



Biography

LAURA TENISON MBE

As the founder and Managing Director of JoJo Maman Bébé, Laura has grown the company organically from its start-up in 1993 to become the UK's foremost niche multi-channel specialist in the pregnancy and baby market. Offering fashionable maternity wear, a Breton inspired children's collection and original nursery products, gifts and toys; JoJo offers everything you need from pregnancy to pre-school.

Laura Tenison previously ran a small fashion company before setting up a French property business based in Brittany. When she sold this venture, her aim was to bring Breton nautical style home and offer practical and affordable fashion for mothers and babies.

With real time sales via all channels; the multi-currency website, 200 page catalogue and the soon to be 37 stores, JoJo offers a truly multi-channel service. The company continues to expand organically at the rate of 8 new stores a year.

With start-up capital of just £50 000, Laura has grown the company with limited bank borrowing and no dilution of equity to a forecast gross T/O of £27M in the year ending June 2011.

The business ethos is based on a strong code of ethical business practice, where people and the planet are ranked higher on the agenda than bottom line profit. The company prides itself on its longstanding employees with the majority of the founding members still part of the team. Emphasis is placed upon the service offered to customers and the value for money in the product. This ethos permeates through the company and has established the brand in the eyes of the consumer as a business to trust.

Laura Tenison is a trustee of the company charity, Nema, based in Mozambique. The tie in was initiated to ensure that company donations make a real difference to the lives of less fortunate children and to reduce infant mortality in this extremely poor area of Africa. 'Nema', (registered charity number 1113131) which translates as "happiness after hardship" is currently receiving assistance from JoJo in the form of UK administration; bookkeeping, funding of charity overheads, ongoing in-house donations and fundraising. This year Nema with the assistance of JoJo will build and support their second school, provide 140 children with secondary school scholarships as well as funding other projects relating to health, water and orphans.

Last summer Laura cycled from the JoJo Design Studio in London to the head office in Wales with her 10 year old son. The journey of 180 miles took three days, and was pursued to raise awareness and funds for the charity. For more information on the charity and JoJo's involvement please visit www.jojomamanbebe.co.uk/charity.php



Laura has worked as a voluntary role model in schools and universities and when she has time gives inspirational and information speeches to women's groups, business conferences and at networking events both in the UK and internationally. In the past she has given many talks including a speech in French on behalf of the Welsh Assembly at the Hotel du Matignon, Paris and inspirational talks at such diverse venues as the British Library, London Chamber of Commerce and the Cycle Show, Earls Court. She is also happy to appear on relevant TV and radio programmes and has recently been on the BBC's Beat the Boss, The Apprentice - You're Fired, Channel 4 News, BBC Breakfast TV and BBC2's Working Lunch, BBC Radio 4 and 5, Sky News and Bloomberg TV to name a few.

Laura Tenison does not use a PR agent, but has been fortunate in receiving many honours and awards over the years, including:

- Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award 2010
- Honourary Doctorate of Business, University of East London, November 2010
- MBE for services to business in the Queen's 2004 New Year's Honours List
- Leading Wales Award 2009
- Fast Growth Business Female Entrepreneur of the Year 2008
- Honourary Fellowship of the University of Wales in 2008
- Harpers & Queen Entrepreneur of the year 2005
- Welsh Entrepreneur of the Year 2003

She is extremely proud that JoJo has won numerous awards over the years, including the following:

Winner, Leading Wales Awards, Best Company Award 2010

Winner, Prima Baby Reader Awards, Best Children's Wear Website 2010

Winner, Prima Baby Reader Awards, Best Maternity Lingerie 2010

Winner, Drapers Children's Wear Retailer of the Year 2009

Winner, Prima Baby Fashion Awards, Best Catalogue/Mail-order Service 2008

Winner, Fast Growth Business Awards, Retail Business of the Year 2007

Nominated a Superbrand

Laura Tenison has two sons (Toby and Ben) who both modelled extensively for JoJo as babies. She is a hands-on mother, juggling her children with her career and putting in long hours to ensure that neither suffers, although she admits that being able to survive on little sleep is essential. Laura was the youngest of a large family and thrives on a busy house full of children. She is known among her friends for cooking huge meals at the drop of a hat and loves impromptu parties and to be surrounded by people. Her home is often the meeting point for JoJo team members (and sometimes their children) from across the company.

She divides her time between London (where the JoJo design studio and marketing office is based), the company's headquarters in Newport, South Wales (where her family are from) and her home in Brittany where the idea for JoJo was first conceived.

For more information please visit www.jojomamanbebe.co.uk.