

## Business kept all in the family

By Barbara Correa, Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 07/06/2008 09:34:46 PM PDT

When you're in business with your relatives, family time is all the time.

Adena Surabian, founder and president of Nature's Baby Organics, makes her first phone call to her father and business partner about 6:30 every morning and the last one at 9 at night. And in between, she and Phil Wolvek are in regular contact about their hair- and skin-care company.

Then on Sundays, the Surabian and Wolvek clans gather at a family compound in Woodland Hills, which also serves as the headquarters for the six-year-old company.

All told, eight relatives work for Nature's Baby Organics.

An uncle is the company attorney; a brother does the books. Surabian's husband runs product expos, and her stepmother, Beverly Wolvek, oversees the sales force.

Her 90-year-old grandfather handled the shipping until recently. All of the grandchildren are pictured on the product packaging.

"We are all A personality types," said Surabian, who lives in Simi Valley with her husband and two daughters. "We have a rule that everyone gets fired at least once a week so no one gets a big head.

"When we do get together as a family every Sunday, my father can be Big Papa to our girls and a father to me. Although he still tries to send me to my room when I disagree with him."

Surabian's entrepreneurial spirit runs in the family.

Phil Wolvek once owned a company that made sunglasses, and more recently owned The Privacy Connection, a surveillance and security equipment retailer.

He also owned several Total Woman gym franchises.

While still attending California State University, Northridge, Surabian started a housecleaning business.

And after she married and had her children, she launched a baby-proofing company.

And in 2002, when one of her infants broke out with severe skin allergies, she contacted a chemist who devised a chemical-free shampoo.

That was the start of Nature's Baby Organics, a brand that has evolved to include shampoo and body wash, diaper creams and chest rubs.

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

dailynews.com

The products are carried by more 2,000 stores in the U.S., including Whole Foods, Babies R Us and The Vitamin Shoppe, and in 700 stores in Korea, Japan, China and Turkey.

Surabian said the company become profitable in the past year, with more than \$1 million in sales.

Surabian persuaded her father to join Nature's Baby in 2005, and she credits him for the company's success in the international marketplace. Among his primary duties is traveling the world and meeting with distributors in other countries.

"There are still men out there that will not do business with women," Surabian said. "I needed that male figure to come in and get us to that next level."

Wolvek said he realized how much his daughter really did need him after they flew to Japan together to try to land a client.

At the end of the long trip, Surabian's first extended time away from her children, she started crying in the airport before the flight home.

"I didn't know what to do with her," said Wolvek. "I told her, I am not traveling with you again. ... Adena is fabulous as a formulator, figuring out what should be in a product or what should not.

"She doesn't do well with travel."

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™