

Female founders share their advice and experience to celebrate National Women's Enterprise Week

National Women's Enterprise Week (19th - 23rd June 2023) is the first nationwide campaign to celebrate and encourage female entrepreneurship. It presents an ideal occasion to hear the untold stories of female entrepreneurs, unveiling the lessons they wish they had known before embarking on their entrepreneurial journeys.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Here is what seven female entrepreneurs said when asked:

What is the one lesson you wish you'd known as you started out on your entrepreneurial journey?

Alison Hall, CEO of Sosandar: "I wish I had known how many kind people there would be along the journey that would be so generous with their time and advice along the way. When you start out it can be daunting and I would say to anyone else starting out to ask for help from people. Complete strangers have given us their time and it is a lovely feeling to know entrepreneurs will help other entrepreneurs."

Gali Arnon, CMO, Fiverr: "Having run two businesses prior to joining Fiverr, I understand the challenges associated with running a business. It

can be difficult, but ultimately extremely rewarding. Before embarking on the journey that is female entrepreneurship, I think it is important to understand the importance of community. In the same way that a business needs to prioritise community to ensure growth, it's in the best interest of female entrepreneurs to do the same. If you can find groups and people on similar paths and working within the same kinds of spaces, it's absolutely worth reaching out and seeking advice."

Alison Cork MBE, founder of National Women's Enterprise Week and *Make It Your Business*: "Most of the answers are out there, as long as you ask the right questions. It's what you don't ask that often turns out to be most costly."

Fiona Parfrey, CEO & Co-Founder of *Riley*: "I wish I knew that every entrepreneur is on their own journey of discovery and learning. Nobody has it all figured out!"

It's very easy to make comparisons to other startups that may seem like they're way ahead of you but everyone started somewhere, so believe in yourself and get going.

"On that, I wish I knew how straightforward it was to get an online business started. Setting up an e-commerce website can seem like a daunting task but Shopify makes it easy for newcomers. The platform is simple to navigate and figure out, and it doesn't have to be a perfect site to launch your e-commerce business; instead take learnings from how people navigate your site and make improvements along the way.

"Finally, I wish I knew that it never gets easier - but that's the fun of it! Running a business will always present new challenges and issues, so

getting bored is not on the cards.”

Eva Sonaïke, Creative Director & Founder of *Eva Sonaïke*: “Be more confident in yourself and your business, everyone started from scratch and learned on the way. Remember to establish a life/work balance from the beginning, it is important to work hard, but also take time off in between to recharge otherwise you will burn out.

“Learn to work smart and delegate from as early as you can. Your website is your window to the world. With Shopify you can create a great looking site that is also functional and easy to navigate for your customers. And the best thing, it is very easy to set up yourself. You don’t have to be an IT expert. Finally, enjoy and celebrate the wins whether small or big!”

Namrata Sandhu, CEO & Co-founder, *Vaayu*: “It is great to see initiatives like National Women’s Enterprise Week shining a light on pioneering female-led businesses and encouraging women into leadership positions. If we work to remove siloed frameworks and instil confidence through better early learning opportunities, we can equalise the gender division for future generations.

“From personal experience, I’ve found that it’s key to be confident in what you’re doing and believe what you’re building will be successful.

Set an expectation for yourself, what you want to achieve and push for it. Keep that conviction.

“One thing I wish I knew at the start of my journey would be the vast selection of tools available that support nearly every facet of your business. Tools like Hubspot for email marketing or Pleo which has been vital in managing business spending. I would encourage any budding

entrepreneur to explore the tools and services that really work for their business.”

Carolyn Pearson, CEO of *Maiden Voyage*: “When I first launched Maiden Voyage, it was all about my passion to make business travel safe and social for business travellers. I hadn’t appreciated the huge learning curve I was about to go on when it came to sales. Whilst most people I spoke to were also excited by my vision, turning that into a sale seemed like a black art. I had potential deals scattered everywhere, in spreadsheets, emails, in my head and in my notebooks.

“It was on a sales course that I learned about sales pipeline management software and evaluated a number of tools on the market. I opted for *Pipedrive* which I have been using for about 5 years. Now all of our prospective deals are in one manageable dashboard and the software makes sure that you are progressing deals to the next stage all the time, even on those days when you think you can’t or feel like an imposter. I particularly love the web visitors functionality which allows you to see which prospective customers are visiting your website and what pages they have visited. This allows me to follow up with those that are ready to move to the next stage, who are always impressed with my ‘perfect’ timing’!”