

# Sportees Active Wear

Whitehorse

Started: 1984

Contact: Andrea Rodger

Sportees Active Wear manufactures and retails sportswear stretch clothing and polar fleece products. Andrea works full-time and has one part-time employee. Andrea's husband, Alan Thomson, does the accounting.



**Getting started:** When running the local gymnastics club in the early 1980s, Andrea learned it was difficult to buy gymnasts' stretch wear in the Yukon so she decided to start making it. She sold the first stretch fabric item she made and began slowly building her business without any external financing. She later added polarfleece items which are now the biggest part of the business.

**Key to success:** Andrea ensures people get what they want in terms of fit, product and colour choice and customer satisfaction has been the best form of advertising. She believes starting small and growing with her business also aided her success.

**Lessons learned:** Early on in the business, few people were turned away no matter what time of day they came by. Setting hours, getting an answering machine, and being confident that people would come back helped Andrea to set boundaries between life and work. It is a challenge to get people to accept that her products are the same value as southern manufactured items. Sponsoring local sport teams is one way she increases the profile of the quality of her products.

**Future of business:** Sportees is planning to do more mail order business with Alaska as a key target market. Andrea plans to upgrade the current basic catalogue and develop a website. She also wants to increase her use of cards which have photos of her products and separate price lists as they allow flexibility in marketing.