

Charlotte takes the cake— and \$130,000 in profits!

"I'm helping my family by doing something I love!" raves Charlotte.



When Charlotte Fowkes' first child, Kirstie, was born 10 years ago, a friend gave her a unique gift. "She had shaped a layer of diapers into the form of a cake and glued lace and baby toys all over it," recalls the 36-year-old Arvada, Colorado, mom of three. Charlotte thought the gift was adorable—but impractical. "Because of all the glue, you couldn't use any of the diapers or toys," she says.

So months later, for someone else's baby shower, Charlotte created her own version of the cake. "Using safety pins and rubber bands, I wrapped towels, blankets and cloth diapers into the

shape of a cake, and inside I put rattles, socks, bibs and toys. That way, the mom could use everything the cake was made of!" she says.

It was a hit. "The women at the shower told me I should sell them," she recalls. Charlotte, who was working full-time, didn't have time to sell her cakes, but was thrilled to spend her spare time making them to give to others. "It was my favorite hobby, something I looked forward to all day," she smiles.

Then one day, Charlotte got a call: Kirstie's appendix had burst, and she

was being rushed to the hospital. Charlotte and her husband, Brian, spent weeks at their daughter's bedside as she battled complications—and unfortunately, Charlotte was fired for missing too much work.

At the same time, she discovered she was pregnant with her third child, and Charlotte knew she had to find a way to earn more money... and that was when Baby Cakes was born!

At first, business was slow, so Charlotte began visiting every florist and gift shop in her area with samples to ask them to carry her cakes. To her delight, everyone loved them! At the same time, well-known search engine Yahoo! began listing her website, www.baby-cakes.com, and soon she was getting several orders a day! And when one of her cakes was featured on the hit show *Sex and the City*, orders

began pouring in! "These days, we make about 30 cakes a day, which range in price from \$12 to \$120, and we have a variety of themes," she says.

Is she earning money? You bet: last year, sales

hit \$130,000! "I'm my own boss, I spend as much time with my children as I want, and it's so great knowing I'm helping to ensure my family's future—doing something I love!"

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gets
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The best way to
**Get your
business
started!**

Years ago, women who wanted to launch their own business had to max out their credit cards because no one would give them funding. But now that the 6.2 million women-owned businesses in the U.S. are generating over \$1 trillion in sales, loans and advice are easy to obtain, assures financial expert Lisa Stern. To get started, try:

● **U.S. Small Business Administration** (www.sba.gov), which offers loan programs for fledgling businesses.

● **Women Business Centers** (202-205-6673), which offer special funds just for women, as well as training and counseling.

● **Hobby Industry Association** (800-822-0494). Sponsors trade shows and conducts market research for companies selling hobbies and crafts.

—Barbara Small