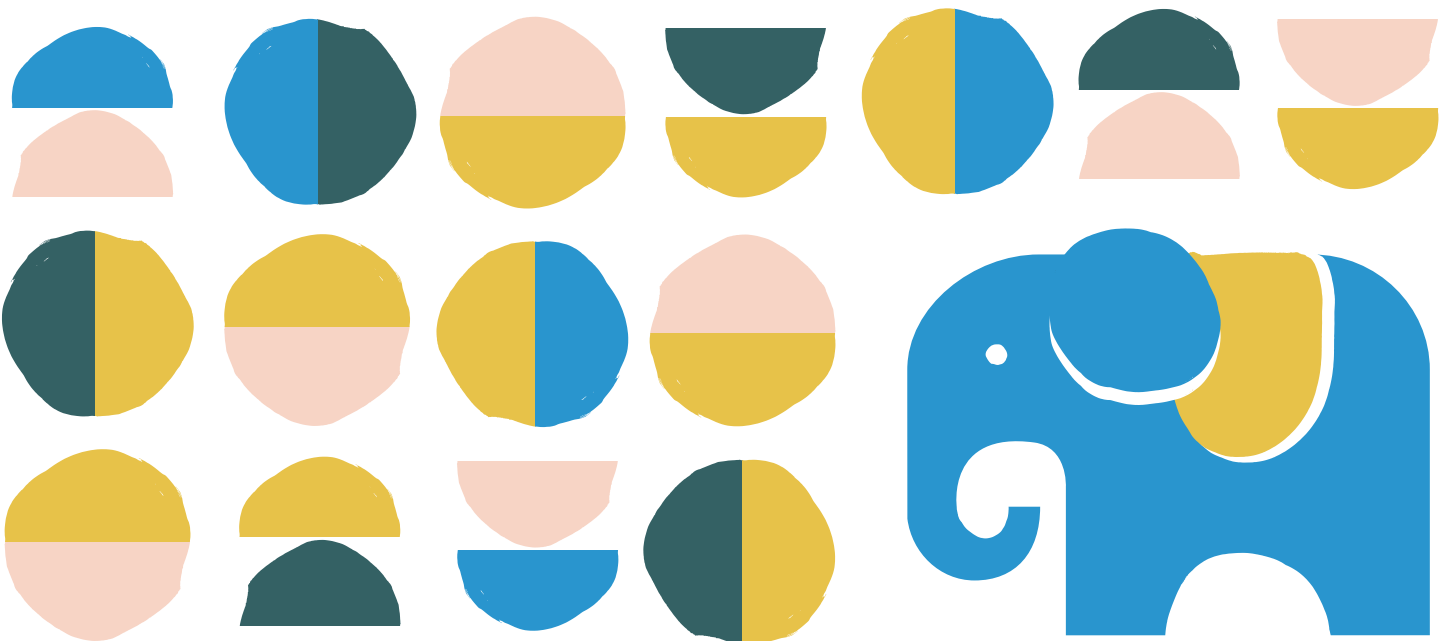
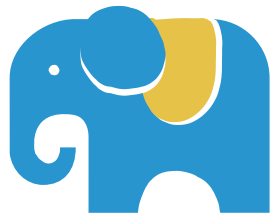
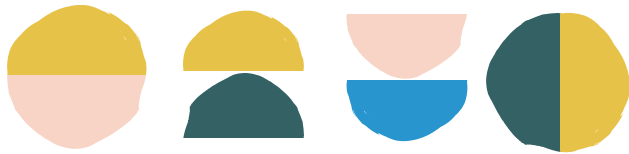


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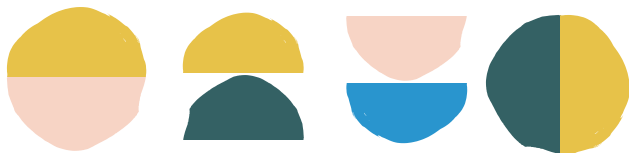
EPISODE 2

MORGAN MONTGOMERY  
& PERKINS MORGAN  
*Paisley & Jade Specialty Rentals*





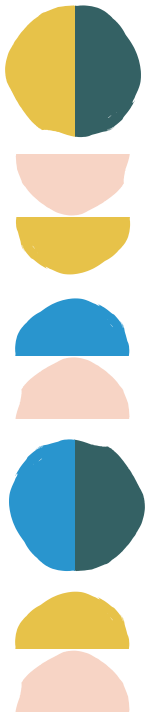
Morgan Montgomery and Perkins Morgan tell the story of founding Paisley & Jade Rentals in Richmond, Virginia. You'll hear about the surprise encounters and rookie mistakes they made which paved the way for their eventual leadership in the event rental industry.





## WHAT'S IN THIS EPISODE

- How Morgan and Perkins got started—through the catering business.
- Early missteps in vetting professional partners.
- Rules for expanding a rental collection.
- The relationship between personal growth and business growth.
- Traits that have contributed to the Paisley & Jade team's success.
- Moments of celebration in Morgan and Perkins' rental adventure.



## QUOTES

"She pulled together an incredible business plan as if to reassure me before I made that leap." –Perkins Morgan

"We were smart enough to be successful but dumb enough to not really know what was coming at us." –Morgan Montgomery

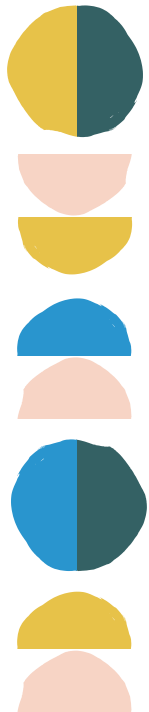
"[Smaller rental companies buy] inventory because it's cheap, but not because it fits a particular style or aesthetic that they're grooming into a collection. And we suffered that same mistake." –Morgan Montgomery

"I think it's interesting when an outsider's point of view recommends something that you never thought of, but instantly clicks." –Perkins Morgan

"As our business evolved we evolved who we were working with and who was the best fit as we continued to learn and grow." –Morgan Montgomery

"Why it's worked is definitely a yin and yang dynamic...we are super, super different. But have a lot of respect for why we're different." –Perkins Morgan

"You have to make the right choices for you and for your team...and sometimes that requires being uncomfortable, which we're not necessarily good at." –Morgan Montgomery



**WEBSITE**  
[paisleyandjade.com](http://paisleyandjade.com)

**INSTAGRAM**  
[@paisleyandjade](https://www.instagram.com/paisleyandjade)

**FACEBOOK**  
[@paisleyandjade](https://www.facebook.com/paisleyandjade)

**PINTEREST**  
[paisleyandjade](https://www.pinterest.com/paisleyandjade)

**TWITTER**  
[@perk2c](https://twitter.com/perk2c)

**PERKINS' INSTAGRAM**  
[@perk2c](https://www.instagram.com/perk2c)

**MORGAN'S INSTAGRAM**  
[@mrgnmntgmry](https://www.instagram.com/mrgnmntgmry)

## PERKINS MORGAN & MORGAN MONTGOMERY

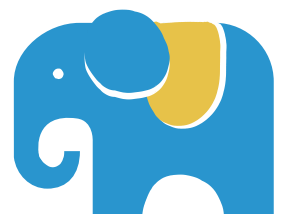
*Paisley & Jade Specialty Rentals | Richmond, Virginia*

Paisley & Jade is a specialty rental company based in Richmond, Virginia, and serving the Mid-Atlantic. With 10,000 square feet of inventory and servicing over 400 clients per year, P&J is known for providing weddings, events, trade shows, and visual display clients with the aesthetic details they need to complete their vision. The P&J collection encompasses a wide range of items & styles, from vintage upholstered pieces to custom-designed and built backdrops and bars. P&J has been featured in numerous publications including The Knot, Wedding Wire, Richmond Magazine, Sage Wedding Pros, and Richmond.com. Founded in 2012 by Co-Captains Morgan Montgomery and Perkins Morgan, #TeamPandJ now includes seven full-time employees and 10-15 part-time crew members ready to make every client's event a success.

Growing up on a historic venue in Nelson County, Virginia, P&J Co-Captain Perkins Morgan has always known that events are in her blood. After graduating from Elon University with a B.A. in Communications and then spending a few years out west, she returned to Virginia to run the wedding division of an off-premise catering company. Frustrated by the lack of visual display options available to her clients, she co-launched Paisley & Jade in 2012 to provide the industry with the resources she always wished she had! When she isn't hunting down vintage finds, she enjoys relaxing at her family farm and taking pictures of her adorable dog Olive.

P&J Co-Captain Morgan Montgomery, CPCE, CMP discovered her passion for unique and vintage finds as she designed and propped shows while working towards her B.A. in Theatre from The College of the Holy Cross. Morgan's passion for business and events extends beyond the walls of P&J, and she loves to share her knowledge through the Paisley & Jade specialty rental coaching program and by speaking at national conferences such as NACE Experience, Lend & Gather, and The School of Styling. She currently serves as the Vice President on the National Board of NACE, and she's known for posting too many pictures of her feet on instagram.

# PAISLEY & JADE



**Allison Howell**  
[00:00:02] Hi, I'm Alison Howell. You're listening to The Trunk Show where I talk with founders of leading event rental companies about their rental adventures. The show is brought to you by RW Elephant, the mighty inventory management software for your event rental business. In this episode, I talked to the co-founders of the first vintage and specialty rental company in Richmond, Virginia.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:00:24] Well, my name is Morgan.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:00:26] And I'm Perkins.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:00:27] And we're the co-captains of Paisley& Jade, based in Richmond, Virginia.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:00:31] I talked to these inspiring ladies about how they got into event rentals through the catering business, how they learned the hard way, which professionals to trust and how they think about expanding their future collection. All of that and more coming up on The Trunk Show.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:00:46] For six chairs? I would do, like 125.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:00:49] Let me put the 125 in as my maximum and then I will set an alarm for like right before it closes just so we can check if that's OK.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:01:00] Sounds good.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:01:01] I mean, this is what you like, what we signed up for, right?

**Allison Howell**  
[00:01:04] Yeah, I think so. I think running your own business sometimes happens when you don't expect it to.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:01:09] Like I'm supposed to be being interviewed for a podcast. That I'm sitting on chairs. OK.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:01:13] So how did you guys get started on your rental adventure? Was there an aha moment or was it a gradual process?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:01:19] So like a lot of people, we kind of had that entrepreneurial seizure, if you read the E-Myth. Perkins and I were working together in an off-premise catering company for a boss that could have been better. And we were selling food, managing weddings and events. Perkins did the weddings. I did the corporate clients and ran the day-to-day of the catering business.

[00:01:40] And we were really excited about putting together visuals for our clients; pass-throughs for hors d'oeuvres or cool bars. So there wasn't anything like that in our market here in Richmond, Virginia. So we started to create the products to rent to our clients that they booked with us



because they wanted those cool options. So Perkins was driving like two and a half hours to her parents farm to borrow wine barrels, borrow in quotation marks. And we kind of had that moment where we were like, we're doing all this work. We're not getting like we weren't getting paid from that time or energy that we were putting into those rentals. The company that we didn't own was benefiting. We didn't really like selling food. And if there was a need for that, then there was probably something more there that could happen. So we both were just kind of like, wait a minute, like if this guy can run a business, we can run a business and it can be something that that's even better and something we like even more than what we're already doing.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:02:33]

Perkins, was that kind of a scary transition for you or was it natural?

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:02:39]

I think I was really young and dumb and had energy and was really excited about it and fully trusted Morgan's ideas and intuitions. So she pulled together like an incredible business plan, as if to like, reassure me to win me over before I made that leap. But it wasn't necessary. I was really excited to do it. And I feel like we had every opportunity at our fingertips and we're like super stubborn and hard headed. We knew it would be hard in the beginning, but I think we also knew we were pretty resilient to get through what we thought would be hard and then it ends up even being harder. But yeah.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:03:19]

I think I was one of those things where we were smart enough to be successful, but dumb enough to not really know what was coming at us. So we have those blinders on of like, oh yeah, this is great. Like we're like, yeah, I am woman, hear me roar. Like we can do this.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:03:33]

Right.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:03:33]

And we we did and we can. But it definitely was just different.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:03:37]

What was the first piece you ever rented? Do you guys have it?

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:03:41]

Was it the Marrietta?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:03:42]

No, it's the Pink Channel back chair.

**Perkins Morgan &  
Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:03:46]

Abilene.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:03:47]

So we started our business. We launched in June of 2012. Again, we talk about things that maybe you didn't know, what you didn't know. We launched our business in June of 2012, went out with like. "Hey, here we are. Rent our stuff." But our website didn't go live until October. So we did two orders in 2012.



[00:04:05] And the first one was a former coworker of ours, her niece's first birthday pictures. I met her mother in a grocery store parking lot and handed her the chair.

[00:04:19] So, yes, that was our first one. We just sold it in. And honestly, it's actually a really classic piece. It's that sort of blush pink velvet. But the upholstery had seen its time and we knew that it wasn't necessarily worth the energy or effort to redo it reupholster it. It's better suited for somebody's home.

[00:04:37] Can I just check on my chairs?

**Allison Howell**  
[00:04:38] Yeah.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:04:38] I'm so sorry.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:04:40] How many minutes are left?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:04:42] Like one. It's up to 190. It's six chairs. Just give me your top number and I'll put it in. We'll call it a day.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:04:50] 250.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:04:51] Up to 250. All right. Putting it away. Find out later if we won guys. Thank you.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:04:56] OK, so how do you stand out at Paisley & Jade? What do you hope your clients associate with your brand?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:05:03] Well, I think for us, we were first to market in our area, so we were able to set the tone across the board for what people should expect from specialty rentals. So I think that's given us the opportunity to create the narrative there of what to expect from a specialty rental company.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:05:20] How do you decide when and what to add to your collection? Is there a rule that you live by when it comes to buying?

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:05:27] I don't think there's a rule. I think we've narrowed down the collection really well over the past couple of years, and that doesn't necessarily mean adding. I think that has a lot to do with kind of pulling pieces out that you think are really neat pieces. But if they don't fit into a group, look, they don't work.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:05:44] So less eclectic.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:05:45] Less eclectic, slightly. And I think when we pull together groupings, you can kind of see what you're missing.



**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:05:51]

I really am fortunate to work with a lot of different specialty rental companies and for the ones they're just starting out. I think on the small scale, the mistake I see a lot is they're buying inventory because it's cheap, but not because it fits a particular style or aesthetic that they're grooming into a collection. And we suffered that same mistake.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:06:14]

Absolutely.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:06:15]

So when you start, it's so easy to be like, I just I just need to rent a sofa, like I need to get things moving. So you get a cute sofa and then you rent it and then you find a cute chair, but they don't go together. So now you're renting a cute sofa or a cute chair. We didn't do a lot of curating when we started. So we had a lot of things that we thought were cute. Looking back, not so much. That's why style and taste evolves over years.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:06:38]

Sure.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:06:38]

But I do think that I see a lot of folks new to this making the mistake of "That's cheap and cute. I should get it because it'll rent" as opposed to "what else will this rent with? How will this help me reach a broader goal revenue wise, in terms of my trying to get people to rent X amount of dollars together?"

**Allison Howell**  
[00:06:57]

Yeah. So Perkins, you know, in your business, you deal mostly with that client side and Morgan is handling a lot of the back of the house. How do you sort of respond to client requests for custom pieces or how are you quantifying customer requests when you're sort of figuring out what people are looking for that might not be in your collection already?

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:07:22]

Definitely. I think it's always important to listen. They are our clientele. They're going to keep the lights on. I think if we built every piece that was ever requested, we would have gone out of business a long time ago. I think it's interesting when an outsider's point of view recommends something that you never thought of, but instantly clicks. I think that sometimes happens and we add it to our collection or if enough people ask for the same thing over a period of time. So there's been a number of pieces we were not never crossed our mind to add, but in like one month, maybe five different clients mentioned it. And then you were like, OK, this is obviously something we should consider doing. And we've had some real success with some pieces like that.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:08:04]

Yeah. And I think part of it, too, is that assessment of like a client request something. Perkins typically is the first sort of line of defense. Like she knows we know each other well enough to be like this is not going anywhere. Or if it's interesting or if she's not sure, she'll then bring it to me and say, "hey, can we just look at specing this out? What's it going to cost? What's the time commitment?"

[00:08:28]

[00:08:28] And, you know, for us, we're really fortunate because we have a full time shop lead. So it's less about, oh, we have to find somebody who can do this. Bobby, who works for us is amazing. He's so talented. So for us, it's not necessarily sourcing the talent or the ability to do it. It's whether we want to if it fits with where we're headed. So from there..





**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:08:47]

And if we have room for it.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:08:48]

And if we have room to store it, which sometimes doesn't stop us. It's an ongoing battle. But Perkins will really well her and I will sit down and really assess what it is, if it goes with other things in our collection, as we've continued to grow our business for us, it's really important the things go together. And then also like what its rentability potential is. Is this something that's going to rent? How much space does it take up? You know. How quickly will we recoup just our materials costs? Knowing full well that that's not the entire cost of it when you talk about moving it, storing it and maintaining it. And then, you know, we make those decisions from there.

[00:09:25]

We've had some duds. We've built some things that we then we're like, this isn't gonna do anything for us. We've also had some really great successes. We recently rolled out a whole new line of acrylic oversized signage that's been super popular. We had a lot of requests for round bars and that was kind of on our list of things we wanted to do. So it was really nice when that sort of converged and we had clients saying, "hey, we really want round bars." We were like, "hey, we've really wanted to build round bars."

**Allison Howell**  
[00:09:50]

Yeah, it seems like the relationship between your customers, there's been a little bit of a shift then from the moment when you're delivering chairs to somebody in a grocery store parking lot to a place where you're sometimes turning down business because somebody can't work within the parameters that you have. What other barriers have there been to growth and how have you pushed past those in your business?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:10:17]

So I think one of the biggest barriers for Perkins and myself and this is a little bit more on the technical side. But, you know, we started this business having never owned a business. We've never done this before.

[00:10:29]

Perkins comes from a family of small business owners, some in the event industry and things like that. My dad owned a business as well. I always said I would never own a business because of that. But, you know, we got to.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:10:41]

Never say never.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:10:42]

I know, right. We got into this business because we saw an opportunity. And and quite frankly, we were done working for somebody else, not because we actually were good at running a business or knew how to run a business.

[00:10:52]

I have a degree in theater.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:10:54]

Mine's in PR.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:10:55]

So we didn't come into this. I mean, I made a business plan. And it's so funny you mentioned that Perkins because I made a business plan. But basically I just like Googled like an outline of a business plan in like filled in the parts. And then I remember because I'm a creative. I went and



got like fancy like teal colored paper and like, made an envelope for it to give it to Perkins.

[00:11:17] But, you know, because we don't we didn't have that knowledge intrinsically of like, oh, what is a cash flow plan look like? What you know, how to how do you deal with workers comp like all of these different business things.

[00:11:31] So for us. We knew that was going to be an obstacle. We could. We could buy cool things. We could fix up vintage furniture, you know, and now to the point, we can we can manage a team and run a business.

[00:11:44] But we didn't come out of the gate with all of that knowledge. So to combat that. One of the first things we agreed upon is that we would hire some specialists or some you know, specialist is not the right word. It sounds like I'm going to the doctor.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:11:59] Professionals.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:12:00] Professionals. Thank you.

[00:12:01] So we hired from the outset an accountant, and a lawyer to be able to do our contracts and our LLC and stuff like that and then help us set up our books.

[00:12:14] And that was helpful. Like a lot of things, again, trial by fire, we actually have gone we're our third accounting service and we finally found somebody that works well with us and that we love.

[00:12:27] But we knew that we didn't have that knowledge and we need to bring in professionals to help us. So I would say that was a huge stumbling block for us. And until we were able to wrap our arms around things like, you know, our financial statements and what it looks like to apply for a line of credit and how, you know, you can work with getting a business license and what what sort of things you need from the state and from the city to be able to operate legally and professionally that, you know, you don't know what you don't know.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:12:55] And then same time, we heard a marketing team to do the website. We hired, a business coach. Like I would say, that is one thing I can look back on saying like we may not have picked the best ones at first, but we did make a really good effort in taking that original startup money and placing it with four to five professionals to do it right.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:13:14] Yeah, it seems like on the one hand, you don't know what you don't know. But on the other hand, you guys really brought in people who do know.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:13:21] Or that we thought would know. So, you know. To that end, we still work with a lawyer, not the same where we started with. Financially, like I said, we're on our third accountant. We are we now work with Michelle from Sage Wedding Pros who we love and is amazing. But she's not somebody we worked with from the beginning. So as our business evolved, you know, we evolved who we were working with and who was the best fit as we continued to learn and grow.



**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:13:48]

And it kind of blew our minds that like when you shop for a professional like that, they need to figure out what your business is. Whereas we thought like just by looking up somebody being like, sure, we can afford them, we'll hire them like they knew nothing about our business. It took us a long time to wrap our heads around like interviewing them to learn about our business, to have that effective relationship.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:14:09]

Sure.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:14:10]

We don't bring any kind of professional into a working relationship, whether it's insurance, whether it's buying like the guy we buy our trucks from without making sure they have a full understanding of our business and what we do, because it's so unique and it's so easy for them to sort of be like, oh, I've got it, I've got it. And then only to find out that things are not being done the right way because they don't get it.

.....

[AD BREAK]

**Allison Howell**  
[00:15:33]

Hey, fellow rental adventurer, we're gonna take a quick break so I can tell you about an upcoming conference that you absolutely must attend. It's a two day summit coming up in January called Lend & Gather. Maybe you're thinking "I'm at events all year long. Please, not another one." But Lend & Gather was designed for boutique event rental pros by boutique event rentals pros. Take it from Lend & Gather conference alum Angie.

**Angie Martin**  
[00:16:00]

My name's Angie Martin. I'm the owner and leader of Borrowed Charm Events Rentals & Styling here in Oklahoma City.

[00:16:07]

I would totally recommend Lend & Gather to any specialty rental company.

[00:16:13]

It was a very big ticket item for us and I was you know, I was afraid of spending those dollars, but at the same point in time, I kind of had to step back and evaluate. Here it's not cheap to invest in vintage furniture. So I was like, well, I can buy a couch or I can go learn and run a better business.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:16:31]

So how is your business changed as a result of Lend & Gather?

**Angie Martin**  
[00:16:34]

Well, we've grown significantly. I think we had three people on staff. Now we have between full time and part time, we have 16 people. We have a really great internship program that we run that was kind of touched on at Lend & Gather. I feel like overall, financially we are sustainable, we're so much better off than we were because I know exactly what I need to invest in. I know what pieces I need to get rid of and the best way to get rid of those pieces. I would say that it's helped me run my business smarter.



**Allison Howell**  
[00:17:07]

So what do you hope to gain this time around?

**Angie Martin**  
[00:17:09]

I will say I'm excited to see some of my friends that I haven't seen in a long time. But other than that just digging in a little bit deeper into the financial aspect of it. As we grow, just being able to make sure that we're making the most use of all of our dollars. Every speaker last year was great and had something to offer, so I'm excited to see who they're going to be. I'm just overall, I know it's gonna be a great experience and I'm going to take something away from it.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:17:36]

Thanks, Angie, for sharing about your experience at Lend & Gather. You can find more information about Lend & Gather online at [LendAndGather.com](http://LendAndGather.com). Or you can find a link to the conference web site in the show notes. Attendance is limited to maintain an intimate atmosphere. So if you think you want to attend, register right away. I really hope to see you there. Okay. Back to my conversation with the founders of Paisley & Jade. [AD BREAK END]

.....

**Allison Howell**  
[00:18:01]

What do you think was that turning point for you where you were like convinced, like, we are like full force now? There's not, like, we're not not turning back.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:18:12]

I think when we got the warehouse. Not that I ever faltered like I didn't falter before that, but I think that was such a commitment that you couldn't back out on.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:18:22]

A three year lease.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:18:23]

Yeah. I mean, it was. You had to keep going. You had to keep pushing. And it was still exciting. I joke around and about we were we were really young and dumb but you had you booked business to have even had the opportunity to have gotten the warehouse. So like we probably don't give ourselves enough credit in that sense. But then you're just put in position where you can't fail. There's no option.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:18:46]

Yeah. And I think for me, it was somewhere was the warehouse and then hiring that first full-time employee. Like now there's no turning back. Like even with the warehouse, like, oh, like you don't pay the lease, like your credit goes, you know, downhill. Like you make a lot of decisions that affect you personally and maybe like a significant other or whatever. But the minute that you brought somebody on, like, you're responsible for somebody else's livelihood. To them, they're not taking a risk, maybe because, like, I'm going to work for somebody, but sure, to me it's like this is a risk. Like this person is showing up every day knowing that there's going to be money in our checking account to write their paycheck in two weeks.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:19:24]

Allison Howell [00:19:24] So, most people know when they get into business that they need to get like a business license. Some people know they should get insurance. But there are a lot of aspects of business that we don't find out until maybe we've broken the rules. So I wanted to know, like, when did you really learn that the state of Virginia has an upholstery inspector?



**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:19:45]

When he showed up.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:19:46]

Yeah. That's a great question.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:19:47]

I was actually not at work the day that this happened when it started. And a gentleman showed up and he encountered one of our employees and he said, you know, "hi, my name is so-and-so. I'm an inspector with the Virginia Department of Health, the bedding and upholstered furniture division." Which, to me, sounded like something out of Harry Potter. Right? Like the Department of like sheets and pillowcases. Here I am.

[00:20:10]

Our employee responded. "I'm going to have to ask you to speak to the owners who are currently not here right now." She was wonderful. As a lot of small business owners, anytime you sort of get a visit, you know, coming from catering, like when the health inspector shows up. That's a big moment. Obviously, guidelines exist for a reason and it's know public health and that's excellent. But anybody in small business, I think, feels that moment of when the fire marshal or the Department of Health or whoever it is shows up. It's kind of like your mom showing up at your college dorm room unannounced. Right. Like, if you'd known they were coming, you might have just like put your laundry away or at least hidden under the bed.

[00:20:47]

So we didn't even realize, though, that we needed to do anything. So I called him back and I asked him, you know, "hey, like you came to visit, what can I do for you? Like, are you having a party? Do you need some chairs?"

**Allison Howell**  
[00:21:00]

Please tell me he was having a party.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:21:02]

No, he was not having a party.

[00:21:04]

And he said, "oh, well, in the state of Virginia, any upholstered item that is leaving your possession needs to be sanitized when it comes back before it can go out again." This is mostly seen in thrift stores or consignment shops. So when somebody has is selling something upholstered and the contents are of like "unknown origin," you have to sanitize them to prevent the spread of bedbugs and other insect issues. So we had always seen, sourcing, these yellow tags on the furniture, but had no idea that it was state regulation or anything like that. So he said "yeah, it includes party rental businesses because the property's leaving your possession. So when it comes back, you need to sanitize it before it ca go out again."

[00:21:50]

So I said, like, "Are you sure? Like this is a rental company? Look, I don't want my things to have bugs. We're not planning on having things have bugs." And he said, "No, the other rental companies do it." So immediately I'm like, "OK."

[00:22:04]

So Perkins says, "Why don't you call our other rental like our big box rental friends and see," because they have some like upholstered things. So I call a friend of ours, a mentor of ours in the market who owns like a tent dish, you know, kind of company.



[00:22:17]

And she says, “yes, yes, it’s a thing.” And I’m like, excellent. OK. She’s like, we have to do with our chivari cushions. But we got to talking and it’s a very interesting rule just in my opinion, because if you have a property on site and you have chivari chairs and you put them outside for a ceremony or you put them two acres away at your ceremony location and they’ve sat outside for three days, they can come back in your venue and you don’t have to do anything because technically they haven’t left your possession. But for us, if they leave our possession, then when they come back, they have to be sanitized. But in order to do that, you have to be state certified. So you have to apply for a permit. You pay for the permit, which is like 60 bucks. You then have to order the special sanitization stuff, which has chemicals that I can’t even say.

**Allison Howell**

[00:23:01]

So it sounds like kind of magic potion.

**Morgan Montgomery**

[00:23:03]

Exactly. We’re back to, we’re back to Dumbledore in the ministry again.

[00:23:07]

So needless to say, we are state certified sanitizers. We’ve ordered our special tags from the Virginia Department of Health organization that they supply those through. And our team sanitizes our product now.

**Allison Howell**

[00:23:19]

I want to ask you about one another. So what is one characteristic or trait that you think the other person in your partnership has that has contributed to your success?

**Morgan Montgomery**

[00:23:34]

I’m a I’m a serious rule follower. Like, if this is why we do the things we do. And Perkins, one of her best traits as she always wants to know why. Or mostly why not. If you’re like, this is why we’re doing it. “Well, well, why? Why can we do it the other way?” And not in an antagonistic way but like she she’s even said before, like she’s the type of person if somebody says like, oh, like “it’s time for a beverage, you can have a coke or a water.” She’ll be like, “well, why can’t I have orange juice?”

**Perkins Morgan**

[00:24:02]

No, I think definitely why it’s worked is like definitely a yin and yang dynamic. Not that one’s good cop, bad cop. But I think we are super, super different. But have a lot of respect for why we’re different.

[00:24:17]

Like Morgan loves a spreadsheet. If she could just make a spreadsheet for every day, that would make her smile and that would kill my soul. Like I would just nope. So I can’t. So I think she lets me have really rambunctious, creative moments and never pulls me down from that. She’s like, “that’s a great idea. Let’s look at these factors as the best way to get this done. Are we sure this is the best policy?” So I think without Morgan, Paisley & Jade would have crashed and burned a long time ago. And I think without me Paisley & Jade would have...

**Morgan Montgomery**

[00:24:57]

Been a lot of spreadsheets.

**Perkins Morgan**

[00:24:58]

Been an accounting firm. You know. Who knows what would have happened?



**Allison Howell**  
[00:25:01] Okay. But did you know that about each other before you started?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:25:04] Yes, because we worked with each other in a 10 foot by 10 foot office with shelves of catering platters.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:25:11] Right.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:25:11] For a year and a half.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:25:13] So you kind of worked in a rental warehouse together. Almost.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:25:16] Absolutely. There was inventory to be had. Running to T.J. Maxx to buy more. Yes. We had a small taste of what our future was going to be like then. For sure.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:25:31] I just remember one day after Perkins started working at the catering company and she just looked at me so sad. And she goes, "I think I'd just really like to be able to sit by the window." Because the office was like such like it was literally a 10x10 room with probably seven or eight sets of like that metal catering shelving. So literally the next day I moved everything around and we went and got like the tiniest little like apartment desk from Target so that she could sit by the window.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:25:58] I needed some sunshine.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:25:59] Wow. Well, besides sunshine, can you tell me about a moment in your rental adventure that you have truly celebrated?

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:26:10] Oh, we've celebrated a lot of moments. A big recent celebration is that we're experiencing an amazing winter, which is considered our off season with great numbers and great projects that are happening. And it's not. I think something really common for the rental industry is during your off season is when you pull back. It's when you hold your breath a little bit more. It's when you cut people's hours slightly.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:26:33] You stop going out for coffee.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:26:34] You start. Yeah, absolutely. And I think this winter has been such an interesting experience that we are not experiencing that. It's been...

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:26:42] Refreshing.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:26:43] Refreshing. Well welcomed and like it that feeling of like our hard work has paid off.





**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:26:48]

I think a moment that I personally celebrated-- other people, maybe not so much-- but when I looked back at 2018, I did the math and I was on the road for 119 days of 2018. Which to me was really awesome in the sense and something to be celebrated in the sense that like, I had an amazing year. I got to experience a lot of things. In that time, though, I still like we I still helped run our business. This isn't like I was on vacation 119 days of the year, to be clear. I actually do better work when I'm on the road sometimes. And I think the team does better work when I'm not there asking them questions.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:27:29]

No. It's kind of true though, cause she's got very short moments to get a lot done, so she gets hyper focused and super productive.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:27:37]

But that was a celebration moment for me of like, wow, in this world of entrepreneurship and small business ownership, like I made a decision that I wanted to travel more. That I wanted to get involved in NACE on the national level. That I wanted to see my family who all live out of state more. That I wanted to go to more education and conference events. And that I made that happen. And not only was I able to do that, but our business didn't suffer, but in fact it flourished underneath that as well.

[00:28:02]

And I'm still married.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:28:04]

Well, those are all things to celebrate, for sure.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:28:07]

Yeah.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:28:08]

On the flipside of that, what are some pitfalls or mistakes you've encountered along the way? And how did you recover from those?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:28:17]

I think... I mean, we have some, like, old school stories of like taking the wrong business and saying yes to the wrong client that I think a lot of small businesses go through.

[00:28:28]

I think one of our pitfalls that we've really learned about is not being your own advocates when it comes to like we talked about hiring professionals and not, you know, saying like not realizing that like this isn't a good fit or like really saying like, I need you to explain this to me until I understand it. Our clients all the time... if we send them a proposal and they don't understand it or they don't understand like why you put that rug with that sofa, they will ask until they understand why. "Why is this console table on my order?" "Oh, that's so we can connect you to lounges back to back." "Why do I have three bars here? If I only am getting one bar?" "Well, those three bars go together to make one bar." But yet as small business owners and I think is as women sometimes, a professional might tell us something like, "oh, well, that's there because that's how it's done." Well, I want to understand why. And I think, I think in the past we've not done a good job being our own advocates in those situations.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:29:18]

Can you give me an example of an experience that you feel like you overcame that?





**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:29:24]

When I fired account number one and number two.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:29:29]

Wow. Was that hard?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:29:32]

Yes and no. Those situations are uncomfortable because we like to support small business and local business and women-owned business. So it's always uncomfortable to sort of have a business relationship with somebody, especially when it's like you got referred to them through someone and it doesn't work out. And here's the thing. Everybody's going to have good experiences and bad experiences.

[00:29:54]

I'd like to think that every client that Paisley & Jade has ever had has had a 100% amazing experience. But I'm sure out there there's somebody that, for whatever reason, isn't 100% satisfied. Like, I feel like we've done everything we can to satisfy our clients, but I'm sure there's somebody out there who maybe wasn't for whatever reason.

[00:30:12]

But it can be really difficult when you're in that situation to have to then disengage from that relationship, especially if it's been referred to you by somebody. Or especially when then later on down the line, you see other people referring those professionals to other folks.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:30:24]

Yeah.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:30:25]

And so that can be uncomfortable. But at the same time, I think, again, being an advocate for yourself in your business, you have to make the right choices for you and for your team and to be able to grow and move forward. And sometimes that requires being uncomfortable, which we're not necessarily good at.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:30:42]

No. And I think a big part of entrepreneurship is a big step is when you finally bring on hiring and staff and then you think it's done. But it's a whole other world of year by year maintaining and cultivating and making sure that's still the right staff to grow with your business. And I think that's we've hit moments where it's uncomfortable when you realize you don't have the right fit. And working through that so the business can continue to flourish and your current employees can still really love their job. So it's been an interesting.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:31:11]

Yeah. How do you feel like you've grown in that? Is there something you feel like you've developed as a boss or just personally that has helped you? Or maybe like something you didn't expect about yourself, a skill or a tool that you have now that you didn't have five years ago.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:31:32]

I think, again, in terms of being our own advocates, Perkins and I have gotten much better about not beating around the bush on certain things. We used to sort of be the type of bosses where, like, we didn't want to upset anybody. So there was a lot of dancing around. Like if something needed to be done differently, it was a lot of like, "hey, I know there's a lot going on and I know you're super busy. And I know I know that like we talked about this last week. And I don't mean to, like be a nudge, but" and that's just creating more work and more noise for everyone.



[00:32:07]

[00:32:07] I'm a really direct communicator and most of my life. So it actually was really interesting to be in this dynamic where we both were doing this sort of awkward dance.

Allison Howell  
[00:32:16]

Sure.

Morgan Montgomery  
[00:32:16]

But we have worked with our team that we have now and really sort of gotten to an understanding where like nobody wants to waste the time or energy on doing that dance. And we can just be direct like feedback is feedback. We are at a great place of our team where we they know how much we love them and care about them and feel like they're family. And in that sense, we can talk like family. So just like I'll tell my sister, like, "you can't wear that," I can look at somebody on my team and be like, "hey, you can't do that." Or "hey, you did this and we need to do it this way next time." And there's a lot of freedom in that because it doesn't become about "what do they think of me?" or "are they angry?" or "am I in trouble?"

Perkins Morgan  
[00:32:57]

Will they stay?

Morgan Montgomery  
[00:32:58]

Yeah.

Perkins Morgan  
[00:32:59]

Or like that huge.

Morgan Montgomery  
[00:32:59]

Yeah.

Allison Howell  
[00:33:00]

So it seems like there's not a lot of security in that.

Perkins Morgan  
[00:33:04]

Yes.

Allison Howell  
[00:33:04]

Along those lines, kind of as we wrap up here, what is one thing you've learned about yourself personally that you didn't know before you started your business?

Morgan Montgomery  
[00:33:14]

For me, I really I feel like I've grown a lot personally in the sense that I came from a place before we started this business where I felt like I always knew best. Like my way was always best. Like you might think you knew but like, clearly you just hadn't come around to understanding that my way was best.

[00:33:38]

And between the transition from leaving the catering company and starting this and building this team and working in a partnership for me, I really feel like I've evolved as a human and as a person to know that is never the case and that should never be the case. That the best things come out of collaboration and that if I'm in a position where I think that all of my ideas are the best or I'm the only one who knows the best way to do things, that that's a great way for things to fail because there's no way that me on my own can be better than a roomful of people who are brilliantly talented in so many different ways.



**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:34:18] I don't know, Morgan, help me out. How have I changed?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:34:22] She got a...

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:34:25] ..A dog?

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:34:26] No, I was gonna make a joke but...

**Allison Howell**  
[00:34:29] Okay, well, think about yourself how you were doing all the deliveries yourself compared to now.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:34:34] Yeah, I think I've learned and I think something that's like super common in the event industry is to be a yes person and like to put your self worth to the side to get that done. And I think that's how people run themselves ragged and they burn out.

[00:34:50] And I think starting it as young as we were and that we're still a process where we're still learning and still like very open to growing and learning more. And part of that was like learning to say no for the better of your personal health and for the business.

[00:35:10] So I think that's something I've gained a lot more confidence in, is kind of standing your ground and learning to say no and setting guidelines and boundaries. There's like a lot of confidence that comes from that, especially when you see it work out for the best.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:35:27] I think together, too, we've also learned about the value of where you spend your dollar. Prior to owning our own business, I definitely was somebody who was real casual about how I spent and where I spent my money. In terms of like, don't get me wrong. I love Target and Amazon as much as the next girl. But we both make a conscious effort, in being small business owners, we both make a conscious effort now to frequent small businesses. To get our coffee at the local place up the street. When we buy gifts for employees or for, you know, clients that we're focusing on supporting small business, local business, women-owned business. And same with, you know, where we send our dollars for these professionals we hire and so on.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:36:09] Great. Okay. Now here's the time for the Lightning Round. So I'm going to ask each of you questions. We're going to go back and forth here.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:36:17] Okay.

**Allison Howell**  
[00:36:18] So get ready.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:36:19] Alright.



<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:19]	Let's do it.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:20]	Okay. Favorite piece in your collection.
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:23]	The Barnegat.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:24]	Ramp or lift gate?
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:36:25]	Lift gate.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:26]	Sole Proprietorship, LLC, S-Corp., Offshore Dummy Corporation?
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:30]	C-Corp.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:32]	Business book you'd recommend?
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:36:33]	The E-Myth.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:34]	Podcast you like?
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:36]	Ones about serial killers.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:38]	Who inspires you?
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:36:39]	My mother.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:41]	Dream buying trip destination?
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:43]	France.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:45]	Is your personal style different than your rental collection?



<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:36:48]	100%
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:50]	Three things outside of work you love to do.
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:36:53]	Eat. Sleep. Play with my dog.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:36:56]	Business tool you couldn't live without.
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:36:59]	My laptop.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:37:00]	You were supposed to say RW Elephant.
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:37:02]	RW Elephant. It's on my laptop.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:37:05]	What's the next big trend in rentals?
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:37:07]	I think the next biggest trend is a play on shapes. I don't think it's like color or material. I think it's a play on shapes.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:37:13]	OK, so final question for each of you. What do you enjoy most about your rental adventure?
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:37:19]	It's ours.
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:37:20]	Yeah. Being the boss. And not of other people, but like of ourselves. Controlling our own destiny.
<b>Allison Howell</b> [00:37:26]	Nice!
[00:37:26]	Well, thank you so much for being on The Trunk Show. And I'm so glad that I know you.
<b>Morgan Montgomery</b> [00:37:33]	Thank you for having us. This has been fun.
<b>Perkins Morgan</b> [00:37:34]	It was really fun.



**Allison Howell**  
[00:37:35]

I hope you enjoyed hearing from Morgan and Perkins about their adventures at Paisley & Jade in Richmond, Virginia. Check out the show notes to find their business and individual social media handles. Perkins' puppy Olive makes a lot of appearances on her account and Morgan's insta documents bad airport flooring far and wide. You'll definitely want to check them both out.

[00:37:53]

While you're digging into the show notes, look out for the link to join the RW Elephant mailing list. That's where you can find more inspiring event rental industry resources and happenings.

[00:38:03]

Oh, and in case you're wondering what happened to the auction for those six chairs...

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:38:08]

Oooo, we won.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:38:10]

Oooo, yay.

**Perkins Morgan**  
[00:38:13]

More chairs.

**Morgan Montgomery**  
[00:38:13]

More chairs.

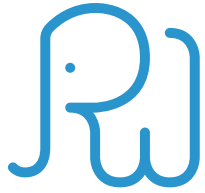
**Allison Howell**  
[00:38:15]

I'm Allison Howell, and thanks for listening to The Trunk Show brought to you by RW Elephant. If there are guests or topics you'd like to hear on the show, give us a shout.

[00:38:23]

Happy renting!





## RW ELEPHANT

### We started with a BIG problem

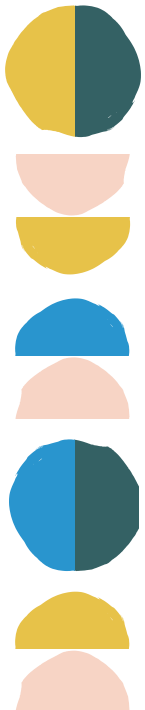
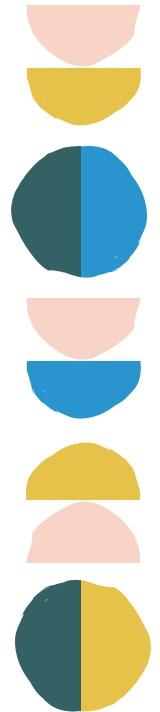
Double-bookings, crazy delivery schedules, and proposals that took hours to create & edit.

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Lots of functions scratched out on napkins, a road trip across the country, and hundreds of programming hours later, RW Elephant was born. The inventory system was simple, easy-to-use, and had just the right amount of features for a small rental business.

Let RW Elephant help you show off your great products, keep track of what's going where when and make running your rental business a little more fun.

*Check out RW Elephant's mighty inventory management software with a free trial at [rwelephant.com](http://rwelephant.com) and see how it can change your event rental business for the better today!*



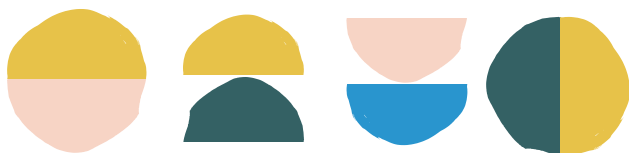
## LEND & GATHER

Lend & Gather: A Boutique Event Rental Conference is happening in downtown Los Angeles, January 20-21, 2020.

Join boutique event rental pros from around the world to connect, collaborate, and be challenged to grow your business. Lend & Gather exists to equip and empower event rental industry leaders to elevate the industry together. Don't miss your chance to sit under our expert speakers, learn from your peers, and gain new perspective for your growing rental business at this intimate experience.

Registration closes December 20, 2019.

*Grab your seat now at [lendandgather.com](http://lendandgather.com)*



## ALLISON HOWELL

As co-founder and CEO, Allison Howell is the sales & marketing brain of RW Elephant. She spends a lot of her time interacting with users, plotting about how to improve the software, and consulting with niche rental businesses about how to get better at what they do. With her background of over fifteen years in the special events industry, she's seen many business owners rise and fall. Now, at RW Elephant, in addition to providing intuitive, efficient software solutions for boutique event rental companies, Allison consults with rental owners to build the best businesses they can to reach their goals.

Combining her analytical skills and aesthetic sensibility allows her to provide a unique perspective to niche rental businesses facing a variety of challenges and experiences. Whether one-on-one, on her blog, or through The Trunk Show, Allison seeks to provide specialty event rental businesses with the best tools possible to create more success, profitability, and enjoyment in their rental businesses.

When she's not RWin, she's scheming about other businesses she'll start someday, challenging her three boys to an epic Nerf battle, or spending a weekly date night with her husband and co-founder Tim.

