

Entrepreneur takes on heat with cool idea

By KERI SMITH / kesmith@ajc.com

"Just because you're hot doesn't mean you can't be hot" — that's Lesley Hatfield's credo. She's the CEO and founder of Night Sweatz, a company that designs pajamas, loungewear and underwear with a moisture-management material — something that has found a niche among grateful women in menopause, as well as athletes and others for whom heat is an issue. The Suwanee resident came up with the concept about five years ago while running with a friend who complained of night sweats. Hatfield's entrepreneurial spirit took over, and the brand is now sold nationwide. From menopause to Oprah, Hatfield shares the scoop on Night Sweatz.

Q: How did Night Sweatz launch into the retail world?

A: We had a booth at AmericasMart in Atlanta in April of 2004. A couple of days after the show, Susan Nethero from Intimacy called, said she had heard of the product and asked me to come meet her. We met, she tried the products herself, and Intimacy became our first Atlanta store. That was huge.

Q: Who can benefit from Night Sweatz?

A: Our niche market, originally, was women from 48 to 60 going through menopause and experiencing hormone [fluctuation]. It's also great for women who are going through chemotherapy, as night sweats are a big side effect. But

Night Sweatz are good for everyone, really. They were great when I was pregnant because my hormones were changing, and they're also good for young athletes who know the benefits of this moisture-management technology.

Q: Are there any new designs on the way?

A: We just launched the underwear line and travel essentials, and we're currently working on a men's line. That will probably be a summer launch.

Q: You've been on "The Big Idea," and the Montel Williams show recently contacted you for an upcoming show. Have you booked any other shows?

A: Before my mom died of Lou Gehrig's disease in January, she had to write a lot because her speech was affected.

One day she passed me the grocery list, and on the back she had written "Oprah, 6 months." I threw the sheet of paper away and later got up in the middle of the night to dig it out of the trash.

Now it's framed in my office. So my thing is, when am I going to be on "Oprah"?

Q: You want to be on her show pretty badly?

A: Well, five months after my mom died, Night Sweatz was featured in O magazine, so I think, if you want something, you've gotta put it out there.



KERI SMITH / Staff

Lesley Hatfield, the founder and owner of Night Sweatz, has been on "The Big Idea." She's hoping that "Oprah" will call.