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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

Tracking down an outside investor in the best possible fashion

Ask James



James Caan

Dear James

I started an online fashion firm last year and am considering going out to the market to look for investment. Who should I target and how do I give myself the best chance of success? And is investment always the best route?
Gemma

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but there are key guidelines to follow. Always look at investment as an

opportunity to grow as an entrepreneur, not just increase your cash flow. As a start-up business,

taking on an investor means sharing equity. Be sure the person you are bringing on is adding value, not just providing cash. Ensure they bring relevant know-how to the table.

The investor should be someone who has a track record in your market. Networking is part of any business but fashion is one where it is key. Research online and with competitors to find the best people to approach. Investors will be as interested in you as in your idea. Sell

yourself and your skills set as much as the business. You should be able to show your credibility by making judgments on potential changes and trends in the fashion market.

Show your passion to investors. They will not commit to you if they doubt your commitment, so always be prepared to answer the question: "What are you putting into this?"

You must have a good handle on your numbers and be realistic with your expectations in terms of equity. If you

believe the investor you have chosen can add value to your business, don't try to hold on to too much equity and risk losing them. It is better to own a smaller share of something worth real money, than retain 100% of something worth a lot less.

■ *James Caan is looking for top talent in the recruitment industry. For more, visit recruitmententrepreneur.com.*