



## SAHRA NGUYEN

**NGUYEN COFFEE SUPPLY**  
VIETNAMESE COFFEE IMPORTER AND ROASTER,  
FOUNDED IN 2018

*portrait by* Eric Kun

**WHAT I WISH I KNEW STARTING OUT:** What works for another brand won't necessarily work for mine, so spend less time worrying about others and more time figuring out what's unique to my business.

**HOW I FUNDED MY BUSINESS AT THE BEGINNING:** I used all my savings and racked up my credit cards to about \$20,000. I wouldn't recommend this path for other entrepreneurs though. The idea of putting yourself at extreme financial risk to start your own business is often glorified (when things go well) but it's not ideal. Too often, it's a reflection of social and capital inequity. I was a bit impatient at the time, so I'd encourage others to find other sources of capital to support their venture — this can be in the form of a crowdfunding campaign, grants, loans, or investments.

**ADVICE FOR FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS:** Get really clear on your “why” and the type of business you want to build. What does the end goal look like for you? What would keep you fulfilled? Understanding this early can help shape your strategy moving forward.

**WHO INSPIRES ME:** My parents! They're the most incredible people I know. Their life experience spans escaping a war-torn country by boat to investing in cryptocurrency with the kids.

**HOW I UNWIND AND TAKE CARE OF MYSELF:** I run a bath on the regular — it's a great way for me to unplug for 20 minutes without access to any screens.