

Get a Grip

How a sock business joined forces with a workout studio.

BY JAKE BEKEMEYER

In 2015, Nancy Giftos took over a fledgling business called Sticky Be Socks that she'd been helping a friend run. When her colleague decided to move on, Giftos grew the product line from a handful of women's grip socks to include men's, children's, and infant's socks, along with leg warmers.

"All of our socks have 'Be' sayings on them. They go from (things like) 'Be Strong' to 'Be Great,' and the kids' socks are 'Be Silly,' 'Be Cuddly.' They're these little subliminal messages," says Giftos, owner and CEO of Sticky Be Apparel. "I'll be in a workout class and want to come out of a plank pose, but I'll look down and see my socks saying 'Be Strong,' and it makes me stay."

Learning as she went, Giftos taught herself design — which ensured new socks continued to roll out when the pandemic suddenly hit. At that time, she says, she moved home to Grosse Pointe from Los Angeles. Soon, orders started to fade.

Wholesale customers — gyms, workout studios, and spas, which made up most of the business — dropped off due to the pandemic, given most were forced to close. Giftos decided to shift some of her focus to an online retail experience, which helped her find a larger audience.

"It's not just a fitness sock. I think, a lot of times, people think grip socks are fitness socks, but they're not. The accounts and people we sell to go from 6 months old to 100 years old," Giftos says, noting the socks are great for older people walking on wood floors, and more.

In a stroke of fate, Kate Shannon also moved home to Grosse Pointe from New York when the pandemic hit. She opened BodyBurn Studio, which is centered around the use of the Megaformer fitness machine, in February 2021. Giftos, seeking a strenuous workout, started taking classes.

After becoming acquainted, Giftos joined Shannon, the owner and an instructor, as a partner at the Grosse Pointe studio, and started to sell Sticky Be Socks there as well. The two eventually began to think about opening a second location and started looking for the right place. The second BodyBurn Studio will open at the intersection of Telegraph and West Square Lake roads in Bloomfield Township in January 2023. The new space will include an activewear retail area and will sell Sticky Be Socks, among other name brands.

At BodyBurn Studio, blending a typical workout routine with the use of machines provides clients with the restorative properties of Pilates, along with elements of strength training and cardio, to deliver a full-body workout. Shannon says it "never gets easier; you just get stronger.

"(It's) 48 minutes, and most people are absolutely gassed after 48 minutes. I can't imagine it being any longer than that," Shannon says. "In

RIGHT SIZE

Nancy Giftos and Kate Shannon will open a BodyBurn Studio in Bloomfield Township early next year.

terms of workouts, you get a ton of bang for your buck, and you're also very nice to your joints, body, and bones." **IB**

