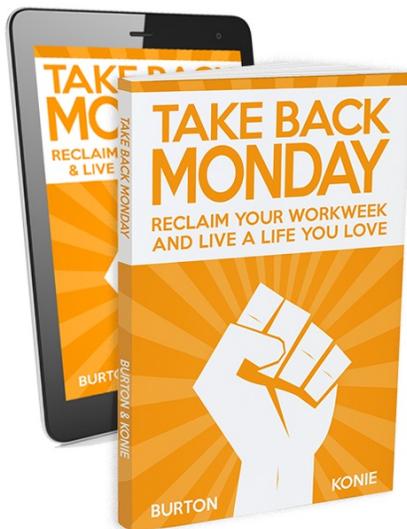


“Don’t get scared by the bigness of your vision. Just take the first step.” LILLY BERELOVICH

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In a world constantly bombarded by information, clarity is a rare commodity. It is precisely the precious asset Lilly Berelovich works tirelessly to provide her clients every day.

At Fashion Snoops, the company she founded 15 years ago with her husband, Itay Arad, Lilly guides a team of more than 60 employees worldwide in forecasting global trends. They take in all the world’s lovely

chaos and make sense of it for those in the marketing and creative industries. By synthesizing cultural influences like fashion, art, and technology, the company provides unique insights on what customers want next.

“We translate the overwhelming amount of data to provide companies with a foundation for innovation,” explains Lilly. “We point them in the right direction and save them time by guiding them to follow the right trends.”

While Lilly has honed a skill for predicting consumer preferences as far as two years into the future, she never predicted she would be where she is today.

“It was never in my plans to start a business,” she says. “I was a trained fashion designer and that was definitely the career I wanted. I worked in the industry in Montreal and New York for many years and loved it.”

Though she found her perfect career match early on, it didn’t necessarily end in happily ever after. In the late nineties, her husband’s job required the couple to relocate to Boston. Lilly describes the move as “horrible.” She adored life in New York and though she was able to continue working at her design firm from afar, it was difficult to leave the city behind.

Unbeknownst to her, however, the move would provide the opportunity to invent what she now describes as her “dream job”—Chief Innovation Officer at Fashion Snoops.

“The move forced me to look at what I could create on my own,” she says.

She and Itay created a tool that harnessed the emerging Internet to address a pressing need Lilly had identified in her field.

“Great design involves a lot of research to understand the trends,” she explains. “In the pre-Internet age, this required extensive travel devoted to information gathering, in addition to time spent designing. As we began to understand the potential power of the Internet, we had a light-bulb moment. It was the perfect tool to deliver valuable content to designers’ desks and save them from having to gather it on their own. This was the earliest days of the technology and it was really a breakthrough.”

By combining Lilly’s design acumen and Itay’s business expertise, the couple knew they could provide a powerful resource to designers and other experts looking to stay steps ahead of shifting trends. It was on this premise that Fashion Snoops was born in 2000.

They started the business while holding full-time jobs. In their spare time, they built the small company from scratch. On weekends and evenings, they devoted hours to creating their platform and giving life to a concept

that had the potential to transform the industry.

A year after Lilly and Itay launched their business, the startup where Itay worked closed shop. At that point, the couple had a decision to make. He could find another job or commit to their company full-time. They chose the latter option. Confident their idea was a good one, they moved back to their beloved New York to grow the business.

“When the opportunity came, we fully committed ourselves to making it a reality. We jumped in with full force,” she says.

Today, Fashion Snoops is a leader in the field, advising tens of thousands of users in more than 40 countries. Leading global brands and retailers look to them for expertise and seek out the company’s holistic perspective on emerging trends.

“We built it piece by piece. We hired members of the team one by one. You figure it out day by day,” Lilly says as she describes the company’s growth over time.

In addition to daily dedication, another important factor has contributed to their success: they always believed it was possible.

“I deeply believe that by naming your vision, you can make it so,” says Lilly. “Not everyone trusts their own word so clearly, but if you have full confidence that it can happen, it will.

“Once you say it, you just have to start walking toward the goal. You can’t stand in fear thinking, ‘Wow, the vision I named is so big!’ Don’t look at the bigness of it. Just take the first step. It won’t happen overnight, but it will be built.

“Anything is possible,” she confirms. “Truly, anything you say is possible.”

Lilly labels the final element of her success as the “juice of everything.”

“Link whatever you do to what you love,” she says. “The creation has to

come from your heart.”

Lilly has always loved the realms of fashion and design, but some people in her past discouraged her from pursuing a career in the industry. Several teachers told her she couldn't do it, saying she didn't have strong drawing skills and that the patterns she created would be impossible to make.

Ultimately, she used these criticisms to her advantage. “I was most empowered by all of the people who told me I couldn't do it,” she says.

These days, she is more concerned about what she wants success to look like. She and her husband have built a vibrant office culture where creativity flourishes, but Lilly says they are still mastering the balance between a business that thrives financially while retaining the positive energy they've worked so hard to foster. “Can we become more aggressive on the sales front and still be a place where people love to work?” she questions. “Success can be accomplished in so many ways. We've definitely achieved it in certain areas. The challenge now is to bring it into every aspect of the business.”

This is a subject on which she offers advice. “If we could go back and do one thing differently, we would have raised money early on. If we had, we would be playing a different game at this point. There is no need to do it on your own. Bring others along to invest in the vision.”

Despite this lesson learned, Lilly's eyes light up whenever she speaks of her work. “I love every minute of it,” she beams. “I'm surrounded every day by creative people who love what they do. It is a wonderful collaboration and a beautiful shared experience.

“The process is so day-to-day. You give your all in every moment and suddenly you're through another year when you look back and say, ‘Whoa! Look at what we have built! This is awesome!’”

While clarity of vision is a must to make any dream a reality, it is the

million connected moments of dedication and effort that ultimately lead to the destination. No matter the end goal, Lilly knows, the most critical moment of all is taking the first step.

By Becky Burton and Robin Konie

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