

At 23, She Started a Side Hustle for ‘Quick Money.’ Now the Business Brings in More Than \$1 Million a Month – and Boasts Celebrity Fans.

This Side Hustle Spotlight Q&A features Katherine Watercutter, founder and CEO of activewear brand Gold Hinge. Watercutter started the business as a side hustle when she was 23. Today, Gold Hinge counts celebrities including Kristin Cavallari and Kaitlyn Bristowe among its fans. The brand went viral during TikTok’s “RushTok” trend, garnering 40 million hashtag impressions and sales in the multi-millions.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Gold Hinge. Katherine Watercutter.

What was your day job when you started your side hustle, and why were you interested in entrepreneurship?

I was a sales representative for a distribution company working with kitchen and bath designers around Indiana (I studied interior architecture and design). I have always been an entrepreneur since I was young; you have to have that as a part of you to be willing to take risks.

When did you start your side hustle, and where did you find the inspiration for it?

I got the idea for it in 2018 and started it in January 2019. There really was no inspiration – I thought it could make me

quick money. But I was wrong about that.

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What were some of the first steps you took to get your side hustle off the ground?

I started a Shopify store and created a website and an Instagram.

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced while building your side hustle, and how did you navigate them?

One of the biggest challenges early on was cash flow. I didn’t receive funding from outside investors and started with very little to invest. So there were a few times where I almost had to close the doors because of cash flow. It taught me a very valuable lesson early on because businesses often fail the first year when they run out of money. I navigated that by getting a line of credit from the bank and a business credit card, which helped with funds, but I also almost maxed those out. It took a lot of discipline, learning and watching the numbers to navigate this challenge until I saw more consistent growth and revenue.

How long did it take you to see consistent monthly revenue? How much did the side hustle earn?

The side hustle didn’t earn anything. It wasn’t until a few years into making it my full-time job, dedicating 80-90 hours a week, that I actually started making money, and I didn’t pay myself until about 2021. It is hard to say how long it took for consistent revenue because it wasn’t until the spring or summer of 2020 that revenue took off – but later that year, it dropped again. It is safe to say that 2021 was the year that revenue was actually “consistent” enough to feel safe where debt was paid off, and things were headed in the right

direction. So that would be a total of about three years (two years all-in on my business).

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You've since turned your side hustle into a full-time business. What does revenue look like now?

During 2023, we went from hitting six-figure months to seven-figure months, and our total revenue hit eight figures.

What's your favorite thing about running your own business?

Being in charge of my day-to-day and future.

What's your advice for others hoping to start a successful side hustle of their own?

My advice may sound as cheesy as it gets, but don't give up. People in this day and age are impatient and sometimes quick to give up when they feel like they keep failing. There were a few times when I thought I hit "rock bottom" and exhausted all options, but I found a way around it. I felt like I was failing consistently for three years, and I know many would have given up by then, but business is all about problem-solving.

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