

# Love & Nudes: A Brampton-based fashion brand that empowers women will pitch to Dragons' Den on Feb 28

Chantal Carter Taylor established Love & Nudes in 2017 as a fashion gift to women of colour. The roots of the business go back to 2001, from her start in the fashion and beauty industry. While working as a fashion editor and stylist, she was disappointed to see that when it came to fashion and beauty, her 'melanin sisters' – two-thirds of the world's female population with darker skin – had very few choices. "So much of the product range is meant to work with lighter skin," says Chantal. "That's not fair – pun intended – to many of us with darker complexions. I've seen so many women taking to Facebook to petition bra manufacturers to produce different shades of nude. So, I decided to use my knowledge to do something about this misrepresentation."



## **Preparing to become an entrepreneur**

Chantal's transition from a salaried employee to a full-time entrepreneur wasn't easy. Jobs gave her a level of stability that was hard to leave behind, even though she had her share of lay-offs. But she chose the not-so-easy path.

In 2016, she began her journey to realize her vision by contacting the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre (BEC). "I was in the initial stages of starting Love & Nudes, and BEC's advisors gave me a lot of guidance in registering my business, preparing my marketing strategy, and making connections with the right people and organizations. BEC events were another great way to learn and connect – I've listened to some awesome business advice from speakers, and received a ton of inspiration from fellow entrepreneurs and their business stories."

On the product side, Chantal's team developed a collection of modern intimates to complement every woman's unique skin tone. Their next big challenge was to organize production and acquire funding.

"Finding full-service manufacturing in Canada was very difficult. So, together with my digital marketing manager Colleen Cole, I opted to produce in Colombia. We love the fact that our Colombian partners are women entrepreneurs who own a full-service company that employs single mothers in a fair-wage facility. I was once a single mother and this very much resonated with me!"

## Set to enter the Dragon's Den

In 2016, to secure capital, Chantal and Colleen organized a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for the first production run. The duo will also pitch to Dragons' Den on Feb 28, 2019, 8 pm, to win the support, mentorship and funding required to grow their brand.



"We will be making every effort to have the judges fully see the business and social potential of Love & Nudes. We're hoping that our pitch will find success and that we will secure our ask."

Whatever the outcome, Love & Nudes is on track to gain more visibility as a chic and niche fashion brand that will inspire women to fall in love with themselves. "We are not simply an underwear brand," says Chantal. "Rather, we are a symbol that lets women everywhere connect and celebrate our individual and collective uniqueness, regardless of colour. As an entrepreneur, using my craft to make those connections is the real prize I'm after."