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Thinking the 'Unthinkable'

Contingency planning and office security have taken on a renewed urgency since the terrorist attacks in the United States. Pinkerton Consulting and Investigations managing director **Warwick Stacey** writes that planning for a potential crisis will auger well for possible outcomes.

Around the world, companies and organizations are reviewing and updating their contingency plans and taking steps to tighten the security of their offices and other facilities.

Terrorism, however, as is building security, is only one of many concerns that can threaten a company's employees and the future of its business. Every company and organization should have crisis and emergency management plans covering a variety of threats. Furthermore, planning without training is a recipe for failure. Employees must be trained and prepared to deal with crises.

Contingency planning generally refers to preparing to deal with a plethora of potential crisis situations including natural disasters, fires, bomb threats, product tampering, accidents, kidnappings, civil disorders, labour strife, war and, yes, terrorism.

A comprehensive crisis management plan should be developed around a threat analysis that identifies and prioritizes the most likely and significant threats facing an individual, a company or a business operation. In this way the organization has the benefit of pre-defined crisis situations and a list of possible scenarios that automatically trigger a pro-active response and a pre-agreed chain of command. This eliminates the problem of trying to contact traveling senior executives during a developing crisis for approval to initiate appropriate response actions.

Developing a crisis emergency management plan involves a large number of details. When the plan is carefully thought out, management and staff have been trained, and the plan has been tested, it can be implemented in an organized fashion.

"It has been demonstrated many times that companies with plans in place cope more successfully during a crisis than those without"

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A greater focus on security is now in motion around the world

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The town jewels



Nestled away on the 16th floor of a building in Lan Kwai Fong lies an oasis of colour, treasure and style. Classically hip and contemporarily chic, Tayma Fine Jewellery is giving Hong Kong's women a new ardour. By **Nick Lindsey.**

Given her vivid background, it is not surprising Tayma Page Allies has a love for colour. Because it's that colour that rests at the very heart of her Lan Kwai Fong-based jewellery business, Tayma Fine Jewellery, which for many ladies has become a haven synonymous with style.

Born in Malta, and raised in the West Indies and Africa before moving to Hong Kong 16 years ago, Ms Page Allies has cultivated a thriving business out of her adoration of coloured stones.

Says Ms Page Allies: "I think that is because I have always lived by the sea. I love the colour of the ocean - blue, and so aquamarines and sapphires are among my favourites."

Since she sold her first engagement ring to Gretel Packer, daughter of media magnate Kerry Packer, 11 years ago, Tayma Fine Jewellery's relatively humble beginnings have soared to new heights as word-of-mouth spreads and referrals prevail.

While she worked for the Hong Kong Trade Fair Group, and also in public relations, when she first came to Hong Kong, her move to study gemology after-hours, coupled with her fascination with antique jewellery and art, is paying dividends.

"I would say my jewellery style is classic with a modern twist," she says. "I get my inspiration from art books and from the stones themselves. I love Renaissance portraits - in portrait paintings I look at what jewellery the sitter was wearing."

The contemporary-antique style fusion has given Tayma Fine Jewellery a niche in the Hong Kong market, allowing women to wear striking jewellery, but without appearing overly glitzy. Ms Page Allies says her clients, generally overseas born Chinese and expatriates, tend to want something they can wear every day. "Women nowadays like to wear their jewellery more, rather than

sticking it away, forgetting about it and then bringing it out twice a year."

And that's good news for business. As she was increasingly kept busy supplying friends, and friends of friends, with custom-made pieces over the years, she decided to take the plunge and invest \$500,000 to set up her Lan Kwai Fong showroom - Tayma Fine Jewellery - two years ago.

Although the showroom is tucked away on the 16th floor of the Ho Lee Commercial building in D'Agular street, Tayma Fine Jewellery is like a sophisticated, elegant jewellery box unto itself. Bleached parquet floors, finely-detailed cornices, clotted cream walls, antique French mirror and 19th Century ladies chaise - but all melded with a homely ambience that proffers comfort rather than intimidation.

"I wanted to create a personal atmosphere, where people can come in and have a look, and build up a collection of what suits them," says Ms Page Allies. "I literally had the contractors come in here and pull the whole thing down."

There was a moment, however, where the stress of starting a business took its toll. The need to organize single-handedly the packaging, a photoshoot, printing a postcard and mailshot, choosing a computer system, the design and decoration of the premises, security, insurance, potential staff, advertising and stock - all in a tight period - invoked a kidney problem where Ms Page Allies had to be rehydrated in hospital on a drip, only days before opening. But a quick recovery, and steady business, quickly changed the tide.

"It was all exhausting and exciting and terrifying when I first did it. But now I really love it...I love coming in...I have my music, my candles... I have it just how I like it and want it," she says. "I have also found I have been able to be much more creative having the shop than when I was working from home."



Tayma Page Allies, top, is responsible for the design of an alluring range of jewellery.

Her collection of stones, including South Sea pearls, pink freshwater pearls, tourmalines, tanzanite, citrines, rubies, sapphires and diamonds, was built up over 10 years. She still spends about \$2 million a year on stock. This is supplied from various dealers, who know Ms Page Allies' taste, and regularly pass through Hong Kong. Many of the wares often come from problematic areas, such as Afghanistan, Kashmir, Israel, Sri Lanka, Columbia, Nigeria and Tanzania. Some sapphires and rubies come from Burma and Vietnam, while peridots come in from China.

"Hong Kong is fantastic, because the colour stones market is basically Asia and Africa, and you find it's old Indian and Pakistani families who are the dealers in the coloured stones. The Thai's are also the biggest dealers of rubies and sapphires," she says.

And given the high value of jewellery, naturally trust becomes an important part of business protocol. "Usually you find jewellery is run in families, it is passed down and people know of you - reputation is very important. Even here in Hong Kong, all the dealers are like third generation stone dealers, everybody tends to know everybody."

Most of Ms Page Allies' dealers will drop off the stones and let her play with potential designs for a few days before making any buying decisions. She still works with the same goldsmith from a decade ago, while many of her customers from those early days as a jewellery designer are regulars.

"So I think the fact I have been here so long as an expat and plan to stay here actually counts for a lot, because people can feel reassured they can bring pieces back or discuss things with me as I am still going to be here for another birthday. Once a customer, always a customer."

But contrary to what many may think high quality custom-made jewellery would cost, Tayma's price range is not all about big dollars. Prices start from \$3000, and range up to more than \$75,000, though the average price is around \$10,000. Although these prices are quite reasonable as far as the value of the stones, pearls, gold or silver used in the necklaces, rings, earrings, pins or pendants are concerned, the fact nearly all pieces are one-offs would make it, for many, a veritable bargain.

"Hong Kong has always been run of the mill... everybody wanted exactly the same. They wanted very perfect, very big...and I like things that are slightly imperfect, but show the beauty through the imperfection sometimes," she adds. "For me, I like pearls that are different shapes, different sizes, different colours - they don't all have to be exactly

the same and perfectly round. There are some pieces I have to say I have had for ten years, but there are others that the minute you do them they rush out the door the same day."

So business is good, the clientele is steady - but what about expansion?

"I have to say I like keeping it small. It sounds very corny, but I like people to be happy and I like to be happy," she says. "If I am exporting, there would be mass production, there would be export licences, there would be shipping, credit...it is a complete headache."

She says some of her friends with businesses have gone in that direction, but at a cost of being permanently exhausted. "I think keep it simple, keep it small - and I think you are very lucky in life if you can do something you love; I love doing this and I love it the way it is really."

While some will always want the mass-produced goods of Cartier or Tiffany - of which exactly the same pieces can be found in most cities in the world - it seems Tayma Fine Jewellery's boutique range will always be in demand. As Ms Page Allies can also custom make

are so individual, they can never be made again. "I do a higher collection, which is over the \$30,000 mark and each one is an individual design piece...and you don't find much of that in Hong Kong really."

And for Ms Page Allies, Hong Kong couldn't be a better place to be established.

"Hong Kong is one of the few places you can really wear jewellery. A lot of people if they're home in England or Australia, they are going to supermarkets, and you go out to dinner a couple of times a month," she says. "People dress down, but in Hong Kong people dress up, and they do go to places like the Mandarin Oriental and the Grand Hyatt."

"A lot of people come here new and they are overwhelmed by all these other women wearing all this jewellery, and with their little ring they were happy with back home, suddenly they feel a little miserable." She also runs small classes, mostly for newcomers, to show them how they can get a bit of glitz and style for not too much money.

Jewellery, as a result, is not just about business for Ms Page Allies, but also a way of life.

"The most rewarding thing for me is when somebody loves something I have done...when someone walks in and says 'oh god I love that, can I try it on', I love it. It gives me a lot of pleasure."

* Tayma Fine Jewellery will be holding a special BritCham members only sale week for Christmas presents from Monday December 10 to Saturday December 15.

