

# BUSINESS

ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE

**RACHAEL AND MARCUS QUINN**



EVAN WILLIAMS / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Your CBD Store husband-and-wife founders, Rachael and Marcus Quinn, at the company's Fort Myers location. After opening its first store in Bradenton last March, the company now has more than 500 independently owned locations across the country and in London.

# CBD EMPIRE

Rachael Quinn and Marcus Quinn opened their first Your CBD Store near their Florida home last March. There are now more than 450 independently owned affiliates in the U.S., including 70 in Florida.

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**R**ACHAEL QUINN PRAYED FOR A SOLUTION to help relieve the painful and debilitating symptoms of Crohn's disease, a chronic condition that causes inflammation in the gut.

A friend recommended trying CBD — cannabidiol — one of the two most well-known compounds extracted from cannabis plants. It doesn't get you high, but is

believed to aid in a variety of conditions as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic.

Ms. Quinn started drinking a large amount of water laced with a CBD tincture and found that it relieved the wave of nausea she often felt in the evenings. Along with her other efforts, including a careful diet, she was able get the disease under control sufficiently to go back to living a normal life, at the time a stay-at-home mom.

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# CBD

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Grateful for the relief and with renewed energy, she and her husband, Marcus Quinn, discussed opening a store that she would run, selling premium CBD products and helping others find relief for their own ailments. Meanwhile, he worked full time at his own direct sales business. She casually opened a small shop called Your CBD Store near their home in Bradenton last March.

"I had opened it sort of like a hobby," she recalls.

A little more than a year-and-a-half later, Ms. Quinn, 34, and her husband Mr. Quinn, 40, have just had their third child. All are boys.

They are also now at the helm of a soon-to-be international franchise company whose growth has exploded with rare speed and success. There are more than 450 Your CBD Stores licensed and operated by independent affiliate owners in at least 35 states, including 70 in Florida, where they are becoming ubiquitous. On the southwest coast there are stores in Naples, Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Bonita Springs, Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, North Port, Englewood, Sarasota and more; and on the east coast in West Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, and on.

It is also beginning to expand overseas, starting in London. They expect to have about 750 stores open by the end of this year.

The Quinns are majority stakeholders of the company, which licenses its logos, business processes, and brand to independent owners. They sell exclusively SunMed premium, organic CBD products, be it tinctures, oils, candies or creams.

About three weeks after the Quinns opened their first store, a local newspaper gave them a prominent write-up. That sparked their success, along with a nationwide desire for CBD products. Ms. Quinn was running the shop with two employees.

"It was like a light switch turned on," Mr. Quinn said. "People everywhere. We could barely get the product in fast enough to sell it and it just went gangbusters."

By the next month, in May, the Quinns had licensed their first independently owned affiliate store.

"It was just friends at first," Ms. Quinn said. "I called girlfriends of mine and was like 'hey, let me ship you some product. Try it out and see how it works for you and then come visit me and we'll go from there.'"

Mr. Quinn added, "I mean, a lot of them reached out to you. I remember the sec-



Rachael Quinn prepares a sample of CBD water.

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ond store, a friend of ours we've known forever, they opened one in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and that was like store number two."

Then came stores in New Orleans, California and Memphis, Tenn.

"It took off really fast, then the idea to do more with it came with it, right?" Ms. Quinn said, posing the question to her husband.

"Yeah," he said. "I mean, when she started kind of doing better than I was doing at my business that I had had for 20 years, I was like hmmm, maybe we need to go look at this and see what's going on."

"Then it was kind of like, OK, this is doing really well, and so let's start looking at systems and scalability. So we spent a lot of time and energy on processes."

The 2018 U.S. Farm Bill that passed that

December also paved the way for their success. It finally federally legalized the use of hemp, a cannabis plant from which CBD can be extracted, and helped open the gates for states to create their own hemp industries. Florida followed suit. Soon, Your CBD Store will be able to use local Sunshine State product.

"We're pumped about the hemp coming from Florida," Mr. Quinn said. "We'll be able to have direct contact with the farms."

Their growth has been so fast that the Quinns for much of the first year had to borrow money hand over fist just to keep with the demand for their product.

"We were borrowing from everybody," Mr. Quinn said. "We were borrowing from family members. We had a little rental

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— Marcus Quinn, Your CBD Store founder

property, we mortgaged it. Anybody that was willing to give us some money we took it because we had to fill that debt gap there, you know what I mean? But we've got everything paid off now. We're debt free and so, yeah, I'm sure that things are going to change for us somewhat."

While the future is far from written, their five-year plan is to continue to scale up. The next step is officially making Your CBD Store a franchise company, which they say will happen next year. Their corporate warehouse is now in St. Petersburg.

"I think that five years from now we're going to look back on this story and it's really going to be something special," Mr. Quinn said. "We've really found a neat niche and we're having a lot of fun doing it and I think we're helping a tremendous amount of people."

For now they've been so busy, the success hasn't yet dramatically changed their lifestyle.

"I don't think we'll ever live lavishly just because of how you grew up," she laughs.

He agreed, somewhat. Mr. Quinn was born in Georgia but grew up in Bradenton with a single mom. He has two sisters and a brother.

"I think my mom just kind of survived," he said. "I grew up with a survivalist."

His father, though not often around, was an entrepreneur. Mr. Quinn has been too, working for himself at various enterprises, be it flipping houses or direct sales, for most of his working life.

Ms. Quinn grew up in Buffalo, N.Y., with her brother and parents. Her father was in construction and her mother, now a teacher, was a stay-at-home mom. She too has long had an entrepreneurial spark, coming to Florida by way of business management school in Orlando, she said, before working at a direct sales company in Bradenton. She met her husband in 2006 at a work conference.

"We're just really blessed, really, really, really blessed," Mr. Quinn said. "And God had been wonderful for us. That's one thing we would like to make sure makes it in the story. It's very important."

For the Quinns, so is their growing family.

"Spending some kind of quality time with the kids and enjoying, you know, their youngness," Ms. Quinn said. "They still like to hang out with us." ■

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