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# 5 Minutes with EDEN BodyWorks Founder Jasmine Lawrence

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*Jasmine Lawrence is not your typical beauty brand founder. When she's not running her hair and body care business, EDEN BodyWorks, the 29-year-old, who holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Master's degree in Human Centered Design & Engineering from the University of Washington, serves as a Project Manager at Everyday Robot Project at X, the moonshot factory (formerly Google [x]) working to build a new type of learning robot. At the age of 13, after attending a NFTE BizCamp, a program for student entrepreneurs, Jasmine was inspired to create EDEN BodyWorks when losing most of her hair as a result of a bad relaxer. "I aimed to create products for myself that were natural, affordable and effective," she said. "I've always had the goal of creating a brand designed to empower women to live fuller, healthier lives, and provide products and community contributions that support that." Now in its sixteenth year, the brand has continued to see positive growth year over year, with products available at retailers such as Target, Walmart, CVS, Walgreens, Amazon.com, Sally Beauty Supply Store and on its own website, just to list a few. Here, Jasmine spoke to CEW Beauty News about her business, balancing dual careers and how she has been impacted by the Black Lives Matter movement.*

## **Beauty News: Describe your brand's point of difference.**

**Jasmine Lawrence:** EDEN BodyWorks is unique in its focus on education, empowerment, and commitment to the community. The products we offer are complementary to our commitment to support women to live happier, healthier lives. We partner with organizations that are committed to similar core principles including that beauty extends beyond your outward appearance. The EDEN BodyWorks team also continues to listen to feedback from our customers to learn about their needs and the best ways to support them. We do this so that we constantly remember that we are in the business of serving others not just making a profit. The impact that we have on people's lives will remain front and center as we plan and grow as a business. Life is a long journey and we want to be right there with consumers with the tools, products, and community they need to thrive.

**BN: How have you been impacted by the Black Lives Matter Movement both personally and as a brand founder?**

**JL:** The Black Lives Matter Movement has been incredibly informative for me personally. I've had many discussions with different groups of people about what's been going on, but the difference has been the focus is not just on the history or the struggle, but on building a more equitable future. People have been genuinely interested in what they can do to make a difference and fight for equality. The abundance of resources has made me feel even more equipped to make a difference and has given me a productive channel for some of the tougher emotions I've been processing.

Professionally, I've been amazed by the love and support being directed towards Black-owned businesses like mine. Our visibility has been elevated through many curated lists, fans tagging us in posts, and other features. I hope that we can continue to be an inspiration for future Black entrepreneurs and an example of Black excellence in business.

**BN: Who is your brand's target audience?**

**JL:** Our target customer aims to live a healthy lifestyle and seeks affordable products that support her healthy hair and skin journey. She seeks flexible solutions for her current hairstyle and inspiration for her next one. She is socially savvy, informed, and also pays attention to recommendations from influencers. She graciously shares her products with her girlfriends, men, and children in her life.

**BN: Describe your brand's marketing/communications plans to reach your target consumers.**

**JL:** EDEN BodyWorks primarily raises awareness through digital marketing and community events. Our social media channels like Instagram, Youtube, and our EDEN Blog allow us to share product announcements, inspirational stories and tutorials, and tips for healthy hair and skin. The diverse array of national (and occasionally international) events we host and attend allows us to build personal connections with customers. You'll often find us using both methods to share outwardly but also to listen and absorb feedback and ideas from the amazing people we meet.

One of my favorite events that we've done in the past is a national college tour where we visited several colleges and universities to share inspiration and tips about caring for your hair and skin even when time and money are limited. It was a great opportunity to support young women in a new stage of independence and curiosity. We consider these events successful because they give back to the community and continue to drive sales in the future from informed and loyal young consumers.

**BN: How do you balance having dual careers?**

**JL:** My two roles may be in different industries but they both center around being a leader, creative thinker and decision-maker in a product development space. These roles bring their own unique challenges that excite me in different ways. Balancing two careers takes solid time management skills. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have an impact in tech and beauty, two very influential industries. My ability to be flexible comes from working with strong teams and having clear timelines and priorities for what work needs my attention.

**BN: What has been your biggest challenges?**

**JL:** Getting my business started. As an underage, minority, female entrepreneur I wasn't exactly the image that came to mind when people considered what a business person should be. I had to mature and prove to people why my business was going to be successful. I did this with thoughtful elevator pitches, an organized business plan, and a strong work ethic, which I maintain to this day. Thankfully, my youth shielded me from taking any 'adults' too seriously and my passion to impact the lives of others kept me motivated.

**BN: What has been your biggest achievement?**

**JL:** My biggest accomplishment with EDEN BodyWorks has been building a team of passionate people who have helped to grow and evolve the company beyond what I could have imagined. My personal biggest accomplishment has been to have the freedom to pursue my interests, passions and purpose, even if that means having parallel careers. I've been able to balance, sacrifice and make things work for the last 15 years and it has been incredibly rewarding. I am proud of the legacy I'm leaving behind.

**BN: Who is funding the brand?**

**JL:** The brand is privately owned. I maintain a majority of the ownership.

**BN: What advice do you have for someone starting a brand?**

**JL:** I would encourage anyone who wants to start a business to really focus their motivations for doing so. This reasoning will keep you motivated in the midst of adversity. Having a strong mission and purpose can bring you the clarity to need to stay focused as well as inspire others to come alongside and support you. It's easy to have ideas and to tell people about them but it's tough to stick with them through execution and obstacles. Your motivations will keep you going when times get rough.

