

Starting A Fashion Business.

Starting a fashion business is usually not as easy as it seems to appear. We all probably guess all it has to do with is the designing and creating of the designs aspect but it undeniably is actually more than that.

From deciding what fashion business to embark on, to the target customers, to the choice of means of production, starting a fashion business is an intense, all-encompassing experience. Below I have taken my time to touch all aspects of what it entails to start a fashion business.

You'll have to oversee all aspects of the business, not just the creative parts, for this reason, you must think of yourself as a CEO first. Not to forget that logistics, supply chain, delivery and quality control are critical parts of growing a business. Start off with deciding and defining the kind of business you wish to create.

To really succeed with the business, you need to put into consideration the fact that you have to craft your business concept cautiously and carefully, understanding the wants of your proposed customers, being unique with your designs and bringing something different and new to the market. Even as you've carefully selected and made right choices suitable for your business, you also need to identify who the competitors are, how they're growing, to what extent they're growing so you can have another idea of what to do differently. You might want to find a



business partner, advisor or mentor that you can trust to help you manage your business, build it and help you achieve more and do better.

Also never forget to make use of your network of contacts such as friends, classmates or family to help you access resources that may otherwise be out of your reach. Test your business potentials by showing them for constructive criticism. To make sure of the constructive criticism, show only those you trust to give honest opinions as well as the fashion savvy ones who understand garment and fabric construction.

You'll need to get the attention of buyers to be successful, your brand should be known for you to make sales. To make sure of this, we have tools like the social media to help let buyers know your brand exists. Really, you can't do without internet. So register a domain and create a website which will serve as

a tool to advertise and market your business as well as to interact with your proposed customers.

Always support your business with a marketing and communication plan. Even as you market your business, you need to have plans to take care of your sales and distribution, not forgetting the delivery.

You must not forget to register your trademark to help against piracy, intellectual theft and brand infringement. Register your business itself legally and you should create a separate bank account for the business.

Importantly, note that you must manage your cash and resources wisely. If it is necessary for you to get someone to manage and put the accounts to record, please do and make sure to put someone trustworthy in charge. You need to have raw materials and sufficient to meet demands.



TOLA ONIGBANJO

INTERVIEW

A British-born Nigerian entrepreneur who has a passion for women and empowerment. Her event, Women4Africa which is one of the most successful black events in the UK was birthed out of her lifelong passion to see women honoured and celebrated for their good works and contribution to the society.

Can we meet you?

My name is Tola Onigbanjo. I reside with my family in the UK. My late parents are Nigerians. My parents gave birth to me in the UK then took me back to Nigeria and then brought me back to the UK at age 5 to start school. This was what they did with four out of the six of their children so I have lived in UK all my life really but I try to visit Nigeria at least once every year. I understand Yoruba very well and cook 90% of our Nigerian food so

as British as people see me, I'm Nigerian at heart.

How was growing up?

I grew up with my Dad as my Mum stayed in Nigeria to look after her own Mum (my grandmother) but visited us often for months at a time. My dad was very strict and I mean very strict so I was no stranger to all of the Nigerian punishments like hands up and eyes closed facing the wall or stooing down with one foot raised and only one finger on the floor and my other

hand behind my back. (Laughs) I won't say I was a naughty child but I did get into trouble quite often.

What gave you an edge in the UK?

I schooled in UK and grew up here from a young age so I would have to say that is what probably gave me the edge.

What is your beauty secret?

To walk in LOVE continually. Don't keep malice or bear grudges. I believe it is what keeps



Photography @o_oseyitis for @kndmedia
 Outfits @LuxuryByFeyi
 Hair @Carrissahair
 Makeup @alali_makeupartist

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you looking young and youthful.

How are successful African women perceived in the UK?

It depends, but I find that as we grow as professionals wider society are embracing and respecting us more. This is driven internally by the hunger and tenacity of more African women to excel.

What inspired the Women4africa movement?

Women4Africa was inspired by my desire to see the ordinary woman who is doing extraordinary things celebrated and elevated to a wider platform encouraging the younger generation to aspire to do great things too. My husband is a Pan-Africanist and it was his stand point that really gave the Africa dimension to women4Africa. So I guess this was how women4africa came about.

You have done a lot on women empowerment and development is that just a passion or a purpose?

I would say it is a

combination of both. I am passionate about my purpose which is to elevate and celebrate women.

What's your take on the increasing development of the women supporting women movement?

I love it but if I could rephrase it I would change it to read 'Women supporting All Woman' simply because it is easy for us to support our friends and family as we all have our close circles and cliques but we need to extend that support to those we may not know personally but know of them and what they do.

You held the 6th Edition of women4africa this year. How did that go and how would you quantify the progress Women4africa has made over the years?

One of our goals is to maintain our Pan African reach, each year we measure how we penetrate and connect with the diversity of African women. Some are non-black some born in the diaspora. As long as we maintain this reach and we keep intact our judging criteria we are happy with

progress being made.

What has been the most challenging experience in terms of organizing the annual Award ceremony?

Managing large numbers of people and making sure they have a great experience. Paying attention to detail is key here, but the challenge is making sure the entire team run with this and at the same time making sure our guests understand the purpose of the awards.

What is the one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

For those who don't know is that I rap very well. I have loved rap music from a young age and I use to rap for fun.

What advice do you have for the young and developing ladies?

My advice to young and developing ladies is "If you believe it you can achieve it". The key to achieving is self-belief. You have to believe in yourself and your abilities. Believe YOU have what it takes and go for it.

Using Social Media to promote your Fashion Brand.

It is a known fact now that the social media is a great advertising tool as we have more people's attention on their phone's screen

It is important to not miss out on this seemingly cheap yet reliable means of advertisement as well as misuse it. To make things easier, below is an outline on how you can use the social media to promote your brand.

First of all, you need to own an account across all social media network of your choice for your business. We have lots of social media platforms good for business promotions, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. After owning an account, it does not end there as you need to be extremely active to serve your followership. Post interesting yet relevant content aside your product or service but can be related to it. Ask conversation-starter questions. Most people enjoy sharing their opinions, so ask them about topics that are relevant to your business



and interesting to them.

Avoid syndicated messages or captions. Humans easily get bored having to read through the same thing over and over as there's nothing new to interest them. To avoid this, use similar language but be sure to change up words as your advertise your product or service on different sites. Always reflect the tone of each network. When necessary, communicate with your followers in trending slangs, memes, jokes or language.

Regularly, post content reflecting your personality so your fans can have a connection with you. Enhance the rewards for virtual check-ins and referrals. Usually, people like to win freebies, so use

this to get their attention by giving tasks to be completed to win these rewards. Periodically and only when possible, provide access to offers and special deals on products or services.

On social networks that enable sponsored posts, make use of sponsored posts and follow the statistics to know and make sure of its efficiency. Use high quality images and videos as this shows your credibility. If affordable, get social media influencers use your product or service and post it on their pages. Post these contents on your page as well.

Basically, consistent quality is the secret to promoting any business on social media.

