



[Shabby Apple](#) is a woman-owned company that makes beautiful, comfortable, wearable (you know what I mean, don't you??) dresses. Blissfully Domestic CEO Allison Worthington and I have the privilege of wearing some of their pieces at the upcoming BlissDom conference. **Join us at BlissDom to see Shabby Apple in action!** I recently had the chance to interview Shabby Apple's owner/designer, Athelia Wooley, on how she and her business partner Emily McCormick go about the business of fashion design. Here's a look into the mind of two designing women.

Jenny Rapson: How did you two meet?

Athelia Woolley: Emily and I have been friends since high school. We first got along well because of our mutual love of fashion!

JR: Do you have a background in clothing design, or was this just something you decided you wanted to do and learned how?



AW: I studied art and design in college and learned about clothing through some costume-making endeavors I had while dancing in college.

JR: Tell us a little bit of what goes into designing one of your four yearly lines. How long does the process take from start to finish?

AW: Usually at least six months. First we have to conceptualize what we want. From there, a drawing has to be made, then an actual sample. Once we have a sample made, we make changes to it and have another sample made. **Often we have 5-8 samples of the same dress made to make sure that it is perfect.** Next we have a pattern made and purchase fabric. Finally, the pattern must be graded, meaning changed for each size. This is all for one dress. When conceptualizing a line, we try to think what dresses go well together and what the line actually needs to make it versatile.

JR: How would you describe Shabby Apple's style in one to three words?

AW: Subtly feminine.

JR: What inspires you when you are designing a line, or where do you look to for inspiration?

AW: I like feminine details (we have lots of ruffles and ruching in our clothing) and something that makes the dress just a little bit 'different'. We both also think a lot about how to make a dress flattering on many types of women with many types of bodies. We really try to design for lots of women, not just super-models.



JR: What do you want women to know before they try on one of your dresses?

AW: Emily and I both felt that in starting Shabby Apple, we really wanted to help other women. Thus we give a portion of our profits to businesswomen in developing countries. **I want women to know that by wearing Shabby Apple, they are helping other women!**

JR: How many people does it take to keep a business like Shabby Apple running?

AW: We have 8 employees, 7 interns and over 50 contractors.

JR: Is there a wonderful, exciting, “career success moment” you’d like to tell us about? An achievement you are really proud of?

AW: Early last December, we hit our goal of funding micro-credit loans to over 500 women in India and Southeast Asia. I was thrilled!

JR: Wow, that is amazing and must be so rewarding! What’s the most challenging aspect of owning your own business?

AW: Learning when to take a break. I took my first actual vacation in two years over Thanksgiving. It was needed!

JR: What fashion faux pas drives you crazy?

AW: Good question! *Too much*. Earrings, bracelets, belt, necklace, hair scarf. **Sometimes when women wear to much ‘stuff’ it detracts from their real beauty.**