

# THE SUCCESSFUL FEMALE FOUNDER

Female Founder Spotlight: Kerstin Bognár



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In the latest of our Female Founder Spotlights we caught up with Kerstin Bognar of The Niche Traveller to discover more about her entrepreneurship journey.

"I spent many years working as an editor and journalist and, before I had children, I travelled extensively. I really enjoyed discovering new places, meeting new people, eating food I didn't even know that it existed. I was always curious to dive into foreign cultures and was ambitious to create my own company one day. At the start I didn't know what it would be, but somehow I mixed my passion with my entrepreneurial spirit and suddenly the idea of creating a niche travel brand for discerning families with a pioneering spirit came alive.

#### **How did the idea come to you for the company?**

After becoming a parent I suddenly realised how tricky it can be to travel with children. It starts with the journey and with finding accommodation that is family-friendly but still chic and boutique. I knew that I wanted to continue travelling to off the beaten track places but these places now had to work for us as a family, with four boys of differing ages. And so, The Niche Traveller was born and I decided to create a business curating hand-picked and sustainable accommodation in up and coming destinations, as well as organising tailor-made family trips.

#### **How did you achieve awareness?**

First we built our website and social media channels and we've always tried to be true to ourselves, to share only high-quality content. This was appreciated by our followers, fans and partners.

#### **How have you been able to gain funding and grow?**

So far our company is family financed. We started doing business at the beginning of last year. 3 months later Covid-19 hit our lives. We decided to go through this, continue developing, growing and sharpening our offer and then catch the moment, when travelling is returning.



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**What are the key successes?**

Our key success was the launch of our club membership. Clients are now signing up for their membership online before we start to interact with them. Currently we are seeing a strong demand for personal advice and consultancy, particularly because of the pandemic. Another of our key successes are the many well-known travel partners we are collaborating with in the industry. These exclusive owner-managed properties alongside well-known international brands such as Rocco Forte, Experimental Group and Belmond.

**What were/are the challenges and how have you overcome these?**

The biggest challenge has been knowing how to navigate through the pandemic, when travel hasn't been allowed. However our membership and partnership model is showing success, so we are on the right track.

**What are your plans now/for the future?**

We will continue telling our story, communicating on the value proposition, gaining more awareness, building a team, expanding and deepening our relationship with our members- and partners. We have quite a few new ideas that we are already testing.

**What would you like to share with others to encourage them to start their own entrepreneurship journey?**

Listen to yourself. Ask yourself, are you ready to take the risk, and what can you give to this new venture? Going on an entrepreneurial journey is not like going for a walk. You need people who believe in you, and most importantly, you need to believe in yourself. Then entrepreneurship in return will be exciting, demanding, fast and furious and an experience you won't miss in your professional life.



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**Can you share your top tips for entrepreneurial success?**

Believe in yourself and your idea, even if others don't understand it at first.

Build a small team of sparring partners, employees and supporters, who believe in you and your idea.

Think big, even when there is a headwind.

Don't let setbacks intimidate you.

Having great goals is good, the persistence to achieve them is even better. But for the big win you also need luck and the right moment.

Don't go for the short run, opt for the marathon.

**Who are the 5 people who inspire you the most?**

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow for her courage to completely reinvent herself with her lifestyle brand Goop

Airbnb's CEO Brian Chesky for his courage to do an IPO while the pandemic was already in full swing

German politician Annalena Baerbock for her talent, toughness, ambition and fair play to become the first ever chancellor candidate of the Green party.

Artist Marina Abramovic for being a constant inspiration.



My former colleague at ELLE magazine, Delia Lachance, who founded the interior-focused shopping club Westwing.

**What are your favourite inspirational /motivational quotes?**

“Whoever has no courage to dream has no strength to fight”

and a quote from Arundhati Roy’s “God of small things”: „There's no time to lose I heard her say, catch your dreams before they slip away.”

**What are your social handles and website links so our readers can connect**

**with you?**

Web: <https://niche-traveller.com/en>

Instagram: @thenichetraveller