

## [POWER PLAYERS]

### Taking the hassle out of car buying

**LeeAnn Shattuck, Chief Car Chick, Women's Automotive Solutions**



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**Question: Give us a brief synopsis of your business.**

Answer: Our Women's Automotive Solutions is a unique service dedicated to helping women through the car selection and buying process. We locate the client's desired new or pre-owned vehicle, negotiate the best price and financing terms, and arrange delivery. Our clients simply sign the papers and take the keys. Our years of experience in the industry enable us to save our clients hundreds or thousands of dollars without the hassle and frustrations that come with traditional car shopping. Ironically, more than half of our clients are men.

**Q: What is your business philosophy?**

A: The primary aim of Women's Automotive Solutions is to bring a positive experience to car haggling, which traditionally has been frustrating for many women. We want the car buying process to be exciting and simple, while enabling our clients to save money on the vehicle of their dreams. We believe in always doing what is best for our clients, while also looking out for the interests of the dealerships. We strive to create a win-win scenario in which both parties feel that the deal was fair and are satisfied that the process worked.

**Q: What is your definition of success?**

A: We believe a successful business is one that doesn't simply grow and make money, but one that truly makes a difference in the lives of consumers and, in the process, changes an entire industry. We measure that success in the satisfaction of each client and in our joy in creating that positive experience.

**Q: What is your biggest accomplishment?**

A: We identified a major problem in the automotive industry and solved it in a unique way. Despite changes in the

the car buying process has not changed significantly over the years. Furthermore, the automotive industry has been slow to recognize the primary role women play in the process. In creating an innovative business model that addresses needs and frustrations of these women and streamlines the process, we have made a significant change in how automotive industry works.

**Q: What are you most proud of?**

A: I am proud of my business partner and best friend, Michelle Lundy for recognizing the need for change in automotive industry and for devising new business model that bridges the gap between dealership processes and customer needs. What started as a kitchen table idea has grown into national company with franchises in five states and several more planned for 2009.

**Q: What is the best thing about your job/company?**

A: The best thing about my job is being able to combine my passion for cars with the satisfaction of helping women accomplish their car buying goals. I share in the joy and excitement that my clients feel when they are able to purchase the vehicle of their dreams without suffering the frustrations of the negotiating process.

**Q: What is the toughest decision you have had to make?**

A: My toughest decision was to leave a comfortable, lucrative corporate job to take an entrepreneurial leap of faith. I am usually a risk-averse person, but I believed so strongly in the Women's Automotive Solutions concept that fear of not trying far exceeded the of failing.

**Q: What do you think was most important in preparing to run a business?**

A: It was critical to build a solid

foundation for the business from the start. We took the time to clearly understand the needs of our target market and why they would benefit from our services. We also had a clear vision of the unique business model and brand we wanted to bring to market.

**Q: What do you wish you knew when you were getting started in business that you know now?**

A: That traditional advertising is not necessarily the best marketing strategy for a service business. While advertising can help create brand awareness in the beginning, strategies such as PR, writing, speaking, networking and strategic alliances are more successful and cost-effective in the long run.

**Q: What advice would you give other entrepreneurs and business owners?**

A: Work smart, not hard. Developing turn-key processes will enable your business to grow and run successfully without you.

**Q: What is your favorite book?**

A: My favorite business books are *Awakening the entrepreneur Within* and *The E-myth* by Michael Gerber. On the personal side, I'm a huge Harry Potter fan.

**Q: If you weren't doing what you are doing, what else would you want to do?**

A: Race cars and help women in underprivileged countries start businesses to support arid feed their families.

**Q: What do you want others to know about entrepreneurs and small-business owners?**

A: That small business owners and entrepreneurs are the cornerstone of the American economy. Their small businesses are the realization of the American dream. We need to support them if this country is to recover from the current economic crisis.

Power Players are profiles of successful entrepreneurs and business owners running companies that fuel the local economy. To make recommendations for the column, contact Research Coordinator Cynthia Holland at **704-377-6221** or email her at [cynthia.holland@mecktimes.com](mailto:cynthia.holland@mecktimes.com).