

Entrepreneur Tickles Kitties into Sexy Success

SAN FRANCISCO — By creating her own trendy euphemism for masturbation — along with a line of toys, books and lubes for newbies — Tickle Kitty president Sadie Allison has launched a business that's taken off like a Pocket Rocket.

And to think it all started with a photocopied masturbation pamphlet in high school.

"I was the uninhibited girl who didn't have a problem talking about sex," Allison said. "I would spark up conversations with my girlfriends, and I discovered that many just didn't know how to masturbate."

So Allison became the Johnny Appleseed of sex, handing out tips on self-pleasure to her girlfriends. Since then, her high school "major" has become a lifelong mission.

Allison's first book, *Tickle Your Fancy: A Woman's Guide to Sexual Self-Pleasure*, which she self-published, was aimed at women just beginning to masturbate. After blossoming from an initial run of 2,000 copies to over 60,000 in 18 months and garnering 2001's Best Sexuality Independent Publisher's Award, Allison recently learned that women weren't the only ones reading it.

"Half the audience is men," she acknowledged. "They see it as a peek into the other team's playbook."

Allison owes much of her success to hard work. After forming Tickle Kitty, Inc., she attended the tradeshows, worked the talk shows, dazzled the distributors and created a stunning Website.

"I started selling a few of the toys that rocked people's worlds after they read my book," she told AVN. "That synergy quickly paid off."



Sadie Allison



Now she's applied her business model to a second book, *Toygasms! — The Insider's Guide to Sex Toys and Techniques* and raised her Website offerings to over 200 items to accommodate the demand.

"I also specialize in creating kits that cater to personal tastes and seasonal events," she said. "The kits not only make a tantalizing gift, they make me a tantalizing guest, which allows me to promote them on TV and radio."

Some distributors and home party companies, attracted to her books' "101" approach to novelties, now make Allison's books required reading for all new employees.

"The girls love *Toygasms!* because they learn how to know themselves a little bit better, along with ways to sell bedroom accessories and novelties," said Chris Cicchimelli,

vice president of Pure Romance, a home party business that requires new distributors to read *Toygasms!*

Together, Allison's books passed the 100,000 copies-sold mark in 2003.

Allison's latest products for her growing and loyal market include "a line of sexy apparel called Tickle Kitty Wear, along with luxurious pleasure lubricants called Slippery Kitty," she said.

Slippery Kitty lubricants are water-based and come in two flavors: plain (Au Naturel) and strawberry (Strawberry Lust). Au Naturel is FDA-approved for internal use, a huge benefit for women, because 90 percent of lubes sold today do not carry the FDA approval.

"We designed the packaging to be fun, inviting, sexy and sassy," Allison said. "It's pretty much the same spirit as everything we do."

— Scott Ross

Tickle Kitty, Inc. is located at 3701 Sacramento St. #107, San Francisco, CA 94118. For distributor inquiries, contact Allison at sadie@ticklekitty.com or (415) 876-3100.

