



Deb Whitecross

Deb Whitecross Enterprises Pty Ltd

Age: 55

Business: Deb Whitecross Enterprises Pty Ltd

Role: disability strategist

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a surgeon or an artist! I loved dissecting animals in biology classes and liked the idea that doctors could save people's lives. I became complacent about studying and didn't get good enough grades to be a doctor so ended up doing graphic arts which was my second passion.

What was your first job?

I lived in Africa and went to school in the UK. My first job was in the UK in a fruit and veggie shop. It was before the Brits got used to lovely ingredients and importing tropical food was not commonplace.

How long have you been in your current role?

I started a disability consultancy in February. It is mandatory for government agencies to create a disability action plan. These plans not only mitigate risk from a discrimination complaint or litigation but also create more accessible and equitable services.

Tell us in 10 words or less what your job involves?

DWE helps organisations meet disability requirements and lead innovative change.

What is the hardest thing about your job?

The ultimate goal of the work I do is to change people's negative attitudes to disability. People with a disability have such a struggle on so many levels: not being able to go where they want when they want (without a massive amount of

planning and support), not always being treated fairly and equitably, not being able to live where they choose or be included in the decisions made for them.

How many career changes have you had in your lifetime?

Graphic artist - this was in Melbourne at Valentine Sands and Hallmark Cards.

Antiques dealer - managed an antique shop in Armadale for a few years.

Caterer - managed a French ski lodge managing a ski lodge for 6 months.

Drafter - was a freelance draftsman in Sydney.

Service industry - After being a stay-at-home mum for a few years, I started my own computer cleaning business before moving back to Victoria.

Social worker - When I moved to Ballarat as a single mother I put myself through uni as a mature aged student to become a social-welfare worker.

Who is your business role model and why?

Dick Smith. He is passionate, courageous, smart and has great integrity.

What business, tool/implement/gadget can't you live without and why?

The internet. Living in a rural town means that I don't need to do so much traveling to see clients, a lot of time-saving communication happens via the internet and the phone.

If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?

Apart from my new venture I revert to the first aspiration to be a doctor.

What's the best piece of advice you can give to other women in business?

Be true to yourself and follow your dreams. I was deeply moved by this quote from Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be?"