



FAST 50



Ali Von Paris is CEO and owner of Route One Apparel.

MIKE MYERS / ROUTE ONE APPAREL

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# ROUTE ONE APPAREL

## ► What has been your strongest driver of growth in the last couple of years?

Our ability to act fast and efficiently, especially in times of change. We have a very non-structured team where everyone is empowered to make decisions, and we have very good communication channels in place. Many of our partners like working with us because we move swiftly and avoid the standard corporate-style delays.

## ► How has your company shifted operations and adapted to the pandemic?

Initially, we experienced an 80% drop in sales at the beginning of the pandemic. No one was craving buying new apparel products. Due to the pressure on our supply chain — i.e. our local screen printers also being out of work and our retail stores shutting

**Three-year growth rate:** 219.73%

**2020 revenue:** \$7.07 million

**Location:** Towson

**Top local executive:** Ali von Paris, owner

**Employees:** 35

**Industry:** Consumer products

down — we brainstormed quick solutions such as digital downloads, creating “pandemic-themed” clothing like “Wash Your Hands” and “Stay Home Hon”, and hosting retailers’ products online that didn’t otherwise know how to operate e-commerce. Next, we launched face masks, before it was mandated to wear them, and that quickly went viral. We acted fast to build a quality product and

get it to customers on time. That immense growth in traffic from this item, alongside just a very positive and hard-working team, lead to great success and adaptation during the pandemic.

## ► Has your company had to expand its physical space to accommodate its growth?

Yes, we are growing exponentially in our physical footprint. We started out of a dorm room 11 years ago. [von Paris] then took over [her] parents’ house and operated there for several years, before purchasing a retrofitted barn, and then in 2017 buying our first official commercial building that is 14,000 sq. ft. in Towson. We are out of space again, so we purchased another building on York Road to accommodate our growth.



ROUTE ONE APPAREL

Route One Apparel has licensing agreements with several iconic Maryland brands including McCormick & Co Inc.

► **What new or ongoing growth opportunities do you foresee in the next couple years?** We have gained a lot of licensing deals outside of the confines of Maryland, which is expanding our brand to have more East Coast awareness. We built a sub-brand called “Thirsty Turtle” during the pandemic that allows local wineries, distilleries and breweries

the chance to drop-ship their alcohol to our large customer base. We have grown tremendously in our custom product offerings and capabilities we can do for clients. Many people increasingly are coming to us for custom products since we have the capabilities of making all the items you see on our site (over 70+ product categories.) — Jessica Iannetta