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IN RAPTURES: Lucy Maglione is enjoying her new-found creativity. "I'm passionate about gifting," she says.

CHANGING DIRECTION

Lucy Maglione is happy to be out of the rat race and doing her own thing, writes Bernard O'Shea.

On her first day back at work after a two-week holiday to Hawaii in 2013, Lucy Maglione was summoned upstairs in the Sydney offices of Insurance Australia Group to be told her role as Manager of the Investment Accounting and Tax team was being made redundant. It came totally out of the blue, she says – she had been with the company for 12 years.

She served out the termination period and then her job search began in earnest, as did her "career transition" program with Lee Hecht Harrison, which helps people find new jobs or take a totally new direction in life.

"I was really scared," Lucy recalls of the start of her transition. "I hadn't updated my CV in more than 13 years – I got the IAG role through my accounting network. I didn't even have a smartphone and I had no social media accounts."

Lucy found the tips on how to spruce up your résumé and LinkedIn profile were

CASE STUDY REAL- LIFE STORY

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invaluable. "Last time I did my CV, it was all task-based; it was all about the companies and the role you held. Now, it is all about your achievements and you have to put a dollar value on your achievements."

Yet about halfway through her transition program, Lucy realised she had had enough of accounting and the corporate world.

"I was sick and tired of the rat race, sick of all the office politics," she says. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time working in accounting, which I had been doing for over 20 years. It was very hard for me to turn my back on a career that was good to me. However, I felt in my heart that it was time to move into a new direction. It was time to let go of the past and embrace the future."

Yet she had no idea what she wanted to do, apart from wanting to do something creative, something online and to work from home, so that she could devote more time to her daughters, now aged nine and 15.

Coincidentally, her sister, Lisa, was also contemplating a change, so the two decided to team up. "We both did the same degree – a Bachelor of Business at UTS, but I specialised in accounting and Lisa in marketing, so we complement each other," Lucy says.

"It took us six months to find an idea of what we wanted to do," she says. The lightbulb moment came when they were looking into buying an online gift hamper business, but decided the price was too high. So they set up their own, Hamper Gift Gallery (hampergiftgallery.com.au).

"I'm passionate about gifting," Lucy says. "Our research took us about six months and, combined with the website build, we launched within 11 months of our initial business idea, which was late November 2014. We knew we were already late for Christmas, but still pushed forward to secure our first large corporate order, which we were over the moon about!"

For Lucy, the redundancy – which she says at the time felt like being hauled in front of a firing squad – turned out to be a blessing in disguise. "Even though I'm not making much money, I'm so happy." Then she laughs, adding: "Well, I hope I'll soon be making money."

LUCY'S TIPS ON STARTING AN *online business*

► Surround yourself with positive people and those who will encourage and support you along the way – it helped me push through the many roadblocks I faced.

► Before engaging a web designer, know *exactly* what features you want for your website at the start of the project, so a price can be negotiated. Once the build starts and changes or inclusions are needed, this can become a costly exercise. Give the web designer some examples of websites you like, as this will help them build your site.

► Know that being on page one of Google will be a costly exercise. It will cost about \$1000 a month for a minimum six-month search engine optimisation (SEO) campaign to work towards this goal.

► “Build it and they will come.” This is what I believed would happen when we flicked the “go live” switch on our site. Oh, how wrong we were! This is when the real hard work began. We continue to work on our network to obtain leads, which will hopefully bring in new opportunities.

► Have a product that is so good that you stand out, as those with a good product are hard to ignore.

► Use your network. It only takes one person to give you a great lead or some invaluable advice, which may open a door for you.



YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

LinkedIn is the largest professional networking tool online.

For individuals in career transition, an updated LinkedIn profile is considered by many as a must. This site is the single most important social networking tool for your career. Once you have established an impressive profile, you can use LinkedIn proactively to build your network, develop your expertise, find job leads and connect with recruiters and hiring managers at the companies of your choice.

FOLLOW THESE EIGHT STEPS

1 Sign up at linkedin.com. Fill out your name, email and the password of your choice.

2 Aim to fill out every major area of your profile. These include:

■ **Summary:** What is your personal brand – the story that you want to tell employers? Share that story in the summary section.

■ **Specialties/Keywords:** What areas of expertise do you have? List the keywords relevant to your experience – this will help when recruiters are searching for candidates by profile keywords.

■ **Past experience:** You don't have to list every job you have held, but do list the most recent and those most relevant to the position you are seeking.

3 Carefully word your headline. This should sum up your brand in one short sentence. For example, “Effective Communications Professional with Fortune 500 Experience.”

4 Use a photograph (a good headshot). This will help with recognition when recruiters see you online and will

make your profile look more complete and professional.

5 Connect with friends and colleagues. LinkedIn is based on the strength of your network and connections, so this is especially important. Upload your email contacts/address book, find out who is a member of LinkedIn and invite them to connect.

6 Consider asking for recommendations, but go for quality not quantity. Choose individuals whom you particularly trust. If they write one, it will be displayed on your profile (you control publishing it) and will be visible as a testament of your skills to potential employers.

7 Join professional groups. Do a LinkedIn search for your field, discover which groups exist and then join a few. Groups can help you keep up with your industry's news, to network and find job leads.

8 Check for 100 per cent completeness. When you are done, LinkedIn informs you how complete your profile is. If you're not hitting 100, revisit the sections that might require a little more work.

Best practices for using LinkedIn

■ Write a personal note with each LinkedIn invitation. The automatic default is, “I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn”. This is the easy way, but if you take the time to do a personal one, it will set you apart from the crowd.

■ Whenever you come across someone new (at an event, for instance) and you see them as a valuable contact, send a LinkedIn invitation within a day or two of meeting

them – it refreshes their memory of you. Don't leave it so long that they have forgotten you and are more likely to view your invitation with puzzlement.

■ Be proactive. LinkedIn allows you to search based on keywords in other people's profiles, so take advantage of this to home in on hiring managers and others who work at companies of interest to you.
Tips courtesy of Lee Hecht Harrison.