

Scootering into 2012

Date: 3 Jan 2012

Anna Gibson and Philippa Gogarty have mined their knowledge of toys and parenting to build a hugely successful [scooter business](#) and are now expanding in new directions.



Just over two years ago Workingmums.co.uk [interviewed them](#) about how the two mums built up their business almost by accident. Eight years ago Anna, a former city lawyer, bought a Mini Micro scooter for her son and approached the UK distributor after friends kept asking her where she got it. When they ran out she went direct to the Swiss-based manufacturer Micromobility.

She ordered some which she started selling. When the UK distributor stopped selling the scooter, Anna ordered a pallet and sold the lot in just two weeks. She had known Philippa since she met her at a baby clinic in 2004 and the two teamed up and persuaded Micromobility to let them be their UK distributor for the scooter. By 2009, the scooter was the top-selling toy in John Lewis.

Since then Anna and Philippa have branched out, including into scooter accessories of all kinds. They started out with safety equipment like helmets and have now gone into bottle coolers, bags and ribbons to decorate the scooters. Micromobility is happy for them to innovate based on their knowledge of their market.

Both have three children. Anna's boys are seven, nine and 11 and Philippa has two boys aged nine and 11 and a girl aged 16. "Being mums we know what mums need," says Anna, adding that one accessory is a bag for parents to put the scooter into to carry it home from the school run.

Anna and Philippa also work with Micromobility on developing their scooters. They have a brain-storming session four times a year to spot gaps in the market. They have just launched a mini seat which attaches to a scooter and allows toddlers to ride it. It can be taken off when the toddler gets older and can operate a scooter.

They have also just been given the rights to extreme scooters for children aged 10 and over and have expanded abroad. They are working with a business mum who is distributing the scooters in Holland based on their model of selling through parents' networks and building the business gradually.

Employers

Anna has moved out of London and the two mums now employ a team of 25 people plus PR and other support as and when needed. Anna admits it's been a big learning curve and there have been times when it has been difficult to balance work and family life. She tries now to delineate between the two more and work less in the holidays, logging on in the evening after the children are in bed.


Philippa and Anna work via email and phone calls, but are together for meetings with suppliers and the like. They have big plans for the future. They have been working with schools on a school scooter proficiency test to improve scooter safety.

For Olympic year with its emphasis on children's fitness, they are developing a range of scooters and accessories in red, white and blue, including bottles and wheel decorations. Mums who have bought the scooter for their kids have also prompted developments. There is now, for instance, a mums scooter club which allows mums with scooters to share tips about exercising with the scooter, which comes in adult sizes.

Anna herself is a strong advocate of the use of scooters by all members of the family. She recently took her family on a scooter tour of London. She says it made seeing London much easier and more fun. "We saw a lot more sites than we would have if we had gone by tube," she says, "and it helped keep us fit."

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