



SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

*Edited By Jacqueline Dose*

*Successful Women in Business Innovation Edition*

Edited by Jacqueline Rose

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Published by Lovely Silks Publishing 2017

*Successful Women In Business*  
*Innovation Edition*



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Transitioning from being an employee to running my own company is a big change. There are a few risks, decisions and paths I took that worked particularly well and may help you too.

***Sarah Giblin - Turning The World's Backpacks Around***

These past few years have taught me that courage was the most important ingredient to set me on the path that was right for me.

I found the courage to accept myself and my dreams.

***Melissa Nicholls- From The Jungle To The Vines***

You have control over getting that new job that works with your life and family so take control and make it happen.

***Colleen Wong – Yes! We Can Have It***

Owning your own business is a big learning curve. You need to be open and accept advice of those that have been there before, those that have tried and failed and those that have tried and succeeded.

***Katie Clayton – Dreams & Realities Can Be The Same***

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. I've invested time and money in some stupid things over the years, but at least I wasn't frightened to have a go.  
Keep your entrepreneurial spirit and don't die wondering, 'what if?'  
Remember, nothing venture nothing gained.

***Irene Manson – CareCallingNow***

We become wiser, stronger, and more hopeful.  
We more passionately strive for our dreams...  
And we succeed like never before.

***Rosalind Cardinal – Life's Lessons***

Let's support one another in our achievements and endeavours. There is no better satisfaction than shaking up our preconceived beliefs about ourselves and proving ourselves right.

***Anne Block – Female Entrepreneur Manifesto***

Small changes can create **big shifts**.  
Learning begins **outside your comfort zone** – *Monika*

"You can buy everything in this life  
except experience, that you must earn" - *Hiam*

***Hiam Sakakini & Monika Gisler – ThinkChangeGrow***

The overall point I am making is for me, the love of business is key to the success of my now online business. How about you?

***Renee Blackwell – The Birth Of A Jewellery Business***



So ask yourself this: what do you choose in your life?  
How do you want to show up every day?  
And what do you truly fear?

***Nora Wendel - My Fear Of Success & How To Show Up Every Day***

My voice is often soft but the words I say are strong. After all, women having opinions is a wonderful thing that can only benefit us all.

***Junko Kemi - From The Boardroom To The Catwalk***

Whilst it is crucial to work towards a healthy profit margin if a business is to make a change in the world for good, that company must have a healthy perspective on what will benefit its customer, its suppliers and the community at large.

***Judith Treanor - Profit Or Purpose And Personal Fulfilment?***

Learn To Celebrate Yourself - guess what? You are not perfect. And you know what? You don't have to be. Learn to accept yourself and love yourself. Don't beat yourself up for all your failures and weaknesses instead; celebrate your strengths and successes.

***Christine Khor - Create the Life You Want***

Life is good, not because I'm jet setting around the world but because when I come home, I do so to a loving family.

A home of giggles, happy children and a husband that appreciates the life we have together, a real man who loves my children like his own, and in laws that mean the world to me.

***Lorena Öberg - From Self-Doubt To Self-Accomplishment***

*Don't forget to Embrace-Life, Love and Each Other.*

***Rosie Shalhoub – Embracing Rosie***

*Stay focused on what you believe in. It sounds obvious, maybe a little cheesy, but I have often repeated this mantra to myself over the years, especially when things get tricky.*

***Emma Coleman - From Nurse to Holistic Skin Specialist***



*The thought leaders who contributed to this book:*

Sarah Giblin – Turning The World’s Backpack Around

Melissa Nicholls – From Jungle To The Vines

Colleen Wong – Yes We Can Have It All!

Irene Manson – CareCallingNow

Katie Clayton – Dreams & Realities Can Be The Same

Rosalind Cardinal – Life’s Lessons

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Emma Coleman - From Nurse to Holistic Skin Specialist

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*Welcome to Successful Women in Business  
Innovation Edition*



Women entrepreneurs are rarely satisfied with the status quo: Instead they strive to build the world in the way it should be rather than abiding by a system that's potentially archaic or outdated. During the course of researching this book we have come to realise that breaking down barriers for women in the workplace is key to success for companies and for countries.

That's the message we hope you will pick up from this book. When more and more women are seen at the top of organisations and running high growth technology businesses, the more this will be regarded as the standard and a perfectly normal, and logical, path to choose.

Starting a company, or managing a company through a period of transition and growth, can be a riveting roller coaster of emotions with tremendous highs and at times, difficult lows. But despite the challenges, many women have risen to become leaders and influential figures in their respective areas. *Successful Women In Business Innovation Edition* recognizes and celebrates the outstanding contribution made by individual women to their businesses and, in many cases, their local communities.

The business leaders profiled in this book are of various ages, social backgrounds and industries. However, the one common thread which unites them is that they dared to believe. And, in believing, they made the seemingly impossible a reality.

Their individual stories tell of the challenges we all face: uncertainty, fear, discouragement, hope, commitment and yes, that indefinable, illogical and yet all-consuming belief that we will succeed against all odds. These are real-life individual stories of success that I hope will also encourage you to believe - and to make that difference.

*Jacqueline*

Jacqueline Rose, Lovely Silks Publishing

## *Turning The World's Backpacks Around*

I had never considered running my own company before I had the RiutBag idea. I can tell you now, whilst there have been plenty of lows attached to the highs, the last three years have been the best of my life. Having ideas, and doing all the hard work to make them happen, is something I would recommend to anyone. And I believe we all - everyone of us - has the skills and knowledge to do it now. You can see what I do and why I do it online at [www.riut.co.uk](http://www.riut.co.uk)

### ***How Things Change***

I write this in a hotel room in distant Fujian province, China. I've just finished checking and signing off the 17,000th RiutBag - the secure backwards backpack - at the factory. They are now heading by road in a 20 foot container to Xiamen, one of the world's busiest shipping ports, before completing a 30 day trip by sea to England.

Three years ago, with no guarantees, I had given up my job and was spending my life's saving on a prototyping company who were helping me make an idea I had dreamt up into a fully functioning, physical object. Yet, just a year before, this plan did not exist. In fact, at that point, I was doing two things: 1) Going to my 9-5 office job every day doing marketing for a small financial services company in my home town, Reading in England. When I wasn't there, I was doing the other thing I did. 2) Flying. I have no idea how many flights I took a year at that point, but with a boyfriend in Germany and a job in England, it meant that I gave most of my hard earned cash to budget airlines.

### ***Lightbulb Moments***

I did have a lightbulb moment, although I didn't realise it fully at the time. I believe the real lightbulb moments we have, the best ones, happen in the most mundane situations. They happen when you're tired, you've had enough and you wish you had something to solve your situation.

Mine was on a Friday night after a long week. I had arrived at the office at 07:15 that morning because I had to catch the 17:00 train to the airport for a weekend in Berlin. Everyone knew I was off because I had a particularly full backpack refusing to fit properly under my desk. By the time I left, I had my laptop, a work laptop, my phone, the work phone and all my belongings for a wintery weekend away.

The train was packed, so I stood for the 1.5 hour journey with a heavy backpack on the stopping train from Reading to Gatwick airport. Huge airport security queues meant I had to rush to get to my gate. We landed at 22:30, the seatbelt sign flashed off and the impossible moment - when 140 travellers fail to coordinate with each other as they grab their luggage and try to get off the plane - began. We all just wanted to go home.

That's when it happened. I accidentally leant into the backpack of the guy in front of me whilst we were waiting to get off. You could tell from his whole demeanour that he was bothered by it. He took his backpack off, took out his passport and phone from the back pocket, put his backpack back on and stuffed them in his pockets.

He couldn't trust me and it showed. There wasn't much I could do about it, since I was on a crammed plane of people and luggage where we were likely to come into contact. The next moment, the guy behind me heavily pushed into my backpack. My brain went into micro-crisis mode too: "where's my wallet? Where's my passport? Where are my keys?"

And then I stopped myself. The guy in front of me was clearly uncomfortable that I was so close to his backpack, yet, I was just another passenger! I wasn't trying to steal from him. And even though I was aware of this, when someone touched my backpack, I found myself checking zips, making sure everything was there and that they hadn't stolen anything. Yet, if I thought this through, from my life experience I know that someone brushing past my backpack is not always someone stealing from me. We are all stressing ourselves out even more than we need to with our beloved backpacks.

In a flash I thought, "I wish my backpack were the other way round. No zips on the outside, just all against my back so that I can just travel around without ever having to think about theft or losing something."

### ***Have I Really Had An Idea?***

In the coming months I did not set up a company and start prototyping; I simply doubted my own ability to use the internet. I searched for this backwards backpack online. I found nothing. But this didn't alert me to the fact I had had an idea at all. I honestly thought I was using the wrong words to look for it. My searches for safer backpacks were bringing up backpacks with nets over them or locks on the zips. Not one looked like the thing I was looking for.

I dropped my search because life called. I went back to work, travel, work, travel, work. Yet, in the back of mind there was something growing. Travelling so much meant that I saw thousands of backpacks every week. I found myself eyeing up each one, looking for the illusive backwards backpack that I hadn't managed to find in any shops.

It wasn't until many months later when I was sitting with friends in London at breakfast. There was a small lull in the conversation and I found these words come out of my month.

"So, I've been thinking about something lately. I just can't get it out of my head."

"What's that?"

I paused as I formulated for the first time the thing that I had been thinking.

"I think all backpacks in the world are the wrong way round."

"What?"

"It's like this: the person behind you can get into your backpack more easily than you can. I think that's really weird. It means you constantly think someone might be opening your zips."

"Yes...?"



“So wouldn’t it be better if you took all the zips off the outside of a backpack and only had them against your back? Then they’re protected automatically when you’re wearing it and you’d never have to worry again.”

They sat in silence for a few moments.

“That’s a great idea, you should do it.”

Suddenly I was on the back foot.

“I was only thinking about the idea. Not about actually doing it... I’m not a backpack designer and I’ve never manufactured anything in my life.”

Yet, from that moment onwards, the possibility of going and making these things - these backwards backpacks - seemed so obvious, it set me on a direct path to where I am now.

### ***Start-up Steps And Stumbles***

Things changed immediately. I felt like I’d been sleep-walking through life until this point. I’d never had a project like it. I started saving money, something I’d never done seriously until then. I started reading about how on earth you run a company, I read blogs about shipping, posting, manufacture and started looking for prototyping companies. After my modest Christmas bonus arrived in January 2014 I penned my resignation letter.

The next morning, I woke up to find I could not hear anything meaningful in my right ear. I froze. Not having ever experienced anything like it before, it highlighted to me how brash I was being, giving up my stable job with private health insurance and for what? I tore up my resignation, went into work and then went to the doctor. No one knew what the problem was, but after a few brain scans and a few experiments, my hearing returned to nearly full power.

I had two choices: 1) Stay in safe employment with all the stable benefits that it offers or 2) resign and make my backward backpack idea work as quickly as I possibly could so that I was able to support myself, even if I become ill. Spoiler alert: I chose the second option.

### ***Power Of The Crowd***

1st March 2014: Day one free from employment, I got straight to work with the prototyping company I’d found. I knew my idea inside out but they helped me get it out and into a functioning backpack which could be manufactured based on this design. Whenever I encountered things I didn’t know the answer to, I built free online surveys and asked my friends on social media to help out by answering questions and sharing the surveys. I asked anything from Do you have a backpack? Which cities do you feel safest in? What do you carry in your bag? What colour should a backpack be?

Without having planned it, I was building my first prototypes with the help of users online and letting them know I was up to something. I hadn’t shared my idea beyond my closest circles. So to most people it was a mystery they were happy to help with.

Over the 7 months that we prototyped together, we made three prototypes and - thanks to the amazing power of social media - 1000 people had taken my backpack surveys online. This gave me confidence I was building something that wasn't just useful for me, but for others too.

### Funding & Starting

I had spent 75% of my savings on my all-important RiutBag prototype - crucial to prove my concept, test materials and cost the production. To make RiutBags real, I had to make a production run of at least 1,300 which required funding. My options were 1) go to a bank and ask for a loan of £60,000\* 2) ask investors to join me or 3) try crowdfunding. Having had so much help from the crowd online in making the RiutBag prototype, it seemed obvious to me that asking the crowd whether they would support an idea like the RiutBag was the right way to go.

In a few short weeks I used my final savings to get a video together and produce complete professional photos of the RiutBag prototype whilst I used my time to create a crowd funding page on Kickstarter. I set up the campaign to last 30 days and, with my heart thumping, pressed the GO button.

Over 1,000 people backed the RiutBag on Kickstarter in those 30 days raising £60,000. Some friends and family, but the vast majority were people I had never met. I flew to China, to meet the person who would become my most important business partner, Daisy. She is my eyes and ears at the factory when I'm not there. She has the highest standards of fairness, communication and organisation. She's a tough challenger but, overall, a dream to work with. We got straight to work turning the RiutBag from a prototype into the first ever production of backwards backpacks RiutBags for my amazing Kickstarter backers all over the world.

By the end of February 2015, less than one year after I left my job with my sketches under my arm, there were real people using RiutBags in cities across the planet.

\* Getting a loan to start a business really didn't make sense to me. Of course, if you're starting a technology-heavy business which requires intense investment and speed to get it going now, then it's much more appropriate. In my case, had the bank accepted my loan request, on the first viable day of my business I would have been £60,000 in debt with no customers. That didn't appeal. Instead, my option - crowdfunding on Kickstarter - meant I reached potential customers straight away. If they hadn't liked the idea or the way I presented it, I would have failed. But this would have been an important failure. But, with its success, I'd found my first 1,000 customers, enabled the creation of the RiutBags with their support and they helped me to evangelise about the design to people near them who could benefit across the world.

### ***From Then Until Now***

Later in 2015 the rest of the Kickstarter backers received their RiutBags. I took feedback from everyone and redesigned the RiutBags with this user thinking. I went back to Kickstarter in 2015 with my new iteration of the safe backpack design and this time over 1,500 backers pledged £158,000 to support the new designs in just 28 days. I worked as hard as I could and managed to get everyone their RiutBags by Christmas that year.

Riut, my one-person start-up, is now standing on its own two feet thanks to all the people who helped make it a reality. Everyone from the man on the plane, to my friends who said “do it!” and of course every Kickstarter backer and RiutBag user. Without them, none of this would have happened.

Now, I stick with the model that emerged as I started Riut. I get feedback from RiutBag users through surveys, I use the feedback to design new RiutBags and bring out new models to solve urban travel problems. We carry not only expensive technology with us, but the data our devices access - whether personal, financial or for business - is worth far more than all the technology put together. In our fast paced cities, we live and travel with thousands or even millions of people we cannot know at a time when we rely on our devices more than ever.

Rather than allowing the new world to stress us out, we can improve the world so that we can all adapt to it better through design. Feeling safe, calm, confident when travelling in busy urban spaces is now one of simple improvements that makes a difference to travellers across the globe. Because the urban world is changing so much all the time through modes of transport, communication, changes in working patterns and technology, there will always be new challenges for the RiutBag to support.

### ***Riut The Philosophy***

My only experience with backpacks is, and was, using them. There is nothing in my in past, apart from that use, that qualifies me to be a backpack designer. As a child I played lots of musical instruments and sang, at school music and economics were my fortes. At university I studied economics, then political theory. I dabbled in journalism in Berlin and then came back to England to study law only to end up in a job in marketing. All these things helped me to do what I do today but fundamental to me being the RiutBag creator is having used a backpack.

I’m a user-designer. This is built into my company name: Riut. Pronounced “riot”, it stands for Revolution in user thinking. I not only think that users can spot problems with designs and improve them, I think we are best placed to do so. It’s using backpacks in those everyday moments when you’re tired and you’ve had enough: that’s the test of when a design works or doesn’t work.

I think anyone who can pay their bills, pay the rent and feed themselves can run a company. To run a company, you’re just planning ahead and paying bills - just on slightly bigger scale. So if you have had an idea and you’re thinking about whether you’re the right kind of person to do it, if you’ve managed to keep yourself clothed, feed and with a roof over your head, you already have the knowledge to do it.

## ***Looking Back: Why Does Riut Work?***

Transitioning from being an employee to running my own company is a big change. There are a few risks, decisions and paths I took that worked particularly well and may help you too.

Part-time or full-time on the new venture? I decided not to do Riut on the side and I left my full-time job completely. The reason? I wanted to put pressure on myself to learn how to make Riut work. I felt that being thrown in at the deep end would force me to make faster and better decisions which would more directly lead to RiutBags existing and Riut being a company that can survive. It shocked many people at the time. However, I think going full-time was part of the reason that there were real RiutBag users in the world within 11 months of me leaving my job with my sketches and an idea.

Living simply and healthily on a budget: As soon as I had the RiutBag idea, I went into savings mode. When I left my job I became even more frugal. I stopped drinking, smoking, going out for dinner and buying new stuff. I told myself, I won't do any of these things until the RiutBag project is profitable - and I enjoyed it. My friends' birthday presents didn't cost much but they were super creative! For Christmas, I made things rather than buying stuff. I tried having a glass of wine or two at the beginning but I found that a hangover could really kill my enthusiasm for the nearly impossible task I'd set myself so it was good for my bank balance, mind-set and health all round to give up my old vices. Funnily, by the time Riut was profitable, I'd lost my taste for all the things I'd given up. I treat myself every so often now, but in general - especially in the first 3 or 5 years - for me it's a good thing to live a simple life and really let the company find its stride before spending that money on unnecessary things.

Learning every part of the business: Every time a new thing comes up in my company, I do it. I built my website, write the copy, make the videos and create the content for social media. I can't captain a ship from China to England so I get someone else to do that.

But if you can, why not do it? I start by doing as much as possible myself and then, when it gets too much and there's enough money in the bank to support it, I get someone else to do it.

The benefit of doing it yourself first is that you understand exactly what needs to be done. You can manage that relationship much better if you know what the work entails. Hopefully, if you're now employing a professional to do it, you'll see how much better they can do it than you. This is a good thing that you'll hopefully see again and again.

Being yourself: People always give the advice to be yourself. I never understood it. In all my previous jobs, I knew that "being myself" would not go down well. Yet somehow at Riut, I finally get it. Everything that I can do well I use to shape Riut and RiutBags. The things that I do, that others don't, are the things that make Riut unlike the next backpack design company. I no longer have to be the right kind of person for someone else's business; Riut is shaped entirely around what I do best.

I love hearing how people travel, what they do and how they do it. I love doing things to a high standard. I'll gladly fight to get my points across and I love monotonous tasks: here's an example. For every production run, I check every single RiutBag one by one so I know they are right for my customer. It's my business, so I run it the way I want to based on what I can do, what I like to do and what I do best. It feels right and good and my RiutBag users get the benefit. I think that's what they mean by, "be yourself".

And I highly recommend it.

*Sarah Giblin*

## About The Author



Sarah Giblin believes the world's backpacks are the wrong way round. While the person behind you can get into your backpack better than you can, this causes unnecessary stress, distrust and suspicion between commuters and travellers everywhere. She revolved the backpack by 180 degrees to create the RiutBag: a backwards backpack where the only zips are hidden against your back.

Riut, pronounced "riot", stands for Revolution in user thinking. This is Sarah's personal mantra, her disruptive yet positive design philosophy and the impact she wants her products to have on their users. RiutBag users are urban travellers: commuters, urban tourists and city dwellers. Sarah designs products to meet the demands of global urbanisation challenges: high density population, associated crime, stress, time pressure and fear of crime.

Riut's products empower the user to feel calmer and safer in the real urban context we experience every day. Riut was built on social media, feedback surveys and successful crowdfunding via Kickstarter. She founded Riut in 2014 at the age of 29. A one-person entrepreneur, she continues to design every aspect of RiutBags, sells them globally online via [www.riut.co.uk](http://www.riut.co.uk) and checks each one personally at the factory before they reach her customers.

If you'd like to find out more about me or Riut's products visit:

Website: [www.riut.co.uk](http://www.riut.co.uk)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/\\_riut](http://www.twitter.com/_riut)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/riutbag](http://www.instagram.com/riutbag)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/riutbag](http://www.facebook.com/riutbag)

***Sharing Some Of The Awards Won:***

Silver, 2017, A' Design Award for Fashion and Travel Accessories - RiutBag Crush

Platinum, 2016, A' Design Award for Fashion and Travel Accessories - RiutBag R15

Gold, 2015, A' Design Award for Fashion and Travel Accessories - RiutBag prototype

Finalist, 2015, British Inventors Project - RiutBag prototype

***And My Tedx Talk:***

TEDx Brighton, Nov 2016, Making My Own Dent in the Universe