



Khasiba is a budding entrepreneur in the growth stage of the product life cycle. She launched her business last year and is going from strength to strength, by sticking to her beliefs and values, determination and good partnerships.

White Orchid Flower Boutique prides itself on being very high quality, with strong attention to detail and making sure that the customer gets exactly what they require. Tailor-made flower arrangements are made to order, delivered and managed from start to finish with the customers' unique design and colour schemes in mind.

The following questions were asked and answered by Khasiba during an interview with Naomi Keir in February 2016, 6 months after she launched her first store.

*What is the main skill you feel is needed for success?*

Time management is key. I am working, I am still a degree student AND I run this business – I have to make sure I use my time wisely.

A typical day for me would be wake at 7.00am and go to work until 1.30pm. I then go straight to university and attend classes from 2.30pm until 6.30pm. I take a break until around 8.30pm and then review the takings for the day in the store and make sure the orders for the customers are ready for the next few days. Finally I sleep!

Also, determination – you don't give up even if things don't go the way you wish they would at first. For example, when choosing my location I first tried Al Mamoura buildings [offices in a key location in Abu Dhabi] but the rental here was way out of my budget; then I looked at the newly launched Yas Mall – but found my target market didn't really go here; next I tried Nation Towers as their reputation is high quality brands – but I was an unknown brand and they would not accept my application at this time; I moved on to try Deerfields Mall in Shahama and there was only one shop available, I was competing with Patchi Chocolate and of course they won being a well-known name. Finally, I was having lunch at Al Muneera, a location just outside Abu Dhabi and found myself looking at a vacant shop...my target market lives outside Abu Dhabi as when I did my research I found there were over 400 flower shops inside the city – not high quality but this would still limit my access to customers. There was nothing catering to people outside, where more and more people are moving due to rental rises and it seemed meant to be for me to open here – the shop was perfect and I signed the lease.

*That sounds like a lot of hard work – do you do this yourself?*

It is not possible to do this by yourself, you must work with excellent people and I have a business partner – my best friend who I completely trust – and we run the business together with excellent suppliers.

### *How did you find a high quality suppliers?*

Research – I had to try lots before I found ones I can rely on and trust to be the quality I wish to use. Now I have a regular delivery and ordering arrangement for both flowers and distribution. The same can be said of my packaging supplier – it had to be absolutely right, as the customers will not come back if they are not. I also believe in being as environmentally friendly as I possibly can and all my packaging, business cards, promotional materials are recyclable and reusable....this is very important to me – a key value I would say. I even delayed my opening day by 3 months, because even though I had nice packaging, it was not environmentally friendly and I waited until I sourced the right materials before moving forward. All my boxes are reusable, and customers will benefit by bringing them for use again.

### *Where did the idea for your business come from?*

Actually, I have allergies to flowers, but I still love them. I found myself being extremely fussy when it came to me giving gifts and I preferred to buy the materials and make the bouquets and displays myself – sometimes spending 3-4 hours on one display. My friends loved my work and asked me to do some for them.....I then believed that in high quality, tailored flowers I may have found a perfect business to run with.

### *What do you do to market your store?*

I am still working on the website and I wish I had done this earlier. However, a lot of my customers use Instagram so I post a lot of pictures there and I also do a lot of personal selling as one of my USPs is the personalized service. Word of mouth is key too but I need to go and see my main target in person.

Link to Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/woflowerboutique/>

### *Who are your main target customers?*

Actually, my main customers are not people who just buy gifts for friends or special occasions – of course this is part of it but not the most. The majority of my business is corporate, flower arrangements for government offices and alike. I have even designed for the royal family here in Abu Dhabi.

### *What about the future for White Orchid?*

The business is going well and I hope to open two new branches in the next 2 years, one in Madinat Zayed and one in Al Ain – plans are already in place to move forward....and I have other ideas I want to run with too, but I will tell you about them another time!

## **Questions:**

1. Can you name three skills that were essential for Khasiba's success?
2. What were Khasiba's start-up influences?
3. Give examples of Porter's Five Forces in action at White Orchid.