

A leap of faith: The secret to building a jewellery brand

Making the decision to leave the security of a reliable monthly income to go self-employed can be a step into the unknown. Carrie Elizabeth Dennahy, founder and CEO of Carrie Elizabeth Jewellery, decided to take that leap when she saw a gap in the market for more affordable, unique and well-crafted jewellery.

After travelling the world as a fashion and accessories buyer for over a decade, Dennahy knew her knowledge of design and craftsmanship could create ethical stunning and affordable jewellery.

Fast forward six years and Dennahy now leads a successful business with revenue currently up over 150% year-on-year. Passionate about building a business that works for life today, her team that has worked remotely long before the demands of the pandemic.

So, what does it take to embrace the leap into self-employment and building a brand? Here are Dennahy's top tips to get you started.

1. Be brave and believe in yourself

“Back yourself: if you don’t, no one else will. Taking that first leap can be incredibly scary. I remember the first morning I switched on the [Carrie Elizabeth website](#) and I was so nervous about how it would be received and if I would actually sell anything! The moment when the first order came through and I realised that this was actually happening was the most exhilarating to date.”

“Leaving the stability of your 9-5 and everything that comes with it is incredibly tough, but if you’re feeling unfulfilled, have a yearning to be your own boss and know that your passion lies elsewhere, my advice would be take that leap and see where it takes you.”

2. Know your market

“Look before you leap. It’s extremely important to thoroughly research your chosen field before setting out on your own. Make sure your venture is both financially viable and sustainable.

“Is there a clear demand for what you are looking to offer? Is your pricing competitive? Are you offering something different or better to the market? Do you have a reliable source or supply base? Do you need to gain financial backing? These are all key questions you need to ask yourself. Having a comprehensive business plan in place will give you the tools and guidance you need when starting out in business.”

3. Find your USP

“I’m often asked, “What makes your business successful and why do people choose to buy your jewellery over someone else’s?” The answer to this is

simple – a unique selling point (USP). In a saturated market, being unique is crucial.

“Design is so important to me and I hope that translates into each and every one of our pieces. Not only is it important to ensure your product is different, but it is also key to differentiate yourself in every other aspect of your business in terms of packaging, marketing, imagery. Every element comes together to create the whole package for your customer, so I always pay special attention to every last detail of my brand.

“Before setting out alone, I had clear ideas on how I wanted my brand to look, the overall brand aesthetic, and my USP, and from this I quickly managed to build a visual mood board to inspire me. Pull together clear images or words that inspire you and define your unique selling point and align these with your business plan.”

4. Take the rough with the smooth

“Starting your own business is not plain sailing. You have to be ready to take knock backs, be adaptable to a completely new way of working and above all, be open to receiving negative feedback and criticism for something that is ultimately so personal to you.

“In my experience, the highs do outweigh the lows and so it is important to take any negatives on the chin. And remember, every challenge is just a stepping-stone to success!”

Carrie Elizabeth is a British jewellery brand designed and based in London, England.