

# Mom-to-be Stephanie Pyrzynski On Running a Successful Marketing Company With Her Spouse



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There is no straight line to success, but sometimes we create these chutes and ladders we think we need to go through only to find out that what we were meant to do was just around the corner.



Excited to be a new mom in March, Stephanie is a creative minded marketer who understands people as much as business and brands. As Co-founder and Vice President of Brand and Content Marketing at [Geoffresh Inc.](#) [pronounced Jef' frēsh], a digital marketing agency she runs with her husband Geoff [hence the Geoff part in Geoffresh], she works with a range of client teams to develop seminal brand experiences and deliver user-centered, data-driven digital marketing solutions. Some of her articles on SEO and branding have been featured in publications like PR News. She is also the founder of

the mom blog and community called [Tinley Park Mom](#).

## How did you get started in marketing and how did you transition into owning your own business?

The business I run with my husband is where I got my start in marketing actually. He had started it back in 2007 and I came into the picture in 2012.

You know that movie Baby Boom (1987) starring Diane Keaton? That's the funniest way I know of how to illustrate how I became a business owner. I was trying to be a J. C. Wiatt (Diane Keaton's character), a successful career-woman. And then I met my husband, who like the doctor in the movie (Dr. Jeff Cooper played by the late Sam Shepard) is this wise and down-to-earth guy who has this way of centering you. In so many ways my husband was my mentor and helped me find my direction; find what I really wanted all along. So like J.C., I chose a different path in life and a partner in life came with it.

I was a grad student at Loyola, studying advertising, public relations, video production, graphic design, digital media, you name it! I wanted to know as much as possible so that I could be like the Angela Ahrendts of this world, leading these amazing brands with innovative, creative ideas. I had no connection to that world, but I was going to work hard and put my all into everything I did to try to reach that level.

So I'm in grad school and my husband (whom I was dating) saw the quality of the projects I was turning out at school and one day he invited me to help on a commercial he was working on for a client. It was just a cool boyfriend giving his girlfriend an opportunity to sharpen her skills and build her resume, but one project led to another, and another. We worked so well together and turned out great work that pleased clients. So months later we became business partners.

Obviously that was a tremendous risk to take for someone so young. I was only twenty-three at the time. I would have usually worried "What if we break up? How do you work with someone you just broke up with?" But in all that extra time together outside of dating, learning about each other and how to best work

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together, we were building this great foundation for our romantic relationship under the surface. So those negative, worrisome thoughts didn't enter my mind when it came to becoming a business owner.



It took me a few years to commit to Geoffresh work full-time however. Being in my early twenties I was worried about not being taken seriously if I skipped working at an agency on big brand campaigns first. I came to realize that I was knocking myself down and that what I felt ashamed about was in fact what made me such a valuable employee to these organizations. And that was business experience. As exciting as it was working in the city for a few years, I had an opportunity to build out my own agency outside the city and work with a diverse array of brands and businesses.

So what they say is true, there is no straight line to success, but sometimes we create these shoots and ladders we think we need to go through only to find out that what we were meant to do was just around the corner.

**What's the hardest thing about owning your own business, and are there any tools or techniques you've discovered that helps?**

For me the hardest thing about owning your own business is setting limits on work-time. I love what I do and sometimes I'll let what I'm working on carry over into my afterwork time.

It'll be this innocent thing where we're at the dinner table and during small talk I'll ask for Geoff's opinion on something client related. When I catch myself doing that I stop and put whatever it is in our project management system that we built out for me to get to the next day. It might sound cut and dry, but as a business owner if you don't set hard limits you'll just fry yourself.

You work together with your husband. What's the day-to-day like and how do you balance work and your relationship?

Since we're a digital agency we can work from anywhere, and working from home is truly a blessing especially right now for me during my pregnancy.

Our downstairs is our office and the rest of our home is strictly home-life. We have this really cool T-shaped desk-set in our downstairs office that makes collaborating so easy.

On a typical day you'll find Geoff on his side of the desk working on SEM/PPC campaigns, managing server performance on a client website, or maybe doing a video conference with a team, then you've got me on the other side designing graphics, working on an analytics reports, or reaching out to businesses. When one of us needs the other, we both turn 90 degrees to face each other at that center panel and it's a meeting of minds. It's pretty awesome. There are client days where we're traveling to meet with our client's and their teams, those are fun because having that face-to-face interaction really makes a difference.

As for how I balance work with my relationship with my husband, it's hard to tell the difference. It's not like there's this mirror universe where we're completely different from our regular selves. We're definitely more silly with each other in our personal relationship, but because both parts of our life involve team work it always feels smooth going from one mode to the other.







**You describe you and your husband as being two diametric types of marketers. Can you describe both sides and how this helps and/or hurts?**

Yes I like that word diametric, I feel that it captures the dynamic ying and yang quality of our working relationship. Two ends of a solid line that meet in the middle. I'm more on the creative end of that line and Geoffrey is on the technical end. Traditionally creatives and techies clash, but that's not the case with us.

You would go to Geoffrey for the nitty gritty things with your website, related to server operation, your database, security, software, and interfaces. He has a B.S in Entrepreneurship and Management Information Systems, so he's heads and shoulders above me when it comes to algorithms, coding, and the mechanics behind digital marketing. It's a huge help having his expertise at hand. When I can't figure out why something isn't working with a CMS for example, he knows a little more to get me to the solution I need.

There's quite a bit of overlap in our skillsets and credentials, which comes in handy when we need to jump in for one another. The only time our different approaches hurt is when it comes to form vs. function; this comes up usually with web design. We usually find a balance between performance and design so that user experience isn't compromised though.

**Any tips/tricks/techniques on how to work together with a spouse?**

I think communication is very important when it comes to working together with your spouse. And you only get better at communication the more you work together. Even if you hit snags where you disagree, stay openminded because in finding the solutions and working through your different approaches you become better as a couple and teammates. I think it really bonds you two when you can work on something or create something with your partner that you both can be passionate about.

Also, if something is bothering you, don't be shy to talk about it. Also giving each other space is really important. Too much of anything is never good.





**Congrats on the being a future mom! What are ways you are preparing your business for a new baby?**

Thank you!

All of our clients are aware that we are expecting our first child in March and that I will be out for a short time after delivery. Truly there aren't too many preparations we need to make. We have a great support system.

**Which aspect of being a mom are you most worried about?**

I am a worrier by nature, but ironically I'm not worried about being a mom. I know how unbelievable that sounds and I've tried to analyze why I feel so calm about it, and the only thing I can come up with is love. I think if you have a lot of love and support around you, it gives you this confidence and comfort about yourself. I'm so excited, I can't wait to meet our little girl.

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