



NICOLE SHARIAT FARB

Age: 36

Current city:
San Francisco

Family: Husband Michael, 35; twin boys, 8 months

Education:
Loyola University Chicago; University of Chicago Booth School of Business



It's All in the Box!

Everything you need to make the coaster above comes in this kit! Wood-burning starter set, \$44



CAREER-SPIRATION

CRAFTING AN EMPIRE

AFTER HER 2011 WEDDING, banker Nicole Shariat Farb spent hours sourcing supplies from craft stores to create cute homemade thank-you notes she'd seen on Pinterest. Then she got to work—and botched the project. “They looked like a 4-year-old had made them,” she says with a laugh. Obsessed with the idea of simplifying crafting for fellow beginner DIY-ers, she quit her job in 2013 to start Darby Smart, an e-marketplace that sells ready-made craft kits. Tens of thousands of sales later, her business is blowing up. *GH* asked her how she turned her fun hobby into a full-time gig.

I DID RESEARCH IN A MICHAELS PARKING LOT. Crafting is a nearly \$30 billion market; I knew the opportu-

nity there was huge. When I was still working at my old job, I spent my free time at Michaels, asking customers outside how they felt about buying craft supplies online. I also cold e-mailed craft bloggers about projects they were sharing on Pinterest. I knew that if I could connect their ideas with supplies, I could help them turn their creativity into businesses.

QUITTING BANKING WAS TERRIFYING. My husband, Michael, has worked at a start-up for a long time; I was always the stable-job person. I was confident that my business model was unique, but there were still so many unknowns. Michael was incredibly supportive. We agreed to dip into our savings so I could give my idea a shot.

Mail-Order Pride

Most Darby Smart crafts (like these DIY Posh Pink Planters, \$20) take an hour tops.



I STALKED MY BUSINESS PARTNER ON FACEBOOK.

He was a software engineer at the website Eventbrite and had the technical background I was looking for, coupled with two key things: He wanted to take a risk, and he had a skill set the opposite of mine. I knew we could make each other stronger. It took four meetings to get him on board. Now we manage a team of 16.

GOING ON MATERNITY LEAVE TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON. When I had my twins, Kass and Cooper, I worried that by taking time off, I would let my team down and our growth would slow. But

taking the time away made me realize how talented our staff is. I have to work on trusting them and delegating more.

OUR OFFICE IS A CRAFTER'S CANDYLAND.

At our new 6,300-square-foot space in San Francisco, we have every supply imaginable—hundreds of cans of spray paint, 20 types of glue, you name it. Every day we test craft ideas submitted by bloggers. After we accept a project, the blogger walks away with a portion of sales. Some of them have told us our site changed their lives—those are my proudest moments.

—as told to Rachel Bowie