

Kaitlyn Study

Orlando, Florida



[South Street & Co.](#)

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Kaitlyn Study:

One of the unifying characteristics of successful individuals is persistence, but it's also intent. If you're clear on where you want to go, you act with calculated intent and you're persistent, you will eventually find success. What follows is a relatable story of persistence and intent.

Kaitlyn Study, Founder and Creative Director of South Street & Co., a marketing agency that offers a variety of services through a custom-tailored approach, shared with us her journey from career-seeking new college graduate to her first "real" job and eventually to owning her own business. Make no mistake, as Study's journey shows, there is no easy or straight road to success.

"I graduated from The University of Central Florida with a degree in Marketing in May of 2012," Study said. "I utilized the UCF Student

Resource Center and the career advisors they had on staff. I was in there so often I was on a first name basis with one of the advisors. I also went on so many interviews that my parents joked that I was a professional interviewer; I was determined to find something. I worked in restaurants to pay my way through college. And I remember in August (after I graduated in May) telling myself that I was not going to be a server for the rest of my life. I wanted to work in marketing. Around that time, a girlfriend of mine found a job through Craigslist. Despite its reputation for having a shady side, I gave it a shot and applied for several jobs. One of the responses came from a dermatology office. After a great interview, I was offered the position. I remember walking into the restaurant I worked at with the biggest grin on my face. Two weeks later, I started my new job."

The dermatology practice had 10 offices throughout Central Florida. They never had someone in Study's position, so they told her to go for it. She spent the first six months re-branding the company and helped to update their logo. Anything she didn't already know about, she researched and learned how to do it. She eventually redesigned another website, implemented social media, blogging, SEO and, over the next two and a half years, helped to double the footprint of the practice to 17 offices in Florida and three out of state. After everything she had helped them accomplish, Study felt like she hit a plateau. Her thoughts began to drift to setting off on her own.

"My mom's hair stylist had a website that needed a lot of help," she said. "I took on the project and helped her clean things up. At this point, I was still involved at the dermatologist. I did a few side jobs, but didn't get serious about starting my own business until that summer. I worked on

my branding and website and really started to get into it. Every Friday, we had a half day at the office. I used that time to cold call and prospect door to door. It wasn't easy or fun, but it eventually paid off. I had a mini Chinese takeout box that I would leave behind. It had a business card with my contact info on the back, chocolates inside and on the other side of the business card it said, 'What's sweeter than having someone do your marketing for you?' Although I didn't get any leads from those cold calling adventures, something better happened.

After a phone call with my mom (I joke with her that she never knew she'd be a business advisor), almost in tears from no movement from my personal efforts in launching on my own, I received a call from a cold caller I'd met. She said she couldn't use my services but knew a networking group of people who could and invited me to go as her guest."

The opportunity to network and get her name out in the business community proved to be a pivotal moment in Study's career. As she gained more and more exposure, she started picking up clients. She worked nights and weekends as she continued to build up her clientele. She said yes to every opportunity. This continued for eight months until the decision was made to put in her two weeks notice. Her last day at her former position was March 10th, 2015.

"I was now completely out on my own," she said. "I hit the ground running. I started calling and networking with as many people as possible. I was working out of the second bedroom in my apartment, but was soon in need of more space. In June, I started looking for an actual office. By accident I discovered a house that had turned into a

commercial building for rent right on Summerlin. I called the realtor who rented it that day to tell him I was interested. He initially offered the back office as a sublease, but I needed more space. I looked at some other properties, but felt like nothing was working out. The realtor with the property on Summerlin ended up calling me back and proposed an alternative solution that gave me the main space. I moved in at the end of July. Not long after that I hired my first employee and I've found some great people along the way. I've finally been able to put together an incredible team."

Study's day-to-day has changed a lot in the last eight to ten months. For one, she can now afford full-time employees. This has positioned her as the true Creative Director of the agency and also allows her to focus more on sales. Study sets the strategic direction of the agency, but she also meets with prospects, drafts proposals, conducts monthly 'touch base' meetings with clients and handles client and employee issues. Study, and her team of exceptionally talented designers and creatives, provide clients with an 'all-in-one' type experience. Their services include blogging, social media, logo design, print design, web design, SEO, email marketing, product photography and even brand strategy consulting.

Study is passionate about helping people grow and thoroughly enjoys the challenge of getting a new client. She also loves having good people around her and delivering solid results for her clients. Current challenges she faces include finding the ideal harmony between having enough work for employees, but also having enough employees for the work.

And she learned quickly that you can't do everything on your own.

"I would do so many things on my own," she said. "As a result, I wasn't

properly training people on how I wanted them to do it. I'm now looking to be more strategic with my time. I'm currently doing a guest piece for HerMag.com. I'm writing about the things I've learned from being in the trenches as a business owner."

Study offers a unique perspective on competition. "There's always going to be competition," she said. "Internally, I have a triangle with three points that represent excellence, creativity and communication. These are things we focus on as an agency. We also answer the phone and respond to emails. Someone called and said, 'Oh my gosh, you answered the phone. I'm going to go with you just because you answered the phone.' It sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people don't pick up or don't call people back right away."

What advice does Study have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Mentors and coaches are very important," she said. "They're more willing to help you than you might think. I read a great book called, You Are A Badass by Jen Sincero, that talks about how professional athletes have coaches - many coaches. They don't do it on their own. We shouldn't either. I found a great coach through the SBDC with a background in marketing. He and others have helped me overcome difficult situations and avoid speed-bumps that they've been through. Sometimes people are intimidated to ask someone for a mentorship, but all you really have to do is ask.

It's also important to believe in yourself and to be your number one supporter. Your passion and your knowledge are what people want. Research your industry. Read books and listen to podcasts. At the end of the day, we're all people and people enjoy connecting with other people. Developing authentic relationships is important. It's also

important to take time for yourself. Your company is a form of you. If you're physically and mentally healthy, your company will be healthy too. I'll end with this. It's not as easy as magazines and books make it seem.

There is no such thing as an overnight success. It takes lots of time, hustle and heart to pull off a success!"

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