

## susan-galvin\_nordic\_insights\_eps 11.mp3

**Satu:** [00:00:13] Moi case and hello, welcome to Nordic Insights, where I introduce you to high achieving Nordic and Nordic inspired people with niche expertise in business, lifestyle, education, innovation, tech, travel and more. I'm your host Satu Raunola, passionate about all things Nordic as well as yoga, running, sustainability, well-being and great coffee. Listen in for some tips on Nordic approaches to a happier and more holistic business and personal life. Join me to explore Nordic common sense and trends in this complex world. This podcast is delivered to you every Wednesday.

**Satu:** [00:01:03] Getting retrenched during covid-19 can be truly devastating, especially when it happens during your maternity leave. This happened to my guest, Susan Galvin, who got retrenched in March this year after giving birth to her first born only a few months earlier. Instead of becoming paralyzed by the challenge, she decided to start her own startup and design her own watch brand by using Kickstarter funding. Susan talks about her journey to becoming a watchmaker in Finland and her experience in the luxury watch industry. She has over 10 years experience working for prestigious global companies such as LVMH and the Swatch Group Omega in the U.K. and in Australia.

**Satu:** [00:01:47] So, Susan, what made you interested in watchmaking?

[00:01:52] Well, it was actually my dad, so he saw an article in a Finnish newspaper about watchmaking. And I was in a point in my life that I needed to kind of think about what's next. So I went after the finished high school. I went travelling and I applied for a couple of different places. But I wasn't it wasn't really successful what I was thinking about for the future in that point. And I went to the one year art school and I really took a liking on doing things in my hands with my hands. So I was working with jewellers and I thought at that point that I definitely want to continue doing that, if not with the two of us, but definitely something that I can it's practical. And then came back from travelling on Hidatsa. So an article in a newspaper about watchmaking in school, it was actually, I think, a female graduate from the watchmaking school who was working abroad. So then he thought that will be good to me, like I could actually do something practical but also have an opportunity of working abroad. So, yeah, I went to the watchmaking school. Obviously I did. I was highly appreciating the mechanical movement and the

beauty of the mechanical movement as well. So so that kind of led me into that process of applying and getting into the watchmaking school. And whilst I was studying, I really took I kind of fell in love with the watchmaking itself. And when it comes to the mechanical movement and watches.

[00:03:32] And so how do you become a certificated watchmaker? So how much do you have to study? And you have also now a lot of experience, but how do you become one?

[00:03:42] Yeah, so in Finland is a three year school, so it's a college. So I went to three years study studying of watchmaking. So it's a Finnish school of watchmaking. So first you start by doing what we actually started by doing tools. So you kind of start with practicing your skills and working with the different tools and materials. So that was the first step. And from there we went to we started to work with the clocks and the third one, the third year, we actually started working with the pocket watches. And from there to actually our second year, we started to work with the pocket watches and third year we started to work with the wristwatches. So, yeah, it's definitely is a trade. So something that it's a very highly skilled trade. So you need to just a practice and. Yeah. Practice your skills.

[00:04:38] Yeah. So when I think of it's so detailed and creates lots of patience, so you need some kind of a certain type of people would do some something, some type of work. So what do you think, what are like trades or characteristics of a person who would be a watchmaker because you have to be so patient and so detailed and it's all the bits are so little.

[00:05:04] Oh, absolutely. I definitely you just said it. There is a patience patience is the key in this profession. So you do need to have a patience because sometimes yeah. Working with this, the smallest, smallest detail is it can be very time consuming. So yeah, patience is absolutely one of the key features that you need to have as a watchmaker and obviously attention to detail. That's something that you have to be in somewhat perfectionist with your work. Yeah. So those are probably the two three way I can think of in the top of my head.

[00:05:39] That's totally opposite what I have so I admire what you have. Now you have ten years experience in working for as a watch maker and you worked very prestige company. So you went first to England, didn't you?

[00:05:54] Yeah. So I after graduating from the watchmaking school, actually the company approach to the watchmaking school. So it was LVMH, so they approach to this school and offered the position for the people who were graduating on that year, and I was one of the people who applied and got in and he said it's a work over there straight from the school. And I remember because obviously in school you do your work and you have your teachers there to help you. But also it's you know, you can take your time with something that you're not necessarily well, you're not in a commercial environment in a way. So you can just kind of take your time at the work. But then you go to the actually working in a field that is completely different story because you do have to produce. So, yes, it was a kind of swim and sink kind of experience for me. So we went from being in a watchmaking school and then started to work in LVMH. We went straight to the chronographs service in chronographs. So it was basically just it's it's a mechanical movement, but it's a little bit more complicated what we were doing in watchmaking school. So there's extra layers. Yeah. So it was it was definitely an experience that I wouldn't I never forget. But also it was something that I can cherish because it kind of let me where I'm now.

[00:07:26] Yes. And you know, the brand with Louis Vuitton and Dior and all, it's so prestige brand. So it would have been a huge kind of experience for you to work in a top leading company which produces all these luxury goods. So the obvious, the education and the school you went in Finland is very well thought in this field, because if they were interested to get good students from that school.

[00:07:53] Yeah, absolutely. Finnish Watchmaking School is highly appreciated all the way from Switzerland. It's it's a fantastic school. And it's a shame that there's been right now, I think in Finland, there's been problems with the funding to school. So there's been a risk of continuation for the school, which is, I have to say, coming from the school, it will be really devastating to see an end to it.

[00:08:19] Oh, well, that's not not good news. So hopefully, hopefully the funding will be organized. So now then you worked in U.K. and you got amazing experience in in this

very great, very prestige company. If you think about your Finnishness and your Nordic trades within your character. And you said that it was very challenging for you to jump from from that school, which was great school, to this very big global company. So what do you think what what characteristics have kind of pushed you forward in in your profession was definitely the famous Finnish Sisu. So in Finland we have the Sisu, which is very famous, and they're all over the world. Persistence. So that's definitely one of the keys that you just don't give up. So I remember when I went to I started working in Manchester and yes, I mentioned that it was it was difficult from coming from the school and taking your time at the work. And suddenly you're in a completely different working environment. You actually have to produce. And also the work that we were kind of requested to do it was much.... it was challenging on that time. So anyway, so it was definitely the Nordic mentality of I'm not giving up that was kind of taken me forward. So. So, yeah, persistence is definitely that. I can see it's a Nordic trait.

[00:09:57] Yeah, that's great to hear. So what do you think in that way, what was your contribution in that with your team and with that working environment? You know, if you think about your Finnishness and Nordicness and there are a lot of trades that we things have, you know, also trades which not not necessarily always are well appreciated for them of being very direct and wanting to kind of get results fast and all these things. So how did you deal with your cultural trades when it comes to kind of this working cross-cultural environment?

[00:10:34] Yeah, I think you're absolutely right with that and straightforwardness. So as Nordic, we kind of see things as the way they are. So that was a little bit cultural shock in a way that you. Well, you can and can't, but I was yeah. So that was definitely something. But I think in Finland is a very equal kind of work environment where we've got so female and female and male working at an equal level regardless of the profession. So that was something that I definitely saw that there was there was differences. So I'm really happy to be watchmaking. It's a very male orientated industry. Widely, to be honest, is fitter. And you can see a little bit more female watchmakers versus what we have in Australia. However, so I'm really happy that I am working as a female in a male orientated industry and I can bring that into the watchmaking world.

[00:11:38] So you you see that there you just being a woman in that field that you can you can definitely make a difference and get possibly other other women also to to become a watchmakers.

[00:11:52] Yeah, I would hope so. In Australia, there's not many female watchmakers at all actually. So I've been where I'd be working now for in Australia. I've been in both of the work environment. I've been the only female working there as a watchmaker. So I would hope so that working in this field, that kind of, if not as an example, but also maybe could encourage other women to kind of consider that also for their future profession.

[00:12:27] Yeah, absolutely. How welcome are you as a woman to work in that environment? You know, how how do your colleagues treat you?

[00:12:36] Um, well, there's been positives and negatives. I've been I remember I started to work in LVMH in when I was working in Manchester. I got a transfer with the company to to Australia. And there were some comments that I was receiving and I was absolutely blown away. I'm not in a positive sense. So I, I remember somebody told me that I was doing this kind of very slow, like refurbishing the case. And you have to do a little bit painting to the numbers. So repainting the numbers. And I was doing that. And one of the my male colleagues, he came to me and he went, oh, you should be working in the nail now, polishing shop instead of the watch. So maybe that's something you should consider. Right. So, no, maybe you should be working in Nail polish salon. So, yeah. So that was that. But in general, there's I think I've been receiving quite positive. Um, I've been I'll be welcomed into the or the workshops that I've been. And obviously it doesn't matter where do you work and what kind of work environment that is. But there's always people that don't necessarily get along that well, regardless of the gender.

[00:14:06] So you have to be diplomatic and and have sisu to go forward in those situations.

[00:14:15] Absolutely. And there may maybe the fact of the Nordic straightforwardness, that is that's a good trait as well in that situation to kind of say things back.

[00:14:25] That's right. That sounds really good right now. So you actually then have been working for a very prestigious watchmaking company for ten years earlier with LVMH and then here in Australia. Plus watch. So out of those ten years that you you've been there, what do you think your most successful moments have been and how do you deal with them with your Nordicness? And on the other hand, then what have been the low points and how do you actually survive them.

[00:14:58] Well, the success point, I think I was working in LVMH in Manchester and because they kind of like started doing more work with the school. So we were the first year when I graduated. That was 2010. So we were the first four watchmakers that started to work with them. Image imagine that point straight after the graduation. So then they started to do from there a summer school. So the finish watchmakers were coming there for working for six weeks or so. So they wanted somebody to come and tell about their experiences working in Manchester to the Finish Watchmaking School. So they invited me. So that was definitely something that I really kind of still in that, because the fact that I get to go into my old environment and tell about my experiences, I saw myself as a mentor. Yeah. So I saw myself as a mentor. So that was definitely something that I do still cherish and think about. Low point.... Well, definitely what happened to me recently.

[00:16:09] So, yes, tell us about it. So you you were on maternity leave?

[00:16:16] I was here, so I was my first born son was born in the 1st of December, and I was on a maternity leave and I was planning to go back to my work on the end of the year this year or October, November. So that was initially my idea. And I was called into a meeting and it was actually the operation manager from all the way from Melbourne. And I thought, all right, well, that's a little bit bizarre since it was March. And I just thought, let's take maternity leave quite a bit to go. I wonder why do they want to make me and I'm just a little bit like, annoyed, you know, I'm still in a maternity leave. I'm not going to go back yet. And I went to the meeting and I saw the operations manager and also manager many or I shoot this is not good news and sat down with them. And yeah. So they decided that the operations from my behalf and for other colleagues from the workshop were moved from Sydney to Melbourne. My bosses, I went there at the same time, so I did have a place to go back anymore. So that was obviously a shock to the

system and wasn't positive news whatsoever. But luckily it did lead into positive things afterwards, so.

[00:17:42] Yes, so that's. So this must be a big shock, of course, and quite unusual to happen, happen in the corporate world that something like that can happen nowadays. But what was very exciting for you that you then decided to start your own business?

[00:17:59] Yes, exactly.

[00:18:00] So, um, so tell us about that.

[00:18:02] Yes. I was obviously feeling very disappointed about my situation of being made redundant. And then I think with my husband, we're talking about what's the next step here and why don't you stop what you've always been talking about, that you would like to start designing your own watch front. And I was like, well, I don't have the I definitely don't have the equity if I don't have the money to start my own watch. And then he goes, well, have you been thinking about this Kickstarter? And I mean, what's that? We start to look into it and it's like a crowdfunding website. So basically, instead of you having the capital beforehand, you actually present the product to the people who are interested about your project. So you present your product and then people are packing your project. With that, you actually can place the stock order. So that's how it works. So I just thought that's a fantastic idea because it means that I don't have to necessarily have the money up front. So it gave me an opportunity to actually start my own watchband.

[00:19:21] Yeah, and I love the name of your first collection is called Alku, which means beginning in Finnish and I just it's such a great name for for your first collection. Thank you. And can you tell us a bit about more details about what's your brand and what's your what are your what is all about?

[00:19:43] Yeah. So basically I started when I started the design process, I just started by drawing. I took a pen and a paper just literally I just started drawing and I was thinking about what's the I like what is the kind of features and of what in a mechanical watch that I, I adore. So I started the whole design process from there. And I one of my training trips, I did training trips to Switzerland where I was working with my previous

employer. I went to this really all it was kind of like a workshop of a sort of shop and that was two thousand seventeen . And I bought this old 1940s automatic watch from there and I decided to give this what's to my husband as a present on our wedding day. And I really loved the features of the watch. So it's very kind of minimalist in in what we know that people appreciate a lot about design. So it was a minimalist, but also there's a features of such as the DOM dial that I decided to use with my design as well. So that was kind of the very inspirational with my design, the watch that I bought for my husband three years back. So I used that as a kind of I started to when I started to do my designs, I used that definitely as an inspiration. I only made one size. So the size of the watches, the diameters is thirty nine millimeters, which is a unisex. Well, it's is seen as a dress watch, a male dress watch. But I basically I just started to do the design thinking about the watch that I like. So when it comes to the size, when it comes to the shape, however, I didn't want to have some features from the vintage style.

[00:21:39] And what makes your you know, you talked about micro... Is almost like a boutique design for watches. So what makes your design and your brand different than someone else's?

[00:21:53] This brand, what my brand is under is called Micro Brand Watch. So that means so that you can say you say that your brand is micro brand watch brand means that you won't be producing more than three hundred to three thousand watches yearly. It's usually a brand that you got a good story behind and also how it differs for the, let's say, micro watch brand, which are the bigger companies. The difference is that you can actually directly talk usually with the founder. So for example, now I got the Kickstarter campaign and people are interested about the product and they might have some questions and they can actually directly ask the questions for me rather than from somebody else.

[00:22:39] So it's it's it's a very high customer service experience that what Micro Brand watch company can offer so that I suppose it's a very Nordic in that kind of sense as well, that we do provide a very intensive customer service,

[00:22:58] Very personalised and also your Kickstarter campaign was very successful.

[00:23:04] Was it was, yeah. So I started the campaign. Well, I launched the campaign and on the first of August, 10 pm Sydney time, and that was three pm in Finland. And in six minutes I hit the target and my target was fifteen thousand Australian dollars. I was absolutely blown away. It was fantastic. And I know that sounds I mean, yeah, it was it totally went past my expectations. I obviously I did know that there was a lot of interest beforehand. People were asking and people were like, I have my social media sites and obviously be talking with my husband was helping me a lot with the marketing work. So. Well, I going to say we made market research, but we did as a maker as well. I knew about people, the hobbyist, I knew about the certain groups and Facebook, for example, that are interested about watches. And I kind of knew where to go and where to start looking like where to start kind of introducing my product. And what amount was it?

[00:24:19] The word.

[00:24:22] So you started to kind of organically, it started to build up, so I started literally when I started my Instagram site, I had. To follow me and my husband, and it's just grown from there, so now we have over 500 people following us and me and yeah, so it's been fantastic. Absolutely amazing.

[00:24:47] Start and also I read about you in Helsingør in Sonoma, which is the main newspaper in Finland. So you you're done amazing work with getting it started. Also, when there's such a great start, an interest, you know that it definitely will be successful. And thank you. Now, how do people find you if they would like to join your Kickstarter campaign or follow you on on social media?

[00:25:13] Uh, yes. I've got on Facebook Galvin Watch Company page. You can find me there. And also Instagram Galvin Watch Company.

[00:25:21] Which company also in Kickstarter for the campaign is still running on the end of the day, August. So until until the end of the August, you can purchase the all. Go watch while you complete the article. What's up next to my campaign. Yeah, receive a great agates as a return. Yeah.

[00:25:43] And they start from was it four ninety nine. You can get one watch.

[00:25:50] Yeah. At the moment. Yeah that's correct. So I've got four ninety nine. I still got so in kickstarts. The idea is that you have a different pledges that you have or rewards and you can get four different rewards. So I've got four ninety nine rewards still left and then I also have rewards left for two Oracle watches and yeah it just people are really interested about the product and obviously because the idea is as well that not just that helping myself to actually start my brand and place my first order, but also as a future customer. You're your investor. You're investing to the company in a way that you actually purchasing the watch cheaper, that it will be in a retail in the future.

[00:26:39] So anyone wanting to support you can still get a watch until end of this end of this month. And they look really fantastic, very elegant and very ageless, which is, of course, a sign of great design. Thank you. So it's been lovely to talk to you and we wish you all the best of success with your with your business. Thank you. With your life. Thank you so much.

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