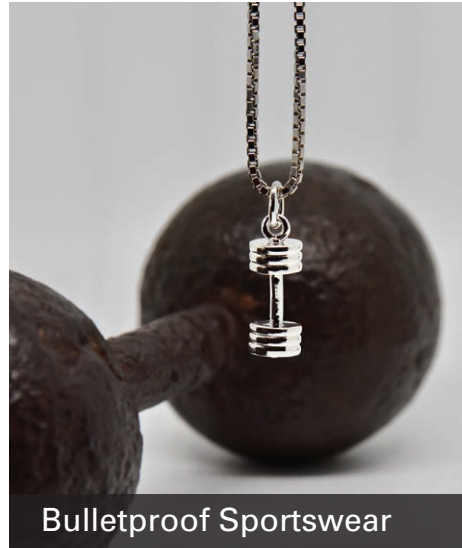




Muscle Vodka



Bulletproof Sportswear



Obsessive Cookie Disorder Company

## Passion Project To Career

There's something about being a part of the bodybuilding family that makes it so different from any other sport. I believe, it's like mindedness and the healthy lifestyle that sets the sport of bodybuilding apart. Yes you are either an athlete or a fan and can strive to be your best and/ or cheer for your favorites but beyond that, you make friendships for life. For Ken and Amy Richardson, they've taken something that's a passion, art and design and turned it into some amazing pieces of jewelry and how they make their living. Grace Gillespie was an athlete/coach and understood the value of creating a product that would provide a healthier alternative for health conscious people to enjoy. She's driven with big dreams and tons of energy to make her mark in the alcohol beverage industry. Tracy and Mohamed Shaaban created an indulgent cookie for the athletes to enjoy after they compete and they've been a hit. What started as just a love for baking has quickly evolved into a full time business. What is your passion and could you make a business out of it? Read how these three businesses got started and how they've been able to find success.

### Muscle Vodka

Grace Gillespie

#### How did it start?

While I was still competing, 2009-2010, I opened a gym and a juice bar in Ohio and I was training competitors, too. My clients would say to me, "hey, I'm going to drink over the weekend. Don't tell me not to, tell me what's my best option. I wasn't going to stop them because I understood. Even when I would go out, I wanted a cocktail that's not going to kill all my progress in the gym. Something that is better for me and that's not going to burn when it goes down. So I decided, I'm going to create the best option. I went to a chemist and said I want you to make this for me, make this happen. He looked at me like I was crazy. I wanted something that was organic, gluten free, no gmo, sugar free, carb free and the least amount of calories you could possibly get in a

vodka. We also did a reverse osmosis so it took out all the minerals and impurities to make it the cleanest form of water possible used in the process. Obviously, I can't say there's no hangover, but as long as you don't mix it with sugar there's not going to be a hangover. The whole process took four years to create the product I envisioned.

In 2017, I launched Muscle Vodka. I launched Muscle Vodka at the Mr. Olympia in Vegas and from that point forward it's just been like blowing up. I'm currently in 37 states and 14 countries online so I can basically get my products to anybody, anywhere. I'm all over the markets in Florida, Ohio, California and I'm opening in Tennessee and Las Vegas in 2022. I'm also in the process of bringing Muscle Vodka to India. I'm partnering with someone over there that does a lot of the bodybuilding shows and is very big into the fitness industry. They fell in love with my products while visiting the states and now they want to really grow the product in India where they also have a lot of bars and nightclubs.



### Are bodybuilding shows the primary place that you market Muscle Vodka?

Not at all, my biggest market is bodybuilding, fitness and health including yoga, crossfit and Orange Theory. People love it because it is the best option if they are going to drink and they want a cocktail. I also sponsor pro athletes in mixed martial arts, boxing, NFL, NBA. I do a very wide variety of events, working with bands, artists, DJs and emcees. I'm excited for the next event I'm doing with Monster Jam. The muscle car events in particular just make sense for me. I love events that have anything to do with excitement and energy. I sponsored the Akon Block Party held at the SuperCar Room in Miami as part of the Super Bowl events last year. I had 10' banners on the stage on either side of him and Muscle Vodka was the only vodka that was served. The crowd was over 1000 people! I get asked to do podcasts daily and I do tons of them. For celebrity boxing, I have the official Muscle Vodka Ring Girls, so yes I am involved with many different types of events.

### I know that you can't possibly be at all those events, do you have a team of people that go to all these different events?

I have approximately 350 ambassadors, both in the US and Internationally. I have a list of all the ambassadors by area, so when I need a person for an event, I look at my list, find somebody in the area, call them for the promotion, give them a promo code so they can make money and then I ship them

everything they need for the event. **You are a one woman show with an amazing ambassador team.** I am and I love it. I have reps and retail managers, the whole shebang and I love it. If I could only have a few more of me so I could be everywhere all the time.

### Where did the Muscle Vodka name come from?

I knew it was the one. I'm a big believer that a lot of things happen because God puts them in your path. When that light bulb clicked and I knew I was going to create the best option for a cocktail for the health and fitness minded, I felt like the name just popped in my head. Muscle Vodka is the name. I never had a doubt. I never went through other names. I knew that was the name of my company and I just kept moving forward.

### What do you see for your future?

Flavored Vodkas are such a saturated market in the US, so that's not something I would consider. I always recommend to people that want a flavor in their vodka to get one of those mio drops, pick out the flavor you want, put a few drops in your drink and boom, you have no calories, no sugar and it tastes better than a lot of artificial flavors. I also have a sparkling wine, you can't call it champagne because champagne has to be made in France. My sparkling wine is a Brut and is made in California. It's only 60 calories a glass, gluten free and carb free. I created it because I love champagne. Everybody celebrates when they win, they celebrate when they're happy, they celebrate when they get a new house, basically when anything exciting happens to somebody, they celebrate. Currently, my product line includes Muscle Vodka, sparkling wine, H2O and hand sanitizer. Eventually I plan to have more products. I do have all the trademarks as well. At the end of the day, it's the vodka that's my baby, it's always going to be my baby! My ultimate goal is to be in all the states and all over the world. I want to take this company as far as I can, for example being one of the largest vodka companies and being one of the most successful companies in the world. It's a crazy fun goal and something I'm always going to be striving for. Our dreams should be big. If your dreams aren't scary, then they're not big enough!

### Do you also have Muscle Vodka apparel?

Is that something you see growing? Yes, apparel is one thing that I can sell online and I don't have the same restrictions and laws that I have with alcohol. I can do a lot with a clothing line. As a matter of fact, we have turned over the whole clothing line to my step daughter who did her first year at FIT for fashion and it's literally on the verge of blowing up. She's designing an all new clothing line and they are amazing! So we are getting ready to launch her new line probably in the next two months.

### You said you were opening up a new juice bar?

Yes, I am opening a Passion Juice Bar in Stuart, Florida. The original Passion Juice Bar is in Ohio. From a very young age, my passion has always been health and fitness. I would go to the gym with my dad, I would sit on the bike and just pedal and watch the people. I was so enamored with the muscle

everyone had. I was hooked on the energy and excitement that I felt. Athletic ability runs on my dad's side of the family with many of the men being boxers. I started as a cross country runner in high school and I had three full paid scholarships for cross country, so running was always my first love but even in school, I was the only girl in the gym lifting weights. I stepped on stage in the figure category. Having that running background, I was just so small. I eventually decided I wanted to compete in bodybuilding more than I wanted to run so I quit running in order to put on any size. One of my first coaches was Shannon Dey of Bombshell. She would say, never ever, ever run more than two miles because at that point it's going to start burning into your muscle. That really resonated with me and even after all these years I never run more than two miles. As a result, my training has been sprints and short distance running.

I recently bought a house in Palm City which is only 10 minutes from Stuart, Florida. I'm literally right on the beach and I just love it here so I thought it would be the perfect place to have a juice bar. At Passion Juice Bar I offer everything fresh with lots of vegetables and fruits, acai or dragon fruit bowls and greek yogurts. I only use natural sugars. I make smoothies, with or without protein plus you have the option of adding creatine and all my smoothies are less than 300 calories! I also offer wheatgrass shots, ginger shots and other juices. The Passion Juice Bar is a completely separate business from Muscle Vodka. Obviously, I'm going to be married to this new business the first couple months while I get a good management crew and like the muscle Vodka business, my goal is to have one of these juice bars in all 50 states.



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**“ I wanted something that was organic, gluten free, no gmo, sugar free, carb free and the least amount of calories you could possibly get in a vodka. ”**

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## The Business Of Doing Business

Not so long ago, I met somebody who said they would love to be a regional manager for Georgia to help open the market. With a background in exercise science it sounded like that might be something to consider. They approached me during covid so obviously, I wasn't opening any markets during covid but maybe it's something to revisit. I've done my research, typically the bigger markets are the ones you open first. Liquor is the number 2 most regulated thing in the world, second to sewage, so when I say if you do something wrong you don't get a slap on the wrist, you're going to jail. Every single thing I do has to be so calculated and above board because I could be required to lay everything on the table. There are 17 controlled states in the U.S. but liquor is so very tough in some states. It took over a year to get into Ohio; some states are harder than others. California doesn't take nearly as long but Pennsylvania is a commonwealth state so you really have to know every state and their laws thoroughly because every state is different.

I have grown my company myself and I have zero investors. I am 100% owner of my company and am proud to say that I became profitable in the first year. I was profitable because I work like a mule. I was out there knocking on doors, going to events every night, waking up at 3am writing down ideas and waking up at 5am to start my work day and going to bed at 1am. That's what it takes and unfortunately most people don't realize that. They think, "I want to start a company so I don't have to answer to anybody and I can make my own hours." But you are pretty much a slave to your own company at that point if you want to be successful. You have to really be involved in your company or you'll end up getting robbed blind. The most important thing is you've got to know your numbers. On any given day and time I know my numbers. I know how much I sold in this state and how much I sold in that state, how much I sold by 4pm in one state versus another. I know how all my online sales are and I know what all my reps are doing. I have a spreadsheet of all my accounts, for every state, for all my products. Learning how to be organized is key.

Muscle Vodka has been my passion since day one. I love what I do and I could do it every single day of my life. I get so excited every morning to wake up and work because I love what I do. I know it's cliché to say, "you never work a day in your life if you love what you do," but it is true. Make sure that your happy and if you don't like what you're in or what you're doing, I tell people to change. It's never too late to take that chance because you'll never succeed unless you try.