

A Passion She Kept Secret, a Confidence You Can See

Agustina Panelo has spent nearly a decade building My Secret Studio into a trusted boutique lash and brow studio, offering personalized, one-to-one beauty services to clients across Miami, Florida. What began as a passion she kept on the side gradually evolved into a distinctive, experience-driven business built entirely around one-to-one care. With support from Ascendus and guidance from loan consultant Laura Rodda, Agustina strengthened her visibility and laid the foundation for a stronger, more sustainable business.



For twenty years, **Agustina Panelo** kept a secret. The work she loved most, she called a hobby, something she did for others and rarely for herself. The day she decided to claim it as her own, My Secret Studio was born.

The hobby she almost didn't claim

Agustina studied administration because that was what the people around her expected. She followed love to the United States, worked in commercials, and spent five years at the Mandarin Oriental, where she learned what world-class service truly feels like. For years, the beauty work she loved stayed on the side, a passion she kept quiet.

"It took me a lot to discover that the hobby I called a hobby was my passion and my job."

When the real estate market she worked in slowed, a bigger question surfaced.

"Maturity led me to ask myself: do things for others, or do things for me? That was a breaking point in my life. That is where the entrepreneurship came from."

Building My Secret Studio

In 2017, Agustina opened **My Secret Studio** in Miami, a lash and brow studio built around one idea: one client, one artist, full attention. The name works on two levels. The results look so natural that no one can quite explain them, and the studio itself had long been her own quiet passion.

"What I do here is part of the secret each client carries with her every time she walks out that door."

She designed the space as a full sensory experience.

"When a client comes in, they have the experience of the fragrance of My Secret Studio. The music, specially chosen to relax the mind. The blanket, super soft. And the wow moment of seeing the result of my work."

And she made one principle non-negotiable.

"At no time did I want to lose the one-to-one with the client. For me, the passion I have in the service is what makes this business exist."

The ceiling, and the decision to invest

The business worked. Clients returned and demand grew. But growth had a ceiling, because Agustina was funding every step out of what she earned.

“The way I was growing, I was reinvesting from what I was earning myself. With all the time that implies.”

To move every piece at once, a new website, an online store, inventory, and social media, she needed capital. She was ready, not out of fear, but out of clarity.

Meeting Ascendus

Introduced to Ascendus through [Prospera](#), Agustina secured capital and coaching that let her build on every front at the same time. Rather than scaling by hiring and diluting the one-to-one care that defines her work, she made a decision that captures exactly how she thinks.

“Instead of having employees, I decided to have employees in products. I channeled growth into a personalized line, a signature collection of My Secret Studio.”

How Agustina’s journey reflects the Path to Ascension

Business Impact

- My Secret Studio remains **fully operational and stable**, open since 2017 and run one-to-one by Agustina as founder and sole artist.
- Reinvested capital into **a new website, an online store, inventory, and stronger social media**, expanding how new clients discover her.
- Grew through **a signature product line** rather than added staff, protecting the one-to-one model at the heart of her work.

Household Impact

- Turned a lifelong passion into her **primary livelihood**.
- Maintains **excellent credit** and **pays every bill on time**.
- Spends below her income and plans ahead financially, building a steady personal foundation.

A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a woman with blonde hair, smiling warmly and hugging another person from behind. The person being hugged is wearing a light blue denim jacket. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a framed picture on a wall.

Community Impact

- As a **lash and brow educator**, Agustina trains other beauty professionals, passing her craft forward.
- Turns every appointment into trust and confidence: clients arrive already believing in her, and leave a little more themselves.
- Strengthens Miami's small-business and beauty community with a service built on care.

A journey that continues to rise

Today, new faces confirm that the decisions were the right ones, and Agustina is already looking to her next chapter, makeup, a natural extension of everything she offers. What has never changed is the trust at the center of her work.

"I don't know, I trust you, that's what I hear. For me, that trust is what keeps me alive."

And every appointment still ends the same way.

"When I grab the mirror, the wow moment always accompanies that experience."

My Secret Studio was once Agustina's quiet secret. Today it is visible, stable, and entirely hers, and it gives every client something to carry long after she leaves the chair. This is the power of ascension: when a private passion becomes a business, and a business becomes confidence for a whole community.

This Way Up!



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