



Yejin Bae

Young Melbourne fashion designer Yejin Bae is all too familiar with what it means to be business minded and successful. Sharon Green finds out how she managed to reach such heights yet still remain so humble.



It was in late 2006 that Yejin Bae released her self-titled fashion label to the world for taking and only months later saw her win the Tiffany and Co Young Designer of the Year award. It seems that true talent really does shine through and the result of this award saw a barrage of media and editorial support for the fashion label. But Yejin took it all in her stride and has remained modest ever since. "I'm very focused on a steady growth in the business rather than building on hype," she said.

Naturally, opportunities opened up for Yejin after her win but she was selective in what she chose to collaborate on. "My biggest achievement was opening my beautiful salon space in Chapel Street, which was wonderful to be able to showcase my full collection," she said.

She went on to release a limited edition line through Target stores nationally in 2007 and describes the experience as 'fantastic'. "They allowed me to create the collection that I wanted and especially important to me was to not compromise the level of quality and attention to detail," she said.

Target fulfilled all of Yejin's design briefs and managed the production and logistics so that once all of the prototypes were approved she could solely focus on the creative direction of the launch campaign.

But it hasn't all been handed to her on a golden platter. Yejin has worked extensively across the fashion industry, from design roles with SABA and Charlie Brown to her fair share of interning overseas.

"There have been many trial and error experiences in running my own business. However, having 14 years experience designing collections for big businesses definitely gave me a level of confidence in managing my time lines and supply chain- both very crucial to this business"

Fortunately for Yeojin, she has a sensible business mind and her years of experience have put her in a good position to tackle her own label. She has also learnt to appreciate and understand the value of knowledge that can be acquired from those around you. "I think it's also important to have people or mentors you can trust and turn to for advice when you need it," she said.

As a self-proclaimed perfectionist, Yeojin has often put such wise words of advice to good use. "My father told me from when I was very young that starting a job was of no importance unless it was completed, and with all my effort and energy placed until the very end."

Her career has certainly been a journey of hard work but the accomplishments have been evident too. Yeojin describes her time working with label SABA as the most rewarding. She joined them at a time when new owners to the business were looking to give the brand a new creative direction and Yeojin had the opportunity to be apart of that process. "It was exciting to be part of this team as head women's designer. Having retail stores nation wide also gave us immediate response from our customers on our new direction with the label," she explained.

Yeojin has travelled overseas a lot and even completed a couple of fashion internships in New York. She agrees that gaining international experience has been crucial to shaping her career. "I think for any creative [person] it's exciting to experience and be inspired by other countries and cultures. Having travelled very regularly for the last 17 years gave me a great understanding of the markets I wanted to target with my collections," she said.

It doesn't come as any surprise that that this ambitious Melbourne- based designer has lots of plans and ideas for the future of her business. "I would love more boutiques in different locations and to constantly have challenges and opportunities coming my way," she said.

It's from years of following her dream that keeps this passionate spark alive in Yeojin, along with an eager approach to moving forward with her label. Her advice to aspiring fashion designers is to have a positive attitude to all learning experiences as they come- even if some of the tasks may seem trivial. "My first job at 17 as a design room assistant was given to me while I was interning, and the current assistant with many more years experience than me was fired. I was told it was due to my attitude, I was happy to sweep the floor every night as I was excited just to observe what was happening around me," she said.

And it's not hard to see how adopting this positive attitude has taken Yeojin on an incredible journey throughout her career.

To learn more about Yeojin Bae, visit her [website](#).