



Inside BrandONE with SARAH VAN AKEN

ACHIEVING THE PERFECT ENTREPRENEURIAL BALANCE



In her downtime, Sarah Van Aken teaches Yoga and Ayurveda – the traditional Indian system of medicine. For this BrandONE Developer, the beauty of aligning mind, body and spirit goes well beyond the studio.

In fact, Sarah has tapped inner poise, truth and harmony in every stage of her remarkable career, most of which she describes as entrepreneurial. One glance at her list of business accomplishments, and you'll see experience that stretches across many ventures.

"When I'm faced with a potential opportunity, I like to keep an open mind on all the possibilities and the best ways to get there," she says. "Usually, the journey is as amazing as the destination."

Early on, Sarah launched the residential arm of a commercial real estate and development firm. She excelled in property, but eventually shifted her

energy toward a completely different industry. Sarah has always had an eye for aesthetic, so she pivoted, founding and nurturing three successful fashion companies.

"I really loved design and the challenge of growing brands," Sarah says. "At my core, I guess I've always had a passion for building small businesses. In that moment, those particular concepts afforded me the best of both worlds."

Still, Sarah's ambition to create only flourished, inspiring her to continue making big moves. She'd switch gears several more times in her entrepreneurial push. At one

point, she even channeled her branding, marketing, and design skills to ease onto the greeting cards scene. Once there, she became an absolute force! Sarah collaborated with a former Hallmark CEO to build a \$135 million social expression business. Today with BrandONE, Sarah leverages her business knowledge and teacher's heart to lead others to the right franchise for them.

"I really enjoy helping people through transitions that bring them meaning and a more flexible lifestyle," she says. "At the end of the day, that's really what everyone wants."

Sarah – who's often called on to mentor women in business

– subscribes to a pay it forward mindset. She most appreciates the opportunity to evolve brands and individuals who serve the greater good.

"Regardless of what I'm working on, I've always remained true to my goal of incorporating a social mission in each endeavor," she says. "That's extremely important to me, and I feel it's guided me on my successes."

When it comes to recruiting high-quality candidates for the brands she represents, Sarah regularly shares one mantra: You don't have to go it alone.

"As a franchisee, you're in business for yourself but not by yourself," she explains.

"Your business is much more scalable when it's a franchise, and you have a collaborative network of support at your disposal. It's about being surrounded by others who can relate to your vision and needs, showing you the best path forward."

