

Boss Babe

The founder of the beauty line Megababe isn't just a successful businesswoman. The Whitefish Bay native is also an increasingly influential body positivity advocate.

By LINDSEY ANDERSON

Katie Sturino exudes confidence. It's in the set of her shoulders, the tone of her voice, the way she wears her clothing—like she's about to step onto a runway somewhere.

Maybe that's why her family members didn't balk when she told them that she was leaving a lucrative public relations job to launch a women's beauty line. She'd grown tired of trying, and failing, to find products addressing everyday issues that affect millions of women. Like thighs that rub together and chafe under summer sundresses. Or sweat that collects around bra bands. Eventually she decided that she might as well start making the products herself, since it didn't seem like many major beauty companies were interested in getting into the "boob sweat" game. And so, in the spring of 2017, Megababe was born.

"I asked my sister and my best friend if they'd want to go into business with me," Sturino remembers. "They didn't have any experience [in cosmetics] either, but they believed in me."

Sturino's parents believed in her, too. They volunteered to let her park 20,000 units of Bust Dust in their Whitefish Bay garage, even though Sturino often joked that they might sit there gathering dust for years.

They didn't. Buyers snapped up all of it in less than a month. And in the years since, Megababe's sales have continued to climb.

Sturino's own star has risen along with her company's, and she's now regarded as a style icon and body positivity champion. She currently hosts a podcast, "Boob Sweat," that delves into topics that make women sweat (think: infertility, divorce, toxic friendships). She oversees a popular style blog called *Theizishstyle*. And through a social media campaign that she spearheaded, #MakeMySize, she's helped convince major clothing brands such as Diane Von Furstenberg

Katie Sturino



Katie's Must-Have Megababe Product

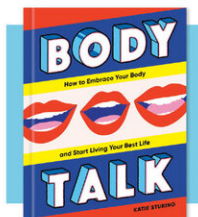
Sturino says that *Thigh Rescue* (\$14, megababebeauty.com) has always been her personal favorite. The balm-like formula contains moisture-rich ingredients like aloe, grapeseed oil and Vitamin E to ensure that it glides across skin easily, without causing any irritation. And the product has won beauty awards from publications like *Allure*, *Cosmopolitan* and *New York Magazine*.

to offer more options for plus-size shoppers.

She's also a published author. Her book *Body Talk: How to Embrace Your Body and Start Living Your Best Life* came out in late May. And Sturino says she's been thrilled by the positive response she's received from readers so far. "When I was approached by the publisher to write a book, I was like, 'I don't think anyone needs my memoir,'" she says. "But I do have lots of lessons from my own journey that I think other women might be able to apply to their own lives, so that they can free themselves from the merry-go-round of diet culture and focus on living their best lives."

As of press time, Sturino had yet to announce any plans for a book tour. But she says she'd love to line

up a Milwaukee-area reading now that in-person gatherings are becoming more commonplace.



Sturino's *Body Talk* was released in May. Part memoir, part self-help workbook, it emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance.

In the meantime, she intends to keep campaigning for greater body positivity. "I want to be an advocate for other women," she says. "However I can do it, I'm here for it." ●