



Bella Weems

just' style



ORIGAMI OWL FOUNDER
BELLA WEEMS

Equipped with a good idea and the hopes of earning enough money to afford a car, Bella Weems started Origami Owl. But when she founded the jewelry company at age 14, she never imagined it would grow into the multi-million dollar business it is today! We chatted with the now 17-year-old entrepreneur and fashion industry mogul to find out how she transformed her babysitting money into a booming business.

Not many people can say they started a business when they were 14! What is it like being such a young entrepreneur? It's hard work, but I really wanted my car so I persevered! It can be challenging to be taken seriously as a young entrepreneur and people will sometimes underestimate you, but if you believe in yourself, and that no dream is ever too big, then you will be successful.

What's the story behind the name Origami Owl?

I have always loved origami. I had it hanging in my bedroom when I was younger. Origami is beautiful and unique, while owls represent wisdom, strength and courage. When my mom and I put the name Origami Owl together we loved the way it sounded and what it represented, whimsy and wise.

Where did you get the idea to make lockets?

I have always loved jewelry and discovered some pretty glass lockets. I had the idea to personalize them by taking charms that represent your personal story and placing them inside the locket so the necklace could be worn for the world to see this is me! Origami Owl is all about expressing yourself, so we create charms that a wide range of people can enjoy and can relate to.

What have you found to be the most rewarding part of running your own business?

The most rewarding decision was to use the direct sales party plan model rather than sell in stores. Everyone who saw our products wanted to get involved. I quickly realized that we had an opportunity... to change peoples' lives by allowing them to do the same thing I did and start their own businesses. That's when we decided to go the direct-sales route, allowing anyone to sign up and sell jewelry as an Independent Designer. We welcome and encourage women, men and even kids as young as 12 to become designers (with their parents' permission). Now we have over 70,000 Independent Designers. I never thought it would escalate to this point. It's been very exciting, and we feel so incredibly blessed!

Any advice for other teenage girls who dream of one day starting their own businesses?

No dream is ever too small or big, and it doesn't matter how old or young you are. Trust in yourself, and surround yourself with people who believe in you. My mom and I took a leap of faith, and look where I ended up! If you have a dream, follow it, make it a reality and always try to find a way to pay it forward.



WIN IT!
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