

FPENTREPRENEUR

GROWTH STRATEGIES

Over founder hopes the company she started on a whim will become a household name

[Mary Teresa Bitti](#) | November 7, 2016 | Last Updated: Nov 7 10:00 AM ET



Photo by Lisa Vigliotta After trial and error, Sabrina Maulucci created a pattern that worked and found the right mix of fabrics, to create a breathable, washable, cover. Now it's a "full-blown company" called The Over Company.

In the past year, Sabrina Maulucci invented a multi-use baby cover, started an ecommerce business with sales in 12 countries, launched into high-end baby boutiques across Canada, gave birth to her third child and won the 2016 Mompreneur Startup Award.

Now, she and her husband, Michael, are scouting warehouses in and around their home-base of London, Ont., to help take The OVer Company to its next phase of growth. Already in talks with U.S. retailers, the couple plan to start shipping to the country in the next six months.

“It’s been a whirlwind and it all started on a whim,” Maulucci said of her goal to protect her second child, Olive, who was born eight weeks premature. When they brought her home, Maulucci, focused on protecting her then five-pound daughter from germs and weather, designed a cover to put over (hence the name) her car seat.

“I’m not a seamstress, but, after trial and error, I created a pattern that worked and found the right mix of fabrics, to create a breathable, washable, cover.”

It wasn’t long before family, friends and friends of friends began asking her to make them OVer’s, and, she soon realized she could also use it in the shopping cart for her toddler Violet or as a nursing/pumping cover.

“I started thinking maybe this could be a business,” said Maulucci, who at the time was on maternity leave from her customer service job at TD Bank. **“I thought I could make a little extra money to decorate my house. Now it’s a full-blown company and I have no time to decorate.”**



Photo by Nicole Fairweather ***“It’s been a whirlwind and it all started on a whim,”*** said Sabrina Maulucci, founder of The OVer Company.

The Mauluccis set about creating a website, logo, and labels. “When the labels came in, I said, we need to do this,” she recalled. Their investment to that point was \$300. They put the word out on their Instagram and Facebook pages and launched on Oct. 1, 2015. Their first run — 100 units sewn by Sabrina and her grandmother — sold out in four days. They hired a seamstress and within one month of launching began getting wholesale and retail requests.

“Our website orders have grown month over month but we waited to launch into retailers because we weren’t ready. Excellence is a core value of the company and we wanted to make sure we could maintain that excellence while keeping up with demand,” Maulucci said.

Shortly after their third child was born, July 1, 2016, they entered the retail market and are now in 50 stores across Canada, including Snuggle Bugz. “In the first month, all of our stores had reordered, Now they order almost every other week. We get wholesale orders daily.”

All sales are through word of mouth. Often, ecommerce customers encourage their favourite bricks-and-mortar baby boutiques to carry OVer. Revenue hit six figures within nine months and it has more than tripled since bringing on retailers. The OVer sells for \$50 and there are now multiple lines in different fabric blends and prints. “Our profit margins are healthy. The OVer company has paid for itself. It is completely self funded,” Maulucci said.

The plan is to move operations out of the family home and into a warehouse within six months and to expand the production team — keeping everything made in Canada. Her next step is to begin designing fabric prints. “In the next couple of months, we will have prints exclusive to the OVer company. My plan is to have all of our fabric prints designed by myself. We’ve sourced a fabric manufacturer in China. We want to be a trendsetter in the baby accessory world.”

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It’s all part of the vision to grow the company into a multimillion-dollar business in the next five years. “I see the OVer company becoming a household brand name around the world,” Maulucci said. “I would like to be among the top runners in the business world with other successful Canadian baby accessory businesses like Lulujo.”

Competitors don’t worry Maulucci: “Our customers tell us our product speaks for itself. The OVer is the first product of its kind to market in Canada. Building a reputable brand is what has made us so successful this past year. Our customers drive our business, so keeping our customers and our quality as the Number 1 priority is what is important to us.”

Brad Cherniak, partner in Toronto-based business advisory firm, Sapient Capital Partners, likes the market segment and the product. Is this a company or shooting star? “The product is simple and practical and

addresses a tangible homogenous need for a tailor-made market: the mom market, which is very social by nature and so self-educating, self-propagating and self-supporting,” Cherniak said.

However, he contends the trick will be speed to market before the product gets copied. “It doesn’t take much re-engineering to make this. Will they be able to find a way to stay relevant once it is knocked off? They should make hay while they can because there is no guarantee they will have a second product that is as successful.

“They will have to strike a knife-edge balance of investing in infrastructure to meet demand while keeping enough of the profits to come out ahead if that demand peters out,” he said.

Right now, it’s great because everything is working. Becoming a business is a different thing. Will she be able to come up with additional products on her own or should she partner with someone else and take on the risk that entails?”