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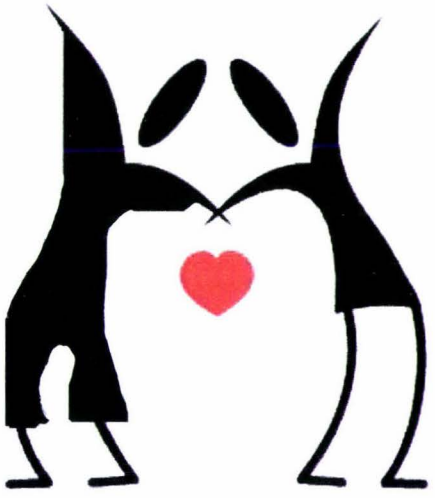
COUPLE-OWNED BUSINESS

IN NEW ZEALAND

How couples in business manage the complexities of their lifestyle.



A 152.800 thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Management

Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand

Kim Florence Ashton Hodgson

2007

ABSTRACT

Given the increasing phenomenon of couples in business and prevalence of SME's in New Zealand, this study contributes to the limited extant literature on couples in business by providing a New Zealand perspective. It also addresses a gap in the research by presenting a step towards building a profile of New Zealand couples in business for interested parties such as New Zealand business, the government and other research projects. The key research aim in this thesis was to examine the dynamics at play within this business lifestyle as couples simultaneously manage both their work and home relationships.

Data were collected using a two-phased research methodology. The first phase of the study was exploratory and employed a qualitative methodology (Focus Groups and Case Studies). Phase One of the study established what key themes were relevant to New Zealand couples. This exploratory phase then guided the construction of a survey instrument.

The second phase of the study utilised a survey and employed quantitative data analysis techniques. The survey investigated whether factors such as gender and dependents living at home defined differences in the characteristics profiles of entrepreneurial couples in New Zealand. The study also investigated satisfaction and tension levels in the sample. Using summary statistics, cluster analysis, and multivariate techniques, this research found that a couple's personal relationship impacted on all facets of their lives, including their work and life satisfaction levels. Couples who were satisfied with their relationship also experienced less business tension. In essence, the relationship was the fulcrum on which the business and the home balanced.

The findings of this research were compared with the limited international data and a degree of similarity was found. The findings also have built on these similarities by offering a unique New Zealand perspective and focusing on the relationship as the keystone to the copreneurial lifestyle. The findings were also examined for relevance to the New Zealand context and it was found that predominant cultural factors affect the couples' lifestyles, home, and work decisions. Further potential for future research was highlighted, for example, investigating eastern cultures, same sex relationships, and industry or targeting specific demographics.

Key words: Couples in Business, Entrepreneurial Couples, Copreneurship, Relationship Satisfaction, Business Tension, Cluster Analysis, Multivariate Analysis, New Zealand Business, Home, Work, Family, Dependents, Gender.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Anyone who says a thesis is a solo project obviously has not been involved with one. Numerous people have contributed to the thesis who I gladly and gratefully acknowledge and thank. I would like to give special thanks and gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Janet Sayers and Dr. Duncan Jackson. Your invaluable guidance has helped me to reach, what seemed at times to be a never-ending goal. I really appreciate your generous willingness to give your time, ready and wicked senses of humour, patience, enthusiasm, and caring. I also wanted to say I really value all of your efforts, especially in the dreaded editing stage. Specifically, Janet thanks for your warm support, understanding of the topic area, incredible way with the written word, and for encouraging me to publish. Duncan, thanks for your methodological expertise, I can now communicate in the foreign language of research and statistics. Also thanks, for making me laugh with your hand-made coffees, regular 'sanity checks', hilarious and upbeat view of the world, penchant for betting on knowledge, and absolute commitment and passion for getting this done. You have contributed nearly as many hours as I have, and I thank you for only ever being an email, phone call, text, or instant message away. Janet and Duncan, both of you are an inspiration to me, you have expanded my mind considerably, and I consider myself smart and lucky for conning you into being my supervisory team! In the words of Casper the ghost, "Can I keep you?"

Heartfelt acknowledgement goes to my husband Mike. I love you darling, thank you for your support and belief, reading, and calming influence, especially when the computer threw wobblies. You are my haven from the storm. This has been a long journey for both of us and I appreciate all the time you gave me to myself.

Thanks too, to my family for your unwavering belief and support. Your encouragement helped enormously. Here I would like to make special mention of Mum and Dad, a couple in business together, for nearly as long as I can remember. You were the inspiration for this study and the one of the reasons I am who I am. I

feel privileged to have you for parents and to count you as friends. Growing up in and around your businesses gave me a huge head start in life. I love you both xx.

Mum, I consider myself lucky that we continue to have so much fun together and that we are the 'bestest' of friends. Thank goodness for phones (but not for the monthly toll bill) nattering with you is a staple of my day! You are my 'superwoman' and I marvel at how you have managed to juggle business, home, kids, pets, and family for all these years. You are one of my rocks, and the voice in my head that encourages me to 'feed my little brain'.

Dad, our stimulating discussions on business, and life in general, have been formative to my understanding of how the world works. My ability to sell ice to Eskimos (dissect, analyse, and to persuade), originates directly from you. While I have not always taken your advice, I do consider you to be one of the most intelligent and innovative people I know. Funny how your advice has gotten so much better in the last couple of years (hehe). For continuing to have my best interests at heart, I thank you.

Thanks also to my buddy Regan, the best big brother a girl could have and yes, you will have to go to another of those boring gown things! (Well, fingers crossed anyhow). I treasure you mate; you truly are one of a kind!

I would also like to mention some of the special people that continued to be interested and supportive of the study: To family and friends, thanks for understanding that going out to play was not always possible. The handbag club (Jo, Siobhan, Barbie, Anne, and Grace), blowing off steam with you all is a highlight of my month, you inspire me, and I appreciate your friendship, motivation, empathy, and caring. You are all brilliant scholars and I am proud to share your research journeys. Thanks for emails, coffees, and advice. To my dear readers, Kimble, Siobhan, Charles, Steve, Maree, Jacks, and my lovely Mike, thanks for lending me your eyes, brain, and your time. Reading this work was a mammoth

task that you tackled without flinching, even professing interest...what wonderful and willing victims...er...friends you are! :-) Seriously, your contribution is invaluable, so thanks from the bottom of my heart! In addition, thank you to the MIB staff and specifically, Dr. John Monin, Dr. Keith Macky, and Kaye Thorn for your support, advice, wisdom, and interest.

To the couples in business together who donated their time and experience throughout the various stages of the process, thank you, this study would not have happened without your interest, encouragement and support. Your willingness to open your lives to scrutiny determined a fantastic response rate and some very interesting insights into your world. I know you are interested in finding about 'others like you' so I hope you enjoy the read.

I also thank the institutions that encouraged and supported the work by putting information of this study in their regular publications to their members. This further extended the reach of the sample. In particular; Lollipops, Business New Zealand, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Paper Plus, the Dairy Exporter, and the Freemasons.

Grateful acknowledgement and thanks also need to go to The Todd Foundation of New Zealand, and to Massey University. To the Todd Foundation, thank you for your interest and encouragement in the form of a research excellence grant. Massey University, thank you for the Massey Masterate Scholarship, and for the regular work. Being a student is a huge drain and stress on finances. Both of your practical contributions and encouragements enabled me to keep going.

Finally, Dobby and Smeegle, thanks for sitting on the desk and keeping me company while I was writing, but not for continuously knocking my notes, papers, and research books into the rubbish bin or onto the floor.

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