

# WORK LIFE

A ONE-DAY DIARY,  
FROM MORNING LATTE  
TO LIGHTS OUT

## Marcia Kilgore, inventor of FitFlop

**Marcia Kilgore, 42, is the founder of FitFlop and Soap & Glory. She lives in South Kensington with her husband Thierry, also an entrepreneur, and their children, Louis, 7, and Raphael, 4**

When people ask me what I do it can be tricky to give a straight answer. The truth is, I'm a serial entrepreneur.

I launched Bliss [the spa and cosmetics group] in America in the mid-Nineties which then sold in 2004 [for a reported \$25 million] and started another beauty business, Soap & Glory in the UK. It cost around £300K to set up but only a year later I came up with an idea for yet another business, and FitFlop was born.

FitFlop was one of those lightbulb ideas. It came to me in the middle of a boring conference in 2005 and I remember all the hairs on my body stood up as I thought: what if there was



MARCIA CAME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR FITFLOP AFTER THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST SON

a way I could get in shape without adding time to my jam-packed day. I'd just had my first son and was already running a new venture (Soap & Glory) but I used to be a personal trainer and missed the feeling of being toned and healthy. All I did was run around all day and then I looked down at my feet and there it was. A shoe that would tone you as you walked around.

An idea is never enough though. One of the reasons I've succeeded is because I think in terms of press coverage - what might be worth a couple of lines in newspapers and magazines. Also I've devised the 'so what' test for all my ideas: I ask myself, 'so what - who would care?' And if

I can't answer that in one sentence then it's just not good enough. That's how I got from making one sandal to hopefully selling 2 million this year.

My kids wake me up at 6.30am. With the help of our nanny, there's about an hour and a half to get them ready and at school by 8.45am. I've got my beauty routine down to five minutes and skip breakfast in favour of an espresso as I put on my make-up. If you've got a good haircut, good shoes and good skin

**"Managing nearly 200 people between two businesses (in the UK and the US) is not easy"**

then it's pretty easy. My favourite designer is Yohji Yamamoto, who makes it easy to just throw on anything. One of my few luxuries is having Angela - who works in his shop - send over all his new-season stuff to my house so I can choose pieces without going shopping - which I hate. And my monthly trips to our family farmhouse in France are my two indulgences.

I split my week into two days at Soap & Glory and three days at FitFlop. Thankfully the offices are near each other (in Kensington and Parsons Green) but it's still hectic. My morning involves anything from meetings (about finance or new product lines) to editing campaign photos. The biggest challenge is communication; trickling down the seeds of excitement from HQ to our retailers and customers. Managing nearly 200 people between two businesses (in the UK and the US) is not easy.

Lunch is chicken and vegetables and a carrot juice from a nearby health-food shop. Then it's more meetings about distribution and media buys or, for Soap & Glory, about website design or a new gift collection while looking at costs, sourcing and shipping.

Usually, I'm out of the office by 6pm because I like to put my kids to bed. Then I have time with my husband who's an incredible cook, and we sit down to eat. We don't talk about work: frankly, if there's a work problem I should have figured out the solution and shouldn't be wasting his time. I like to keep my work and home life separate. I use what I call the 'death-bed test' - I ask myself, if I was on my death bed would I wish I'd done X or Y? If it's a choice between a finance meeting and the boys' sports day at school, I'm going to wish I attended the sports day, aren't I?

I try to be in bed by 11.30pm every night but sometimes I'm at the office until 2am. If I have to work, I'd rather be in the office and not take it home with me, for the kids' sake. I'm OK with them inheriting my work ethic though. I became an entrepreneur as a way out of the poverty I experienced growing up in Canada. Although my kids won't have that problem, they will have seen both their parents work hard for businesses they believe in.

[fitflop.com](http://fitflop.com); [soapandglory.com](http://soapandglory.com)



MARCIA WOULD STEP INTO PEGGY OLSON'S HEELS

## PLAN B: ADVERTISING CREATIVE

**If I wasn't an entrepreneur I'd want to be in advertising. I'd love to spend my days, sitting in a room, brainstorming ideas for new clients. I think we've all been influenced by the Mad Men phenomenon but, unlike them, I'd have to be picky about who I worked for; I'd work only with people who are making a difference. I loved the 'I'm not a plastic bag' campaign by Anya Hindmarch and tried to do something similar with my two-minute rinse campaign for Soap & Glory, encouraging people to save water when they shower. I can always make another face cream or another shoe but there are limited chances in this life to really make a difference.**