

Jenny Reed's Story

Written by Angela Newman

Imagine white sandy beaches, crystal clear waters and a warm Caribbean breeze coupled with unparalleled value, impeccable service and delicious cuisine with breathtaking scenery as you travel by train through the mountains of Alaska or even taking the perfect photograph of the sun setting in Venice. That's exactly how Jenny Reed entices readers on her website at www.OurCruisePlanner.com. Her business specializes in cruise vacations and she can set you up wherever you would like to go around the world.

Jenny describes herself as a 'great' student in high school and was fortunate enough to go to college on a full scholarship. Because of her love for school and her ability to excel in education she found college to be fairly easy. Shortly after graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi, she started her marketing career at Walt Disney World and began climbing her pink ladder. After working for large corporations in the marketing field, Jenny decided it was time to take the plunge and open her own travel agency. She purchased her travel franchise one month prior to September 11, 2001 at the age of 30. She didn't think it would be possible to own a business of her own at her age, but it has worked out very well for her.

Opening a travel agency around the tragic event of 9/11 - presented a whole new host of challenges for the travel industry that no one could have predicted. Jenny says, *"I learned so much about the travel industry and owning a small business during that challenging time that I have continued to apply the principals to my business today."* Working for so many years in larger corporations that seemed to have endless marketing budgets at times, Jenny found herself searching for ways to market her new company on a much smaller scale. On marketing ideas, Jenny says, *"When you start your own business, it becomes pennies on the dollar. What I found out is that you have to think outside the box and be more creative. Word-of-mouth and referrals from my clients has been the mainstay of my business."* And Jenny, I'm sure many of the Pink Ladders readers can relate to that statement with their own businesses. Business owners helping to support others in business is a great thing by spreading the word and recommending products and services to each other's network of friends and

acquaintances and customer base. The power of networks is a wonderful thing and no one knows that better than Jenny.

“Networking built my business! I believe getting your name out there as a small business is the key particularly in a competitive industry such as travel and recently I have found social networking to be a key component in my marketing plan.” It’s not enough just to have a network to tap into for selling a product or service; the product or service must bring enough value to your customers to keep them long term. Jenny is, *“constantly looking for new ideas to build business while making sure to take care of the loyal clients who have gotten me where I am today.”*

But she isn’t all work and no play. She loves to go walking outside or exercise because it helps her clear her head and relax, reflect and re-focus, which now is more important than ever since she is a first time mom. She is finding that running a business and being a mom can be challenging at times and means having to adjust schedules and priorities each day to allow for business and family time. *“I have found that organization and time management more than ever play an important daily role in my life! I wouldn’t trade the flexibility of my job as it allows me to spend time with my family and be on my own schedule.”*

It has been 7+ years since Jenny started her own travel business and absolutely loves what she does because of the value and excitement she brings to her customers everyday. She remains persistent, enthusiastic and as one would expect from Jenny, always educating herself to become more knowledgeable in her industry and business in order to provide better service to her customers. She has won many awards and received accolades over the years. She says it best with, *“It is the personal satisfaction (even on a challenging day) that I am doing what I love that makes me proud. Most importantly I am proud of my family and being a mom.”*

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If you are planning a vacation, land or cruise, Jenny Reed will be happy to help you out at [www.ourcruiseplanner.com](http://www.ourcruiseplanner.com).