

Giving Creative Talents a Boost

Written by Vinil Ramdev

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Meet Shreya Bajaj, She's a 22 year old CA student from Bangalore and she has already ventured into her first business. Her business, her dream is called ItsHandMade. ItsHandMade.in is an online platform for creative people to share and sell their creations. The venture has already taken off in full swing and Shreya is all excited about this project. Find below, an extract of an interview with this young entrepreneur.

Please tell us something about yourself and your company?

I'm Shreya Bajaj - a 22 year old CA Final student from Bangalore. I have always been a dreamer, and have had an urge to try something different and challenge myself to make my ideas come to life. Backed by three generations of entrepreneurs, I have inherited a strong business sense, but with a touch of artistic charm.

ItsHandMade is a one-stop shop to showcase creative and undiscovered art, design and craft skills. ItsHandMade is for all those who love to create little pieces of magic and for those who love to collect them. For artists to help understand the market and for the others waiting to paint their lives with precious handmade gems.

ItsHandMade, the dream, was created to give an opportunity to all the creative people around us to share their creations on a common platform. In an artistically populous country like ours, we felt the need to give sellers an identity of their own without having to invest in websites and marketing tools. The dream is to give people a reason to create art all the time as a means to a livelihood, instead of just a hobby.

What we are hoping for is to connect creators to collectors who have always had an eye for original creations. To do away with the middlemen and help buyers understand the origin behind these creations. To help them build a relationship and share a magical space where everyone learns to share and fall in love with everything handmade.

How did you start off as an entrepreneur? Was it an accident or did you always want to be an entrepreneur?

This is something that I knew was going to happen! I just didn't know when, where and how. The day this idea came to my mind, I had a sleepless night - And i knew that this was it! The

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reality can be better than the dream and I started off the very next day.

What are your primary reasons for being an entrepreneur?

I'm backed by three generations of entrepreneurs and hence knew that this was something in my genes. The urge to be an entrepreneur was very natural. But for me the biggest motivation has always been impact, reaching as many people as possible with the work you do. To make a difference. And I felt being an entrepreneur was the only way out.

I've also seen the impact my Dad has made in the lives of many. I've heard his stories a hundred thousand times. And, my respect grows for him by the day. ItsHandMade is my attempt at being like my Dad.

Tell us more about your company ItsHandMade.in, what is the mission of this company and what do you aspire to achieve out of it?

ItsHandMade is a network of like minded individuals who are either creators or collectors. ItsHandMade is a marketplace provider. People don't need to invest in a website or inventory or deal with hassles like Payment Gateway and Logistics. We like our sellers to leave the operations side to us and for them to focus on doing what they are good at - creating magic.

We also aspire to be a one-stop shop for everything handmade, through our blogs and social media pages. And, our Activity Board lists workshops, melas and flea market sales happening in the city. As a CSR exercise for us, we give NGO's a portal to sell handmade creations for no cost. And encourage people to make donations at the comfort and ease of their home and getting a piece of treasure in return.

What are your future plans for ItsHandMade.in? How do you envision the future of ItsHandMade?

I envision ItsHandMade to be a fairytale marketplace to sell and buy unique things. Delightful little creations made out of passion, by luck or by chance. A place where people would come by to have some fun, to spread a little cheer, to brighten up a gloomy day. I hope for it to be an eCommerce Portal with a lot of heart.

In the future, we'd like to get on board the rural artisans, the home of fine arts in India and to get NGO's on board who support artisans making products and wish to showcase them.

What do you want to see happen in the coming 5 years?

To bring in more professionalism in the art/craft space. A place of inspiration for all things nice. A one-stop shop to showcase art, craft and design skills. A feast to the buyers eye - to have a prerogative of choice even in all things unique. Once the idea is sold, we will definitely sell our

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products in large numbers too.

What have been your key learning since starting your business?

I'd say dealing with people. I've realised how important 'listening' has been. You needn't have to follow everything people say. But listening is important. You never know when and where that helps. Other than that, integrity and honesty pays. So do good. It'll all pay-off.

Is there anything you regret?

Nothing at all. Every action has only made me richer in experience.

What have been your biggest mistakes so far?

I have made mistakes but nothing that is so big that I can count it down as one incident and title it.

What advice would you give a young entrepreneur just starting-off in business? What to do and what not to do?

1. We all have had a business idea at one point of time or other. If something really stirs you - Just go for it. Give yourself a chance. You will have nothing to lose. You will only get to learn.
2. Believe in your idea. Hope, Pray and Work Hard. And leave the rest to that faith you believe in.
3. Document everything. You never know when its going to come of use.
4. Grab every opportunity that comes your way.
5. Do what you love and love what you do.
6. Keep learning. Keep growing.

Who is your role model? What did you learn from your role model?

My parents are my role models. The most important thing that I have learned from them is - no matter what you do, do good. They have taught me to be brave and not be afraid of failure. To stand up for what I believe in. To stay hungry and foolish, always.