

## PRODUCTS

### SHANNON BARNARD

#### *A Decade of Designs and Decisions*

One thing Shannon didn't believe when her business, K9 Bytes, was just a dream – and still doesn't after 10 years of living and breathing her dream -- is that it's easy to work for yourself and that your time belongs to you. She's lost count of the number of dog and cat collars she's stitched since 2004, but knows for sure she pulled more than a few all-nighters!

Creating business systems for tracking orders and appointments came naturally to Shannon, born organized and attentive to detail. But the evolution of computer technology and business-savvy software have certainly enhanced her efficiency. "I use Outlook to communicate with my clients and keep my calendar/schedule," says Shannon.

Facebook has been a great sales outlet, she adds. "I update it with new collar designs and special offers." She also maximizes the use of her website, which focuses on Gifts for Pets and Pet Lovers. It's fresh-



## K9 Bytes, Inc.

Gifts for Pets & Pet Lovers

looking and greatly diverse. Shannon's company, K-9 Bytes, offers a wide variety of collars and leashes as well as pet treats, toys, blankets and grooming products. On the "people side," there are note cards, comforters, candles, bath products, wedding favors and unique gifts.

She's also faithful about sending a newsletter to customers. There's something else Shannon does not miss: an opportunity to say, "thank you." Shannon is never shy about telling employees and contractors how thankful she is for their help and contributions. She treats customers with the same courtesy and respect, which is no doubt why she has a decade's worth of repeat orders under her belt!

#### *Listening Up*

We've all heard how important it is to be a good listener. Well, Shannon truly is. To her credit, she has built many a professional relationship this way. "I listen and learn from the people who I want to form business relationships with, endeavoring to understand what their goals are," explains Shannon. Partnering with other pet-loving businesses and generously providing samples of her products are two of the key ways she has grown her novel business.

#### *R&R – Reenergize and Reward*

When she needs a boost or wants to fine-tune her focus, Shannon turns to her bookshelf and grabs her copy of "The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom" by Don Miguel Ruiz. She reenergizes by walking her dog, an English Cocker spaniel named Rogue, on the steep trail, near her house. She loves the calmness of walking through the trees alongside a creek. Surely Rogue does, too.

Shannon has also learned it's essential to take care of herself as she does her customers! One way she does that: "I use a rewards credit card (that you pay off every month) for as many purchases as possible. Then I use the rebate or travel credits for business trips or a special reward for myself."

This creator of pet collars and pet treats is herself one smart cookie when it comes to starting, sustaining and growing a business.

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