

# Peter Alexander

## *The King of Pyjamas*

Meet a man who knows what people like in bed! Peter Alexander has been Australia's 'King of Pyjamas' for 30 years, and his well known brand is hailed, worn and coveted by anyone and everyone.

Peter Alexander is a true entrepreneur. Founder of Peter Alexander Sleepwear, Peter grew the company from a single man operation on a living room table to an internationally recognised sleepwear business and brand name.

At age 24, having worked for four years in the retail industry, Peter decided it was time to be his own boss. Identifying a gap in the market when his female friends were unable to find comfortable women's pyjamas that weren't flannelette nighties or lacy lingerie styles, Peter decided to establish his own business.

With the support of his parents, Peter began making women's pajamas for the wholesale market, working from his mother's living room table. He worked like this for four years and in the early days was the only person working in the company. When the phone rang, in order to make the business seem bigger, Peter would pretend to be someone else.

During this time, many people tried to discourage Peter because he had no formal training and no business experience. However when a department store cancelled an order for 2000 pairs of pyjamas, Peter's biggest set back became his biggest opportunity. In desperation, Peter put a mail order advertisement in *Cleo* magazine. The response was overwhelming and Peter was flooded with 6000 orders from one advertisement. Since then, he hasn't looked back.

Following this success the business started to grow and attract media attention. Peter was dubbed the 'Pyjama King' by the Australian Media and the nickname has stuck to this day! His humorous, quirky and playful personality shines through in every collection.

Each new collection has a unique theme and is inspired either by Peter's travels around the world, from Paris & New York to African Safaris or exciting design collaborations with Disney and Sesame Street just to name a few.

Voted the least likely to succeed at school, Peter's teacher suggested he leave and go to TAFE. Peter didn't like being told what to do and decided to stay at school anyway. He successfully



completed Year 12 and says this is what gave him the confidence to believe in himself and trust in his own abilities and decisions.

Peter's only regret about his education is that he didn't do a business course. "As a result I didn't make any money from my business for seven years because I didn't know what I was doing" he says.

Believing in the importance of setting high goals, Peter says people with high goals have far more chance of achieving them, than people with lower goals or no goals at all.

For Peter, the most satisfying thing about running his own business was being able to take both the blame and credit for his work. He says "When you work for someone else you often get blamed for something that's not your fault, and when you deserve credit, you don't get it. When you work for yourself, you only have yourself to blame if you mess up and you can also take the credit."

Having felt he had taken the business as far as he could, Peter sold Peter Alexander Sleepwear to Just Jeans for an undisclosed sum. At the time of sale, the business was making \$6 million per year and growing by 40% each year. Part of Peter's arrangement with Just Jeans was that he continued to run Peter Alexander sleepwear for five years.

Peter was always an animal lover, even from a young age. But it was Penny who ignited Peter's passion for animal welfare. Peter is an ambassador for the RSPCA, constantly thinking of ways to raise money and awareness to help all creatures great and small. One day he walked past an adorable little dachshund puppy in need of home. That was the day he found Penny who grew to become the beloved and iconic logo of the brand. As you walk through the pink doors today, you will see Penny almost everywhere, from the pyjamas to the gift packaging and even Penny dog shaped door handles!

Over the last 34 years, Peter Alexander Sleepwear has grown with leaps and bounds from a pure catalogue based business to a multi-channel business with over 140 retail stores across Australia and New Zealand.

Peter Alexander remains the Creative Director of the brand.

[VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE](#) 