



# Mei Xu & Co. LLC

## Knowledge Sparks Joy

I recently spent a rainy weekend Marie Kondoing my closet.

If you're a shopper like me, and someone who loves fashion and retail, you know that's not an easy feat. When all was said and done, however, I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment.

My initial joy came from knowing that clothes which had been sucking up valuable space in my closet might now become someone else's treasure. But, as I went through the process of individually accessing each blouse, pant, jacket, dress, belt, scarf, and shoe, and pondering each item's joyful derivative, it dawned on me that the pieces I loved the most were those that had meaning and sparked memories.

For example, the flirty floral swimsuit cover-up I bought in Estoril, Portugal, from a beachside boutique run by a woman shop owner who loved fashion and brands as much as I do; or the pair of kilim loafers designed by a woman artisan and hand-crafted from a vintage, flat-woven Persian rug.

I just happened to stumble upon these one-of-a-kind smoking loafers deep within the maze that is the Medina in Marrakech as I was trying to snake my way back to my starting point.

Thank goodness I got lost that day or I never would have discovered these gems! I certainly have more trendy shoes than these Moroccan-made slip-ons, and, being only five-feet tall, I often prefer shoes with heels to give me some height. But there is absolutely no substitute for the memories that these flats evoke, and it's that memory that brings me joy.

I get this exact same joy in learning the story behind the products I buy. As someone who spent two decades making

scented candles and growing the business into a global enterprise, I want to know who is behind the goods and services I'm buying. I am interested to learn how she got her start and know what challenges she faced in her journey to appreciate her solutions and workarounds.

Did she start her business as a side hustle or quit her day job to pursue a venture full time? Where did her financing come from? These are among the questions that pop into my mind, as my curiosity leads me to want to know the story behind the product so that I can form an emotional connection with its maker.

Research proves I'm not alone in my quest to learn who is behind the products I'm buying. According to a Pace Pulse survey, 61 percent of women say that a company's values affect their willingness to purchase, compared to 45 percent of men.

When you add this statistic to the \$18 trillion U.S. dollars in purchasing power that women around the globe now control, you can begin to see how powerful a force brand storytelling is for women, in particular, who feel empowered to take control of our buying decisions and make informed, conscientious purchases to support causes we believe in – including women's entrepreneurship.

Advancing women's entrepreneurship is a mission I share with *Enterprising Women*, and it's the foundation of my new venture, Meixu.com, a new online community and future ecommerce marketplace to showcase products and services made *by* women and *for* women.

I'm invoking my name, Mei Xu (which in English is pronounced May She) to give encouragement to women around the

globe who dream about launching their own enterprises and tell them: Yes She May by sharing new stories each week of female doers and dreamers, along with designs that inspire and destinations where women-owned businesses are making their mark. By sharing stories of female entrepreneurs and how they built their businesses, we aim to spark new ideas and leverage our collective strengths and talents to help each other build better enterprises and make a deeper impact.

I hope you will join me on my new journey and next chapter, as I chart a new course for myself and help other women entrepreneurs find success in the marketplace. The past three decades have been an incredible journey for me as an entrepreneur, but it's not always been smooth sailing.

By chronicling my experience and sharing the ups and downs that others have encountered, we hope to pave the way for others to find success.

While I'm no longer in the candle-business, I still embrace as my motto, "A candle loses nothing by lighting up another." And to me, this is what sparks the most joy. ☺

Mei Xu is a Chinese American immigrant, successful businesswoman and serial entrepreneur who founded Pacific Trade International, BlissLiving Home®, Chesapeake Bay Candle® and her newest venture, [www.meixu.com](http://www.meixu.com), an online community and marketplace for women entrepreneurs. Connect with Mei on Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Mei is a member of the Enterprising Women Advisory Board and has been inducted into the Enterprising Women Hall of Fame.