

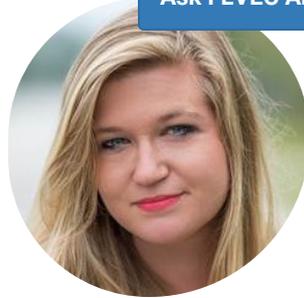


# Lacey McLaughlin

Daytona Beach, Florida

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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Lacey McLaughlin:*

Lacey McLaughlin, founder of Idea Dinners, is somewhat of an accidental entrepreneur but that does not mean she lacks passion for her startup. "I started this as a fun side project to get people together to share ideas and better our community," McLaughlin said. "As I started incurring costs to promote it and put each event on, I realized this is a business. I wasn't setting out to be an entrepreneur per se. I wanted to support them and I love good ideas."

McLaughlin launched Idea Dinners in January, 2016 with the plan to bring innovative, talented and passionate people together to collaborate and share over a gorgeous meal and inspiring setting. "We're looking for anyone with an idea to pioneer change, improve something in the world, or be entrepreneurial," she said. "They apply at our website and we

select them for a theme that fits their particular profile."

Idea Dinners are often hosted by a special guest who leads the discussion around a theme. "It's a great way to bring people together to connect through conversation and a meal and showcase local talent and spaces," McLaughlin said. "There are so many great chefs and venues that are relatively unknown."

Connectivity stands at the center of much of what Idea Dinners strives to accomplish and is also McLaughlin's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs. "So much of entrepreneurship is about being a person and connecting with others instead of trying to pitch your business," she said. "What has worked well for me is genuinely wanting to learn and connect with others. I've learned what skills others have and how we can work together. Those connections are much more fruitful than trying to convince people to buy your product or services."

McLaughlin finds additional meaning in supporting women entrepreneurs who may experience difficulty developing the confidence to consider themselves true entrepreneurs. "From my experience working with a lot of women, I've learned that my hesitancy to call myself an entrepreneur is common among women," she said. "We are slow to consider ourselves competent enough to call ourselves entrepreneurs and I think that we almost devalue what we're doing as a result. I urge women to strive to find the confidence to call yourself an entrepreneur and be OK with the fact that it's ok to create something of value when you start and not focus so much on your bottom line. The money will come later."

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