



Paid Post by Auriens

This content was produced by the advertising department of the Financial Times, in collaboration with Auriens.

LATER LIFE STORIES

THE MAKEUP MONARCH
Tricia Cusden, 70

Owning your Age

RETIRED AT 65 IN THE WAKE OF A LIFE-CHANGING FAMILY EVENT, TRICIA CUSDEN ASKED HERSELF WHAT SHE WANTED FROM THE REST OF HER LIFE. FIVE YEARS ON, THE PHENOMENAL SUCCESS OF HER ONLINE MAKEUP BRAND, LOOK FABULOUS FOREVER, HAS GIVEN HER THE ANSWER.

have a granddaughter with special needs called India, and I started the business because of her. Being in a children's hospital is powerful; it opens a door into a world you don't know exists. No one can be in that environment and not be affected by the fragility of life. It sparked in me a kind of existential crisis – what is my life for? How do I live, in the light of what I now know?

I was doing executive coaching, winding down towards retirement. I really missed being in business meetings – working with people, being in a stimulating atmosphere, and I'm passionate about makeup. I knew the beauty industry excluded me in this very significant way. I hated the language of anti-aging; I thought it was very insulting.

I Googled cosmetic manufacturers. I knew nothing about the beauty industry, but I think that was an advantage, because if I'd known what I know now, I probably wouldn't have done it. You'd think there'd be no gap in that market, but I created one. Older women could buy makeup from any number of suppliers, of course they could. But as a consumer I said



there's a problem here: the makeup they supply that suits every single skin tone and every single person doesn't work when you're older. So there was the gap.

It's complex, managing stock, because there's cash flow and demand is variable. You've got to get boxes printed and assembled and then the ships bringing the compacts can't get into port because it snows, and suddenly your wonderful planning goes all to pot.

I was on BBC Breakfast at the end of 2015 and our website nearly crashed. We had so many orders it was unbelievable. Up to that point we'd been selling an average of four orders an hour – we were selling four a minute.

Thirty per cent of our orders go to America and we don't do any marketing in America. They just find us on YouTube. We've just come back from the Oscars; we had products in the goody bags and we did LA for a

week, me and my daughters. It was completely mad.

In the widest possible context, we're confronting our ageist society. We do that by not digitally altering images, by choosing women who have a few signs of aging and also through language, because that's where ageism resides – it resides in language; it resides in images. We aren't putting makeup onto twenty-year old skin and saying, look, they're marvellous, we're putting it on to sixty-year old skin and saying, look, they're marvellous! And we're not making any apologies for saying, this is for older women. We're not calling ourselves women of a certain age.

When I go to big London salons, I don't see a single image of an older woman, yet the clientele who can afford those prices are often my age.

“ ”

WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES CHALLENGING AND DIFFICULT QUESTIONS: WHAT IS MY PURPOSE? WHAT WOULD I MOST REGRET NOT HAVING DONE?

You go in and you don't see yourself at all. Why am I not on the wall?

I do a lot to live longer. I've started exercising. I have a personal trainer who comes twice a week. I want good cardio aerobic fitness. I've got a sporty car that I've got to get in and out of without looking ridiculous. I'm eating a lot more fish because I need good quality proteins. Through the research I did for my book, I've come to realise the quality of nutrition is very important.

We have to adjust to the hundred-year life, a reality for more and more people. It's presented as problematic, financially and socially, but on a personal level it's the most incredible bonus. Who wouldn't want it?

We have to ask ourselves challenging and difficult questions: What is my purpose? What would I most regret not having done? I'm not prescribing that we should all start businesses. It's just about having something that makes you excited to be alive.

This is the latest in a series of profiles of individuals who are redefining later life that will appear in FT Weekend Magazine and at laterlifestories.ft.com.

FIND OUT MORE AT AURIENS.COM

