

RAISING KIDS > MONEY

Motherhood Propelled This Entrepreneur to Build a Multi-Million Dollar Hair Extension Empire

Alexandra Cristin, a plus-size model turned entrepreneur, started her Glam Seamless at 23 with just \$1,000. Here's how motherhood bolstered her success.

By [Maressa Brown](#) | Published on July 16, 2020



When Alexandra Cristin found out she was pregnant, she was running her successful premium hair extension company, [Glam Seamless](#), from her two-bedroom apartment alongside two employees: her mom and her friend, Hayley. The then 26-year-old was on a roll. Three years after founding Glam Seamless with just \$1,000, the business was earning \$2 million in revenue. "I thought to myself, 'This is like the worst time to have a child,'" she says. "I thought, 'How am I going to run my business and be a good, involved mother?' I didn't want to do less than my absolute best in each one of those areas."

Scared about how she was going to "balance it all," Cristin committed to creating more division between her professional and personal lives. "I decided to get an office down the street because I wanted my home to be

my home and my work to be my work, and I knew it would be hard to separate the two," she explains.

After that, she zeroed in on pushing even harder as an entrepreneur. "I needed to scale up quicker and faster so I could have more income," she says. To do that, she learned to ask for help by hiring a baby nurse and adding additional employees to her team.

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Cristin's drive lasted throughout her pregnancy and extended after she welcomed her daughter, Ava. Her upbringing served as a guide for keeping her nose to the grindstone. "My mom was a single mom and a paralegal," says Cristin. "All I had was this vision of a really hard-working mom and that's where I get my work ethic. Finances and financial freedom was very important to me."

With that in mind, during the first year of Ava's life, Cristin resolved to not only balance motherhood and her business—but to find ways for one to fuel the other. "I was able to realize there's no shame here," she says. "I'm a mom and I work. I felt like I had a superpower. I thought, not only am I taking care of a baby and making sure that she's safe and fed and entertained, I'm nurturing a business and creating jobs and growing something that's going to impact hundreds of thousands of other people through our products and services and how we make them feel."

Now, Cristin, who grew Glam Seamless' revenue from \$2 to nearly \$20 million, believes that having a baby made her a better business owner. She shares her advice and insights on reframing the pressures of being a mom and an entrepreneur, setting yourself up to succeed, and harnessing the lessons and responsibilities of parenthood to bolster your business.

See Pressure as a Privilege

Cristin encourages moms to go after their dreams, even if it might initially feel like they're adding to an already full plate. One reason: She believes strongly in the expression that "pressure is a privilege."

"Not everyone gets the beautiful opportunity to be an entrepreneur, so it's a privilege," explains Cristin. "And when you're under pressure, you're more accountable and productive. Motherhood definitely made me more accountable. You have to be 100 percent more responsible for your health, your finances, and your child."

All of that accountability proved motivating for Cristin. "For me, the reality was that both my business and the baby were going to be there at the same time, so it forced me to figure it out quickly," she says.

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Get Organized When You're Expecting

Cristin recommends reframing pregnancy as an opportunity to get all your ducks in a row. "Make as many smart decisions as you can for your lifestyle and how you're going to integrate your work life into your new busy family life and your new baby," she advises. "Having a lot of clarity and making decisions early on will be very helpful."

You'll do well to take a step back and think about what you want parenthood to look like and the necessary groundwork to achieve your vision. One example: "If you can afford to hire more people, a nanny or someone to watch over the business, either one will help you have a better return on your business," notes Cristin. "Say you want to stay home and cut back your salary to have someone else grow the business. That's a smart investment, but it is going to take time to find the right person to hire." That said, the earlier you get the ball rolling, the better.

Embrace Short-Term Sacrifice for Long-Term Gains

When Cristin was pregnant, her midwife said something that she repeats to this day: "You have permission to work." Even though she took the statement in, Cristin felt guilty after welcoming her daughter and hiring a night nurse and a nanny and working long hours. "It felt horrible, but three and a half years later, all of that extra work and hours has paid off financially," she says. "And now my child is three-and-a-half, and I can spend more time with her."

That's one of the reasons she urges parents to look at their big picture vision and consider how hard work is going to help their child and family in the long run. "Sacrifice is a part of success," says Cristin. "Let long-term rewards drive you—not the fear of the small moments that you might miss out on during early childhood. At the end of the day, do what you need to do to get ahead."

Prioritize Self Care

Cristin urges moms to continue to engage in activities that make them whole, whether that's squeezing in a regular spa trip or working out. "When you have a business and a child, you can't stop socializing or [practicing] self-care," she says. "I became miserable when I didn't do that."

What's more, the time-out will help you be more productive by freeing up headspace and amplifying a sense of centeredness. "It really helped me to

headspace and amplifying a sense of control. It really helped me to carve out time for myself when I didn't have work and I didn't have the baby," says Cristin. "I found those moments to be quiet times when I could think, 'What can I do next?' I could make better decisions for the business and for my personal life."

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Find Inspiration in Setting an Example for Your Child

Modeling strength and success for her daughter has proven to be a main source of motivation and inspiration for Cristin. "I think it is really important as a woman to be independent and doing work that you love," she says. "I truly do love my business, I love hair extensions, and I love the power of transformation."

Years from now, Cristin hopes Ava grows up to recognize the empowerment and wide variety of rewards that comes from working hard on a business you love. It's then that Cristin believes her daughter will understand what a life of passion and success looks like.

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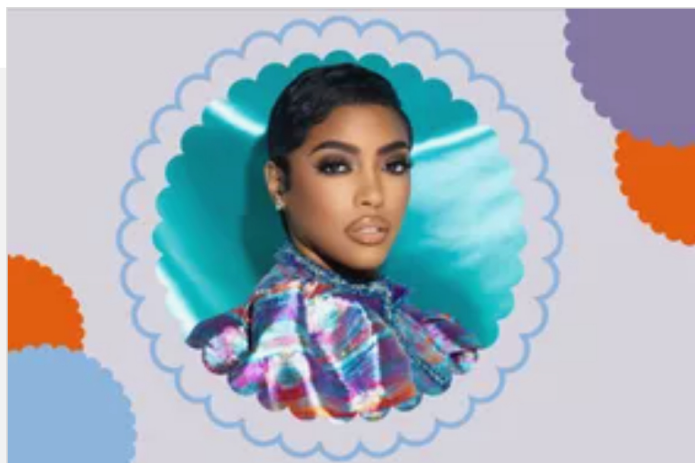
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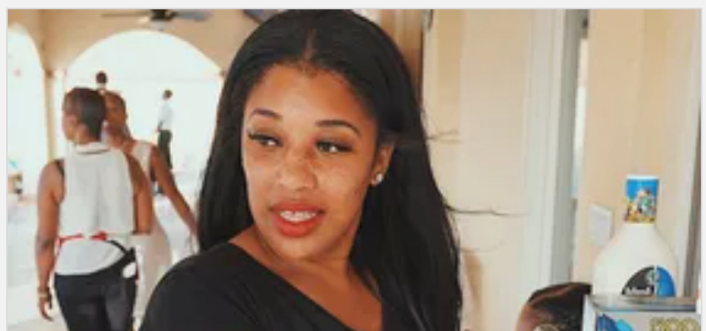
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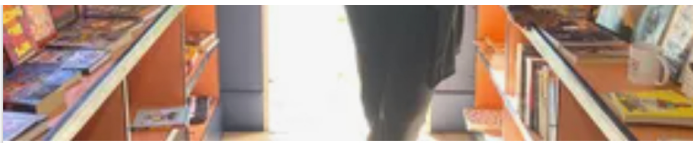


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