

TORONTO LIFE

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The Trinity-Bellwoods cult, the failed exorcism and the girl who died P.74

DESIGNER CO-WORKING SPACES P.99

I finally quit the sex trade after 10 long years P.164

Hidden
gems

THE ULTIMATE NEIGHBOURHOOD RANKINGS

The
best places
to buy a
condo

The
top-rated
school
zones

Our (mostly) scientific survey
of 140 Toronto 'hoods

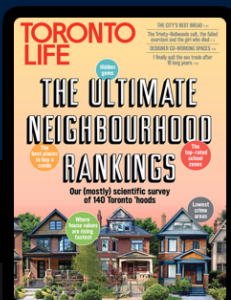
Where
house values
are rising
fastest

Lowest
crime
areas





KNOWS
NO
EQUAL



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THIS CITY

The Upstart

Toronto's boldest innovators on what they're making and how it works



LILY TSE

Founder and CEO of **Think Dirty**, an app that educates consumers about ingredients in beauty products.

COMPANY HQ: King and Berkeley
FOUNDED: 2012
EMPLOYEES: 7
USERS: 2.5 million



HOW IT WORKS:

"We're essentially Shazam for personal care and beauty products. You can scan any barcode and the app gives you a breakdown of the allergens, chemicals and possible health implications, then suggests cleaner alternatives where applicable."



EUREKA MOMENT:

"After my mom was diagnosed with cancer, I started doing research on the possible causes. I was shocked to learn that products I use every day contain carcinogens. The beauty industry isn't regulated like the food and drug industries. At the time, companies weren't even required to list ingredients online. I realized we should be paying attention to what we put on our skin."



HOW MUCH YOU SPENT INITIALLY:

"In the early stages, I bootstrapped the company with freelance income and a developer. We got a \$5,000 grant after a pitch competition at George Brown, which helped us get some extra leverage."

YOUR TURNING POINT:

"Right after we launched, I got a call asking if I wanted to be interviewed on *Global News*. I was too excited to sleep that night and I didn't have time for a shower before the interview."

YOUR BIG-TIME BACKERS:

"MaRS, CFC Ideaboo and Ryerson DMZ."



THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED:

"Always plan for Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong will go wrong."



THE WORST ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED:

"You need to 'think big.'"

TECH JARGON YOU HATE:

"All of it, but the worst is 'thought leadership'—it's such a buzzword and really doesn't mean anything significant."

YOUR TECH ROLE MODEL:

"Sara Blakely, the creator of Spanx. She started her company with very little money and now she's one of the world's youngest self-made female billionaires."



COOLEST THING IN YOUR OFFICE:

"A head massager."



APP YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:

"I use Headspace every day. It's a guided meditation app that helps keep my mind clear."



YOUR GO-TO OFFICE ATTIRE:

"I always have my sunglasses and a backpack."

IF YOU WEREN'T RUNNING A START-UP:

"I'd still have a business, but it would probably be related to dogs, tech or mental health."

PHOTOGRAPHS: TSE COURTESY OF THINK DIRTY; BLAKELY BY GETTY IMAGES; MASSAGER BY ISTOCK

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