

As a wide-eyed teenager, I never imagined that a simple hobby would lead me to become the CEO of a six-figure profit jewelry business before I even set foot on a college campus. My journey into the world of business began with a naive fascination for shiny trinkets and a desire to make people smile.

It all started when I was fifteen, crafting friendship bracelets for my high school classmates. What began as a way to spread joy soon turned into a small side hustle, with friends and family requesting custom pieces. Little did I know that this innocent pastime would blossom into Romikas, a thriving jewelry business that now employs 215 people across two continents.

As I dove headfirst into the world of entrepreneurship, I quickly realized there was so much I didn't know. Every day brought new challenges and learning opportunities. I fumbled through creating my first social media strategy, laughing at my initial attempts at product photography that looked more like abstract art than jewelry showcases. But with each mistake, I grew more determined to succeed.

The turning point came when I decided to donate a portion of our sales to charity. It was a decision born from a simple desire to give back, but it resonated deeply with our customers. Suddenly, our jewelry wasn't just an accessory; it was a statement of compassion and social responsibility. This naive yet heartfelt approach became the cornerstone of our brand identity, propelling us to over 5,000 customers in just three years.

My journey took an unexpected turn when I interned at Support Vectors. Armed with nothing but enthusiasm and a willingness to learn, I found myself creating machine learning algorithms to analyze holiday sales patterns. It was like being handed a Rubik's Cube and told to solve it blindfolded ? intimidating yet exhilarating. This experience opened my eyes to the power of data in decision-making, a lesson I immediately applied to Romikas.

Now, as I embark on my college journey at UC Berkeley, I find myself involved with Nova Consulting, working on projects for luxury car brands. It's a far cry from friendship bracelets, but the core remains the same ? understanding people's desires and creating value.

Looking back, I realize that my naivety was perhaps my greatest asset. It allowed me to take risks without fear, to approach problems with fresh eyes, and to build genuine connections with customers and employees alike. As I continue my studies in Business Administration and Economics, I carry with me the lessons learned from my unintentional plunge into entrepreneurship.

The future, much like that first bracelet I crafted, is full of possibilities waiting to be shaped. And I, Rika Pinto, am ready to weave together my experiences, knowledge, and unwavering curiosity to create something truly remarkable in the world of business.