

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CASE



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A Case Study of Anita Roddick

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An Entrepreneurial Case

ANITA RODDICK

Dame Anita Roddick (23 October 1942 – 10 September 2007) was a British businesswoman, human rights activist and environmental campaigner, best known as the founder of The Body Shop, a cosmetics company producing and retailing beauty products that shaped ethical consumerism. The company was one of the first to prohibit the use of ingredients tested on animals and one of the first to promote fair trade with third world countries. Roddick was involved in activism and campaigning for environmental and social issues including involvement with Greenpeace and The Big Issue. In 1990, Roddick founded Children On The Edge, a charitable organization which helps disadvantaged children in Eastern Europe and Asia.



Roddick was born as Anita Lucia Perilli in a bomb shelter in Littlehampton, Sussex, in an Italian immigrant community. Her family had fled Naples just before the Second World War. Her mother, Gilda ran a café and was in the habit of recycling. Roddick's parents divorced when she was 9 years old, and her mother married her former husband's cousin, Henry, who died of tuberculosis after only a few years of marriage. It was not until Roddick was 19 years old that her mother told her that Henry was the biological father of Anita and her brother. Prior to this Roddick thought that her mother's first husband, Donny, was her biological father.

After leaving school, Roddick trained as a teacher at Bath College of Higher Education and travelled widely before her mother introduced her to Gordon Roddick, whom she married in 1970. The couple opened a restaurant, followed by a hotel. By the time they married, they already had one child and were expecting another. Roddick became the mother of two daughters, Justine and Sam. Roddick worked for the United Nations, for which she traveled extensively and met people from a number of different cultures. She founded The Shop in Brighton, in 1976. The first The Body Shop was basic, offering only 15 products at first. The Body Shop's full range now has over 300 products.

Roddick opened the first Body Shop with the aim of making an income for herself and her two daughters, Sam and Justine, while her husband was away in South America, with the idea of providing quality skin care products in refillable containers and sample sizes, all marketed with truth rather than hype. She opened her second shop six months later. On her husband's return, he joined the business. By 1991, the Body Shop had 700 branches, and Roddick was awarded the 1991 World Vision Award for Development Initiative. In 1993 she told Third Way Magazine:

“ The original Body Shop was a series of brilliant accidents. It had a great smell, it had a funky name. It was positioned between two funeral parlours--that always caused controversy. It was incredibly sensuous. It was 1976, the year of the heat wave, so there was a lot of flesh around. We knew about storytelling then, so all the products had stories. We recycled everything, not because we were environmentally friendly, but because we didn't have enough bottles. It was a good idea. What was unique about it, with no intent at all, no marketing nous, was that it translated across cultures, across geographical barriers and social structures. It wasn't a sophisticated plan, it just happened like that.”

In 1997, Anita developed the Body Shop's most successful campaign ever, creating Ruby, the size 16 doll, who was thought to bear a passing resemblance to Barbie.

By 2004, the Body Shop had 1980 stores, serving over 77 million customers throughout the world. The Body Shop was voted the second most trusted brand in the United Kingdom and 28th top brand in the world.

In 2004, Roddick was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis due to long-standing hepatitis C. After she revealed this to the media in February 2007, she promoted the work of the Hepatitis C Trust, and campaigned to increase awareness of the disease.

On 17 March 2006, L'Oréal purchased Body Shop for £652 million. This caused controversy, because L'Oréal is involved in animal testing, and because the company is part-owned by Nestlé which has been criticized for its treatment of third world producers. Anita Roddick addressed it directly in an interview with The Guardian, which reported that "she sees herself as a kind of 'Trojan horse' who by selling her business to a huge firm will be able to influence the decisions it makes. Suppliers who had formerly worked with the Body Shop will in future have contracts with L'Oréal, and working with the company 25 days a year Roddick will be able to have an input into decisions."

Roddick was known for her campaigning work on environmental issues and was a member of the Demos think tank's advisory council. Children On The Edge (COTE) is an organization that Roddick founded in 1990, in response to her visits to Romanian orphanages.

Upon seeing the conditions the children were in, she created COTE to help manage the crisis and worked to de-institutionalize the children over the course of their early life. COTE's mission focuses on disadvantaged children affected by conflicts, natural disasters, disabilities, and HIV/AIDS.

On 13 December 2005, the National Post reported that Roddick had decided to turn her back on the world of commerce and give away her fortune, worth some £51 million.

Text Sources: Wikipedia 2010 (www.wikipedia.com), MaximsNews Network (<http://www.maximsnews.com>)