



**THE GRANDPA SOAP CO.**  
SINCE 1878

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## BACKGROUNDER

The Grandpa Soap Company's rich heritage started at the stove of Jess Hoffman's farm in 1878, and extends through several generations of family ownership. Over the years, a few things have changed, but the original dedication remains - to simple, effective products for head-to-toe cleanliness. Today, the family and its employees continue to stand behind the quality of its products and value of its traditions.

Katherine Oliver Jarnigo and Molly Oliver Vollmer are co-CEO's of The Grandpa Soap Company, a family-owned business that is among the oldest continuously operating soap manufacturers in the United States. Both women grew up working in the business, which was previously run by their father. Molly and Katherine acquired the company in 2016 and formally took the reins as the next generation of company leadership. They divide certain roles within the company but come together to manage strategy, innovation, and product development.

## EXECUTIVE Q&A

*Katherine Jarnigo, co-CEO of The Grandpa Soap Company*

### **How many years have you been in the company?**

I officially joined the team in the Spring of 2010 and my sister, Molly, joined the following year. Prior to that we had many years of 'take your daughter to work day', summers packing soap, and even a few days as punishment in our teenage years when our father wanted to teach us the value of hard work.

### **What is a typical workday like at The Grandpa Soap Company?**

Molly and I take advantage of our long commute by carpooling. We hit the ground running – starting with kids school drop offs, a quick swing through our favorite local coffee shop where they know us by name. We use the 45 minute ride to prep for the day – outlining our priorities and goals for the day and week ahead.

My office is really just for storage. I hang up my jacket and leave my bag and then am on the move - from the warehouse, the conference room, employee offices and my sister's office. I keep up on emails mostly via my phone because I do not do well with a large number of emails in my inbox. I enjoy being hands on with our employees and value the quality time with each of them every day. I consider an hour at my desk a major win if possible!

### **What has been the most personally satisfying company initiative you've worked on?**

In 2015, we refreshed the packaging and branding of The Grandpa Soap Company. I am so proud of what we accomplished. I felt the refresh was necessary to compete in today's market and to ultimately, continue the legacy of these great soaps. The packaging was dated and the competition was fierce. Our father was terrified but in the end

was proud of our dedication to revitalize the brand. We are following that re-stage with the launch of new shampoos and conditioners and later this year, we will introduce body wash.

We acquired The Grandpa Soap Company from our father in 2016. It's now in our hands to foster, care and continue this great legacy that dates back generations.

**What is your personal motto when it comes to your work/company?**

“Don't let the urgent overcome the important!” We have this printed at the office and live by it daily.

**Are you involved in any causes or charities in the local community?**

Molly and I are founding members of the Women's Committee for the Cincinnati Parks. We are committed to maintaining and preserving green spaces as a place of health and enjoyment for future generations.

We are also proud to support Dress for Success. This is an organization that was created to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and development tools to help them thrive in work and in life.

**What inspires you?**

Our family. Molly and I had children around the same time. They support and inspire us every day to work hard as business women, leaders, mothers, wives, sisters and friends. We are proud to continue our family's natural soap making legacy and create better, clean products for our children and the next generation.

**How do you like to spend your free time?**

With our husbands and kids. The work week can be long and demanding. It's amazing to unwind with no plans spending the weekend cooking great meals and indulging with a glass of wine!

**What is your favorite vacation getaway?**

Northern Michigan. Our family grew up going to the lake in Northern Michigan near Traverse City. Every summer, we still load up the car and head north for a week of swimming, sailing, boating and quality family time - with no technology. It's wonderful to share this with my children!

**EXECUTIVE Q&A**

*Molly Vollmer, co-CEO of The Grandpa Soap Company*

**How many years have you been in the company?**

I'd like to say I started when I was 11 years old. My father acquired The Grandpa Soap Company in 1998. He was always bringing his work home for us to see and try. As a little girl I remember testing out the latest *Shea Butter* and *Love My Loofah* bar soap. He knew which ones were our favorites and always made sure to keep the house stocked. I officially started working in the family business in December of 2011.

**What is a typical workday like at The Grandpa Soap Company?**

Busy. It's a bustling small business and we love it. The energy is very positive but it's hard work. We have worked over the years to set up leadership meetings and strategic department meetings. We are very involved in the daily functions of running the business and I like to be kept informed.

**What has been the most personally satisfying company initiative you've worked on?**

Strategic recruitment of talent. We know that we are nothing without our employees. Katherine and I are incredibly proud of the talent we have brought on board over the last five years and are excited to see the company grow well into the next generation.

**What is your personal motto when it comes to your work/company?**

“Don’t let the urgent overcome the important!” I have this printed above my computer monitor where I can see it daily. Often the days are short and the number of emails can be consuming. It’s important to not sacrifice the time to step offline to develop sustainable, strategic plans.

**Are you involved in any causes or charities in the local community?**

My sister and I are very involved with the Women’s Committee for the Cincinnati Parks. Our parents, Debbie and Rich Oliver, believed in the power of green spaces for both economic development, city employee retention but most importantly, family health and happiness. We want to continue their legacy of giving back to the community by maintaining and preserving green spaces as a place of health and enjoyment for future generations.

**What inspires you?**

My sister. I have so enjoyed our ride to becoming owners and co-CEOs of our growing business. We are sisters and best friends, first and foremost. She is the organized, determined sister and I see myself as a little bit more of the dreamer. She balances me both personally and professionally...and for that I am so grateful.

**How do you like to spend your free time?**

With my husband, Will and our two children, Willy and Charlie. Will and I love the outdoors and are excited to see our sons following in our footsteps.

**What is your favorite vacation getaway?**

Missoula, Montana. My husband went to school at the University of Montana and I went to the University of Colorado. After college we lived in Missoula and spent the summers fly fishing and floating the Blackfoot River with friends. We have been fortunate to take our boys back to instill our love of the west and the great outdoors.

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