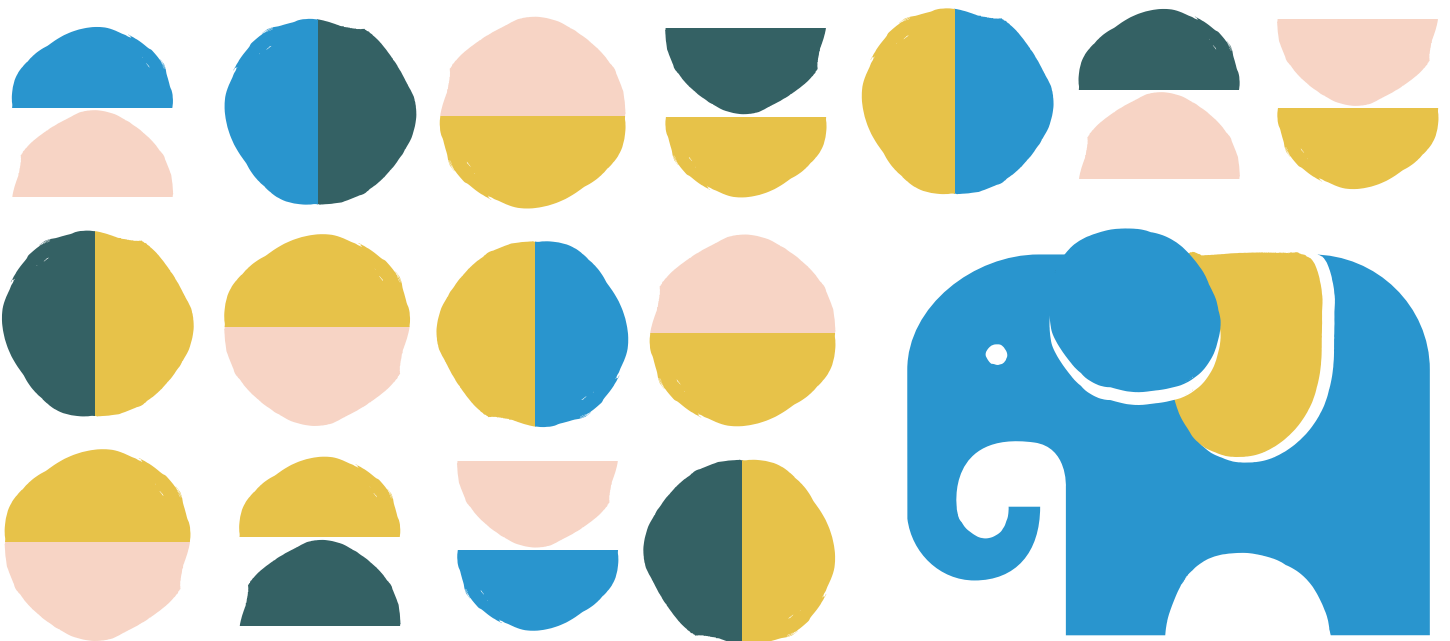
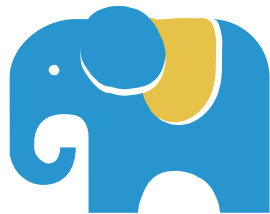
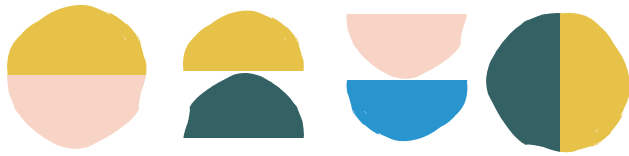


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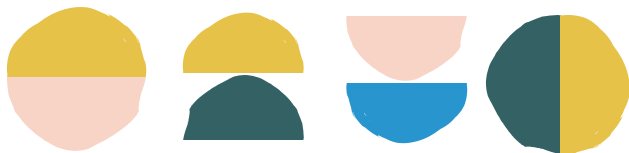
EPISODE 6

MARTHA SANABANDA
Martha My Dear Rentals





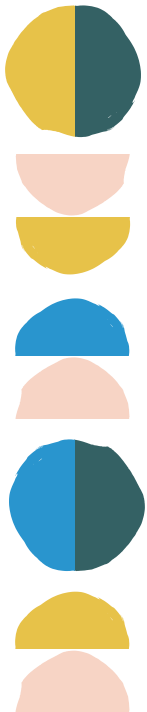
Martha Sanabanda dives into how she started her business, Martha My Dear Rentals, as a hobby before realizing it was everything she wanted in a full-time job. You'll hear how she dealt with internal and external skepticism about becoming an entrepreneur and how she's found her place in the industry along the way.





WHAT'S IN THIS EPISODE

- Martha's path from social work to event rentals
- Turning a hobby into a business
- Protecting your business dream from the skepticism of others
- Having family members as co-workers
- How to make space for creative work
- Policies and processes which have fueled business growth



QUOTES

"Well, I actually find that most of the clients that come to us, they appreciate that our farm tables are made with real wood. [...] It just has so much character to it. And so our target bride loves that." –Martha Sanabanda

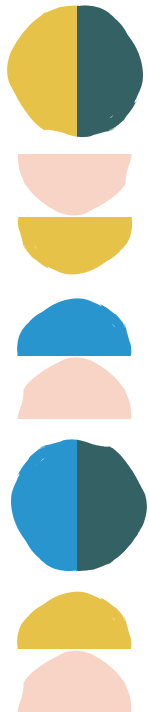
"Well, and it also gives you a point of view, right. This is not just any old table. It's a table created here from the point of view of this place. It's unique in that way, too. I think it's really a beautiful way to add to your collection to be hyper local." –Allison Howell

"We don't have a business background. We've never done this before...It was an idea I just couldn't stop thinking about." –Martha Sanabanda

"Whenever I felt like I wanted to give up, I just told myself: 'This is the course. This is how it is when you start a business.'" –Martha Sanabanda

"So in the beginning, it was really tough for me to not be at every delivery and every pick up. And even though physically I couldn't because I was pregnant, I think I realized that he can handle that. And it allowed me time to kind of dream a little bit about our business. And it gave me energy to do that." –Martha Sanabanda

"We used to deliver two chairs all over town for an event. We definitely put in place some rental minimums. And that was a bit scary at first. We thought we would lose business. But if anything, I think it's helped us gain more business." –Martha Sanabanda



WEBSITE
marthamydearrentals.com

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

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

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

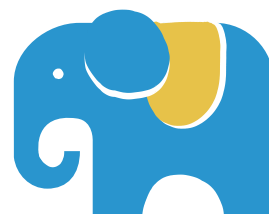
PERKINS MORGAN & MORGAN MONTGOMERY

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.



Allison Howell
[00:00:02] Hi, I'm Allison Howell. You're listening to The Trunk Show, where I talk with founders of leading event rental companies about the adventure of running a business. The show is brought to you by RW Elephant, the mighty inventory management software for your event rental business. My guest for this episode hails from Wilmington, North Carolina.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:00:20] I'm Martha Sanabanda and I'm the owner of Martha, My Dear Rentals.

Allison Howell
[00:00:25] We're going to get into topics like turning an event rentals hobby into a full time business, the rewards of growing a business slowly, and rental policies that can free up your time to focus on the stuff that really matters.

[00:00:37] All of that and more is coming up on The Trunk Show.

Allison Howell
[00:00:41] Where did the name Martha, My Dear, come from?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:00:44] Ah, so, Martha, My Dear, is actually the name of a Beatles song.

Allison Howell
[00:00:48] Uh huh.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:00:48] So, my name is Martha. I'm named after my grandmother. All my life I've kind of been teased in school about having this older lady name. And so I always loved the Beatles and I love that song and the play on my name and the song and trying to make my name cool.

Allison Howell
[00:01:07] Tell us about the market in Wilmington a little bit.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:01:09] It's a smaller town over here by the beach. We're in the south. And I think our tradition has been more classical. Weddings have been kind of like light and airy and pretty, a lot of outdoor weddings, hasn't been super modern. It hasn't been moody.

Allison Howell
[00:01:29] And so how would you describe your collection?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:01:33] I think when we first started, we were very shabby chic because that was kind of the feel at that time. This past year, we kind of have revamped our collection a bit. And I have some rental friends in other states and I see and learn about what's popular over there.

[00:01:50] It's been fun to kind of take those elements that I liked and appreciated from other rental companies and try to put our spin on it and still honor it. But, you know, kind of make it our own as well. I've been trying to bring some more modern pieces here to Wilmington and it's been getting some traction.

Allison Howell
[00:02:09] Yeah. So what pieces build the foundation of your collection?



Martha Sanabanda
[00:02:15]

I think color palette is really important. I would say that neutrals are always a classic piece and it's probably the most versatile also because it could be used in so many different ways just by adding accessories. So I think what's been really fun for us this year is we, we added a new kind of farm table. So we're trying to bring some like elegance to the farm table and not just have it be this brown rustic piece.

Allison Howell
[00:02:47]

So tell us about these new farm tables. What makes them more elegant?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:02:50]

They're called the Heartwood Farm Table. Our other farm tables are a lot darker. These are lighter. The legs are trestle tables and...

Allison Howell
[00:02:59]

Oh okay.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:03:00]

So it's exciting to have a new style and kind of build a collection around this farm table in hopes that people would want to rent the entire collection.

[00:03:12]

I've been trying to create a collection so that people would want to rent our chairs that match the Heartwood Farm Table and create a Heartwood cocktail table that also matches our Heartwood farm table and just kind of like create bigger orders for folks.

Allison Howell
[00:03:31]

So are you building those pieces in-house?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:03:34]

So we actually found a carpenter in town and he actually... It's so funny. He lives on our block.

Allison Howell
[00:03:41]

Oh!

Martha Sanabanda
[00:03:41]

Yeah. We were so lucky to find him. And so this past year, you know, we just kind of sat down and put together some plans and we started with farm tables and then we added chairs to match the farm tables and cocktail tables that he also built for us. And we added bars that match the table that match cocktail table.

Allison Howell
[00:04:04]

Yeah.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:04:05]

It's been fun.

Allison Howell
[00:04:06]

And is your region or local market interested in sort of the craftsmanship or the makers behind your collection? Or is that not much of a decision making factor in their renting?



Martha Sanabanda
[00:04:20]

Well, I actually find that most of the clients that come to us, they appreciate that our farm tables are made with real wood. There are some competitors that don't have a real wood as farm tables or we make sure that our chairs are real wood and it just has so much character to it. And so our target bride loves that.

Allison Howell
[00:04:42]

Right. Well, I can just imagine knowing that it was made in Wilmington, also is just a sweet, another sweet connection there that people feel like, oh, I'm supporting two local businesses here by renting this table, not just one.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:04:59]

Yeah. And there's a story behind it. You know, I get to tell them a little bit about how I met our neighbor down the street and learned that he was a carpenter. And I think it's, you know, it's kind of endearing to hear that and see this collection that we built all around that one table.

Allison Howell
[00:05:15]

Right. Right. Well, and it also gives you a point of view, right. This is not just any old table. It's a table created here from the point of view of this place. It's unique in that way, too. So, yeah, I think it's really a beautiful way to add to your collection to be hyper local.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:05:42]

Yeah.

Allison Howell
[00:05:43]

So what got you into this? How did you get started in rentals?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:05:47]

Back in 2013, my husband, now husband, Brian, proposed to me. And so it all started with me planning our wedding.

Allison Howell
[00:05:58]

And that was there in Wilmington?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:06:00]

Yes. So we got married here in Wilmington, North Carolina. And at that time, I had done a lot of research and try to find some specialty items. And we discovered that there wasn't a ton of that in our town.

Allison Howell
[00:06:15]

Sure.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:06:16]

Yeah. And so we were also on a budget at that time. So we kind of just took it upon ourselves to go ahead and try to find these items ourselves.

Allison Howell
[00:06:24]

Got it. So what was the moment when you first had the idea to start renting those pieces to other people?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:06:32]

Yes, so we... While we were planning our wedding the whole time, Brian was also in school. And so he had went back to school studying accounting. And I was working at a nonprofit. And we know our lives were we kind of were living very humbly and we were students. So we were on a budget for a wedding and we thought, you know, this could be a way for us to also make some money in the future. Or I thought that at first.



Allison Howell
[00:07:01]

So what was the turning point? When did you decide, hey, I'm going to start, I'm going to, I'm going to call somebody up and say, hey, do you want to rent this from me? Like, how did you actually put yourself out there?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:07:13]

So at first, it was something that I didn't really talk about. So I was trying to make sure that this was a strategic move for us. So we kind of had that conversation as we got closer to our wedding and I asked him, could this be something that we could create into a business one day? And so we both thought that if we tried hard enough, it would be something that we could do together. And we made that decision to keep our job while we tried to learn about the business, create the business and market it.

Allison Howell
[00:07:49]

OK, wait, wait. So you're planning a wedding and you're starting new jobs and you're starting a business? You did all three of those things at the same time?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:07:58]

Yes. We, we always do things that are complicated like that all at the same time.

Allison Howell
[00:08:03]

OK. So you've told Brian now I want to start this business and he's on board right away?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:08:08]

Well, at first, he was a bit skeptical. You know, this was completely different than what we were planning on doing with our lives. He was in school to be an accountant. I was working in the nonprofit world and I was working as a social worker with people who had mental illness.

[00:08:30]

We don't have a business background. We've never done this before. But he knew that this was something that I've kind of wanted to pursue. And it was an idea I just couldn't stop thinking about. So, you know, working in the social work field was at that time really draining for me and helping people who have these awful life crises.

[00:08:47]

And I turned to planning our wedding and possibly starting a business as therapy. It was kind of something that I looked forward to doing after I got work to get my mind off of work. And I found that it brought me like a lot of joy and a lot of happiness. And it became this whole other animal.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:09:06]

I would meet with clients and other vendors in the wedding world and they would always say how calm I was and how, you know, and nothing really seemed to bother me. And yes, there are many crises in the wedding world and planning a wedding is a big deal. But it just felt a lot different than having to deal with people who were homeless and people who were on addiction. It was a completely different type of problem.

Allison Howell
[00:09:33]

Sure. So you started your business. Was the goal to transition out of your day job?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:09:40]

Yeah. Well, at first I... It was funny because at first I even called it a hobby.

Allison Howell
[00:09:45]

OK.



Martha Sanabanda
[00:09:47]

I was looking back at like old Instagram pictures from the very first few posts that I had and I took a picture of our business cards that I made. And in the caption of the post said, "Excited about my new hobby for 2014." So even with a business card, I was calling it a hobby.

Allison Howell
[00:10:06]

When do you think that changed?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:10:08]

I think it changed probably when we did our first few events. And I saw that people were interested in us and we were getting some actual checks coming in and people were kind of treating it as a business and not as a hobby. And it was something that I was trying to create and and protect and promote.

.....

[AD BREAK]

Allison Howell
[00:10:34]

Hey, we're going to take a quick break so I can tell you about an upcoming conference designed for boutique event rentals by boutique event rentals pros. It's called Lend & Gather. It's happening this January 2020, right around the corner. If you're wondering to yourself whether you should go, Lend & Gather conference alum, Angie wants you to know, yes, you should definitely go.

Angie Martin
[00:10:56]

My name's Angie, Martin. I'm the owner and leader of Borrowed Charm Event Rentals and Styling here in Oklahoma City. I would totally recommend Lend & Gather to any specialty rental company.

[00:11:06]

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
[00:11:26]

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

Angie Martin
[00:11:29]

Well, we've grown significantly. We, 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
[00:12:01]

So what do you hope to gain this time around?



Angie Martin
[00:12:04]

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 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
[00:12:32]

Thanks for sharing, Angie. Check out the speaker lineup, get your tickets and more at LendandGather.com. That's LendandGather.com. The conference is almost fully booked, so reserve your spot right away. I really hope to see you there. [AD BREAK END]

.....

[00:12:45]

OK, back to my conversation with Martha.

[00:12:46]

What was your first event?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:12:51]

Our first event was a very small wedding. I think the only thing that they had rented from us was the mantel, which is funny, the mantel that I used for my wedding. And we probably had like three items that we rented. And we delivered it on a Saturday. We made a couple hundred dollars and it just felt, oh, my gosh, it's so exciting. You know, that small event was probably more than I would have made at my job, working for a couple of days.

Allison Howell
[00:13:20]

So it was significant both in like the moment somebody rented our pieces, but also financially, it felt like, oh, this is legitimate.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:13:30]

Yeah, it felt like, you know, this work was legitimate and it was money that we were taking for the work that we did and keeping for ourselves and not having to give to our supervisor, to an employer.

Allison Howell
[00:13:47]

Did your family or friends when you told them, hey, I'm starting this business on the side, was that something they were like, oh, of course, you're totally entrepreneurial.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:13:56]

So I think when I first told people they were skeptical and I remember being worried about telling folks because I didn't want them to kind of crush my dreams. And this idea that I had. And so like I remember one of my friends kind of said to me, well, how are you going to do that and also work full time? And I remember someone else telling me like, oh, you're not going to quit your day job, right? So it was kind of, it was a little bit scary to tell people. And because of that, it kind of made me want to protect it even more.

Allison Howell
[00:14:33]

Yeah. Yeah. It's interesting you say, protect it. I once heard somebody talking about sort of ideas that we have, whether it's for a business or an art project or maybe some other kind of creative experience, that we kind of think of it as a baby bird and it's like this thing that we want to protect and make sure is safe. And then eventually we have to like let it fly. But it's a really scary thing to let it like leave the nest, you know?



[00:15:00] But as you're talking about that, I've heard you say the word protect a couple times. And it and it is interesting, like when it's that small or when it's that close to you, you do feel this sense of like, I want to protect this. I don't want someone to talk me out of this. I don't want someone to tell me I can't do it. I want to be able to, like test this out and prove it before I get too much feedback.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:15:22] Yeah. And I think it's so hard in the beginning, especially with any business, you know, I always hear people say, like the first five years are the hardest. Or you won't be making any profit if you can make it to year five, you'll be OK. So I kind of thought of that going into it. I knew that the first couple years were going to be tough.

[00:15:43] And whenever they felt like we wanted to give up, I just tell myself like "this is the course. This is how it is when you start a business. And if we can, you know, celebrate like the smaller things, that would be more meaningful. And let's just take it year by year but also plan ahead."

Allison Howell
[00:16:03] Sure.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:16:03] I mean, it was the best thing I probably could have done because we were able to take all of the money that we made from the business and put it right back into the business. And I think the great thing, too, is that we were able to not have to take out any loans. And so we were essentially debt free for most of the time.

Allison Howell
[00:16:25] Yeah, well, that gives you a lot of freedom to grow and experiment and try things and not feel pressure, right?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:16:35] Yeah. I mean, we were able to kind of finance ourselves, so we didn't have to worry about like paying some money back to anyone or trying to make someone else happy. We're able to like make our own decisions and just know that if we didn't book an event this month or if we didn't, you know, have all this extra income coming in, we would be OK and we can try to find new ways to grow the business.

Allison Howell
[00:16:59] Yeah. Yeah. So was there ever a transition point when you knew you needed to choose one or the other?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:17:07] It was probably when I got pregnant with my daughter that we decided that we definitely could not go... continue to do this route. We were just working 24/7 and balancing all these things.

Allison Howell
[00:17:21] Right. Well, what changed in your business? Did anything change in your business when you were pregnant? Were there things you stopped doing? Were there things you started doing?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:17:29] Yeah. So when I got pregnant, I did let my employer know where I was working, that I had a business. And I let them know that my plans were eventually when I had our daughter to pull back, some from from working with them and eventually stop altogether.



[00:17:46] I continued working the entire time. We ended up having to plan our C-section just because of some risks that were involved. And the doctor asked me, you know, do you want to have your C-section on Friday or do you want to have it on Monday? And we had events planned for that weekend.

Allison Howell
[00:18:05] Please tell me you weren't doing deliveries while you were that pregnant.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:18:10] No, that was that was the biggest blessing. So once I was pregnant, I stopped doing all deliveries and it forced us to have some extra help in place to do that kind of thing for us.

Allison Howell
[00:18:21] Well, you know, that's kind of a good marker, right? If you've, like, always wanted to get out of the delivery portion of your business and you just can't figure out how to hire people. I guess you could always just get pregnant. And then it's like, well, now I have to really figure it out, right?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:18:34] It was the best excuse.

Allison Howell
[00:18:36] Good. And so what has been different in your business now that you're a mom?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:18:42] It has not been easy, but it's been great because having my daughter has been a great excuse for me to kind of prioritize my time. It's allowed me to kind of pick days where I was going to spend that time with my daughter and take care of her and pick days that I was going to be in the office or days that I would be out meeting with clients.

[00:19:06] So it's definitely forced me to kind of keep certain hours and look at my time more as being valuable. So I kind of look at my day now and think like, what's the best way to spend my time? Is it worth me, you know, maybe giving up story time with my daughter at the library to go make this appointment? Is that something that I need to be there for or can someone else handle it?

Allison Howell
[00:19:36] That's interesting. So what processes or practices did you have in place before you had Sadie that made the transition easier?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:19:45] We made it important to hire some additional help to handle those deliveries like we talked about. Brian kind of has taken on the role in being our predominant warehouse guy. So he's at that warehouse more than I am. He's handling all the deliveries, meeting with all of the staff that's helping us with those deliveries, loading up the truck. And that's really allowed me to step back and kind of be the person that's meeting with all the brides, doing all the advertising and planning with all the planners.

Allison Howell
[00:20:19] And what do you think has changed in your business as a result of that kind of division for you guys?



Martha Sanabanda
[00:20:26]

I think it's really helped. Our business has done really well this past year more than we thought we ever would. You know, we kind of set some humble and manageable expectations last year for us and we've exceeded that. And I think it's because we kind of just took on different roles and kind of see where we were good at.

Allison Howell
[00:20:48]

Has it ever been hard to trust one another as you've moved into these more separated roles?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:20:56]

So in the beginning, it was really tough for me to not be at every delivery and every pick up. And even though physically I couldn't because I was pregnant, I think I realized that he can handle that. And it allowed me time to kind of dream a little bit about our business. And it gave me energy to do that.

[00:21:17]

And while I'm doing all of this, I'm also I was also preparing for our daughter. So kind of it was nice to step back a little bit, but I kind of had to be forced to.

Allison Howell
[00:21:27]

Are there any other rules or policies or processes that you've put in place that have been game changers for you in your rental business?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:21:35]

Well, I think especially this year, we've changed some things in terms of minimums. So now we used to deliver two chairs all over town for an event. So we definitely put in place some rental minimum. And that was a bit scary at first. We thought we would lose business. But if anything, I think it's helped us gain more business.

Allison Howell
[00:21:58]

Tell me more about that.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:21:59]

Yes. So we will get some inquiries from brides that want to rent, maybe just a sweetheart table and two chairs and you know, I will respond and let them know that both pieces are available and we love to send to them, but we have a minimum and could they possibly add a little bit to their order? So yeah, we have some of that in place that helped. And we find that most of the time brides are onboard and they look more into our inventory and then add to the order.

Allison Howell
[00:22:31]

That's great. So it seems like the thing that you feared actually hasn't come true and instead the opposite has been the case.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:22:39]

Yeah. And then we realized that if we don't get that business, that that's OK, because at the end of the day, you know, do we want to sacrifice our time that's really limited and do we want to go over town for two chairs?

Allison Howell
[00:22:53]

Right. Well, it seems like you've definitely entered into a season where time is more valuable to you than those few hundred bucks that you'd make renting just a couple chairs. And now the time is the thing that you want most of in your life.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:23:12]

Yeah, and I think that's been great because that's what my daughter has brought to us. She made us prioritize our time and put a value on it.



Allison Howell
[00:23:21]

Sure. So what have been some of your barriers to growth?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:23:28]

Oh, gosh. I think it's the pace that we've chosen to grow at. We knew that we wanted to start slowly and that was important to us to really build roots. And so I think that was difficult at first because we had our full time job and we only had X amount of time to dedicate to it. So we knew that we were probably going to grow a lot slower compared to some other companies that were all in from day one.

Allison Howell
[00:24:00]

Sure. So how did you push past that? How did you keep going even though that was difficult?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:24:07]

I think I'm lucky enough to have Brian, who has such a strong work ethic and just both of us, you know, being on board. You know, we had to, we haven't had the biggest social life because we are kind of trying to work all the time and play catch up. That has been a challenge but we, you know, we've always been on the same page and we always just said, you know, we'll get through this together and then and then we'll we can enjoy it one day together as well.

Allison Howell
[00:24:38]

Yeah, that's really such an important blessing to have a partner in this experience that is so supportive.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:24:48]

I can't imagine doing this without him. And we kind of always, you know, we'll have our talks throughout the year and just check in with each other, make sure like we're both OK, like we're both feeling seen and, you know, do we need to take a break? Do we need to just go away on a vacation when this is, whenever we get a chance. So we do that regularly.

Allison Howell
[00:25:10]

Well, as you look back at the let's see it now, five years, you've been in business, what moments have you truly celebrated? What are the two or three big highs that you look back and think, wow, those were really great.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:25:25]

Yeah. Let's see. So the first big moment was when we were invited to a very large event in our town. It was kind of this wedding showcase that you had to be invited to attend as a vendor. We remember going to this wedding show back when we were engaged. So it was really exciting when we were invited to attend as as a vendor and as a business.

Allison Howell
[00:25:53]

Yeah. You were the insiders.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:25:55]

Yeah, it was really exciting. That was probably our big first moment. About a year and a half in our business.

[00:26:01]

Oh, I think the biggest and we are still celebrating. It's been over a year. But it was just our warehouse. For so long we worked out of our garage and, you know, I'm still grateful for those brides that would come to our house and still sign the contract and still believed in us. But just getting a legitimate sign and a space have been so amazing for us.

Allison Howell
[00:26:27]

Yeah, it's no longer a hobby business, right?



Martha Sanabanda
[00:26:30] No, it's like we have our business address. We have a mailing address. We have a big sign and we have a space that we're proud of.

Allison Howell
[00:26:39] I hope you enjoyed hearing about Martha's rental adventure. Check out the show notes to find links to Martha, My Dear's website and Instagram. While you're in the show notes look out for the link to join the RW Elephant mailing list, which offers more industry resources and happenings. As usual on The Trunk Show, I've got a lightning round of questions to ask my guests. So stick around.

Allison Howell
[00:27:00] OK, so favorite piece in your collection.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:02] Our Sadie sofa.

Allison Howell
[00:27:04] Is it named after the baby or is the baby named after the sofa?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:08] We named the sofa after the baby.

Allison Howell
[00:27:10] OK, good. Ramp or lift gate?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:15] Ramp.

Allison Howell
[00:27:17] Sole Proprietorship, LLC, S Corp, Offshore Dummy Corporation?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:22] Right now I believe we're an S Corp and I hear that works for us. I still don't understand it really.

Allison Howell
[00:27:31] But you've got an accountant for a husband, so...

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:34] Yeah.

Allison Howell
[00:27:34] Is there a podcast you love?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:36] Yes. I love How I Built This by Guy Raz.

Allison Howell
[00:27:40] So good. Who inspires you?



Martha Sanabanda
[00:27:43] I feel like my daughter inspires me. And it probably sounds cheesy and corny, but I just... I do everything for her and I'm hoping that one day, like, she will look back on this and be proud.

Allison Howell
[00:27:57] I'm sure she will be. Dream buying trip destination.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:28:01] I would love to go to Europe.

Allison Howell
[00:28:03] Is your personal style different than your rental collection?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:28:07] It's funny. I think our personal style has actually changed because of the rental collection. So it's kind of merging with with our Heartwood collection right now.

Allison Howell
[00:28:16] Three things outside of work that you love to do.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:28:20] Right now I love to soak in the bathtub. I love to eat good food as much as I can and massages whenever I can.

Allison Howell
[00:28:34] Great. What is a business tool that you couldn't live without?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:28:39] A laptop.

Allison Howell
[00:28:41] What's the next big trend in rentals?

Martha Sanabanda
[00:28:43] I think in our area we are finally leaning towards more specialty chairs like dining chairs, and people are looking more to get a different kind of chair, which is fun.

Allison Howell
[00:28:56] OK, so here's my final question to close this out. What do you enjoy most about your rental adventure?

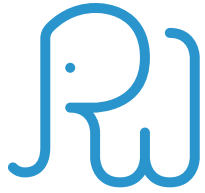
Martha Sanabanda
[00:29:05] Oh my goodness. I just have really enjoyed being part of the whole journey and riding it out. Through our other jobs, we only get to see certain aspects of projects and it's been kind of nice being there for everything.

Allison Howell
[00:29:21] Well, I hope it's a ride you're proud of.

Martha Sanabanda
[00:29:23] I am and I feel like it's just started.

Allison Howell
[00:29:27] 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, let us know. I'm Allison Howell. Happy renting!





RW ELEPHANT

We started with a BIG problem

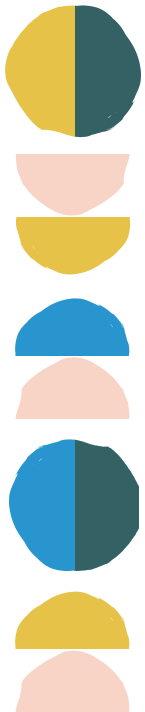
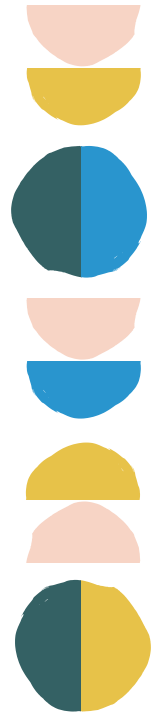
Double-bookings, crazy delivery schedules, and proposals that took hours to create & edit.

So what did we do?

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 and see how it can change your event rental business for the better today!



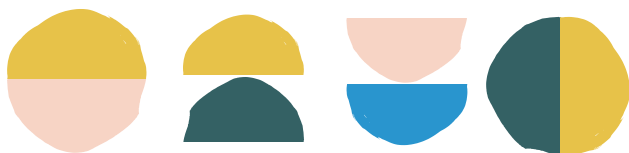
LEND & GATHER

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



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.

