

I've been underestimated my entire career and it's fuelled me.

At 16 I got my first job organizing closets not because I had to but because I wanted independence and I really wanted to earn my own money. Then came the cameras and I was on keeping up with the Kardashians. Everyone thought they had me figured out. They had no idea I was building. She's here. I wasn't just in the conversation I was shaping it. Skims, KKW Beauty, every brand launch, every campaign was thoughtful and strategic and I built billion-dollar businesses. I have home ten rules that I master them and you'll create marketing that commands attention and build businesses that will scale. And I'm putting my principles to the test with three entrepreneurs. The packaging feels a bit wasteful. Applying them to their businesses in real time. That's great advice. I wouldn't have learned half of what I learned about business had I not experienced it. Everything is teaching you something. Giving you those tools and skills to be the most professional.

These are my ten commandments. These aren't my suggestions. These are the rules I live by. I'm Kim Kardashian and this is Masterclass. There was a phase when I thought fame was everything to me and I was so excited to be on a reality show and would have done anything to be famous but I was like a hustler way before that and that is what mattered to me most.

I love fashion. It's my thing. When I need an outfit I just go into my store which is my big closet. I pull something. My store Dash in Calabasas. The first product that I sold was these floral headbands that I would make. I was about 17. My dad would drive me to Michaels and I would just do it in my bedroom at his house. I would buy all these things of flowers and I would buy fishing wire and it was these like zigzag headbands and I would sew a flower on to each space and I sold them to Fred Siegel, the biggest department store of like everything cool. I would always wear these headbands and everyone would ask me where I got them. I said I just made it and I can sell them to you and when they said they were interested and they made an order, I mean to me that was success. It was something that got me excited to know that you can come up with a creative idea and make it happen.

I mean I sold anything and everything. You brought me a weight loss pill and a cupcake deal and Carl's Jr. and I was doing it all at once. Every deal taught me something and I learned that the visibility of the product was so important to selling the product. I'm gonna show you guys a new Skims collection. It's super stretchy. Confidence and visibility are everything. Just dip it right into the contour palette. So I wanted to show you guys the packaging that My Skin products. If people see you believe in what you're building, they'll buy in.

Commandment one, you are the product.

People invest in you and how you make them feel, not just what you sell. In 2006, my sisters and I opened up our own clothing store. We started filming Keeping Up With The Kardashians a year later. Before there was social media, I thought if we're visible, even if we're not talking about the product, we'll be able to draw customers to our store. So that was like my main goal of wanting to start the TV show. I'm finally a business owner in Miami. So my part is publicly talking about it and bringing publicity to this business that companies pay millions of dollars to do. If you're visible, you can sell products. That's why we wanted to then renew after Keeping Up With The Kardashians and do the Kardashians show. The Kardashians. Because I thought that is relevancy, which can be viewed as a currency. You might not have Keeping Up With The Kardashians as your platform, but today social media can give that same kind of spotlight to anyone. You guys, this is my new fave. Look it, it's like stretched terry cloth. So cute. You do need social media as a big part of your brand. It should be as imperative to the business as the product, the packaging. You don't have time for social media? Don't start a brand then.

I just don't know how you can launch a brand in today's world without having social media. I don't know how you get that message out there. And it is hard. It is hard to figure out tick tock. It is hard to make videos. It is. But these days it's all about using your own platform and starting your own platform and having your own platform is free. So if it's not your thing, you kind of have to make it your thing. It's all about like shaving and shaping the face. One of my favorites. I just love having blush. I had this extra knowledge and this expertise from the years of working with makeup artists. It's Kim and I go under here. What I'd like to do is see where the shadows are and pictures on my... I remember just even the first time I posted about my glam team. It was like no one really did that. It was this like taboo thing. Everyone wanted to act like they just looked perfect all the time and I knew that wasn't my reality and like how I was looking this way. It was a whole glam team.

I felt like I had those expert secrets that I just wanted to share. I'll say this more when they're not glamping me or we can just do an interview and glam because it's just how I live my life. The key is being able to take something that other people wouldn't really have access to. Figure out how to simplify it and present it to the world in a way that they feel like they can use it. That knowledge became the foundation of KKW Beauty. I have to tell you about the craziest bra. Do you guys wear push-up bras? You need to be the expert at that one thing that matters to your customer and know how they want to feel. Embody that feeling as your brand. Find that thing, own it completely and show them how it solves their problem. When I'm just feeling like I need to get it together, especially after I had babies, I would wear this just around the house. I would always walk around in

shapewear like in my house.

I don't even know why. Did I always have cellulite? Just makes me feel snatched. There's no other word. Like it just makes me feel so good in my clothes. I remember filming our show and Scott was like, what are you wearing? Like he thought I was naked and I would just always walk around in shapewear. You know that. No, I'm so insecure lately. Just with my weight. I cannot leave the house without Spanx. I have talked about shapewear for decades. I think like literally 20 years.

Shapewear usually didn't have a lot of skin tone. I've told my stories of cutting it up and dyeing it in tea bags. A ton of tea bags and dye them in the same to get it darker skin tone so it wouldn't be so light underneath my clothes. You can see in the picture, you fully see my shapewear in the line. I would wear it all around. You'd see it in paparazzi photos kind of hanging out of my dress sometimes. And at the time I could have thought, oh my God, how mortifying. They caught a horrible photo of me showing that I'm wearing shapewear and no one even knows what it is. They think it's like this girdle that I'm wearing under something. And then I use that to my advantage later. So it was super authentic that I would launch a shapewear line.

The perfect shapewear just didn't exist. So I made my own. With makeup and shapewear, people aren't just buying the product. They're buying the confidence that they see in me when I wear it. That's the feeling that you need to create with your customers. There is not a single way you can fake the feeling someone gets when they receive a package from you and they open that package and they try it on and they feel good and what you're providing for them. There's no way to fake that. You can have the best marketing. You can have the best stars for your campaign. But if the product comes and it is not quality product and it is shit product, you are fucked. Having quality product is the number one thing that will gain success in a brand.

Commandment two, they prove it, you perfect it.

Most people think they need to invent something new. You don't. You just need to solve the problem no one has solved yet. For me, it starts with what isn't working and what I wish existed. Then I see if there's demand. And if I can meet it in a way no one else has, that's innovation. I always try to find something that's missing in the marketplace of a solution based brand. Find out what your specialty is. And sometimes it's the most simple things, but figuring out how to make that then accessible into the marketplace and more accessible to the consumer. In 2017, I launched KKW Beauty. Everyone thought I should have launched with an eyeshadow palette and lips. And I was so definite that I wanted to launch with a contour kit. I had this vision for it. And the whole team was like, don't do this. And I know that this is what I want to do. I would always watch my makeup artists blend all my contour and do all these contour tricks.

And it's like I wanted to bring those tips and tricks to all my fans and to the consumer in a way that they could understand it. When I launched with like contour and concealers and I launched body makeup, no one had a body makeup out at that time. I needed it because I had psoriasis and I wanted to cover it up sometimes. And I just think people had never even thought of the concept of body makeup before. The other factor isn't what product to make. It's what product only you can make credible. We just had really great, poor products that everyone loved that were really attainable.

They can understand through the way that we would communicate it on social media that it was easy to use even if you weren't a makeup artist. So when I would do the before and afters, I'd go to my grandma's house and I'd take her hands and I'd cover one hand and show the side by side. And the differences were just so crazy. How long does that stay on? For me, it stays on really all day. It just became such a thing. It was one of our best sellers. That's amazing. We should leave it on forever. That was just the magic behind KKW Beauty is making the customer understand that they had all of this expertise and everything that I learned. And I'm like sharing that with you guys. This is something that really any entrepreneur can do. Do this. Identify the three biggest brands in your market. Write down where they're falling short for your audience. And then list at least one way that your product will stand out and serve them better. Look for what's almost working, then fix the one thing everyone's complaining about.

That's your opening. I know what I was missing in shapewear and I knew how to make that happen. When designing the first collection for Skims, we were super specific about the design details of the shapewear. I would put on a dress and then you'd see the shapewear lines underneath. And I always hated that, so I wanted seamless shapewear and to create a custom knit shapewear that you just wouldn't have any seams or lines that you'd see through the tight dress. When you solve your own problem, you're the perfect test case. You know it works because you're the customer. And the global market for shapewear was huge. \$2 billion a year. Shapewear was always designed with the intention to smooth and flatten, but I wanted to accentuate. And the way that I styled and designed the shapewear is really different than what I knew to be in the marketplace. Part of the whole vibe of Skims is innovating products that seem personally tailor made to your needs. For instance, we created and patented a one legged bodysuit you could wear with a high slip dress. I hadn't really seen that before, so I think just having a different lens can have the viewer view it the way that I did. And I just wanted the customer to view shapewear the way that I did.

Commandment three. Define yourself before others do.

Determine your brand's DNA. The values, the visuals, and the voice that make your product instantly recognizable. There is nothing more important than the product, but pretty close to that is branding. Branding is the feeling people get before they even touch your product. Branding is really what your company embodies, what you stand for, the emotion around it all. It's really the best representation of who you are and what you want to be. The product has to be amazing, but it's all about the presentation and it's all about the whole package. It really is important to have an emotion when you open something. And as an entrepreneur, you have to know what to really focus on. For Skims, it's really our taste level, our simplicity, and our tones. Skims, I think, has a really unique sense that when you see our images, you know it's a Skims product.

Our packaging, the texture of our paper, everything seems really simple, really monochromatic. We first did a neon pass where Skims was in neon and it just didn't look like it belonged in my home. And I felt like, you know, really strong about that and we redid it and it felt really right once we changed it. I mean, it's like my lifestyle, it's like how I live, it's like my office, my home, it's just who I am. So it just made sense to have that be an extension of the brand. But I think anyone that's looking to create a well-known brand, you need something that really sets you apart. Your brand should be recognizable from across the room and not just the logo, the vibe. Your brand should just be so authentic that there's no doubt of who it's coming from. Do this. Define the three core principles of your brand and make them non-negotiable as your business evolves and expands. What I did for my brand is I love shapewear, so I started there. And then we moved into intimates and now swimwear. Okay, we have so much Skims swim that I had to put it on two different racks. And activewear. I think the intention is to always keep the simple pieces that are necessities in the closet. Here is the high-waisted wreath.

So, you know, I went in my closet and I thought, what can I make cooler pajamas? All I do when I get home is I put on pajamas. It's like my happy place, my comfort zone, but I didn't have any cool pajamas that were really comfortable. Look at this material. It is so cute. I'm obsessed. We are evolving to a brand that has really good quality basics and that shows a lot of brand growth and evolution. But there definitely has to be a point of view for the customer to connect with the brand. Here's the tension. Your brand has to feel like you without being only you. And that's the hardest balance to strike. And it's non-negotiable if you want to scale.

It has always been very intentional to brand Skims, not just a Kim brand. We did understand that at launch, for the first year, I would be in every single photo shoot to get the consumer used to the product. And, you know, we needed me to launch that. But then the

second year, I would scale back and not be in every single campaign and get other talent to represent the brand. We just really wanted to branch out and make sure that we were really product driven. That's really what set us apart. Because one day I'm not gonna want to be in every campaign. I may or may not in my 50s, 60s and 70s want to be posing in my underwear, you know. We wanted to really have the brand be able to stand on its own. I wanted people to love the product, whether they were a Kardashian fan or not. I love that for Skims. I want to be extremely universal and not just tied to maybe what they see on the show. And that was very strategic. My rules of business apply to any entrepreneur. And I'm helping Lisa Tran, founder of LaPAR, put them to work. She grew up in the nail industry. Her mom immigrated from Vietnam, became a nail tech and opened her own salon. When Lisa developed dermatitis from chemical exposure, she created LaPAR, a clean, non-toxic nail brand. So I wanted to show you some of the products that I developed. One of the main products that I am very prideful of is the gel builder in the bottle. And it allows your natural nails to like reconstruct underneath. So the healthier ingredients is really important.

A lot of products people don't realize, but it eats away at the nail bed. And the onset's like six, seven years. And by that time, people have thick, cubicle nails. Can I see that? Yeah, absolutely. We have a color match set. That's what you would use after the gel. Getting my nails done tomorrow. Maybe I'll try this. Exciting. Yes. Oh my gosh. So this is polish and gel. I love that. Thank you. The packaging seems really hard. This seems like kind of expensive. I don't really get the story of clean beauty here. Okay. When I said this felt really expensive, okay, it feels a bit wasteful. Got it. Like it's an over-the-top packaging, which like would be a great press box to send out to people. This looks like very toxic. Oh, you know, is it more clean and cost-effective if it was just in a box like this? Got it. Or something a little bit more simple? I was also thinking like eco-friendly boxes. Something like that would be a little bit more storytelling. Okay. Subtle packaging cues like material and shape can make your product feel higher quality and using paper instead of plastic tells that story without a single word. What is your logo? It's gold. It has a green. Yeah, so it's a dark green and a gold and white. Is this color dark green? If it's all dark. No, this one is black.

I don't know why I decided to go with the black box. I do think that there should be a little bit more uniformity. Like this is gold, this is green with the gold, like somehow it can just all be the same. Like I wouldn't look at these two packages and think that they're from the same brand. Okay. I do like having the green feeling all throughout. I mean I've never seen a brand nail polish that's that dark green. Oh, and you're wearing green. Yeah, I love green. I don't know. Yeah. Well if that's like your aura and that's what you're feeling then maybe incorporate that. I definitely will do that and change it. I really

think you should work on your packaging and presentation.

Okay. I think it is really important to really feel like a non-toxic, super clean brand. Okay. Do you think that your packaging has to represent who you really are a little bit better? Okay. A great brand isn't built, it's told. When your packaging conveys a strong brand story, it helps the consumer feel aligned with the brand. People don't know as much as you know about the product but also they don't really want to take the time so you have to give them that information. Okay. The beauty space is oversaturated so having a product that stands out that's different than what everyone else is doing is really important. Okay. I really appreciate that. Of course.

Commandment four. Don't follow the feed. Be the feed.

Marketing isn't about being everywhere. It's about impact. Create unforgettable moments that can dominate the conversation and your audience will do the rest. It's the way that you create a community around your product and around your brand. It's creating this urgency around the brand, creating a real conversation out there. I think we presented ourselves at Skims as being really serious and really sophisticated but we have so much fun and there's different sides to my personality so I definitely wanted to show different things. The nipple bra campaign was so much fun. The earth's temperature is getting hotter and hotter. That's why I'm introducing a brand new bra with a built-in nipple so no matter how hot it is you'll always look cold. We had like the fairy butt mother.

With Skims new shapewear you can get a butt, boobs and amazing curves immediately. Thanks fairy butt mother. We have this really fun Merkin campaign. Welcome back to Does the Carpets Match the Drapes. Let's have your guesses audience. We definitely have really fun ideas and this is a strategy that you can use too. You can experiment with a new product and limited release and get your customers attention. I think I've always been that way right? Like I've always been in on the joke just showing we're in on it too. Like butt pad, shapewear, yeah funny amazing. Oh a Merkin is a little hairy bikini. It's like hair for down there and you wear it like underneath your lingerie. Oh no it's like you should Google it it's like hairy situation down there. This is where most brands stop. They got the buzz, mission accomplished, but pay attention to who responds and why. That tells you where to go next.

The nipple bra was just such a fun idea we had to come up with a funny campaign. Some days are hard but these nipples are harder. Never once did I think I would see these amazing articles and think pieces from breast cancer survivors that would post about the bra and say I'm wearing this bra and I just feel normal again. We got a completely different audience from that bra launch than we ever anticipated. Now

we have a breast cancer survivor bra and I worked with one of my besties, one of my lifers, her roommate in college got breast cancer and she loves our bras but she was explaining that she would love a bra that had like just one side because she's had a mastectomy and she uses these pads and so we worked with her to help develop this bra. So we have really important pieces launching and it's such a fun surprise and that's the kind of marketing you can't ever pay for.

You can't plan for those magical marketing moments. These products started as headline grabbers but became part of our core product line because we listened. That's not luck, that's strategy. Do this. Launch one bold unexpected campaign or product drop. Track who engages, not just how many but who they are. What audience showed up that you didn't expect. How can you serve them better? Let the response guide your next move. The last thing I want you to do is try to chase trends but if you want your marketing to be effective you have to stay tuned into the culture. I don't get a report that says this is what's trending. I don't want to just copy and do a version of that. I want to do what feels good and looks good and feels right and if it happens to be on trend great. I think you can get inspired by looking at social media. I screenshot things all the time. I screenshot things from my friends that they send.

I have a media diet and so should you. I wake up and check my group chats. They're like mini focus groups that spark ideas. I scroll Instagram like a magazine and TikTok for real time culture. Pick your own key sources. Think of it as your own real time lab for your brand. I try to be really on the pulse and we are out there to see what's really going on. We do want to hit as many generations as possible. I drive them to school every day so they control the radio and they control the playlists when we're driving so I get to hear music that I've never heard before. I hear what's like all the trends what they're talking about. I'd say the carpool rides are gold. Everything and I couldn't even say it because it'll be over by the time this comes out and then I'll be the cringiest mom on the planet so I'm not even gonna dare say a phrase. I said one like a week or two ago and they will not let it go and I just don't feel like carrying it. I'm meeting Lily Polstein founder of sustainable landscapes.

Like many entrepreneurs Lily is selling a service landscape design and maintenance with a focus on edible gardens. She designs installs and maintains them herself but growing a service business can be challenging. I'm gonna tell her how to do it. I'm just obsessed with landscaping. It can just change your whole mood. It's just how it can really shape a home. I'm looking at your social media now, your Instagram. Do you work on the hardscape as well? Yeah we do everything from plant installation to hardscaping, lighting, decking, everything. I see the work that you do it has a particular eye and I think it tells a story of what your aesthetic is. Just off of looking at the pictures I wouldn't have guessed anything about sustainability except

for it says sustainable which is great but I want to see in the captions why it's sustainable. I think you can scale your business if you educate educate I think you need to start being that like go-to person for everyone. Yeah everyone goes to you to even ask advice like on a little gardening blog.

If you want to build a vegetable garden here's what you need for it. Here's aftercare, here's just like all the steps throughout. You know like educate people instead of just beautiful photos. I do love your aesthetic and your tones and everything that you're doing but I think it would be really helpful. Even cute stuff like this the tomatoes like if it's swiped to something that you made with the tomatoes would be really sweet and start building this like gardening community. Educate your audience by sharing tutorials, origin stories and behind-the-scenes content to boost engagement and drive sales. Beautiful as I think the aesthetic is I do love seeing this picture of you. I do love hearing a little bit more of your voice because I don't feel like I see that on your social media. Yeah definitely. Oh so you have a TikTok. Yes I actually just started. I have been told by many people that I should do it but. TikTok is I know it's it's a hard jump to make but it is super important. If you're promoting this landscaping business that you've built for so long you want to show that off. Yeah. But people want to know the story so what is your story like how did you get there so maybe that's on TikTok maybe you share a little bit more but it would be nice to bring that out into your Instagram as well. Yeah definitely. I find myself when I am on site finishing a project all I want to do is go home. Yeah. Done for the day and I forgot to post and then I'm in the car and I'm like oh shoot you know and I miss an opportunity. Yeah I think you definitely have to get in the right mindset.

I think if you dedicated one day a week to just making sure that you captured content even having something up weekly would be almost like people would come in for like that little episode or something that they'd be really into seeing what you're up to and what you're doing. Yeah yeah that's great. In a service business people buy you first show up then create a social media calendar commit to posting at least three times a week on your primary platform and be present on comments DMs stories daily. Do you think you can really commit to spending some time really levelling up your social media? I mean I don't know what you want to hear. It's not exactly yeah but for me making TikToks and Instagram sounds really exhausting and overwhelming but I will definitely try and I am excited to shift my mindset and really start this next chapter of Sustainable Landscapes LA. If you are a leader of a company I think one of your main jobs is to remain calm. There's gonna be emergency situations and you have to think quickly and my best advice would be to just remain a solution-based problem solver because any other way doesn't really get you far. You just have to think clearly I mean if there's an emergency I can't be the one freaking out you know I've done that before and it just hasn't gone

well and so now when there's emergencies you just figure out what to do. That's the way that I lead my team is I want everyone to feel safe and I want everyone to feel confident that we're gonna come up with a solution it's gonna happen quickly and we're not gonna stay in this crisis mode. That energy isn't just where I want to be I can't live in that space.

Commandment five: turn failure into strategy.

Every brand will face backlash don't let it break you or define you. Claim it first fix it fast and bring people into the solution. When you do a crisis doesn't end you it makes you stronger. Every brand will face setbacks but not all setbacks are the same. Sometimes you need to make something right and sometimes it's just noise. The skill is knowing which one you're facing. When I founded Skims it had a different name. Skims name was Kimono and I had this business idea I didn't think of a name for the business and the team kind of threw out all these names and I loved the name Kimono I knew I wanted my name in it some way but not so blatant. I loved it everyone hated it. When we launched everyone was confused the Japanese government reached out and put out a statement that this garment of clothing a kimono means so much to them and they're so confused and cultural appropriating and it turned into a huge issue right before launch. Some people at first were like oh no it's just noise but then once I realized that it wasn't gonna go away and I thought of how will my future launches look I knew that I had to like stop really think about this let's take a beat but let's do it quickly let's take accountability this name is going to offend some people we never thought about it it wasn't malicious but let's let's change it. And I think I issued a statement fairly quickly like within like two days.

I hear you guys we're gonna make a change I don't know what that new name is but we will change it so just hold a beat and I'll be back and I think that transparency with the customer they felt heard they felt seen they felt like they were a part of the process. And we had like a full deep dive of other names. I posted an Instagram post asking the consumer if they had any names and to help me come up with a name and I already had skims in the back of my head and then I saw a few other names like that come up and it was just such great confirmation that that was it and that people would love it and they felt included. And I think the most important thing is just getting ahead of the narrative always being a step ahead okay we knew that there was drama with the name Kimono let's fix it let's put out there quickly we're gonna change it let's just already be ahead of the whole process as much as we can and we're gonna change it. So I think that's the key to the process. We're gonna change it let's just already be ahead of the whole process as much as we can. Here's the playbook on this acknowledge the mistake fast take accountability make the customer part of the solution move decisively.

We had like a million garments printed I didn't want labels we had them printed on the garments and everyone was like let's just launch and I was like no no no let's just eat the cost and figure it out and get new labels and we'll have to push it back a few weeks because now there's gonna be a label on top of the kimono label and aesthetically it's not my favorite but we have to make a good decision for the business and we're not gonna ruin this launch but we will take a beat and we will tell everyone we change the name and we will reshoot everything and it was the best decision that we ever made. When we launched it was just such a success we knew we made the right decision we changed the name skims is you know so much better for our brand than kimono and we sold out and then it was so crazy we had this launch event in New York and so many people like people in the business that I respect so much like heads of fact like they came up to me and was like you did that whole kimono thing just as a PR thing right and I was like no like that was like it cost us a lot of money and it was really stressful but like people were like that was genius you know way to get so much attention right at launch.

In today's media landscape attention is the currency even critics amplify reach. It did generate a lot of extra press and attention and I think people are really curious to see what's this new logo gonna be what's the new evolution of the name and was it something I picked they loved being a part of the process so really getting ahead of the narrative which seems to be hard these days but in business you can control what you put out. This is your company this is your brand it's what you stand for you just absolutely have to know when to take accountability pivot and move on. There's gonna be so many things thrown at you and when do you take that and just let it roll off which is usually how I roll or when is it enough and you have to stand up and pivot and make a change in something and I think that is something that makes it really tricky of being a celebrity that's running a brand because your personal life does get meshed with the business side of everything. There has to be like this separation of is it a real customer that we know has real concerns and great advice on you know the way that a material could be better or style lines could be better or less compression or something that really has to do with the product or is it just someone that is a complete hater that just isn't a fan of the brand and just wants to put out noise. I think there is a time when we have to discern what's real and what's not real which it's like you can talk about that in a product sense but then also in real life right a great example is our maternity line.

When I was pregnant I always wore shapewear and I did find a brand that had maternity shape or if anything I'm 80 pounds bigger than I was of course I want shapewear to hold me in and something needs to make me feel good about myself. At this point you know so the customer was asking for it at the time when I was breastfeeding I couldn't find a maternity bra that I liked and so I would wear a regular bra and it

was inconvenient to not have the flexibility to be able to breastfeed but to have really comfortable bras that are supportive during that time I think was a necessity you know and and when we launched with that the negativity around it was insane to me. Here's what I learned from that experience. Negativity rarely translates into lost sales unless it impacts core trust. You have to know to trust your gut of course I'm not gonna not continue with a maternity line because there's a lot of noise of women wearing shapewear during pregnancy. If that was something where I'm like in my gut I know what the right thing to do is here and the wrong thing to do and it would be so wrong to completely exclude this group of women from our category just because there was a few nasty stories like that. Just didn't make sense to me. There's noise all the time you just have to know when to listen.

Commandment six: your customer is your co-founder. Treat your customer like a partner. Listen collaborate and build with them. The best ideas come from the people you're creating for.

When I launched skims I don't know what I was thinking but I launched shapewear without a p-hole. Sometimes it's really hard to get shapewear on and so I heard from so many people like we love this jumpsuit but it's so hard to get on and off can you please make a p-hole. So I changed that immediately and I think if you communicate to the customer I hear you guys you are so right they love that and they love feeling like they really had a hand in making your product better and they're a part of the design process and a part of your business feels so special and productive. I'll be at events I mean I was at an event the other day our skims Nike launch someone came up to me and was like can you make the hole like a little bigger because like I peed on myself and I didn't know what to do and I was just like say no more you know I'll I'll change it for you. I'm really open to ideas and I love collaborating with the customers and I do think that that will pay off. There is a big win there when you consider the people that you're making the product for I really do get the mindset of like a creative that wants to do what they want to do and put that out into the marketplace. I fully respect that and I get that but no matter how smart you are the customer decides your success so listen to them I personally love connecting with my customer.

This is what I do when I am on the road and having them feel like they're a part of this brand and help start this with me. Can't wait to show you guys the colors whether it's taking polls and asking for color tones or giving them options and seeing what they like better for packaging ideas or if it's after the product has launched hearing feedback. I was thinking about that yesterday actually I was watching something and someone was really honest and said oh they didn't like this but they liked this and I thought okay I can trust that review because it's super honest they're saying a positive and a negative. I

don't know if the brand would repost that. I would say oh I hear you okay good no do this post a poll asking your customers to choose between two or three versions of something you're working on. Incorporate the feedback into your product or campaign then show them their voice matters. It all comes down to this you have to have your customer in the front of your mind when developing products.

The idea for the adaptive line first came from when we were launching our fits everybody bras and underwears and our lounge sets and it's so stretchy and we were stretching it and we were thinking how can we make this a real collection so that everyone that might have a difficult time getting something on? How do we make that easier and so we consulted with this woman that was in a wheelchair and she gave us like the best advice of like putting it on the side and this is how I would do it and do these like specific snaps. So I wanted to make sure that we represented something that made everyone feel good about themselves feel sexy and we always get an expert opinion someone that can use the product someone that needs the product and I think that's the best way to develop the product.

We want the girls to feel confident but we want to show them also a new confidence of being really simple again that like goes back to the skims DNA and having our taste and our simplicity and knowing what we stand for and our style down to the style of how we shoot people and so no matter what the campaign was about they are just cool. That's how you can really tell that it's a skims campaign. One of the main points when we were launching skims was inclusivity. I couldn't find shapewear that were in shades of nude that matched my skin tone or somewhat close to that let alone all my friends skin tones. I genuinely had an issue not being able to find shade ranges, size ranges, and felt like I wanted to make as many as possible in shapewear and I felt like that was including a lot of people that typically wouldn't have had shapewear before. As far as size inclusivity I wanted to make sure that everyone would have the opportunity to wear my product if they wanted to and so it was just like a no-brainer was just like who we are at our core that goes back to having that strong point of view that ethos of the company. Always sticking to that even if you change some things around if we've never changed our point of view that's worked for us so I couldn't stress more about having what your brand ethos and what you stand for being the like core of how you operate as a business and how you move because people will notice.

When I started skims I never imagined I'd be in an ad campaign alongside all these great athletes celebrating the power of women. That's just like craziness to me. The Nike skims partnership was driven by our customers repeatedly asking for an athletic line and we each bring something to the table. Nike has the best innovation and being able to tap in but then giving our silhouettes and our color tones that might be a little bit more muted for Nike I hope that the

customer just sees how cool this partnership really is bold collaborations expand your audience, create cultural moments and build lasting brand value.

Commandment Seven: culture sets the time.

Culture is a gold mine of information. It tells you where to move next. Our sorority collection began with the cultural phenomenon rush talk. We actually started to see really fun sororities post full fun videos and tick tocks wearing our product and I thought it looked so good and so we started to create these college collections geared towards that audience that age demographic.

Maybe when we first launched our sophisticated hosiery you might not have imagined that later we'd be in sororities but I think you can still see the skims girl behind the different age demographics. You have to look around you and just see what you can utilize and it can come in so many different forms and so many different ideas and once you start looking you'll see potential collaborations everywhere.

Sometimes it's like these just movements of like when skims partnered with Mel's drive-in and we redid their checkered floors to nude and white checkered floors and the booths are all nude and the menus are different and it just looked like fully "skimsified." They had pancakes with like skims butter dripping all over. It was really fun and curated so well and it just gave us such amazing content even though it was only gonna be open for I think a week.

The lines were out the door like people just wanted to be a part of it. There wasn't really a whole lot of money to be made with the skims and Mel's collaboration but sometimes it's more about the the moments and the feelings then it could be even about the sales and that noise can transcend and bring you other collaborations that might be more lucrative in the future.

But the cultural currency is just as important as regular currency.

It does bring that in. Does this make a list of five brands that reach an audience. You don't ask yourself what do they have that I need? What do I have that they're missing? What could we create that neither of us can make alone?

This club has been years in the making. I'm obsessed with North Face. When a brand does a collaboration with another brand I think the whole goal is just to make sure that they leverage each other's audiences and so that they can really create a new customer and it's so much fun to know that this is like a one-time capsule collection.

It creates urgency in the brand and it creates this buzz around the

brand and I think for me that's like Swarovski skims collab because we were able to take these crystals and still skimsify it but really elevate the skims product into a Swarovski product and I hadn't even seen Swarovski make clothes before so it was such like a new innovative fun idea that opened up our world to a whole new audience and vice versa.

Doing that collaboration was so much fun I got to have this like fantasy crystal bling and it was really a beautiful amazing collab when I started KKW Beauty I mean we had no advertising money like I couldn't pay big influencers to be posting and doing tutorials with my products so we went to every micro influencer and we found everyone that was so excited to get the product and they would do the greatest content and then you know we would post that and and it would be a win for us because we would have all this content and then for them it would be a win because now they're getting all this visibility and so I wouldn't get so stuck on having to get the product to all the biggest people I send it to people that are super happy to get the product it is really important to make sure that you have a seeding process of getting people your product get it in people's hands you want to get that feedback you want those focus groups every launch that we have I change up our seeding program it really depends if we're launching Nike skims we want to maybe get it to a few more athletes then we typically would our skims product or beauty products you have to know your audience and then you have to like send it to people that are like mini experts in the field so they will be able to communicate how they feel about it really articulately but then you also want to get it to people that are new to it and will be able to express their excitement over receiving something that they typically wouldn't have received before it's a lot about knowing your customer if you're sending something to a big influencer you have to really see who is following them and who's being influenced by them and taking in that information so you might want to get it to those people in addition to the person that you really want their opinion from so it's really just understanding your customer I've always been underestimated and it's never something that's really bothered me I always love to over deliver where people are pleasantly surprised with the product or my work ethic whatever they thought I really don't live in that space of feeling upset about it if anything I feel motivated by it like okay you're judging me I'm just hustling you I am just grinding I'm just working and like it'll pay off for me at some point and who knows where you will be think what you think you know I'll do what I do.

Commandment eight know your worth and add tax.

Set your price and protect it ask for what only you can bring and then add the premium for how you deliver it I wasn't always the one that was so confident wait Courtney wait just I started off with my sisters

and I would let them make all the decisions and I lived under Courtney whatever Courtney said it was like I kept on saying to her growing up like I don't know what I would do if I didn't have a big sister I love seeing you go first and I just follow and copy everything that you do and I used to be so stuck in that and live in that and feel okay in that position I'm the second child like I'm okay there and then I leaned on my ex husband a lot for advice and opinions and validation but when that relationship ended and I didn't have that connection I was forced to make those decisions by myself and I had to believe I already knew what I liked I just I was stuck I would literally ask like five people do you like this color this color this font or this font you know and now it's just like I'm like this but it took that like cut off for me to be like oh I have no other choice I have to do it on my own and I was like you know what I'm gonna get double the work done if I can just walk straight instead of have to stop a million times to ask everyone what everything means and just seeing all these like really hard workers and really great thinkers and really creative people I just like built my confidence watching how everyone moves and making decisions quickly I am so happy I got into skims knowing my worth at the time and that took a lot of experience and and a lot of failure so if I could tell you to be confident and know your worth going into something that you're starting and knowing how important you are to the brand and that you bring the expertise and you bring the creative and you bring the flavor but I had to learn the hard way not to undervalue myself thank you so much for picking the Kardashians as your favorite e-family we're our favorite family too of course we're crazy but what is your excuse nothing you don't have an excuse we did a makeup line once and we called it chroma it's a licensing deal and they can use our name for the time being our deal was that we got a royalty payment of 6% of sales and so that 6% was split between Courtney Chloe and I we each got 2% and then from that 2% we had to pay our agency that brought us the deal that was 15% and then we had to pay my mom 10% of a management fee and we're traveling the world and we're doing photo shoots and we're not getting paid this whole time we're waiting for the sales of the royalty to get that and they told us that was business standard is like you know 6% is like amazing an amazing royalty and if it's a multi-billion dollar business great but it was a zero dollar business so I mean I couldn't even tell you what we got from that and we're like finally look up and are like why are we traveling here and here to promote something and have you seen a check well no wait have you seen a check how is this making any sense like we're not really making a lot from it so once we were out of the deal KKW Beauty happened and that was like something that changed my whole life I was really running a business on my own I wasn't depending on my sisters for their opinions and so that was like the first time I was stepping away and doing something on my own and it was so scary we built that up to a billion dollar business in five years with just a staff of four people I think I had to go through all of these deals bad deals things that didn't work out the way that I wanted it to to figure out that I knew what I was gonna bring to the

table do this know your worth ask yourself what can I do that others can't copy what do people already seek me out for if I walked away what would break your answers to these three questions set your base value in the market now add tax the tax is the premium you can demand after delivering results repeatedly knowing your worth is extremely important can you imagine if skims was one of those deals that I did that an agent brought in and my man like and everyone just took a piece and I got six percent I wouldn't feel appreciated I wouldn't feel I would have felt like oh this deal is being done to me and I'm being used but instead I feel appreciated because I knew my worth you have to work really hard to get to where you want to get to and there's no shortcuts people want a big outcome but they don't necessarily want to put in the tough work that comes along with it it's just super simple if you put in the work you will see a better result no matter what that is super simple if you put in the work you will see a better result no matter what that is.

Commandment nine empires are built before dawn.

Protect the hours no one sees. Own the vision but hire for what you don't have. Set the standard and let the experts do their job. I have moved so many things in my life around for time efficiency. This office for example, seven minutes away from my house. I'm able to take my kids to school. I have everything really micromanaged. I love to like double up on certain things. I take phone calls even when I'm in the shower and then when I work out I can take calls. I'll do calls when I'm in fittings. I always have to voice talk because sometimes I'm like can't type it quick enough. Can you bring my computer to the office.

So it's like managing it all and sometimes you just have to be a mom and do what you got to do. You really have to manage your time well. Everything is like down to the minute. Your routines are your lifeline when things are intense. Establish your own discipline that's the base of good business strategy. I knew how to hustle back when I was selling headbands but I had to learn how to work with others starting with my sisters

When we first started Dash, Chloe was 19, I was 23, and Courtney was 24. They were both really into fashion. I was working at my dad's office and so when he passed he left us a little bit of money. You know it wasn't a crazy whole lot of money but it was enough to secure a lease on a property and then we were able to get a credit card first solely in Courtney's name because she had the best credit. So she would do all the ordering and we didn't have a history of you know being able to pay vendors back on time so we had to pay for everything up front. We figured that out together. I mean we didn't have an accountant we didn't have anything to have like started rocking up credit card bills and use all of your savings.

Like how much a runway did you have at that point Chloe might know you can call her hey really quick that's what I thought. Okay I'll shout you out you did the taxes legal zoom okay bye. I got some good intel so we would purchase all of the inventory on Courtney's credit card. We would pay just the minimum every month when the credit card bill would come. This is probably the worst advice because you probably should be paying your credit card bill off but we just didn't have the money. So Courtney, Chloe, and I each had these roles. Courtney would go to these shows, basically where different designers like showcase all their stuff. My job, I felt like, okay I'll bring all the customers. I'll come in for special customers and I could bring the clothes to their house and do personal styling. Then we really all needed each other and I think that was a really good lesson for all of us to figure out. Like okay we have this one goal and we know we can't do it on our own. You need great partners and you need that trust and you need just a lot of things to be aligned and in sync for something to really take off and work well.

My sisters and I worked really hard and we worked really well together. We delegated responsibilities to each other and I'm really convinced that you are so much better with the team. It's okay to not know everything. It's okay to ask for help and it doesn't mean that you're not competent. I think that's really important for people just to know when they have to let go of some control or when to know that you don't know. There's some people that just know more things than you in that particular area. It is really important to be able to do smart hires and make sure that you can let go of some of that power and that control.

I don't think you realize how much getting that time back is so valuable and it's so much better spent in other areas and it won't lose like the feeling of the business. I have a business partner that I work with, Jens, who controls basically all of back-of-house, all of our staffing, all of our distribution, all of our factories. I do all of the creative. I come up with all the marketing. I do all of the photo shoots and fabrics and the fits so we really know what our lane is. It works really well together. Jens and I, we always want to be on the same team.

We sat for a while and talked about what our goals are and how to align them from the start and then we both brought in trusted people that we feel like we can really delegate to if everyone's aligned it can be beautiful it's almost impossible to over communicate connect often listen intentionally and your conversations will be more productive.

Delegating it wasn't something that I always loved. As someone that loves to be in control and it was really hard for me but once you find your people and that you really trust and you've hired them for their

expertise and you trust their decisions it's golden. The right team can make or break your business. Here are six things I look for in an employee. I love working with people that want to be there for the long haul. Meticulous organized. Thinks three steps ahead. Be a team player. No job is too small. No job is too big. Like even if it's not your wheelhouse you figure it out.

Do this. Build one ritual. Choose one before dawn, habit, and do it the same time every day this week. Test the payoff. Track what compounds after seven days. Did you finish more? Did you think more clearly? Did people notice? Your work ethic sets the bar for everyone on the team. Just don't confuse working hard with being hard on people.

One lesson: if I could give to anyone it's being easy to work with goes a long way. Obviously you should stand up for what you want and get what you want, but you can also get that with being kind. Just being kind to everyone it seems really simple but you'd be surprised and those are conversations I've even had with my sisters and my family, but like there's nothing funnier and crazier when someone talks like this and then when they're done they like scream with their glam team and like it's like a such a different personality.

I've seen it so much and it's just crazy to me. Don't touch me. I'm just kidding. very Christian.

Lara Adekoya runs a bakery in LA. Fleurs et Sel. It's got a loyal following and the business is growing. During the pandemic, she got furloughed from her job as a sales rep at a high-end department store and started baking cookies out of her apartment. She did doorstep drop-offs, curbside pickups, pop-ups, whatever worked. Four years later she's got a storefront and a product people want but the business still depends on her for pretty much everything and now if she wants to scale she needs a strategy.

I'll have a little bite of the chocolate chip just to get started. mmmmm. Really moist. Milk chocolatey. Yes. I love that. Thank you. I love that.

So we have pictures from the site. Your Instagram is really well curated. Thank you. It definitely makes you want to taste it. You can smell it from just looking at the pictures.

One thing I'm struggling with is how important is it for me to keep my face in front of my brand and how can I build a brand that maybe stands on its own without my face everywhere?

It's important to have your face on it for a while okay and at the beginning for sure because people love a story and they love to see where you came from. Everyone loves a good founder story, absolutely.

I would keep that, but it is a lot of pressure, yeah. I find joy in all parts of it. Like I do all of the marketing. I do all of the photography. I do all of the baking right. I've had this kind of DIY attitude where I've done everything myself.

Mm-hmm.

How do I grow?

Mm-hmm.

Accomplish the goals of scaling and all of that I think that is a real struggle.

On one hand you want to be really confident and know that like no one is you so no one can do what you do. So it is okay to find someone to delegate. Finding people that you really trust to start meeting all of your customers, them knowing this person by name, hmm, I get how scary that is but you do have to make that leap if you want to be able to do things. Like how are you gonna be able to come up with the social media posts, new recipes unless you're doing that all at nighttime when the shop is closed or in between when there's maybe not you know a ton of customers in in the store. You have to make that move where there's so much at stake for your business. Nothing is ever going to be like perfect. I know you think it is when it's in your hands right but like as long as it's like 99% to your standard that 1% is worth the peace of mind to be able to do other things that will grow your business.

That's great advice. It's just the battles you have to pick yeah.

So if you're here right now who's running the store?

We're actually closed today because I'm here.

That's kind of a problem. Just knowing that if you step away for a meeting your whole business has to close down for the day, right?

So it's definitely a sacrifice that I've been making.

The quality of the product is a plus, that won't change, right, but it's not like your customers, no offence, it's not like they're only coming in to see you. They want your amazing cookies right? I'm sorry. Gonna buy it from your place even if it's someone else that hands it to them, right? Getting to the first level of success is hard and growing to the next level is even harder. Delegation gives you the time to focus on growth. I think if you think of immediate next steps higher one or two people if you can. Someone to do the social media and someone to run the store for you and then I think really just

brainstorm on new ideas or little holiday ideas or whatever you think can make these little viral moments for your brand and your business to really stand out. I think is really important. I think that's great advice. I think you have such a great business and I just wish you the best of luck. I know you're gonna do amazing things.

Commandment 10 because I said so.

Embrace who you are. Work hard and pay it forward. At a younger age when I first started to want to sell things and work I saw that fight and those entrepreneur skills really from my dad and his brother they were always bouncing ideas off of each other working together and when my mom and my dad got a divorce my mom quickly remarried my stepdad and they didn't have a lot and so to see my mom get her manager's license and her agent's license I just saw her figure it out and completely change their world.

As a family we had something important and if you don't have it you need to figure out how to build it around you and that's support family support friends support no matter what you do surrounding yourself with. People that want to see you win I love being the biggest cheerleader to my friends and family and I feel that same love from them to having that support system when you're coming up and having those people you can talk to where it's a safe space is so important and is so underestimated not talked about but you can go so far when you have someone that really believes in you and I just love this like molded packaging because starting a business from scratch is the hardest thing in the world.

It's like birthing a baby there's these like ebbs and flows of when you're so proud and confident of a business you built and then you think it's like done and then you come up with another idea it's so fascinating how it works that way and sometimes being an entrepreneur feels impossible when you have a vision. When your gut tells you this is where you should be that's where you should be let's talk about scams you'll just never know unless you try. I couldn't live with the what if that's just not who I am. If you even have a question and you're wanting to try go for it.

So take my commandments. Forge through my wins, my mistakes and everything in between. Now make them your own because I said so. I feel like that teenage girl learned it all and all my missteps and everything that I was supposed to learn I was supposed to learn and I love those lessons no matter how hard they were. No matter what I went through I always say like life would be so boring if it was always perfect. I feel like that version of me if she saw me now would be like holy shit. Like I can't believe that this is your life and I can't believe that this is where you are. It's just beyond anything I ever imagined and I want that for you too. You'll face challenges but

don't get stuck. Each obstacle is a chance to improve and get better and that's just my mindset. Okay we have to work harder. Cool. We're gonna work harder. Doesn't matter what the roadblock is it just matters that we get to the finish line. Let's do it