

Greenhouse Creative Paper Goods

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Welcome back. It's great to have you both in here again. My name is Kathryn Dankesreiter, I am the Marketing and Engagement Coordinator here at the Texas Tech Innovation Hub. Why don't y'all go ahead and introduce yourselves?

Angelique: Okay. I am Angelique Rymer.

Kimberly: I'm Kimberly Robles. And we are a Greenhouse Paper Goods.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Awesome. So walk me through how you both met.

Angelique: Yeah. I think it was mutual acquaintances sort of knew each other growing up, I moved off for a bit, came back, and we're just had overlapping communities.

Kimberly: Her family ran an organic produce garden. And I was there every week. One week I came to pick up my veggies and Angelique said, "Kim do you want to make greeting cards?" And I said, "yeah, I do". Then we hit the ground running.

Angelique: The rest is kind of history. The funny thing is we didn't actually have a close relationship before that we were just acquaintances. But I knew her skill set. I had this wild idea to make greeting cards, but couldn't do it myself. And so I was like, Kim, "I know you a little bit, you know me a little bit, let's do this." Then a month later, we launched our website and the first 10 designs of our cards.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: That is awesome. What year did this officially start?

Angelique: We launched in October 2020.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Yeah. Two years, two years. Why greeting cards?

Angelique: That is a great question. Like I said, I had this wild idea that I wanted to make greeting cards and stayed up one night until probably 4:00 AM trying to use some design programming. Couldn't. Still can't.

Kimberly: So, I'm a graphic designer. I did a lot of client work and serving somebody else's vision, which is wonderful, but I think just wanting to create some products that were just my idea and not somebody else's.

These never saw the light of day, but I have a file of really old greeting cards that I had tried to make. So it's something I had always wanted to do, but selling a product requires a lot other than making the product. Unfortunately that's the part I'm best at and basically nothing else. I needed a counterpart who was good at all the things I'm not good at.

Angelique: Our motto is encouraging others to encourage others. And I'm very passionate about that. I think greeting cards is a tool for a life motto.

Kimberly: Yeah. Encouraging others.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: That's so beautiful. You mentioned this at 1 Million Cups, but you use printers that are from here in Lubbock.

Kimberly: Having been a graphic designer, I have worked with printers for years. I find it really hard to work with printers online because if you don't understand what you're asking for it, you tend to receive a product that's not what you thought it was going to be. Or if you have an idea that you want to figure out how to produce, it's often hard to know how to ask the questions to get what you want.

So, for me, it was important to have somebody local, who I could have a face-to-face relationship with and walk in and say, "all right, this is the idea that I have. How can we make that happen? And what will that cost?"

And local obviously matters to us. And so I've wanted to keep our production local as much as possible. It's not the cheap route, but it is the better route in a lot of ways I think. We work with Action Printing and we love their customer service and their quality is wonderful. Yeah, we've had a great experience working locally would definitely not change that.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: That's great. I love action printing. You know, local businesses sticking together in that instance is just phenomenal. Is Greenhouse Papergoods your first startup company?

Kimberly: Yeah, I have been a freelance graphic designer and photographer for almost nine years now. I love to work for myself. I have always wanted to be an entrepreneur.

I had a lot of product ideas when I was a kid. I had a stint of selling my paintings on Etsy. That Etsy shop doesn't exist anymore, but there's been a lot of phases that I've been through. So it definitely felt natural. I feel like this was your first experience starting anything up, right?

Angelique: Yeah. I was dabbling in freelance marketing at that point. But this was my first go at anything entrepreneurial, but I really wanted it. I had been prepping myself to do something and at this point really needed a creative outlet.

Kimberly: It's definitely like my experience of learning to run a very small business has helped us a lot, but we've learned a lot.

Angelique: So grateful for Kim . She knew the basic technical things that I needed.

Kimberly: I brought all my knowledge to the table, but I certainly do not know even half of what we needed to know that we now know. We've together learned marketing a service and marketing product is different.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: So you kind of grew up in the whole family business orientation.

Angelique: Hundred percent. My parents and one of my big inspirations is my brother-in-law actually, he runs Hometown Hats, Soap Bar, the Embargo, a plethora of small businesses. I was seeing him do all these things and he doesn't think he just does. I did some marketing work for his businesses. And I was like, I can do this. I just need to stop thinking and just jump.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: That's great.

Angelique: I've been pleasantly surprised with the small businesses in Lubbock. Everyone functions around the concept of "everyone rises with the tide". You'll actually hear a lot of the small business owners in this area use that exact phrase. Even within the paper industry, we have relationships with other women and business owners that produce very similar products, but we talk and we're each so unique. So it's been great being able to collaborate so that we can all rise together.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: I'm getting a lot out of this. This is phenomenal. I didn't know that.

Kimberly: The community here is incredible. So much so that the two of us and two other business partners started another business where we host pop-up shopping events for local artists and makers, it's called the Lubbock Artisan Collective. We have had an unbelievable response from the community of just like how much they desire to build a culture in Lubbock of shopping local. That was really important to us that we feel like this exists in other cities. It exists here, but people don't always know about it. And so we wanted to create an opportunity to get all these people in the same room and promote them as much as possible.

Angelique: We run the events for the small business owners, but we are also one of the small businesses that get to benefit.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Yeah, that's way cool. My entire apartment wall is about 30 feet high and it's big. I try and fill it with as much artwork as possible so having that available, that's incredible. When's the next one?

Kimberly: Well, a good question. We have not pinned down a date yet because we're kind of evaluating, probably late summer. We'll see.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Keep me updated on that. So you're online right now. What made you make that decision versus being a storefront?

Kimberly: Mostly overhead. It's a lot cheaper to run a website than it is to rent. We do find that we sell the most at pop-up events. Cards are an impulse item. People buy them in person. They buy them when they are. They don't often think about it ahead of time. It's generally in the moment.

Angelique: Yeah, our wholesale market is growing. So we are in stores and we use a platform called fair to kind of run our wholesale portion of the business. I think another reason is like Kim said, she freelances. I have a couple of other things that I do on the side. So it, wasn't practical to do a brick and mortar type situation because we just don't have the time.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Alright. For people that kind of wants to move into the entrepreneurial space, whether they're freelancers or they're someone that's out there that has an idea and doesn't know how to get started. What's your advice to them?

Angelique: Just do it. No for real, don't overthink and you can refine as you go. Express yourself through the process and ask for help.

Kimberly: And surround yourself with people that has the skills that you need. Just ask you'd be shocked at how many yeses you get. If you just ask for help or for advice or to get coffee with someone.

Angelique: Doing that in Lubbock, it's the perfect place. There are so many people rooting for people that try. I feel like we just have so many cheerleaders that are just excited that we're trying. That is very unique to Lubbock.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: It's the Southern hospitality meets appreciation for small businesses. What do you envision in the future? I know the last time we spoke at 1 Million Cups it was moving into adding new products to your lineup. How's that going?

Kimberly: We have added a couple of silk scarves to our product line up. So it's been good. One of our big challenges has been selling wholesale more. The hope is to be able to expand the product line a little bit more and expand our reach as far as wholesale.

Angelique: 1 million cups when we talked and just got juices flowing as far as different ways we could market wholesale specifically, not just doing individual sales. Pursuing more bulk orders and being in stores consistently with retailers so that we have a good foundation to add more product.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: That's cool. Well, anything else y'all want to add that you want to mention?

Angelique: This podcast will not airing before, but we're having our third annual Galentine's day card writing party. It's an event that we started to kind of encapsulate who we are as a brand. People can come and write cards and we have women makers selling their product.

Kimberly: At Wild Lark Books.

Angelique: We'll have soaps from Clean Day. We'll have painting from Lizzy Paints. Lost Canyon is bringing her candles. Slow Sips. Slow Sips is a great new brand, but Mallory she makes syrups for specialty cocktails. They are so good.

Kathryn Dankesreiter: Thank you so much, both of you for coming back to the innovation hub. I mean, this has been phenomenal. I always love chatting with local entrepreneurs so thank you so much again for coming and talking with us.

Angelique: It was a pleasure.

Kimberly: Yeah.