

Go-it-alone events stager takes business award



Winning works: In six years, Robyn Radomski has gone from starting up on her own with Conference Works to winning an award for the best micro-business, employing seven staff. Picture: ANDREW GORRIE

ADRIAN BATHGATE

HARD GRAFT and a family willing to pitch in have helped Wellington woman Robyn Radomski turn her start-up company into an award-winning business.

Ms Radomski's conference and events organising company, Conference Works, won the Best Micro Business category in the HerBusiness awards for businesswoman of the year announced this month.

Winning the award is the highlight of her career, she says.

Ms Radomski founded the company in 1999 as a one-person operation on the family computer.

Her previous job as conference organiser at the Events Centre had come to an end at that time.

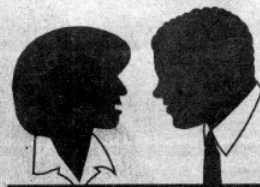
She made her decision to have a crack on her own while organising her last conference for the centre — on managing career change for the Career Services. "I just loved the field, and I didn't want to leave."

A couple of early breaks — by having conferences lined up — meant Conference Works was able to hit the ground running.

Six years on, it employs three fulltime and four part-time staff.

At various stages her three children and her husband have lent a helping hand. One of her children still works three days a week around university studies.

Though Ms Radomski has been happy confronting the professional challenges of organising con-



KEEPING COMPANY

ferences, she says learning how to run a business has proved to be the greatest hurdle.

With no base in human resources, tax issues or other compliance areas, she needed to upskill — and fast.

"What I would say to people starting up is to get really good advice. It often costs you, but it's money well spent and it's worth it in the long run."

Despite the peaks-and-troughs nature of the business, Ms Radomski has had a good run, she says. With a good base of repeat business, she has stayed busy.

Ms Radomski enjoys dealing with a variety of people and helping them get what they want out of an event. That's what makes a good conference or good event, she says.

Now the business is an award-winning enterprise, Ms Radomski has her sights on further growth. "My goal is to be the best conference organiser in Wellington. But when I said that once, someone said to me, 'Why stop at Wellington?'"