

# Newsworthy Founder: Nimi Fafowora, Inclusive Conversations, Credibility + Champagne

## **SPEAKERS**

Nimi Fafowora, Lexie Smith

### **Lexie Smith**

Hey guys Lexie here, travel enthusiast, lover of puns, pizza and wine connoisseur and founder of the PR bar, Inc, and you're tuning in to the pitching and sipping podcast, from behind the scenes interviews with the media, to honest conversations with other PR pros to look at inspiring brands and entrepreneurs that are rocking the world of PR. In this podcast, we talk tips while taking sips and talking about all the things that make those and the world of PR tick. Let's get started. Today's episode features newsworthy founder Nima Lulu or Nimi, for short, Fafowora, who is the founder and owner of The Beem Box. The Beem Box is a beauty subscription box for black, indigenous and people of color, as seen in various news media outlets, including Elle, Cosmo and create joy. As the owner of The Beem Box. Nimi wears many hats, overseeing acquisition, supply chain sales, strategic planning, and of course, public relations. Nimi started the Beem Box to create a community that admires and acknowledges those who are often left out of the beauty conversation, and to provide well suited makeup products for deeper and darker skin tones and the episode to follow. You not only get to learn more about this inspiring entrepreneur, but we also dive into just what PR has done for her business. Other ways she's been able to grow her brand, how the bean box has turned customers into community, and much, much more. What she sippin Well, let's just say I'm a personal fan as well. Alright, let's get started. Okay, everyone, today, we're here with an absolute Rockstar and newsworthy founder, I first met Nimi pre COVID at an in person, the PR bar event that I co hosted with the forward female shout out in downtown Los Angeles. And we got to work together one on one shortly thereafter. And ever since I've been in absolute awe of how much she is absolutely killing it with her company the mailbox. We'll get into all the nitty gritty business stuff here soon. But first me me. Welcome. I'm so happy to have you here. Can you please start by sharing with us a little bit about who you are outside of work.

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Well, hi, Lexie, thanks so much for having me on the podcast. Um, a little bit of me outside of work. I'm really family oriented and that I have a bit I come from a big family. I have four sisters or relatively all in our 20s so we get along really well. I spend most of my free time just talking with them hanging out with them brunch, all that fun stuff. And other than that, I honestly feel like my, my passions, My hobbies are kind of in line with what I do. I'm really into makeup, anything fashion related. I actually literally make YouTube videos about like fashion and makeup and food sometimes because that's another big thing I

love. But um, yeah, just spending time in my family. You know, enjoying cooking new dishes, camping going outside. It's maryada fun stuff that I like to do.

**Lexie Smith** That is incredible. And if you before we were recording, I learned that Mimi has the coolest family in the world. Would you mind sharing your sister's names? Because I think it's nothing short of epic, of course.

**Nimi Fafowora**

So I have four sisters just like I mentioned. First one is Simi, Bimi, Beeme, Nimi, and Kimi. So.

**Lexie Smith**

And there's meaning behind them. Sorry, briefly, I just I think this is so interesting. And I think everyone else would love to learn something like I just learned something if you wouldn't mind sharing just really high level kind of the significance there.

**Nimi Fafowora**

Oh, yeah. So my dad came up with our names. And obviously they're rhyming, but each of them has like a different meaning. We're all Nigerian, and the translation loosely from my name is to have God before me. It's basically means like God needs to be in your life before I could step in, kind of like kind of that's a very loose translation. But generally all our names have some relation back to God. So

**Lexie Smith**

yeah, so cool. I googled my name. So my full name is Alexandra and I googled it one time, and it means defender of mankind. Okay. Powerful. Okay, so let's now focus in on the beam box. First, can you tell us what is The Beem box?

**Nimi Fafowora**

Yes. So the Beem box is a beauty subscription box for black brown women of color. Essentially, it's kind of like a makeup box that is curated for a deeper and darker skin tone. That's the focus and demographic that we often see look at because often in the beauty community, you see that a lot of brands create makeup provide makeup, but it's kind of lacking when it gets to the deeper and darker skin tones. We're still it's 2021. And there's still issues with finding the right foundation shade, concealer, shades, even blushes, lipstick, all that stuff that exists that's for deeper and darker skin tones especially. So what we do is we make it easier for those ladies to find that we introduce them to brands that have the perfect makeup shades and ranges for them. And yeah, honestly, it's more than just the beauty box. It's really the community having a space where women can feel empowered, they feel focused on it feel acknowledged. And yeah, that's really what the bean box is. It's a beauty box, but it's also a great community.

**Lexie Smith**

So how did you even get into this take us back to inception. Where was it? You know, on a random Tuesday, you were inspired. And then you started a company, I always love hearing kind of the story behind how thing how this came to be?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah, so the story is, I find it kind of comical, because I feel like everyone goes through this time in their mind. But I recently graduated, I graduated with an engineering degree and I was working as an engineer, and you know, new job, I was just like, is this really what life is about? Like, you start the day you end the day, you know, you go home, and that's it. And then you go to work all over again. And it just felt very repetitive. And I felt at the time I felt like there's something more that I can be doing. I feel like there's something more I can be doing in this world with the other skills that I have. And so I just kind of started to think about what I loved and what I liked doing and kind of things that over the years I'd really enjoyed. And I was talking to my sister one day, and we were kind of chatting about what doesn't exist. And she's like, you know, it doesn't really there's not really a space for women of color to find makeup. And I was like, I'm like, well subscription boxes kind of do that, like they introduced to a lot of brands introduce makeup. And then I was like there isn't really one for black and brown women that are specifically targeted for that. And literally a light bulb went off. And I it was like 3am and I couldn't sleep and I was at the computer like furiously typing like ideas like this, what the box gonna look like, this is what we're gonna do. It was so intense in the fact that I knew this is what I was supposed to do that it was just, it was a straight shot. So um, yeah, I honestly feel like a lot of people have that I should be doing something else. But people normally like put it aside and they kind of ignore it. But I just couldn't. And that's honestly what kind of led to them being boxes me not like me not letting go of that feeling. And that inkling that I can be doing more, there's something out there that I need to do.

### **Lexie Smith**

So first off, let's acknowledge that you are an engineer. So we got the beauty and brains thing. Second off, I have to say I'm jealous because I have 3am wakeup sessions. But my last one was a fly trap. Like, what am I going to do? No joke, I have an entire engineered sketch of an idea for a fruit fly trap. And I do not want to get into that industry. So I have not had one of the epic like world changing, maybe it would change someone's life anyways. So your ideas are way more fun than my brain at 3am I so funny. It's I literally I'm gonna save it. And you know, maybe one day 20 years from now pull it out. My husband's an engineer. So anyways, I guess you never know. So you have had some incredible press placements. Do you want to give us kind of a quick overview of some of the different places that have picked up what you're doing?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah, so one of some of the bigger ones are el and cosmopolitan, cosmopolitan. Thankfully, it's actually twice now, which is freakin insane for me. And then also cratejoy cratejoy is like a huge platform in the subscription based business. There's a couple others that I'm not remembering. But honestly, every time I think about just the L and the Cosmo, I'm just like beaming with joy.

### **Lexie Smith**

I see what you did there.

### **Nimi Fafowora**

But um, no, literally like those ones are, I think, being in the beauty space. And there's so many 1000s millions of brands that exist out there and to be not only selected once, but twice and pretty much three

times on these different platforms is super iconic. And for a small business like mine as well, where I'm literally spearheading everything on my own. It's it's a shock factor for sure. So yeah.

### **Lexie Smith**

So here's the question. I have to follow that up. Those are huge names, right. And by all means is they're on people's dream bucket lists. Did they do anything for you? And if so, was it was it sales? Was it credibility? And what way have they impacted your business?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

So right off the bat for sure, credibility. As we're curating the boxes, we often have to reach out to bigger brands to say hey, we need your products in the box. And just being able to name like Cosmo and L and cratejoy is already like Oh, their ears perked up. They're like, okay, we're listening, like you've been acknowledged, you've been recognized. So that's like one huge way. And often I actually saw a better response rate when I had, you know, you send cold call emails, like, in COVID. It's just something you have to do now. So having that in there, there's been a way better response rates. And before that I saw, and then as far as sales, it's been a wave. So initially, when the posts happen, I saw a lot of traffic to the site. A lot of people kind of like figuring out and learning and understanding, you know, what exactly is this brand? Like? What do they do? I did see a small spike in sales, but it's not been something that's been consistent. I think the biggest thing I can definitely attend to those being announced in those publications was credibility and brand awareness and kind of like letting people know that we exist, we're here. And yeah, honestly, it's been such a great thing. I, I'm always shocked every time I think about it. I'm shocked.

### **Lexie Smith**

It's I'm not shocked. But more recently, when you shared your second appearance in Cosmo, you did this really cute Instagram post where you were dancing? I'm pretty sure I was actually dancing with you. I was I was super pumped to see that for you. Here's another question. I bet some founders are sitting here asking themselves, did your PR firm do that? How How? How did you get selected?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

So I don't, I don't have a PR firm, right? You're literally the only PR person I've ever worked with. And I think one of the biggest things that helped at least help the brand be recognized is the uniformity and the message that we put out there. If you look at our Instagram, or Facebook, our website, everything, there's a collective message, and it's a strong one. And not only that, but I think the graphics the content itself. I don't mean to own horn, but it's it's pretty cute. It's it's good looking. So I think, you know, small things like that people don't think matter, but they do matter. Also, our blog posts, that's, you know, that helps with SEO and traffic. So when these other platforms are looking for brands to write about, they're able to quickly find us on the web. And it's funny people don't you know, they don't ever think these small things matter. But I definitely think that they had a hand and having a good presence, having that community, great content, your your site, what you're producing looks good. And it almost gives you without you even introducing yourself, it gives you a good front that they're like, Okay, this is something that looks good. This is something that I think I can trust. So honestly, those factors really helped. It's funny, because none of those writers actually reached out to me personally. So they literally

just found me online. And you were like, I love this brand. I like what they represent. And I'm going to write about it, which once again is insane,

### **Lexie Smith**

which is called organic PR and it is a gold standard reach for the star, what we all hope will happen. And the thing is, is it wasn't luck, actually, you were doing the things that you needed to do to be seen. And I have to give a shout out for this word, it's you kind of started talking about this larger thing called the digital ecosystem. And that's kind of a term I learned from a colleague of mine, LaRouche boys men just wanted to give her credit there. But it's all part of that this is all part of the digital ecosystem. And when you talk about SEO, another thing that Cosmo note did for you was provide you a really high domain authority backlink. And that's another part of press that I don't think a lot of people unless they're immersed within PR and marketing as a profession, understand, PR and SEO really, really do go hand in hand. So outside of your outstanding messaging, blog posts, these really great PR wins. Have there been any other ways that you've promoted your company, you know, influencer marketing brand collaborations, I'd love to just hear some of the other tactics you've tried.

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah. So um, COVID honestly has changed so many things. But one of the biggest things that I really enjoyed in growing the beambox community was in person events. You know, like you mentioned me I'm We met at the Ford female event, but I love to just go table and talk to women about the brand. Sometimes I'm able to meet people who are connected in different ways, but that's one of the in person is just so important. And it just, it stinks on the COVID it just really stinks. But that's one of the biggest Yeah, that's one of the biggest ways that I found that I'm able to kind of talk about the talk about the brand and grow the brand and like just just introduce people to the brand. Now that we're online, we're trying to figure out new strategies. So one new exciting thing that's coming up is being beauty shops. So basically what this is going to be is an ID life conversation with a beauty influencer. We sent her a box we talk about the box, we talk about her makeup journey while she's doing her makeup. And this is something that we've not yet started but it's going to be once a month. And I think just this is Kind of tagging back to that in person events where you're connecting with someone that's more than just like, Hey, I'm trying to sell you something, it's like getting to know who that person is and what they like what the pain points are. So, yeah, we've definitely had to shift a lot. Being that I can meet people in person, and struggle strongly of having a stronger presence on Facebook, on and even Tick Tock Instagram, all the social media platforms is super important during these times. So

### **Lexie Smith**

for a product based business like yours, do you can you say which social media platform has proved to be the most successful for you? Or is it kind of a balance?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

It's kind of a balance. So in all honesty, tech talk, I don't really have a strong presence there, just because I don't believe my customers are on that platform. So Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, they've all kind of brought around the same amount of interest. So I think it's hard. It's hard to like, put energy into all those platforms. But it's also super important, because that's where you get the greatest return

when you're able to put out as much as you can, on those different platforms, is where you get a lot of great customers and a lot of great subscribers. So yeah,

### **Lexie Smith**

yeah, I actually think that's a realistic thing to point out. A lot of times, you'll hear people saying, pick one platform and put or one or two and put all your energy there. But to be honest, and this is the case in my business, as well, sometimes they all do kind of perform equally. And sometimes, you know, if you are getting traffic or customers from Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram unless one starts to really take precedence when you're early, right, you don't necessarily want people are going to disagree with me. I just I want people to know there is another option. And you can do a little bit of sprinkling. And really when you're you're first growing, you kind of need to to see what doesn't work. Yeah,

### **Nimi Fafowora**

it's funny you say that, because I I honestly think it really depends on the business and the business model. Because you're right, there are some businesses that will just thrive on Facebook and Instagram is irrelevant. And then on the other front load thrive on Instagram, but Facebook is relevant. But with something like ours, the product exists and our customers are literally everywhere. It's just somewhat easier to have those three different touch points. Sometimes a customer will see, you know, an ad on Facebook. And then like two days later, they see us on Instagram. And then like a couple of days later, they see us on Pinterest and the next thing you know, they're ordering something.

### **Lexie Smith**

'Cause you're everywhere! Yeah, that's actually so on not to get to data nerd on everyone here. But I think this is an interesting point to highlight as well. If you're looking at your Google Analytics, there's a section called direct traffic. And sometimes it's this big mystery of how did people come to my site? Because you will always know when you're checking your acquisition report. What it is sometimes is just what you said, they saw you on Pinterest yesterday, they saw you on Instagram today, they maybe even they saw an ad or they saw your article. And then you know that Wednesday, they're like, I want to check out that beambox company that's been going everywhere. So it is kind of having those independent touch points can lead to someone remembering you in going Oh, yeah, I wanted to check that company out. So yeah, anyways, that's what we won't dive too much into that. Okay, I'm going to shift a little bit more, because I want to dive into more of the mission behind your brand. And then also kind of tying it back to some things that are pretty dang relevant right now. Not pretty dang, they're very relevant right now. So on your website, it states, I started the beam box to create a community that admires and acknowledges those who are often left out of the beauty conversation. More than a beauty box. Our aim at the beambox is to encourage and inspire the beauty that is within you. So when you mean not only do I find this powerful, important and beautiful in itself. It's also relevant to a larger conversation surrounding race and skin color. And that topic has been really projected into the prime spotlight over the past year. So if you're comfortable speaking or sharing, I'd love to hear how you have addressed or haven't addressed these larger conversations as a brand with your customers.

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah, let me take a step back to like me growing up. I was born in Nigeria, but I mean, the United States when I was about eight, and I grew up in the San Fernando Valley, Woodland Hills kind of area.

And growing up I wasn't viewed as the ideal standard of beauty. I mean, like, You're gorgeous. You have blue hair, blue eyes, blonde hair, like if we if we were to take a textbook and whatever they write down I think they'd probably write down what you look like which is gorgeous. So growing up and constantly seeing that type of beauty being portrayed often was Kind of detrimental to my competence. It was really, I don't want to say harmful because that's, I guess, in a sense was harmful to me growing up as like a woman and how I saw myself. And I often see that that still happens, unfortunately, in this time and space where people who look like me with dark skin and you know, dark hair and brown eyes aren't necessarily always said, hey, you're gorgeous, you're beautiful. I'm here to like, talk you up. And I'm here to show you that you are beautiful. And so you know, the beambox, what we are really doing is adding to that conversation that hey, beauty comes in more than just a textbook definition, more than just what people think is like, Oh, that's gorgeous, like, beauty comes in different shapes and sizes, shades, ranges, all that stuff. And so one thing that we're doing to add to the conversation is creating a space that really helps people understand that, you know, in this time and space 2020, we saw a lot of uprisings with George Floyd and Breanna Taylor. And I think people started to notice that like, we've had black, brown and Judas people in our spaces, but we don't ever really like acknowledge them. We don't ever praise them, we don't ever give them like the shine. And I think that's really what the beambox is doing. We I mean, we were started in 2019. So before the uprisings, but that's what we've always been doing, it's always been about is about praising, acknowledging, putting the spotlight on those who are often left out of spotlight like I was when I was growing up. So that's one big thing that we're adding to the conversation. And, to is, I'm not sure if you know, but in the inbox, we always try to include women on brand, women of color own brands. And what we're really doing is uplifting that business at the same time by introducing our customers. So customers are able to say, Hey, I didn't even know she's a black owned brand, I didn't even know they offered makeup. Now I've learned about them, and I'm going to go shop with them. So we're kind of adding value and dollar back into that community. And both these I think these two are probably the most important things that we can do and the things that we're capable of, especially in these times. You know, we talked about discrepancies with like social status and differences in like communities and black and brown communities. And with what I'm given with the beambox. Honestly, I feel like the best that we can do is one uplifting the company's back again. And then to his voice and to our customers. And you're beautiful. You belong, we acknowledge, and we want you to shine. So yeah.

### **Lexie Smith**

I first want you to know how honored I am that you just shared all that. And I actually don't even want to try to add or respond to because I feel like what you said was so powerful. I love that to just resonate with everyone. Because there's there's such truth and power and significance to what you just said. So all I'm going to say is thank you for sharing that. And I did know that you about the brands you focus and I love that about your brand, I'd actually just in case there's someone listening, what type of brands are you looking to work with? Is there a kind of a specific niche within the beauty product? industry that you know, we're in? What q1 of 2021 you're looking for what type of brands listening right now? Would you like to hear from if any,

### **Nimi Fafowora**

um, honestly, the biggest thing that we look for is brands that align with our belief lands that understand that diversity, inclusion, matter and beauty. I tend to reach out to brands more that I know that, hey, I've

tried your products before I trust them. I know that, you know they work for my dark skin tones I wouldn't it my subscribers and customers won't have any issues with this. But I also do love when brands reach out to us as well. I you know, I can scour the internet for years and years. And I still don't find all that exists out there. So sometimes it's even nice when I stumble upon a brand because they reached out to us saying, Hey, we have this great product. And we you know, we have raving fans about it. Would you like to include it? And maybe two out of five times? I'm like, let me try it. We'll see what's good. That's good. And it can be included. But yeah, that's it's definitely I'm trying to find brands that align with our mission and understand what we're trying to do in this world. So yeah,

### **Lexie Smith**

yeah, that's great. And I hope everyone listening, just read, I think you can do the tap back button. If you're on Spotify, do a couple 32nd tap backs if you're within the beauty space and re listen to what she just said. So that if you do reach out, you do so in a thoughtful way and go to her website, which is you want to share your website real quick.

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah, the website is thebeembox.com and beem is spelled b e e m,

### **Lexie Smith**

and we'll repeat that at the end but go and check out her website and look through the brand and the types of products they've featured in the past you know, reread the mission and make sure that you really are fit. And before before filling her what I'm sure is very full inbox. So one more kind of topic. I want to hit on Before we wrap up with some fun questions, you said that the bean box is more than just a product. It's really taken your customers and created a community, which is incredible, powerful, many adjectives, positive adjectives. So tell me how have you done that? What are some of the ways that you've been able to take your customers or create, transform them and create a community from that?

### **Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah. So I have to give credit to Shana crater. She's a copywriter that I met through Instagram. And she taught me more about engaging with my followers, then more just than just customers. So literally, when I'm have any chance to interact with them directly, I'm not really even focusing on Hey, I have a have something to tell you how to install you. It's more so like, what do you like? What are you into? Do you like, Oh, do you have suggestions for you? Do you have suggestions for me, like kind of having a very casual way of connecting with people, and I feel like it opens them up more. And honestly, that's kind of the biggest win I found is when you put down the walls of like sale, sale, sale, sale, sale sale, and you just get to know who they are as people and human beings, you get to see a greater connection, you get to see better responses. Not only that, but you literally get to learn more about people. And then they want to be part of the community. They also want to chat up other beauty lovers. So it's funny every once like, every once in a month, I think I post like a Would you rather? And I'll be like, okay, would you rather live for a whole year without chapstick or have no eyelashes, something completely ridiculous. But then you see all these women like responding back like, Oh my gosh, that's crazy, I would never do that. And you just you just get to chat with them about like how important lashes are to them, or how important like just chapstick is to them, and how they can't survive without it. So

you know, really just breaking down that wall of leaving selling out of the picture, honestly, which sounds crazy, leaving selling out of the picture and just connecting with them. And then they they're more inclined to want to join that community. And because we share the same interest, they're, they're more than happy to chat about it. So

**Lexie Smith**

it's about the relationship with and this is a PR podcast, and I will remind everyone that PR stands for public relations, right? So it's about that relationship building. And it's so true. It's funny, I was having a conversation Actually, this is a conversation I have often now with my husband, I'll say such and such or such and such. And they're all virtual friends. He's like, Who? Like, oh, yeah, it's like an Instagram friend. I know, it sounds weird. But actually, we talk a lot. And I have this whole huge community of people that I actually have never met in real life. But it's Yeah, it's like when I pause to think about is kind of funny, but also really cool because it also allows you to connect with people from all over the world that maybe I would not have ran into living where I do. So.

**Nimi Fafowora**

I completely agree. It's it's crazy the amount of people I've met through Instagram that I still talk to pretty much every day than the people in real life, which is nuts.

**Lexie Smith**

Yeah. You know, I had a client. This just reminded me because I think this is the craziest Instagram story I've heard. I had a client who met a girl on Instagram, and they ended up traveling Europe together they'd never met before. They just decided I'm like, I'm so glad that that didn't turn into the end of a horror movie and that it wasn't some creeper. But it just kind of speaks to how when you're really authentic, and you've put that relationship first what it can do to impact your life. So that was kind of wild. Kudos. Shout out Susan if you're listening. Okay, so this is called the pitching and sippin podcast. We've talked a lot about the pitching side of things and the PR side of things. I'd love to now find out what we can find you sipping so what is your favorite beverage? It can be alcoholic or non alcoholic.

**Nimi Fafowora**

Okay, can I just have two answers? Again, though, one is water, which sounds so boring, but I love water like I'm always dehydrated, which is so annoying. And every time I drink water I'm like why I feel so good. So one is water and two is champagne. That's probably my top two. Like champagne just feels like it's Today's a party celebration. So it doesn't matter how bad the day is if they're champagne, you know what the day is turned around? It's a good day.

**Lexie Smith**

What else do you need in life water and champagne and pretty sure you can live off with let's add a couple but I love that also. It's so fitting that you're such a water consumer because your skin is no one can see you right now but skin is literally beaming Here we go. I'm sure that's because the water I wish I wish that I remember to drink water a little bit more. So no but yeah and champagne. Fabulous. So amazing. I love that. Okay, so we're gonna wrap up by telling everyone where they can go to find out more about the beam box.

**Nimi Fafowora**

So you can visit our website which is thebeembox.com And as I mentioned, beem is spelled b e e m You can also check us out on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, all platforms, the mean boxes the same everywhere.

**Lexie Smith**

Perfect, and hopefully sooner rather than later we can reconvene in real life and have some champagne. And she has been an honor to watch you grow. And thank you so much for coming on the show today.

**Nimi Fafowora**

Yeah, thanks so much. And I also have to thank you, I'm so glad I met you. I don't know months ago year, maybe over a year, which is mind blowing. Insane. 2020 just flashed by, but um, you were the person who actually brought PR into my forefront and how important it is as a business owner, because I definitely feel like a lot of people don't seem to understand how much that is important in owning a business. So I have to thank you for that. Honestly, I just I never would have even thought about it. Put any thought to it. But that's all credit to you Lexie. So,

**Lexie Smith**

thank you. I think that's a great place to end. Cheers. Bye, everyone. Hey guys, if you are enjoying the pigeon and sipping podcast, please do me a huge favor and leave a review wherever you are listening. If you want to connect with me to learn more about the PR bar Inc. You can do so on Instagram at the PR bar underscore Inc or you can check out my website at the PR bar inc.com cheers