

BUILDING AN OUT-OF-THE BOX BUSINESS

More than a subscription service, FabFitFun sells a curated community

By Alex Harrell



Photos courtesy of FabFitFun

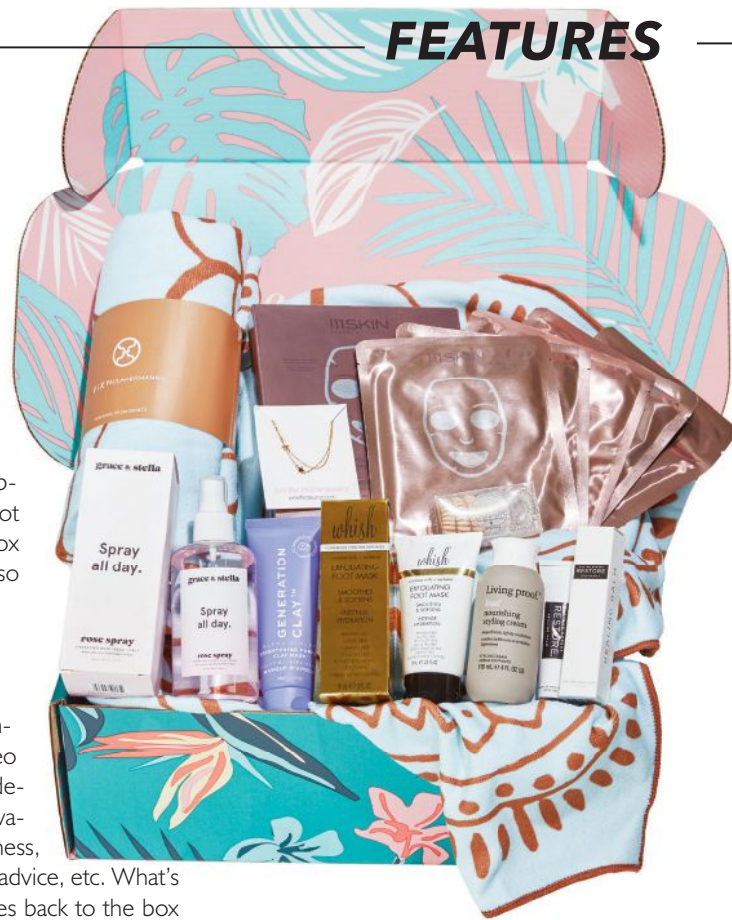
FabFitFun. Maybe you've seen YouTubers posting unboxings of its seasonal treasures, but you've *definitely* seen it on Instagram — particularly posted by emerging influencers.

FabFitFun is a lifestyle membership that inspires women to lead happier, healthier lives through product and brand discovery. Its flagship product, the FabFitFun Box, delivers a curated collection of full-size products across beauty, fashion, wellness, fitness, home, technology and beyond — to more than one million members — each season. In addition to the box, members receive access to FabFitFunTV, a streaming video service offering on-demand wellness videos, daily lifestyle content, the FabFitFun online community and year-round exclusive sales and shopping experiences.

The West Hollywood, California-based company has around 550 employees split between two offices, as it has grown so much and so quickly in the past two years. FabFitFun expanded to the UK just a few months ago. Fashion Manuscript talked with Katie Echevarria Rosen Kitchens, co-founder and editor-in-chief, to get the scoop on the explosively popular membership service.

What's a typical day like for you?

No two days are the same. I typically wake up anywhere between 5 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. That's when I spend time with my daughters, Summer and Sienna, and make them breakfast, which I love doing. I tend to get into the office around 9:30 — 10 a.m. and I do a lot of in-person meetings with my team and across the organization. Face time is important, so I try my best to be available, involved and present.



I always see “Bachelor”-girls with FabFitFun boxes on Instagram. How do you determine what influencers to partner with?

We've partnered with many “Bachelor”-girls over the years, but our most successful “Bachelor” collaborations have actually been with our long-term partners including Ashley Iaconetti, Carly Waddell, Catherine Lowe, Jade Roper and Trista Sutter. We've been working with them for over four years and they've all been loyal brand advocates.

It's always been important for us to cast a wide net when it comes to the influencers and celebrities we work with. We want our members to be able to see themselves in these women; with over a million members, we seek to work with incredibly diverse groups of people. Our ambassadors truly showcase that FabFitFun is for every woman.

How do you stand out from the myriad competition of subscription boxes?

We didn't start in the subscription business. FabFitFun launched as an editorial brand where we were writing about everything women need to feel good from the inside out. My background is in editorial. At the time, the market was saturated with glossies telling you what to do and how to look.

We wanted to be the opposite.

We were your best friend who also knew everything about beauty, fashion and fitness. The FabFitFun box was a natural extension from the online magazine. We had an engaged audience, a robust marketing platform, and we were already writing about our favorite products. The next step was to put them into people's hands. Our audience was hungry for it. That first box sold out in just a couple of days.

We also don't think of ourselves as a subscription company. FabFitFun is a membership. The box is one of the premium components that drives tons of value for our members, but it's only a piece of the puzzle. We've always believed in bringing the products to life through content through founder stories, ingredient deep dives, or how to wear/use tutorials — that bridge between content and commerce has been one of our biggest differentiators.

The last piece of the puzzle is our community. We have big social followings on the major channels, but we have created another layer on top of that. We basically have our own social network where FabFitFun members come not only to talk about the box and the products but to also to form real friendships.

Tell me about FabFitFunTV.

FabFitFunTV is our members only streaming video service that includes on-demand videos covering a variety of lifestyle topics: fitness, cooking, DIY, relationship advice, etc. What's really fun is that it often ties back to the box and our community to create a 360 opportunity for our members.

For example, we partnered with the incredible Venus Williams last spring. We developed a jump rope together that we seeded in the box, created exclusive workouts with Venus using the jump rope for FFFtv, hosted an amazing live event with Venus and then members actually developed challenges within the community where they would tag their friends to do their jump rope workouts on FFFtv every day.

I know this is a loaded question, but how do you curate the boxes?

We are a data-driven company and our scientists will gather as much information as possible from our members so that we're really bringing our members a box they love. We have a very active community; they don't shy away from providing feedback or letting us know what they want to see in a box. We really take this into consideration when curating our boxes.

For example, we kept seeing diffusers pop up in the community and we made that happen in our most recent Spring box. Also, a 50-year-old in Kansas City isn't always going to want the same items as a 24-year-old in San Diego, and we have both in our membership.

As we've grown over the years, we've been able to incorporate more and more customization options so that members can select the items that align with their interests, location, etc. Our Summer box had over 1,000 variations. And, of course, data is just one piece of the puzzle. We also do a ton of trend forecasting to make sure we are always ahead of the curve. Our goal is to be a well balanced box — so we look for a mix of categories each season. We always make sure to include well-known brands that establish the value of the box next to up-and-comers and more niche products. And last but not least, we always want that wow factor. Something they might not expect — whether it's new technology or a new ingredient that really creates the excitement.

Where do you see FabFitFun heading in the next few years?

We think we are still at the very beginning. As far as the box goes, we are gradually evolving from the FabFitFun box that everyone gets to your FabFitFun box — a box that is increasingly tailored to your own wants, needs and personality. The membership will continue to evolve to include more and more exclusive perks, and the overall marketing machine that happens each season will continue to grow with the scale of the membership.