

Monica SMITH

Owner/Operator
The Pink Monogram

You could call Monica Smith a lot of things: mother of four, educator, salesperson, craftswoman. One thing you can't call her is a slouch. Up at five a.m., even on weekends, the entrepreneur and mastermind behind the Pink Monogram is hard at work multi-tasking.

It wasn't too long ago that multi-tasking meant she was teaching an elementary school class, volunteering for the Junior League, and cheering her heart out on the sidelines of her son's baseball games. No matter where she was, though, she was always stylishly sporting some clever clogs with a custom-stitched monogram across the top.

"People would always ask me where I got them," she recalls, laughing out loud about those days she was busy sewing in her basement. But as more people started demanding their own pair, Smith knew she had something bigger on her hands. Through trial and error she hit on a formula that was just right and boom – the Pink Monogram was in business.

A few tactical moves on Smith's part sent that little business straight out of the basement and into the stratosphere. Taking her clogs and accessories to the gift market in Atlanta got her the first 20 accounts. Going back each season and working that show saw that number shoot up to 600 last summer.

She now has a website that offers over 5,000 products, and a storefront right off Augusta Road that serves as a retail boutique, a warehouse, the manufacturing center, and the offices of her 14 employees. Those employees include her husband who came on board with full-time accounting and invoicing responsibilities.

Despite the explosive growth, Smith continues a very hands-on approach and is committed to excellent customer service.

Though the three years she spent working out of her home and putting out 200 boxes a day on her porch for UPS pick up are receding into fond memory, she still recalls thinking her neighbors must have thought she was crazy. "They laughed at me," she says. Meanwhile, as the orders continue to pour in, helped by coverage on radio, in major magazines and the *New York Times*, Monica Smith can bet that the last hearty laugh will be her own.