

# Gisele Rufer, Founder & President,

DELANCE, on Creating An Ode To Women's Courage, Creativity & Love

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Giselle Rufer is President and Founder of DELANCE Swiss Watches for Women.

Catapulted into the entrepreneurial world by a moment of inertia in a glass-ceiling job, Giselle Rufer wanted to make something for women that expressed their strength and their eternity.

After having worked for the Swatch group, Giselle founded DELANCE, Inc. in May 1996. DELANCE makes and sells prestigious Swiss watches created exclusively for women. Since its creation, DELANCE and Giselle have won a plethora of awards for the excellence of their work and for their social engagement. Among these awards are the “Golden Award for Quality” in New York in 1998 and The American Biographical Institute Award “Woman of the Year” in 2005.

By creating DELANCE Giselle not only realized her dream to offer a TalisWoman to all women all over the world, but also devoted herself and her activities to social commitment to women.

As president and the spirit of the company, Giselle is also a motivational speaker and a missionary who travels all over the

world to encourage women to be everything they can be. Based on the values shared by all women the DELANCE watch therefore is a sign of recognition for women who want to make it happen for all women.

**We spoke to Gisele about how she came to create a company exclusively making watches for women; her global expansion plans; and how fate will come knocking when it's time for an exit.**

**TNW: How did you come up with the idea for a special watch for women and then arrive at the decision to turn your idea into a reality?**

*“From my childhood I had the dream to create something very beautiful for women, something like an ode to their courage, creativity and love. It took me 30 years to finally arrive to the decision to create a watch... it was my destiny.”*

Working for a famous Swiss watch company as a product manager I could see that there was no real watch for women. Most of them are reduced men's watches (women are not reduced men), fancy watches or men's watches with diamonds and a pink bracelet. It was not what I wanted to wear. I convinced the boss to let me create it and worked on the project for 3 years. Finally when it was time to launch the watch, the boss left the company, the next one abandoned the project and I left the company.

**TNW: What makes your company different from your competitors?**

Delance is the only watch brand in Switzerland created by a woman and making watches exclusively for women. The specialty of the company is that we personalize the watch in a very intimate and romantic way, so that your watch is the mirror of your soul, the mirror of your dreams and accomplishments.

**TNW: What is your business model?**

GR: Delance is something like a virtual company in the sense that I work with a network of free-lance (mostly women working from home) and suppliers. In the office we are four women.

**TNW: When you built your team, what are the key qualities you looked for to ensure the success of your business?**

GR: I look for people who can think out of the box and who are passionate in their field.

**TNW: Who were your first customers and how hard was it to attract them?**

GR: My first customers were my mother, my daughter, my sisters and friends, and they helped me to create the buzz.

**TNW: Who are your customers and partners now?**

*“My customers are women who share the dreams of other women and men who support the accomplishment of women and recognize their contribution in all fields.”*

**TNW: What is your marketing strategy and what has been the most effective source of new customers so far?**

GR: Delance is a small company and the only way to be global is to be very active on the web. Delance.com was registered in 1996. We are very active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**TNW: What is next for your company?**

GR: We are in the process to create a special platform for Delance aficionados and I am also launching Delance in Asia, first in Thailand.

**TNW: What lessons have you taken from your successes &/or failures?**

*“Success is not for ever; failure can be transformed into success... just be persistent”*

**TNW: Do you have any tips or any advice for women who are thinking about becoming entrepreneurs?**

GR: It takes more time, more money, more work than you think but if you have a dream. Just do it.

**Do you have plans to expand internationally? Which countries and when?**

GR: The BRIC countries and North America, Europe, ME, India, Africa...

**TNW: Do you envision an exit, how and when?**

*“Not yet but I am looking for the right person to continue. I know that she will just knock on my door and do it when it is the right time.”*

**TNW: Briefly describe your history in raising investment for your company**

GR: I began very small with my personal fund, then asked my family and friends. Banks never responded to my demand.

**TNW: How would you describe your leadership style today?**

GR: In Switzerland and in women's circles I am recognized as the “Watch Lady”. I am often invited as a speaker to tell my story and I like to do it. From my childhood I am a natural leader.

**TNW: What is one lesson you would like to pass on to other women leaders?**

GR: Just be true to yourself, develop your talents and trust the other.

