

HEALTHCARE

Veluxe CEO Susanna Quinn on 7 keys to brand traction

December 23, 2016



Susanna Quinn is founder/CEO of Veluxe

By **Mack McKelvey**

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Jared Polis, Congressman from Colorado and the founder of Blue Mountain Cards and ProFlowers, said, "Underestimate the amazing Susanna Quinn at your peril."

I recently sat with Susanna Quinn, founder/CEO of Veluxe, and I heeded that warning. I found her to be a refreshingly authentic and savvy CEO who was willing to share her experiences creating a successful lifestyle brand in the digital era.

Susanna founded Veluxe, a technology platform for in-home health, wellness and beauty lifestyle services two years ago.

Veluxe provides custom and personalized beauty, fitness and wellness services. Customers can select the time and location of their choice, and connect with stylists, trainers, instructors and makeup artists.

Headquartered in Washington, Veluxe has become a mainstay lifestyle brand for the city's spectrum of political power players and business professionals. Veluxe expanded into Chicago in 2015 and more city expansions are on the horizon.

According to Euromonitor International, the United States is the "undisputed king of beauty," with a market worth \$80 billion. The U.S. market is expected to increase by \$18 billion by 2020.

Knowing that the health, beauty and wellness service industry had not caught up with the growth in technology, she seized the opportunity.

"You could order a car, book a vacation home and find a date on your phone or computer, but it was not easy to do the things that make us look good and be healthy," Ms. Quinn said.

Building an app to solve the problem was one thing, creating a sustainable lifestyle brand was a whole other proposition.

Here are the seven fundamental pieces to Veluxe's success from Ms. Quinn:

1. Create an authentic brand. The CEO of a company is the brand. For Veluxe, the customer base expects a high-end experience, as the "Veluxe life" was established by, and is lived by, Susanna Quinn. She is known in the DC area as being a successful, well-connected entrepreneur, who happens to be fashionable and healthy.

"What was initially an idea to make it possible for busy people to book last-minute services has evolved into a core part of our clients' lives," Ms. Quinn said.

"Veluxe enables them to maintain beauty and wellness routines," she said. "Clients look to us for recommendations in all parts of their life, so we are working to build a lifestyle blog and other products and services to ensure we are enablers of our customers' growth as well."

2. Live it. Customer surveys only give part of the story. The best way to know how your service or product works is to use it.

"At every stage of my life, I have been a Veluxe customer, as a young [Capitol] Hill staffer, a businesswoman and now as a working mom," Ms. Quinn said.

"Veluxe enables me to stay fit and to look professional, so I know it works," she said. "We get messages all the time from both men and women saying that their services helped them sell a house or close a deal."

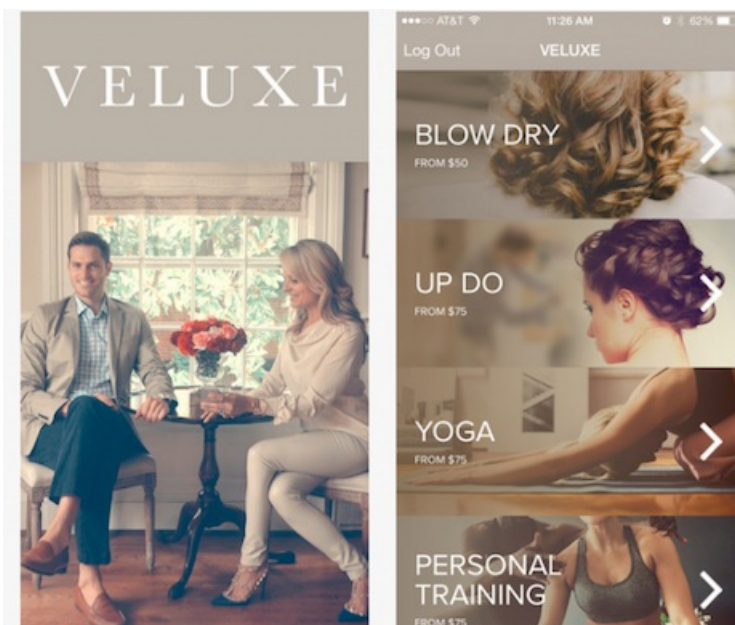
"Being fit and looking good absolutely gives people a certain degree of self-confidence and presents an image of success. Living a Veluxe life has changed the attitudes of so many of our clients. Do you know a busy professional woman? She's our target client. Is she a mom? Then, she's our power user. I couldn't help them if I wasn't a power user myself."

3. Evolve with customer behavior. Using customer feedback to fuel product evolution, which leads to stronger loyalty and growth.

"Initially, we went down the path of providing an on-demand service, allowing our customers to book what they wanted, when they wanted it, with just a few clicks on a smartphone," Ms. Quinn said.

"These services are still core to our customers, but we found that people were using us not as a last-minute impulse, but more and more to schedule the things that they want to do in order to be healthy and look good in between the things that they need to do for their work and families," she said.

"Our clients love Veluxe and from their feedback we have made changes to everything from the app to the type of services that we offer to create the best product and service for them that we can. It's working. Twenty-one percent of our clients are power users, booking more than four times a month."



Veluxe is a technology platform for in-home health, wellness and beauty lifestyle services

4. Know the long game. Every business requires the proverbial blood, sweat and tears, but creating a digital luxury consumer brand from the ground up takes all of that, plus perseverance and guts.

"Before I started Veluxe, I thought I was busy," Ms. Quinn said. "I had no idea. Within two years, I developed an app,

launched a product and built up a two-sided marketplace. And, in the process, we have really built a recognizable lifestyle brand. And we are just getting started."

5. Have a purpose. Customers typically buy products or services that they want. Mission-driven companies seek to solve customers' problems.

"Veluxe is radically reshaping the consumer experience by making it possible for men and women to live their best lives," Ms. Quinn said. "Veluxe has streamlined what has been an external, time-consuming experience for women and has brought it all into the home.

"The Veluxe experience creates more time in the day for women, perhaps the single most coveted product for today's high achieving woman," she said. "I want to bring this to women all over the country."

6. Trust your gut. As an entrepreneur, you surround yourself with smart, complementary skill-sets and minds, but the CEO has to make the tough calls.

"As the CEO of a startup, I've learned I can't overthink things," Ms. Quinn said. "If you have an idea or an instinct, act on it. There is always a chance for a do-over.

"I have often waited to take action until certain conditions have been met, but I have learned that is just setting up gates for myself," she said. "Since I launched this company, I have had a solid hockey-stick growth increase in courage and a solid hockey-stick growth decrease in hesitancy."

7. Revenue is the new black. Euromonitor reports expectations of high growth in the beauty category alone, but competition is fierce. And as sexy as the industry may look from the outside, it is similar to other industries. Revenue is king.

"From the beginning, we have been working from an aggressive plan," Ms. Quinn said. "Monitoring product and services adoption and lifetime value has been critical for our roadmap.

"A third of our customers book more than three different types of services which demonstrates real brand loyalty," she said. "And that brand loyalty has translated to real revenue, which has enabled us to beat our financial plan."



Erin (Mack) McKelvey is managing partner and CEO of SalientMG

*Erin (Mack) McKelvey is managing partner and CEO of **SalientMG**, a Columbia, MD-based digital and mobile consultancy. Reach her at mack@salientmg.com.*