

A close-up portrait of Janine Allis, a woman with long dark hair, smiling broadly and showing her teeth. She is wearing large hoop earrings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Janine Allis

FOUNDER OF BOOST JUICE
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
INVESTOR ON *SHARK TANK*

A small red and white graphic element, possibly a book spine or a decorative tag, located on the left side of the cover.

THE ACCIDENTAL ENTREPRENEUR

THE JUICY BITS

WILEY

THE ACCIDENTAL
ENTREPRENEUR

THE JUICY BITS

Janine Allis

WILEY

The first edition of this work was published by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd under the title *The Secrets of My Success* in 2013. This second edition was first published in 2016 by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.

42 McDougall St, Milton Qld 4064

Office also in Melbourne

Typeset in 10.5/14 pt Sabon LT Std, by Aptara, India

© Allis Investments Pty Ltd 2016

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Creator:	Allis, Janine, 1965- author.
Title:	The Accidental Entrepreneur: the juicy bits / Janine Allis.
ISBN:	9780730327738 (pbk.) 9780730327745 (ebook)
Notes:	Includes index.
Subjects:	Allis, Janine, 1965- Businesswomen—Biography. Entrepreneurship—Australia. Women-owned business enterprises—Management. Success in business.
Dewey Number:	658.4092082

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the *Australian Copyright Act 1968* (for example, a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review), no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

Cover design by Wiley

Cover image by Jarryd Biffin at Bang Studios Collingwood

Printed in Singapore by C.O.S. Printers Pte Ltd

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Disclaimer

The material in this publication is of the nature of general comment only, and does not represent professional advice. It is not intended to provide specific guidance for particular circumstances and it should not be relied on as the basis for any decision to take action or not take action on any matter which it covers. Readers should obtain professional advice where appropriate, before making any such decision. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the author and publisher disclaim all responsibility and liability to any person, arising directly or indirectly from any person taking or not taking action based on the information in this publication.

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I was playing cards with my gran, who at the time was 93 years old, and she was telling me what it was like to be a woman of the 1940s. She told me about when the war started and most of the men headed to war, and she and her friends starting working in an ammunition factory. It made me think about what an unusual time it must have been—when your life as you know it is turned upside down, your husband leaves you for up to five years and you have to survive by working in a factory. You start to make your own money and start to feel the freedom that this brings, only to be told to get back in your box when the men come home. To think that she was not allowed to work or even have a loan in her name now seems unbelievable.

In her time, women were not the bosses; they did not run businesses. So, in her mind, what man would listen to a woman in the workforce? She constantly told my mother not to ‘get above herself’. For her, a woman had very little to no real power, even in her own home. It took my gran years to understand that at Boost, I—her granddaughter, not her grandson—was running the business. She couldn’t get her head around a woman boss, because that was not what girls did in her day. Why would they even listen to Janine? The funny thing is, it took a *Herald Sun* article for her to believe that I had actually started the business (because clearly everything you read in the paper is true). This wasn’t beliefs from 100 years ago; this was only my gran, two generations away. But times have changed.

For me, life is a marathon, not a sprint—mind you, it took me years to realise this. When I was younger, I wanted everything now (sound familiar?) and did not have a patient bone in my body. I am getting better at this. I love the journey that I am on and appreciate every day.

For those who are picking up this book for the first time, here is what you are in for ...

The first thing is that you will not be blown away by my literary skills. Like singing and painting, I have no talent in this area. But what you will read is my honest account—warts and all—of my journey to date.

The great thing about getting older (because there are a lot of negatives and you have to see the positives) is that you get to embrace who you are and see all aspects of your journey. And you're happy to share—even knowing that people will judge you, rightly or wrongly, but you don't care. What I hope is that people see that it's okay to not get everything right in life. You don't always have to be happy with the decisions that you make. And, yes, you are very dumb when you are younger but (if you're lucky) this enables you to have adventures that you wouldn't have when you are older because you aren't as stupid as when you did all those crazy, mad things!

Often people are afraid to make mistakes—and they live a life half-lived because of it. So this story is my journey—from an ordinary girl from the 'burbs to marrying my soulmate Jeff, to starting Boost Juice and Retail Zoo and becoming a shark on the TV show *Shark Tank*.

For all those people who have given me feedback on the first edition of this book, thank you! I was surprised and delighted by the impact that this book has made on people's businesses and lives, and I'm happy to say that the book is a bestseller. My English teacher from high school will honestly never believe it!

What is different in this book is it brings my story, and the story of Boost, into the present-day—including some of the experiences I've had on *Shark Tank* and the lessons I learned through this experience. This book is full of the tips that are the heart of how I believe businesses should be run and what you need to do to be a success. Whether you're in the start-up stage, growing like a weed or looking to expand into new territories—or even if your business is still just a great idea that you have yet to realise—there's something here for you. No matter where you are on the journey, it's always great to be reminded of the simple things that can make all the difference in helping you become a success.

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>v</i>
PART I: The Surprise Entrepreneur	1
1 The scenic route to Boost	3
2 Natural born winners	27
PART II: Finding a partner in crime	65
3 The winning formula	67
4 The power of team	77
PART III: Getting your systems in place	101
5 Growing like a weed	103
6 Structure for growth	123
PART IV: Seeking investors, mentors and acquisitions	167
7 Scaling up for the win	169
8 Show me the money!	195
PART V: World domination	215
9 Leaping into new markets	217
10 The giant leap	229
<i>And then you win...</i>	<i>249</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>251</i>



PART I

THE SURPRISE ENTREPRENEUR

When you ask successful businesspeople how they got started, they may tell you about the little businesses they started in primary school — the ingenious corner lemonade stand, the school chocolate-bar sales or the lawn-mowing service employing other 12 year olds. The types of businesses that led these overachievers to climb that first rung on the ladder to success. Sales charts, forecasts and ROI calculations lined these kids' walls like Andy Gibb lined mine. The entrepreneurial spirit seems to be part of their DNA.

My story is drastically different. You could say that my entrepreneurial spirit was...umm — dormant. Okay, it was non-existent. To be honest, if you'd asked me what an *entrepreneur* was in primary school, I may have thought it had something to do with food and would have had no idea how to spell it (actually, I still struggle with spelling that word). It was 20 years after primary school that foreign entrepreneurial DNA somehow began to morph my behaviour.

During the 20-year, pre-DNA takeover, I travelled around the United States, Europe, parts of Asia and Australia. I had 30 jobs, got fired from some, moved on to others, made money, lost more, met the wrong man, had a beautiful baby and met my soulmate. What I didn't realise at the time was all the lessons and tools I was picking up with each triumph and pitfall. Each piece of my journey was enabling me to have the strength to take a tiny idea and turn it into a passion.

Of course, I don't really think having the skills to become a successful entrepreneur literally needs to be part of your DNA. I also don't believe there is a cookie-cutter process for success, or that success has to be hard or come easy. What I have attempted to do in the following chapters is to share with you my journey; it has many ups and equally as many downs. If someone had done the same for me, perhaps the learning curve would have been less bumpy. This is a short, honest glimpse into my archives so that you can see I'm human, just like you. I too trip over the kids' toys, go to work with my children's fears and problems running through my head, laugh, cry, make mistakes, learn from them and try to grow.

I hope that you take something from the following and follow your dreams.

1

THE SCENIC ROUTE TO **BOOST**

Growing up, I was a typical suburban kid. My passion was netball and I spent as much time as possible outside throwing a ball at the brick wall in our garden. After leaving technical college, my first job was in advertising—during the 1980s (think shoulder pads, big hair and liquid lunches)—and I even gave modelling a go. Sensing there was more to life, I worked three jobs to save for a travelling adventure. Telling my mother I would be away for three months, I set off—returning six years later with a two year old.

Just a simple girl from a simple world

I once read a book that suggested we actually ‘pick’ our parents. If that’s the case, I picked the quintessential ‘Aussie Mum and Dad’. Mum stayed home and Dad made the bacon. Dad worked for Fibremakers, a carpet-making company, in a middle management position. His aim was to move up the corporate ladder during the week and enjoy his time off on the weekends.

I’m the youngest of their four kids, born in Knoxfield, about 30 kilometres east of the Melbourne CBD. Back in the 1970s, the suburb was semirural. Our home was a tiny green weatherboard

house—only 10 squares—but it was set on a quarter-acre block of land that had previously been an orchard. It was full of fruit trees, with an abundance of fruit every year (which could have something to do with my brother needing to manually pump the septic tank every day). Ummm... perhaps the love of fruit started here? We were outside children by necessity. Weekends were spent at the football oval for my brother, Greg, or the netball courts for my sisters and me. Our family was obsessed with sport. Netball was the one thing I was truly interested in during those years. I played and trained six days a week (even as an adult, I played netball until I stumbled into yoga at 41). Okay—healthy living and a bit of obsessiveness started to shine through during my childhood, but the availability of fruit and overachieving netball skills do not a businesswoman make.

My childhood was relatively uneventful; my siblings and I were much loved, and it was a stable upbringing. Life was simple, with not too much money being left over after the expenses were paid, so everything we did have was appreciated. I remember as a child the joy of seeing black and white television for the first time. I also remember going to the movies and watching that huge man on a horse, telling everyone how good for you it was to smoke Alpine cigarettes—as opposed to the other horrible, unhealthy cigarettes. I wasn't sold on the habit of smoking but, on the big movie screen, I did notice the vibrant green of the grass, so when I returned to the black and white television, I made a point of telling my whole family what colours we were missing.

Holidays were eight-hour road trips to Robe in South Australia, in a car without air conditioning or seatbelts. For Christmas one year, I got a bike that was second-hand with a damaged seat. (Mum told me Santa had damaged it on the way down the chimney and, of course, I believed every word because I knew Santa existed.) Looking back at my childhood, my memories are happy ones; my parents ensured we never felt like we missed out.

Even though my parents were encouraging of anything and everything we did, their aspirations for my siblings and me were

minimal. Neither thought that someday we would own our own business, become a lawyer or even a doctor. This had nothing to do with not believing in us, and everything to do with expectations and our environment. My parents sent me to Knox Secondary College for two reasons: it was close to home and it had a business course. Okay, it was more of a typing course... In our neighbourhood, you completed your Leaving Certificate and then you got a really good job as a secretary, preferably in a bank. My school only went to year 11; my parents had no expectations that I would go to university. In fact, it was never discussed. Being the youngest, I could slip through the cracks. I was never the class clown or class dunce; I was smack in the middle—Miss Average. I never pushed myself too hard and rarely did my homework. How is that for dormant entrepreneurial DNA? I seemed to be always thinking, *What is the point to all of this?* In contrast, my older sisters, Rae and Lisa, were diligent, smart students. Not seeming to match them in potential or politeness, I was a bitter disappointment to the teachers who had taught my sisters prior to me.

My school was a technical college, focusing on practical skills like woodwork, typing, basic bookkeeping, graphics and metal work. As a result, I can type, build a solid birdhouse and do basic drafting, and I'm very handy with a soldering iron. But don't ask me the capital of Azerbaijan or where the country is located on a map!

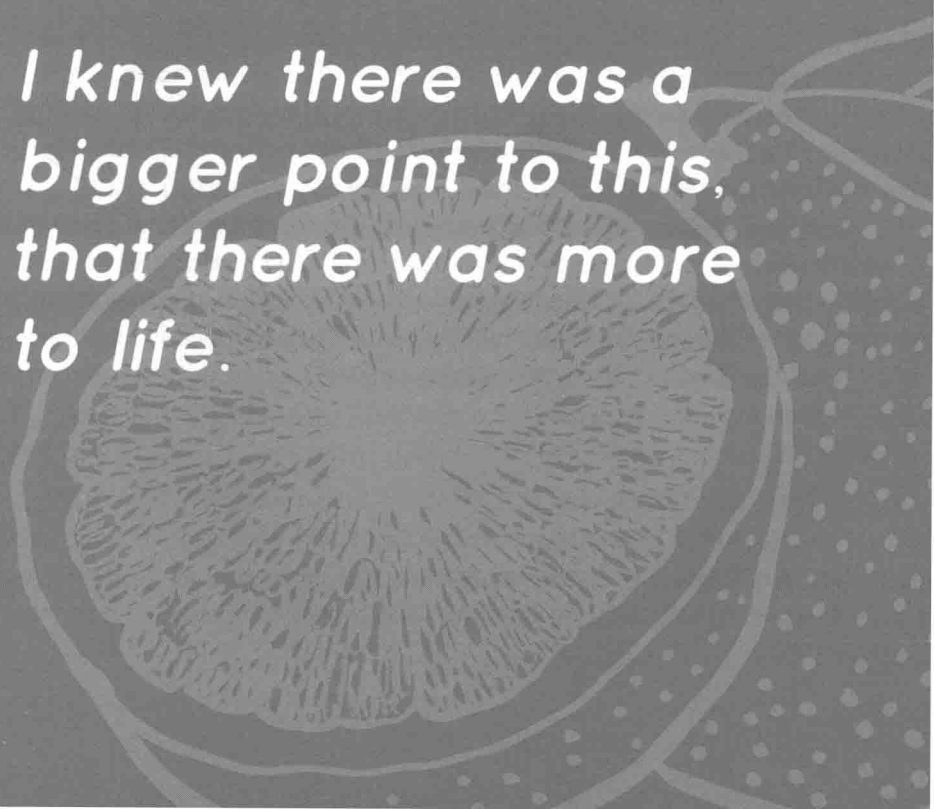
At the age of sixteen years and ten months, I left tech school and could type 100 words per minute. At the time, I didn't realise that this was probably the most useful skill I had learned; everyone on earth was about to switch to computers. I could also handle very basic bookkeeping, which would serve me well later when Boost was without a CFO. The technical drawing class came in handy when building the birdhouse, but also when designing the first Boost Juice stores. You never know what subjects are going to be helpful in the future.

When I left school, my mother made me sit for the Commonwealth Bank test so I could get a job at the bank. She thought working in a bank would be the perfect job for me; I could think of nothing worse. My parents' plan for me was to finish school, get a good stable job, marry well, have lots of babies and live happily ever after. God forbid you not having a child by the time you were 21 (this was Mum's expiration date for starting a family). All I wanted was an adventure. But, to please Mum, I attended the Commonwealth Bank test to see if I could get a job. I doodled my way through the test and I didn't get the job (surprise, surprise).

I would like to be able to say that it was during this time that a wise teacher saw the flicker of an entrepreneurial spirit in me and encouraged me to think higher, but I would be making it up. My childhood was loving, yet simple. I was happy, but somewhere buried deep within, I knew there was a bigger point to this, that there was more to life. I just needed to figure out *where and what* more was.

My childhood was
loving, yet simple.
I was happy, but
somewhere buried
deep within,

*I knew there was a
bigger point to this,
that there was more
to life.*



First job, bad hair and many lessons

After turning my back on a safe bank job, I managed to get a job in advertising. My sister Rae was working for a huge ad agency at the time and she recommended I go to the employment agency she used to get her job. So, in I went, even though I had absolutely no experience. The woman I met with told me she thought she had the perfect job, and with a quick phone call she'd arranged an interview (telling my future boss I was a 'freebie' for him and that she thought I would be perfect, even though I was a bit green). After a ten-minute interview, and answering the question on whether I made good coffee ('Absolutely!'), I got my first job.

I was a very junior, junior (did I mention I was junior?) media assistant at an advertising agency. Advertising in the 1980s was all about short skirts, bad hair and long boozy lunches. Each Friday, lunch started at noon and ended at 5 pm. For a while, the fun in advertising significantly outweighed the boredom of my first job. (And it was a very dull job, mostly just typing little numbers into little squares, which, to be honest, after many liquid lunches, was a challenge.)

The ad agency was very advanced and had some nifty devices to help me out. They had these boxlike things called 'Apple computers' that allowed me to do a spell check (after coming from Knox Secondary College, I thought all my dreams had come true). Three months after I started, they also purchased a brand-new machine where you could insert a photo (or whatever) in one end, and it would print out on a similar machine somewhere else. (If it was a photo, it would print out a bit grainy, but if you looked really hard you could see what it was.) They called this machine a 'fax'. Still, the spirit within wanted more.

One of the many terrific things my mother did was to continually tell her daughters how beautiful they were. Personally, I think a degree of rose-coloured glasses was involved when she looked at us, but it was always nice to hear. While I was at school, I completed a Suzan Johnston modelling course, like my sisters had before me. Twelve months into my new job at the agency, the people who ran the

course called and asked if I wanted to audition for a job promoting Australian-made products. The promotion was to be government-funded and they wanted one girl from every state. Never one to die wondering, I went to the audition—and, to my surprise, was given the role of the Victorian model. So I handed in my resignation and off I went to Brisbane to start my very short-lived stab at modelling. After settling in to Brisbane and meeting all the girls from each state, we started our ‘training’. Unfortunately, however, after about three weeks we heard the government had decided not to go ahead with the promotion—and I found myself out of a job.

Still, with the confidence I gained after getting the role, I thought, *Why not try modelling more seriously?* I had some photos taken and did the advertising rounds with my new photo book. It became fairly clear fairly quickly that my mother’s view and reality did not quite match. Tall and thin I was; Elle Macpherson I was not. However, I did land the in-house modelling job at Adidas and made a *few* front covers—admittedly not the cover of *Vogue*; more like *Greyhound News* and *CB Action* magazine. In the end, modelling was not for me—a fact cemented after an appearance on *The Bert Newton Show*. I was modelling the new Olympic uniforms and went in the complete opposite direction to everyone else, tried to turn, tripped and fell. Not my finest moment and the end of a very short modelling career.

Next, it was back to the wheel of advertising for me with a job as an account coordinator. Multiple lessons were learned in this place. One senior male had octopus arms, which he used for big, long hugs and touches. When I complained to one of the bosses, I was told that I just had to put up with it (got to love the 1980s). The same male spent absolutely no time teaching me anything and kept everything regarding his work to himself. When he was sacked, I was given his accounts to run (Johnson Tiles and the SEC) and found myself way out of my depth. I tried my best to swim, but I simply did not have the experience or knowledge to do an effective job. In the end, the agency lost the accounts and I lost my job.

So there I was—20 years old and jobless—when my friend Deborah asked me if I wanted to go travelling around the world

with her. That was it. That was exactly what I wanted to do! I said I would join her, but the pull of a good party and buying new clothes meant I had very little money saved. When she packed her bags and took off without me, I knew that I had missed out. It was time to get serious so I could investigate my deep-seated knowledge that there was more. I started to work at night for two nightclubs. One was called the Chevron. If you're from Melbourne and over the age of 40, you probably remember that this was the hippest place to be—and I most likely checked your ID. I was hired as 'The Door Bitch' (a term that was not always affectionate). The nightclub life was an eye-opener for a girl from the 'burbs. I saw all sorts of things: girls being taken out the back for a quickie, drugs and gangsters. I worked six nights a week at these clubs and got a job at a little advertising agency during the day. I was too busy working to spend any money, so rather quickly I had saved enough to start my travelling. During this period I was so determined, most nights I worked until 2 am. I remember driving home thinking that if I drove in the centre lane, I might wake up before I hit anything. Young people can be dumb and, once again, I was no exception. (I can only hope my own children are wiser than I was.)

The adventure that was supposed to last three months

At 21, with a blue backpack, \$6000, a plane ticket and a determined look, I set out on my own. I can still see Mum's bewildered face as I kissed her goodbye at the airport. To this day, she still complains that I didn't turn around to wave goodbye like all the rest of the travellers; my sights were firmly set on the future. I was off to Marine County, San Francisco, to work as a camp counsellor during the American spring and summer.

The camp was for children of different backgrounds, some with health challenges. Many were deaf and in one of the sessions all the children were blind. At the camp I taught the kids about trees and nature, and how to swim, make candles and light a camp fire. At the start of the camp I had to take the children through what to do in the event of a fire or an evacuation. I also explained what they

needed to always have at the bottom of their bed—a blanket, shoes and a torch. I asked at the end if anyone had any questions. A blind child lifted her hand and asked what the torch was for. I said to see in the dark, which clearly would not help this particular child; she laughed her head off at this, as did the rest of the class. Obviously, they had played this joke before, but the experience was such a great learning curve for me on how people are people. Not only did I learn a bit of American Sign Language, but I also learned patience and appreciation for what I had as I watched these children with extreme physical challenges overcome daily obstacles.

When the camp ended, I travelled with some of the camp counsellors I had befriended. We travelled up and down the California coast, hiked the Grand Canyon, sat by Lake Tahoe and eventually ended up in New York. From there, we flew to London. I found the city a bit too depressing—grey skies, little houses and lots of rain. I contacted an agency and quickly scored a job as a nanny in Le Cateau-Cambrésis, a little village in France, about two hours from Paris. It was the birthplace of Matisse and the site of much fighting during World War I.

I arrived in the village and couldn't find anyone who spoke English (or at least chose to speak it to me), except the woman I worked for. She was, not to put too fine a point on it, a cow. I was hired to look after her three children and ended up in the basement doing all the ironing and most of the cleaning; I felt like Cinderella, without my Prince Charming in the distance. She wouldn't talk to me for days on end; at other times, she would shout at me for mispronouncing the little French I knew. The kids were lovely—or at least I think they were. They spoke no English and I no French; perhaps they actually said awful things to me. I will never know. Overall, it was a horrible situation, but at the time I couldn't see many alternatives. All I could think was that I should give it my best shot. And sticking with the job was good grounding in finding solutions to problems; when you travel you have to rely on your own resources.

I had been playing Cinderella for the evil French woman for a few months when a friend from Oz called me. She was visiting her father in Munich for two weeks and invited me to meet up with