her! She has a very successful business in Manchester and I visit them whenever I am in the UK. I still call her on a weekly basis, 23 years later. Now we share ideas and help each other whenever we can.

**NF** – What is the most inspirational book you have read recently?

**DH** – ‘500 Letters’ by Pauline Grogan. The journey the book takes you on is an inspiration. She is an amazing woman who has had a really hard life, but still had time for others. I often think of her when I am busy and have no time to do anything for myself.

**NF** – What is your favourite website and why?

**DH** – I love searching the net for ideas and inspiration. Apart from our own website, my current favourite is [Manjulaskitchen.com](http://Manjulaskitchen.com) It's step by step Indian cookery. I have an Indian friend who makes wonderful food; one day when I was visiting, she showed me the website, now I use it all the time.

**NF** – What is the first thing you would do if you became Prime Minister?

**DH** – I would encourage all businesses to let the Costume Studio make them a fluffy superhero to brighten up the day and make everyone smile.