

Working Women



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CapeWomenOnline serves as your local venue for the women of Cape Cod to share their ideas, experiences and resources while inspiring each other in their life's journey.

Connections and Confidence as a Recipe for Business Success

by Amy Mason and Pamela Wills

Starting a business is always scary and always requires taking a leap of faith. Call it courage, call it crazy – either way, it is a venture fraught with many challenges, adventures and rollercoaster emotions.

Add to that mix the added complications of motherhood plus location on this tiny resort peninsula and you've got a pretty unique recipe. Is it a recipe for success, or disaster? Well, it could go either way.

However, this is a story about success.

As two women living in different areas of Cape Cod (both so-called "wash-ashores"), Amy Mason and Pamela Wills have found success here. Some of that success has come from their individual blood, sweat and tears over the years. But most of it has come through the unique connections on this special almost-island they call home.

It is through these connections that they have found the support and confidence necessary to progress as mothers, friends, and business women.

THE STORY BEHIND STONY BROOK DESIGN

Amy moved to the Cape twenty years ago and started a family with her husband, a native Cape Codder. They grew happy roots in their community and juggled raising two sons. During those years, Amy simultaneously worked part-time outside the home and began planting seeds for her own business. Coming from the city, the Cape was a healthy change for Amy. The laid-back energy, creative, friendly and very accepting people allowed her to relax and unravel. Allowed her to finally be herself.

The interesting thing about "being herself" was that she was happy. Content. And she began noticing that her positive energy attracted positive people into her life. Her artistic talents found an outlet in making cards, custom drawings and invitations.

The family lived in a tiny cottage, so she stored her supplies under the bed, behind the sofa, wherever she could find space. She worked when she took the kids to the park or the beach and colored each piece by hand with colored pencils.

Amy has drawn ever since she was old enough to hold a crayon. Even as a child, she was always doodling, creating handmade cards for family and friends. In her early teens, she began dreaming of one day having a card store & gallery... a very specific vision that remained with her all these years.

Why this obsession with cards? Maybe because it's an affordable way to share her art with the world. Maybe because it's a way to combine her need to draw with her innate sense of fun. She has no idea, but it's what she does and she loves it.

Amy kept at it until she made her hobby into an official business thirteen years ago, naming it Stony Brook Design. She went store to store with her samples to get orders but did not feel confident in the sales end of the business. She continued to take part time jobs and did freelance work designing store windows, but ideas for her own work were always percolating.

What helped Amy turn the corner into serious entrepreneurship was meeting a woman named Denise with a blossoming card and invitation company. The two hit it off and Denise became a sort of mentor to Amy. Denise helped her with technology questions and showed her the value of investing in a computer, a tablet, and programs like Photoshop.

Denise hired Amy to work with her at the National Stationery Show in NYC, an inspirational trip that motivated Amy to exhibit there one day, too. In 2005, she did and she felt her path was validated.



Amy Mason and Pamela Wills

Now, in a slightly larger home that gives her studio and shop space, Amy and Stony Brook Design are open to the public, doing retail for the past five years, full time for the past three. Amy feels very confident as an artist and as a business woman.

PAMELA WILLS, CONFIDENCE COACH

For Pamela Wills, living on the Cape has been a full-circle journey. As a Falmouth New Silver Beach summer kid, the Cape always owned her soul. Even going to school in D.C. and then living in Germany for almost two decades couldn't keep her away; she returned "home" to live with family five years ago and promptly enrolled her daughter in first grade.

Returning here brought lots of changes, both wonderful and difficult. She ended her marriage to a controlling husband in Germany, followed by a three-year international legal battle in which she won full custody of her daughter.

That settled, Pamela looked at her life and knew she wanted to give and do so much more than she had up to that point. With energy, time and passion to help others who might be facing similar challenges, or might want to build courage and confidence in their lives and careers, she found that life coaching was a natural fit. In 2010, she took the plunge, earned her certification, and hung out her shingle: Pamela Wills, Confidence Coach.

"When I was a kid, I was the quiet, shy one," says Pamela. "I was the listener and shoulder to cry on. Maybe it was because I was taller than most, or because my birthday falls in February before most of the others. Whatever the reason, the other kids seemed to come to me for decisions."

She continues, "Somehow, I became the thinker, philosopher, helper among my peers as we grew up. I didn't always follow my own advice but I was always ready to help!"

When she started coaching, it was clear to her that this was exactly the right path for her to be on. She loves helping people, talking with people, speaking in front of people, writing blogs and articles and generally teaching and coaching.

BELIEVE + INSPIRE + GROW = B.I.G.

Connections, word-of-mouth, referrals... These are huge business essentials. In a unique community like Cape Cod, these are crucial means for growing a business.

What do you get when you mix a group of entrepreneurial women, a compassionate environment, and the need to connect?

B.I.G., as in "Believe Inspire Grow," is a business networking and support organization exclusively for women, which has finally hit Cape Cod. With monthly meetings that feature professional presenters, and "pods" in Falmouth and Mashpee, B.I.G. is growing quickly.

Zoom back to March 2012. Amy Mason had never heard of B.I.G. but was invited to attend a meeting at the Falmouth pod by a friend, Helen Kosinski, a business coach in Brewster, who was the presenter that month. The topic: Growing Your Business Confidence.

"Ugh," thought Amy, "Go all the way to Falmouth from Brewster? Well, Helen's awesome, so I should go."

Amy was floored. The gathering of women was not the usual networking scenario. Instead, it was inspiring, warm, safe... and a ton of laughs. And the topic was important to her.

Confidence really is the key here for women business owners on Cape Cod. We are alone, we are moms, we are paying bills with our own work and we are here on this beautiful peninsula that really comes alive for the summer season.

How do we sustain our cash flow all year? How do we keep from going insane, alone in our four walls? How do we juggle all of our responsibilities as moms, wives/girlfriends, business owners, artist / writer / coach, friends, women, etc.?

The answer to all of those questions found both Amy and Pamela in Spring 2012 when they both showed up for the May B.I.G. meeting. Pamela was the presenter and spoke about goal setting. By mid-June, Amy and Pamela had arranged a trade deal where Pamela would give Amy coaching sessions and Amy would create Pamela's new logo and business

stationery.

They both now say, "We had no idea how much this trade would give both of us when we made it!"

The connection has turned into an interesting client/friend situation full of productivity, inspiration, and mutual cheerleading. A successful combination for sure.



After earning a B.A. in Graphic Design from Simmons College, Amy Mason launched into a retail display career and remained in Boston for many years. Love brought her to Cape Cod twenty years ago where she has lived, raised a family, and grown happy roots.

An illustrator and graphic designer known for her colorful, whimsical style and quirky sense of humor, Amy is the proud owner of Stony Brook Design in Brewster.

The ever-evolving studio/shop showcases her cards & illustrations as well as handcrafted gifts, art and vintage goods. In addition, Amy creates one-of-a-kind invitations & stationery for clients and custom logos, brochures and ads for small businesses.

See more of her work at
www.StonyBrookDesign.com



Pamela's mission as your Confidence Coach is to guide you from darkness into the light of feeling strong, confident and sexy so you can learn how to Get Your Sizzle On!™ She earned her Certified Professional Coach (CPC) credential from Fowler-Wainwright International and her BA from Georgetown University.

She has been writing and teaching professionally for over 20 years and currently publishes her own weekly blog and eZine. Pamela also belongs to the Expert Panels at LifeBusinessGrowth.com, SoulWomanSanctuary.com and coming soon, LawofAttractionKey.com

She also sits on the Speakers Bureau of B.I.G. Women's Network in Massachusetts.

Book a FREE Spark Session with her
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www.PamelaWills.com/schedule-session

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