

Online wedding gift store new to NZ

Business Name: The Perfect Gift Limited
Spokesperson: Nicole Viljoen Business Development Director
Location: www.thepperfectgift.co.nz
Finalist for: EIT Emerging Business Award

What is the business' brief history?

The internet site went live on Valentine's Day 2004, after more than four months of planning, research and development. The online wedding registry concept is fairly new in New Zealand but is widely used and established overseas.

What is your key business? We are an e-store that specialises in hosting private online wedding gift registries. We have 15 departments, 60 brands and more than 600 products available. We do three things:

First, secure online shopping: Store visitors can not only shop for themselves, but also select any item to send beautifully gift-wrapped with a card. Overseas ex-pat kiwis can send gifts within NZ to avoid expensive international shipping charges. Second, exclusive online wedding registries: When a couple registers their gift list they receive personalised slips for guests detailing the registry login and password. Post-wedding we provide a gift-giver report to assist with thank-you notes. Third, a forget-me-not reminder service: Valued clients can record friends' and families' special dates. We email reminders a couple of weeks prior.

How many people do you employ?

Nicole Viljoen and Claire Price.

What was the best business decision you've made? To go for it! This was not a simple decision; we conducted in-depth research and analysis before we even decided that it was a viable proposition.

And the biggest business risk you've ever taken? We have just bought out a competitor. It was a tough call but we are convinced the investment will be well worth it. Our experience in the industry means that we can hit the ground running

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with our second e-store and build up another productive business.

What advice would you give to anybody else starting out in business?

Endeavour to do it once, and do it right. Running your own business is incredibly hectic and it can prove to be very difficult finding the time to go back and fix stop-gap measures.

Do your homework, especially if you are going into business with a partner. Our initial business plan not only analysed the viability but it also ensured that we had similar goals, expectations and motivation.

Seek support, speak to people in business, government agencies such as Biz Info and Business in the Community mentors. At the end of the day you'll have to do the hard yards yourself, but it is great to obtain guidance, support and resources.

What does being a finalist mean to you? To be selected as a finalist in the Hawke's Bay Business awards is phenomenal. We are two at-home Kiwi Mums in our 20s who have grown our business around the demands of our home and families. It is a fantastic validation for us as everything we have achieved has come from hard work, dedication and self-motivation.

Why do you think you should win the award? We have created a style of business and service that New Zealand has never really seen before.

We are forging new ground in online shopping in New Zealand, creating an experience that is secure, enjoyable and convenient.