



The Job's On! Blog

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[A catch up with the CareerMum](#)

Tuesday, August 5th, 2008

Yesterday I caught up with Kate Sykes, the Canberra-based founder of [CareerMums](#), an online careers centre and jobs board for working parents. Kate is a successful small business owner, so I thought that it would be a good opportunity to meet with her and to learn a bit from her experiences.

Kate came to our coffee meeting brandishing a copy of yesterday's Daily Telegraph. She turned to the business section to show me a [feature article](#) on [CareerMums](#) - published that very day - about businesses who foolishly spurn female employees proceeding on maternity leave. The article was accompanied by a photograph of Kate in her swish home office.

The article neatly summed up the post-maternal experience that led Kate to start [CareerMums](#) in the first place. Now she has become a champion for other women who find themselves in the very same boat.

Like many mothers, Kate was dissatisfied with the part-time employment options that she was offered upon return to the workforce after maternity leave. She found that employers were not overly sympathetic to parents with young children and she saw that mothers were generally sidelined in favour of those who were less 'encumbered'. So, Kate chose to set up her own business at home and to 'work in and around' the time demands of being a mother to two children - since then, many a late night has been spent building the [CareerMums](#) brand into what it is today.

A component of the [CareerMums](#) business is providing organisations with ready-made tools and policy documents to effectively employ mothers when they return from maternity leave. Kate and her partners have come up with a range of toolkits that allow organisations to frame their own working-mother employment policies and 'stay in touch' programs, which see businesses maintain engagement with mothers during their maternity leave. And Kate's client list to date is very impressive...many large international corporates have adopted the [CareerMums](#) toolkits.

Kate also champions the 'work-from-home' model, where mothers can be tasked to undertake project work, or writing/report-based jobs, during their childrens' 'down time'. The ability to undertake these tasks remotely via email and the internet means that they are particularly well suited to stay-at-home mums. This ongoing engagement of mothers ensures that corporate knowledge is not lost to the organisation - and it might ultimately result in a return to full, on-site employment at a later time when children are older.

It was fascinating to learn about Kate's philosophies and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I

recommend that all mums take a good look at [CareerMums](#) - this is one small business that is doing great things.

Here's a video of Kate speaking on Channel 10 earlier this year:



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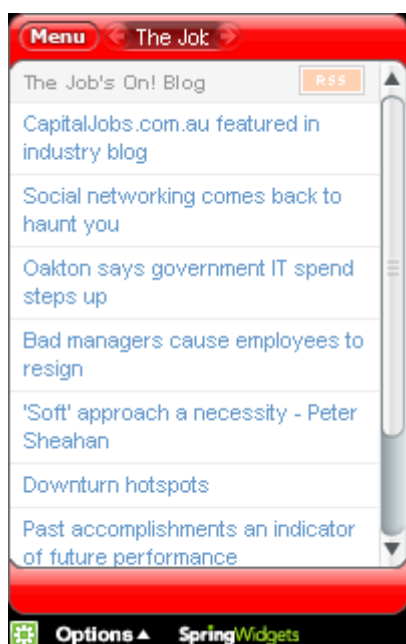
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