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Today we'd like to introduce you to Lisa Kamer.

Lisa, can you briefly walk us through your story – how you started and how you got to where you are today.

After a long career, my company was sold and I found myself, after 20 years as a food industry executive, trying to figure out part 2 of my working life. About the same time, I lost my two beloved Corgis, who died exactly one week apart. I promised myself I wouldn't get a new dog right away as I had to have time to grieve the loss of Georgie and Dana. I felt unmoored without the daily routine of taking care of the dogs and couldn't wait to get my new puppy Leo, a beautiful 12- week- old Corgi. But shortly after coming home to live with us, he began teething on everything in sight. To save my blankets, sofa and rugs, I began to think of ways to entertain this young bundle of energy. At 12 weeks he also displayed an eagerness to herd...anything and everyone! When I realized that Leo's favorite items were made of fabric, I knotted some scraps together for a play toy- and suddenly my wild and crazy puppy was happily -and quietly- playing.

That gave me the idea to start my company. Leo really inspired me; I thought that other dogs might also love the knotted toy. And when a neighbor girl saw me braiding and knotting a new toy for my puppy and asked to help, I realized that the process of making the toys could be a great activity for kids-even kids with disabilities From that point my company took 2 directions- the first was developing a school fundraising kit and the second was marketing to retailers. I was very fortunate to have some great local support. After my first couple of sales to local pet stores, my products were picked up by Whole Foods

Markets in the North Atlantic Region. From that point a few years ago, Knots of Fun's toys are sold across the country, both in retailers, online and now on Amazon.

Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?

I've had many challenges along the way but none that were insurmountable. I am very fortunate to have family and friends for help and advice. The struggles I've faced have been challenging myself to trust my instincts and reach out for help when I need it and to rely on individuals who have expertise in areas that I don't. Running your own business means experiencing the highest of highs and the bottom of lows...often within the same day.

Alright – so let's talk business. Tell us about Knots of Fun-Makers of Happy Hands Happy Dog Toys – what should we know?

Knots of Fun is a Massachusetts based dog toy company. Our biggest supplier is a wonderful manufacturer has been braiding fabric locally since the 1930's. What sets our toys apart is that we make interactive play toys, toys that help train your dog when they are younger and then reinforce the bonds between you as time goes by. Often I'm asked what toys we have that a dog will not destroy. I always say none but will talk about the importance of play and how effective our ropes and tugs are in the process. Our toys are made of the highest quality Polar Fleece in a wide variety of textures, colors and lengths. Our toys are machine washable, they can be frozen and for added outdoor fun, they float!

What I'm most proud of is that I believed in myself and my ability to create products and provide services that hold meaning for me. For others considering running their own business, I'd recommend making sure you are committed. It's important to understand that being in charge of everything is a huge undertaking and responsibility. But if you're up for it, you can live your passion- and earn a living at the same time.

Any shoutouts? Who else deserves credit in this story – who has played a meaningful role?

This is a tough one! Knots of Fun would have come to be without the partnerships I formed early on with the many schools who used our project kits. Perkins School for the Blind was the first school, followed by The Maryland School for the Blind, MillNeck Manor, and the Learning Center for the Deaf, to name a few.

Another supporter would be Cindy Walsh who is the owner of Red Rover Clothing. Cindy gave me a gentle nudge and offered me an office space in the building that houses her studio and several other businesses. Her scraps were the beginning of Knots of Fun. Our beautiful building was built in 1852 and overlooks the Framingham town Common. Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't give an enormous thank you to the local pet stores who gave me a chance, Thank you, Polkadog Bakery, Especially for Pets, Pet World and The Pet Cabaret!

My Sister in Law, Devereaux Smith is without a doubt my number one cheerleader, along with my family and dear friends. I could visualize my business and came up with a strategy that worked for me, along with the ongoing support of close family and dear friends.