

He Started a Salty Backyard Side Hustle That Out-Earned His Full-Time Job and Now Makes Over \$1 Million a Year: 'Take the Leap'

This Side Hustle Spotlight Q&A features Kyle Needham. In 2011, he co-founded Oyster Party with Samuel Keller. The company serves private parties, weddings and corporate events by shucking oysters on the half shell, popping up raw bars and seafood towers, providing caviar bumps and more. Oyster Party hosts pop-up events at Smorgasburg, in Manhattan's FiDi neighborhood and the Hudson Valley and has expanded beyond New York to the Tri-State area.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Oyster Party. Kyle Needham.

What did your day-to-day look like before you started your side hustle?

Before I started Oyster Party, I worked for a wholesale seafood company in Manhattan and retail fish markets in Columbus Circle and Grand Central.

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What inspired you to start your side hustle?

I started shucking oysters at parties throughout Brooklyn. My love for oysters really took off then because I had more access to them and began eating them regularly. The enthusiasm

that people showed when they would eat them after I would shuck them was palpable and continues to be to this day.

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

I threw a party with oysters and lobster rolls at a bar in Williamsburg in 2011. We ordered 1,000 oysters and made 50 lobster rolls. We sold out of lobster rolls within an hour and oysters by the end of the night. That's when I knew we were on to something. After that, I applied to Smorgasburg and started an S corp.

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

The biggest challenges were finding new ways to connect with customers and clients, especially during the colder months. We tried the grassroots way, which was one customer at a time. We ended up selling at a lot of events. We were always confident in the quality of our products, and slowly, people started to appreciate what we did, which turned into more business.

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Image Credit: Courtesy of Oyster Party. Needham and his co-founder Samuel Keller.

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

We were lucky as we started to see a consistent monthly revenue right away. We were motivated by our passion, so we reached out to different bars, markets and corporate clients. We were earning more than we did working at our full-time jobs.

When did you know it was time to take the backyard side hustle full-time?

I realized within a year that this business would only be a side hustle if I didn't commit to it 100%. It was definitely scary, but once I quit my job, I saw an immediate increase in revenue as I was able to dedicate a lot more of my time to growing the business.

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What does growth and/or revenue look like today?

We currently have about 15 people on our team, and we operate all over the Northeast. Our yearly sales are over \$1 million, which we're very proud of.

What do you enjoy most about running this business?

Being able to do something I love and that I'm passionate about. It never fails to bring a smile to my face after someone eats an oyster and tells me a story about their first oyster or recalls a memory of eating oysters with their family at a particular place and time.

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What's your advice for others hoping to turn their side hustles into successful businesses of their own?

Take the leap and believe in yourself. Trust yourself to make the right decisions and know what's best for your business. Stay curious and not complacent!

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/his-side-hustle-out-earned-his-day-job-now-makes-1m-a-year/473411>