

Meet Katelyn Bourgoin!

Founder,
Katelyn Bourgoin Marketing



A born entrepreneur, Katelyn Bourgoin’s passion for people, communications and research-driven results have paved the way for her growing business. Katelyn specializes in customer research and digital marketing, helping businesses learn about their customers, and provide guidance to help their business grow and succeed.

My career path from high school to now certainly wasn't a straight line. I've always been the kind of person who chases several rabbits at once! I didn't know what way I should choose for my future - English, theatre, and writing were among my main interests in high school.

I went to Dalhousie University for my Bachelor's degree in English and nearing the end of my degree, I realized I didn't want to be a journalist or English teacher. After completing my degree, I worked at a restaurant for a couple of years, but it ended up being a turning point in my life. One day, the owner of the restaurant looked at me and said, "You are really good with people, you should think about doing Public Relations".

To be honest, I didn't even know what PR was, but then found the NSCC Public Relations program nearby. It was actually while I was taking that program that everything changed for me. As part of a school project, I had to put together a website for myself and from that, somebody messaged me on Twitter saying, "I'm starting a new business and I need some support to serve a client. I don't want to hire you as an employee, I want to hire you as a contractor". It was exciting to be recognized for my work, and I viewed it as a great opportunity for me to start a business, which was something I'd always wanted to do.

By age 28, I'd launched two companies — RedRiot (a branding agency) and The Fork Project (a restaurant consulting business). The Fork Project got acquired in under two years and RedRiot was growing quickly. I'd built a rockstar team of creatives and we were reeling in clients like Target and Holiday Inn.

Things were going well, but I wanted to build something more scalable. So, I did something that my friends and family thought was "crazy." I walked away from my safe, growing business to

launch Vendeve — a high-risk tech startup. The next 18 months went by in a blur. We built an minimum viable product, raised a little venture capital, grew our team, won pitch contests, pivoted our product, and wooed the press. Forbes was calling Vendeve “the next LinkedIn” and they’d named me as an influencer. We were being recruited by TechStars. Even Randi Zuckerberg (Mark’s big sis) had her eye on us.

From the outside, everything looked great. But, internally we were struggling. We were great at attracting new users into the network but struggled to keep them coming back. As a network, you need people to log in and use your product every day. You need them to invite their friends, but that wasn’t happening. Our marketing was great, but our product had missed the mark. I made the painful decision to shut the business down in 2017.

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I didn’t give up after that – I took some time and then built what I do now. To put it simply, I help marketers and product teams to figure out what triggers their customers to buy.

What I learned was that many companies had the opposite problem from what we had at Vendeve. They were great at building products but struggled to predictably attract new customers.

That’s where I come in - I basically teach companies how to use customer research to better understand who their target market is and what triggers those customers to buy, so the company can improve their marketing tactics. I’ve been doing this for roughly a year, and I have approximately 200 clients across Atlantic Canada.

Working with great companies is probably the number one thing I like about my job. I work with companies that are really passionate about making a difference in the world and getting to see the results that they get from our work together is extremely rewarding. That’s the main reason I get up every day.