

Melody: Okay, and we're LIVE. Thank you, everybody, for joining us tonight. Today I'm interviewing Kim Handy. Her website is KimberlyHandy.com. I'm really excited to be interviewing you today. Thank you so much for joining me. I really appreciate. It.

Kim: No problem, Melody. Thank you so much for having me.

Melody: I'm so glad you're here. I actually met you on social media I think. You're kind of like the Twitter Queen, right?

Kim: I'm trying to do a little better with social media this year, yes.

Melody: You love Twitter. I'm always like: There's Kim saying 'hi'. Cute. I love it. I love it. I hope you guys that are listening hop on our website and go check it out...KimberlyHandy.com. Follow along as we go through this.

So, Kim, where did your business idea come from?

Kim: Oh, boy, my business idea for skincare actually came from Twitter, believe it or not. I promise you that about 3 years ago I was on Twitter. That was around the time that Twitter Chats were just starting out. Now they're more popular (everyone is doing a Twitter Chat), but I kind of ran into this Twitter Chat and they were talking about face skincare...face cosmetics.

I didn't participate right away. I was just kind of looking and going back and forth and seeing what the interaction was. I could not believe some of the facts and some of the information that these ladies were sharing about face skincare and chemical-free products and different things like that.

So I actually started to interact in the conversation, got some more information, got a website, did my own research, and then I started to think about - I actually went into my bathroom and looked at all of the products I used on a day-to-day basis from skincare to hair care to body

care. I started to look at all of the ingredients and the labels. I was like: Oh, my God, all of this stuff is probably killing me. It's so unsafe. I can't pronounce half of the ingredients. It's like 50 ingredients per product. It was just a real eye-opening experience.

In my quest to find natural or chemical-free products I started to think maybe this is something I could do just for myself for my own safety. One of the ladies who was on a Twitter Chat had been diagnosed with a brain tumor and her doctor told her it was probably caused by environmental conditions and products that she was using.

It really impacted me and I said: *Maybe this is something that I can make a couple of scrubs or a couple of body butters or something for myself.* That's really how I got started and how my interest was piqued for this industry.

Melody: Wow, that's really fascinating. I don't think I've ever heard that. That's really fascinating. The focus of your business is safe cosmetics like chemical-free products and your whole blog is about how to live healthier really.

Kim: Yes.

Melody: I love some of your articles. One thing I noticed is that you've just recently started developing and launching some lines. On your website you have a face oil and I think you're coming out with a few more products. Is that correct?

Kim: That's correct. I have a face oil that's called Squalene Face Oil and it's not to be confused with Squalene Oil. Squalene Oil is a plant-based face oil. That's the only ingredient. That was actually one of the first natural products that I tried that I purchased from one of the ladies who was in the

Twitter Chat. I purchased it from her and this is like 3 years ago. It is by far my most...it's my go-to. It's my go-to skincare product. It's a moisturizer.

As I've gotten older my skin has changed. I used to be pretty much normal skin. Now I'm more dry. I love oil-based products. I launched the face oil because it is my favorite product and something that I wanted to share with other women – particularly women over the age of 40 like I am.

It's a pure face oil and it's (again) my favorite skincare product that I use every day.

Melody: You are gorgeous, by the way. I have always like...look at that smile and your skin is fantastic. So that's your secret? You use that oil all the time?

Kim: That is my secret. I use it in the morning (I promise you.) before I walk out the door and when I get home I cleanse before I go to bed. A little goes a long way. It's very light and odorless. It doesn't stain your pillowcases or anything like that and it's light enough to wear under makeup.

When I do wear foundation I don't even wear powder because it just gives me a really nice subtle glow. I love it.

Melody: That's fantastic. So now you said you got interested 3 years ago. How long did it take for you to actually flesh out the thoughts that were in your head and going from making your own products to actually launching your business and selling to the public? What was that process like for you?

Kim: That process was crazy. I'm going to be honest with you. It was a roller coaster ride. I'm one where if I get interested in something I get real excited and I dive in. I'm like 4 feet ahead. That's exactly what I did when I decided to launch my skincare line.

I did all the wrong things. I wanted to launch 5 or 6 products at one time. I had them all written down on paper. I was doing my FDA research. I was doing all this research and ordering bottles and jars and all sorts of things. I still have them in my spare closet right now.

I was ordering all the ingredients and essential oils and I was mixing things up but when it got down, Melody, to packaging that's when I hit the wall so to speak.

I got so overwhelmed with trying to make a decision on packaging. I didn't really have anyone working with me. I didn't have a coach or a mentor. I didn't even know what all of that meant...having a business coach or a mentor to kind of guide me along the way.

That whole process I think I did for about 9 months until I got overwhelmed and walked away from it. I walked away from it and actually started another business.

I started a jewelry business and that was a total nightmare. That lasted less than a year. During that time I acquired a coach. I started to get some guidance just on business strategy and again, back to social media, someone posted this lotion or oil on Facebook and I said: *Oh, my gosh. Let me go back to what I originally started over a year ago. (By then it was maybe 2 years had passed.) Let me kind of work through this process and do it the right way.*

I want to say in July of 2013, which is just recently, I just made the commitment to go ahead and start my skincare line. Like I said before, being on social media I connected with you and some other women, just wonderful helpful connections that have kind of helped me through this process.

With all of the guidance I feel more at ease. I'm not overwhelmed. I'm not stressed out about the process, and I'm not trying to shell out all of these products at one time like I was trying to do before.

Three years later I started and stopped and now I've started again.

Melody: Wow. That's a heck of a journey. You said since July (I think that's when I met you.). I know that you are an **INDY(8:44)** member as well, right? **INDY(8:46)** is fantastic resources. So all of that guidance has helped you to get where you are now and you've got your first product out and it's launched, and you're launching for more coming behind it, right?

Kim: Yes, that's correct. This process is ever evolving. Initially I want to say – maybe 2 months ago- let me just start with skincare first and then I'll think about maybe adding body care. But now I'm kind of going back and forth and thinking maybe now I'll just stay with skincare and let that be my focus for now.

I have the face oil and I've actually been testing some products because I've decided to do the private label option and that's just my preference. It works really well for me. I'm testing some skincare products for mature skin – for women over 40- and I'm looking to launch maybe one or two more products within the next 30 days and have a complete line of maybe 5 or 6 products by the end of March. That's my plan.

Melody: Wow. You're moving pretty fast. That's awesome. Now that you're focused it seems like all the obstacles are out of the way and you're very clear on your next step and it's easy for you to do.

For our listeners, if you could give them your biggest lesson that you've learned in launching your product line (specifically maybe in working with private label companies) what would that lesson be?

Kim: I think the biggest lesson that I've learned is for me to take my time. It's really exciting when you finally get to the point in your life where you feel 'I've found my place. I've found what I'm passionate about. I've found something I'm good at that I love that makes a difference and that can be a benefit to other people'. We tend to want to rush the process.

My biggest lesson has been to not rush the process. I've gotten calls from boutiques, from other businesses that are saying they can't wait to have my product in their stores. I've been invited to do events. Actually, there's one this weekend. I just have one product. I'm not comfortable doing an event with just one product. I want to have more. Again, that's just my preference.

For me my biggest lesson has been not to rush regardless of the outside pressures. Those people are still going to be there. I'm not concerned about losing business or anything like that. I have to do this the right way, legally with everything lined up the way that it's supposed to be so I won't have any unexpected surprises 6 or 12 months from now.

Melody: That's really good advice...not to rush the process... because you and I have talked about this before. You've kind of experienced spinning your wheels and when you go after it and then realize it's a lot of wasted time and money to get frustrated and burned out.

Listeners, if you've heard that...don't rush the process. That's great advice.

So now one thing I love about your site and your business is that you're focusing on women that are over 40 but it's not like 40 and done, it's about how to be 40 and fabulous sort of thing. Where do you see your brand in 3-5 years?

Kim: I see my brand really in 3-5 years... it's kind of hard. I see a complete cohesive brand and that's something that I learned from the ebooks that I purchased from you...The Business of Beauty...which I absolutely love. I see my brand really evolving, Melody, with the customers' needs.

I subscribe to some skincare publications. I try to keep myself as educated as possible and current with the trends so wherever we're going to be in 3-5 years as far as the industry, I think the industry is really moving towards the natural organic phase for skincare and cosmetics. I see myself being in the midst of that and just being able to offer my customers top quality skincare with natural ingredients that really really work.

Melody: Awesome. That's awesome. Now do you hope to get retail distribution? Are you going to go for any kind of store distribution or online sales? What's your strategy for sales, if you don't mind sharing with the listeners?

Kim: Sure. Absolutely. Right now my strategy is to focus strictly on online sales. I am open to retail sales but not anything that's too big like Whole Foods or these big retail chains. I don't see myself going in that direction simply because I work my business on my own. I don't have any employees or any staff, and I have a fulltime job that I love.

I do hire people to help me but it's more on the administrative end. I hire people to help me with my website, maybe a copywriter to help me with some writing that I'm doing. I hire people to help me with those technical things that may require a lot of my time like behind the scenes.

I focus on my customers and testing products and just building and maintaining a good cohesive presence online and through social media.

Melody: Aha. That sounds like a good plan. It sounds like a good strategy. Are you going to...I know you said you're going to focus primarily on retail not big

chains at all, will you be doing tradeshow or events or anything? Is that part of your marketing strategy at all?

Kim: Yes, I definitely would like to do some tradeshow and some events, but it has to be the right fit. Another lesson that I've learned in this business is I have to go where my customer is and be where my customer is. Every event is not for me. Yes, I would love to go to the hair shows. I would love to go to the fashion shows, but my customer per se may not be there in majority...maybe a bridal show. That may be something along the lines that may fit me best.

I'm very very selective in shows and tradeshow and events that I go to. I'm definitely open to expos that focus on natural eco-friendly type products...those types of things.

Melody: That's fantastic. That's a lot of wisdom, too. A lot of people I see go everywhere all at once and spend all their money and may not get as much return back. It sounds like you're already learned that valuable lesson.

Kim: Yes, I have...the hard way, trust me.

Melody: One thing you mentioned that struck me was that you said you're not one of these business owners that's trying to quit their job. You love your job. You just do this because it's a passion of yours. What's the most gratifying thing for you about being a business owner?

Kim: The most gratifying thing is when I press the product either personally or I may send out some samples as part of my market strategy and follow up with a survey and I get so many great responses. People are actually seeing a difference for the better in their skin whether their acne is

clearing up, their dry skin is now more moisturized...whatever the benefit is.

To know that for years they've been going from product to product to product and now a product that I may have to offer them has been the answer that they've been looking for ...that, I think, is one of the most gratifying parts of being a business owner and offering good quality natural skincare to customers.

Melody: That's fantastic. That's a great answer. It's really about serving your clients and getting what they need. That's wonderful, Kim.

We're almost to the top of the hour. I wanted to ask you...Thank you for taking the time out. I know you're really busy but if our listeners want more information about you and your business where can they go and how can they connect with you?

Kim: Sure. They could connect with me via my website that we provided earlier. KimberblyHandy.com is the blog website and I have a shop site on there, too, if they want to just look at my product and see what I have to offer.

They can also connect with me on Facebook or Twitter or Pinterest or LinkedIn through my website as well. They can email me at info@kimberlyhandy.com. Again, I'm on the email. They can connect with me through social media. Like you say, I'm active on Twitter and Facebook pretty much throughout the day.

Melody: Wonderful. Wonderful. I personally love your blog. I love that blog post you did about: Do you know your body shape? That was really insightful. I was like: Wow!

Kim: Eye-opening, right? I learn plenty when I do my blog posts. I say I think my customer's going to like this, but I learn so much personally I'm like: *Wow. This is a really good blog post. I really learned a lot.* Because I do put a lot of research into what I post about.

All of my blogs have to do with some type of personal experience that I've had. I hope that I'll be able to connect with women because I've had that personal experience. I know I'm not the only one so it's fun. I learn a lot myself so I enjoy it.

Melody: That's wonderful. You do a great job. Thank you so much, Kimberly. I will be posting links to your site as a way people can connect. Thank you again for all your time. We have enjoyed having you.