

Russian Pointe Inspires Growth Through The Arts



Aleksandra Efimova is founder of Aleksandra Enterprises, the parent company of arts-oriented brands Russian Pointe and Growing Through Arts, both based in Chicago. Russian Pointe has grown to become one of the best known and most trusted brands of ballet supplies, with retailers throughout the continent. Growing Through Arts provides educational materials to assist in children's early academic development while exposing them to the arts.

As a Russian immigrant, the very thought of owning a business was foreign to Ms. Efimova. She states that she started her business "very accidentally." As a child, her path led to becoming an artist. She attended art school at The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia; and studied various forms of dance and piano. However, when Ms. Efimova came to the United States, she realized that she had a strong interest in Business. She decided to study business at Eastern Michigan University. Her love for dance

and art was still very strong. Ms. Efimova competed in Ball Room Dancing at her university. At 20 years old, she met some people in Russia who manufactured shoes for dancers in Russia. Ms. Efimova came up with the idea to design shoes and import them to the United States. She states that this was her "alternative to waitressing."

Ms. Efimova decided to leverage the opportunity to start her business with a \$1,200 student aid check. Instead of buying books, she registered her business, bought a fax machine, ordered business cards and purchased inventory. She could not afford an attorney or accountant. So, she registered her own company for \$95. The processes took her about an hour. By the time she graduated from college, Ms. Efimova already had a couple of employees, a network of clients and revenue coming in. While her friends were building resumes to look for jobs, she decided to continue to grow her business.

An alumna of Harvard Business School (OPM program), Ms. Efimova has positioned Russian Pointe as a premium brand. Her goal is to "continue to help artists of all ages fulfill their goals in art; building character and skills that they need to succeed in all parts of their lives; by providing higher quality products. Russian Pointe offers tools or instruments to help them achieve their dreams; while inspiring them to safely, comfortably and beautifully participate in the arts." Ms. Efimova is inspired most by the success of others.