

MEET THE BOSS

Lorna Jane Clarkson

She may have more than 125 stores across Australia bearing her name (and three in the US), but former aerobics instructor Lorna Jane Clarkson didn't set out to be a brand.

"It was accidental really," she says. "I started off just making activewear and it's now about inspiring women to move, nourish and believe. The brand has evolved according to the way I live my life."

For Clarkson, leading by example still means a hands-on

approach. "I get into the trenches and fix the seam on the inside of a tight," she says. "Hopefully I inspire my team, as I'm willing to do everything and put in the time and effort."

With more than 1000 employees, 400,000-plus Facebook fans and a turnover of \$100 million, it's an effort that has paid off.

"I learnt this on the factory floor," Clarkson says. "I did go and get some credentials, but in hindsight, I didn't need to."

SUE WHITE

Curriculum vitae

Name Lorna Jane Clarkson.

Current position Founder and chief creative officer, Lorna Jane.

Responsibilities Oversees look and feel of Lorna Jane brand, ensures company philosophy is incorporated across brand.

Education Training in dental therapy after high school, combined with part-time aerobics instruction for five years. Quit both to pursue business.

Additional training/courses

Diploma of fashion (TAFE), completed after business established.

Professional associations Works closely with Salvation Army through the Swap Shop initiative, in which customers' preloved activewear is donated to the organisation.

Honourable mentions BRW outstanding retailer of the year, 2011. Numerous Retailers Association of Queensland (RAQ) fashion design awards.

Strength Making decisions. When you head up a company you need to make dozens of decisions every day. If you can make decisions quickly, it's a strength.

Weakness Everything is personal, because it's my brand and me as a person. I try not to take it personally, but it is personal and it always will be. Maybe that's why women connect with the brand.

Management style and tips Surround yourself with great people.

Work motto Do what you love.

