

[Community](#) / [Features](#) / [Interviews](#) / [Sara](#)

Search

Meet Sara

[Interact](#)
[Connect](#)
[Features](#)
[Shop!](#)

What motivated you to create Spanx?

My favorite pair of cream-colored pants that never even left my closet. I could not find the right undergarment to conceal panty or thong lines and cellulite. All of the shapers on the market added bulk or showed through my clothing. One night, I cut the feet out of my pantyhose. It was a perfect solution, except they kept rolling up all night. So I decided to invent them myself.

How did you first get your business off the ground?

For months I researched hosiery manufacturers on the Internet and made calls to mills. I took a week off of work and drove around North Carolina, begging mill owners to help make my idea. Most of them sent me away, not to mention they thought the idea "made no sense, and would never sell." Two weeks later I received a call from a mill owner who said he "decided to help make my crazy idea." When asked why he had the change of heart, he said, "I have two daughters." Turns out they didn't think the idea was crazy at all. The prototype took a year to perfect because as someone who wanted to wear the product everyday, I was obsessed with comfort.



How did you get Spanx into stores and onto women's butts?

Once I had a perfected prototype in hand, I called the buyer at Neiman Marcus and introduced myself over the phone. I said I had invented a product their customers would not want to live without, and if I could have ten minutes of her time, I would fly to Dallas. She agreed! I put the prototype in a Ziploc bag from my kitchen, threw it in my good-luck red backpack, and was on a plane. During the meeting, I had no shame... I asked her to follow me to the ladies room where I personally showed her the before/after in my cream pants. Three weeks later Spanx was on the shelves of Neiman Marcus! I then called all my friends and begged them to go to Neiman's and make a huge fuss over the product and buy them up. At just the moment I was running out of friends, Spanx caught on and the rest is history. I did the same thing with Saks, Nordstrom, Bloomingdales and all my other retailers!

Oprah was very influential in getting Spanx off the ground. Can you tell us how and why it was important?

It took me two years to get my product manufactured, and at one point I began to wonder if my idea was crazy. I was on a business trip, and I saw the Oprah show on TV. She raised her pant leg and showed the world that she had cut the feet out of her pantyhose. I felt like that was my sign! So as soon as I had my product in hand, I sent a great big basket of footless pantyhose to Oprah. A few months later, an Oprah producer called to tell me that Spanx footless pantyhose would be on the "Favorite Things" show. After the show aired, we sold 50,000 pair of footless pantyhose from the back of my apartment. The great thing is that Oprah is still talking about Spanx. Recently, Oprah told her audience that she loves Spanx and wears them every single day.