

INDUSTRY DISRUPTER

WITH THE COWORKING SPACE FEMOLOGY, MEAGAN WARD HAS HELPED USHER IN A NEW ERA OF PROGRESSIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL INCUBATION. THE BEST PART? WOMEN OF COLOR ARE PLACED FRONT AND CENTER **BY MARQUITA K. HARRIS**

Meagan Ward was still a young college student when she watched her mother struggle after being laid off from a job, a misfortune that led to the loss of her childhood home. Fortunately, a family friend took in both women as they worked through the rough patch. “I remember my clothes being stuffed in garbage bags, getting dressed and making the best out of it,” she says. That ordeal drove the Detroit native to launch a marketing business while she was in school. Along with co-owner Ashleigh Brock, she ultimately opened Femology. The unique coworking space also functions as an incubator for Detroit’s community of Black women entrepreneurs. “It’s a hub for fostering collaboration, but also serves as a strategic foundation for building businesses,” Ward says. Here the 28-year-old serialpreneur tells us how she did it and what’s to come.

ESSENCE: How did you get into entrepreneurship?

MEAGAN WARD:

I launched my first business in my college apartment. I started these companies because my mom had lost her job, her house was going into foreclosure and I almost had to come back home from college. I had to grab the reins like, *Okay, you need to help Mom out. You need to provide a way so that you can finish school.*

ESSENCE: What bumps did you face along the way to getting Femology going?

M.W.: People would make certain comments like, “Is this legal? Are they discriminating against men?” Of course, we’re not discriminating. We only said that we’re women-focused, meaning everything we do has a woman’s life in mind. When you go to WeWork [a popular chain of coworking spaces], it’s a generalized concept. When you come here, as soon as you walk through our doors, you’re like, “This is for me. I feel like I’m home.”



“All women crave purpose and sisterhood,” says Ward.

ESSENCE: In addition to working on Femology, you participated in a speaker program with the U.S. Embassy. How did that come about?

M.W.: I was invited by the folks at the U.S. Embassy to go on a campaign with them [overseas]. They were inspired by Detroit, Femology and the revolution we have going on here. It went so well, I was also able to speak at a conference for the United Nations and represent the U.S., discussing what women’s empowerment means and how it can be a positive force for global change.

ESSENCE: What was that experience like, and has that led to other opportunities?

M.W.: What I learned is that all women

crave purpose and sisterhood. People were so excited about me attending, and the feedback was great [so I was added to a database of preferred speakers for the State Department]. I’ll potentially be partaking in missions that deal with women entrepreneurs and female empowerment globally.

ESSENCE: What advice do you have for women in the throes of starting a business?

M.W.: Be authentic to yourself; that’s the first thing. As women we want to be fulfilled. That’s why so many of us are creating businesses. We want to live our dream life and to do what we want every day. Own your story. Successes are as important as losses. Losses are just as important as challenges, and all of this factors into your unique story. You never know who it can inspire and impact. ♻️