



BRAND SECRETS AND STRATEGIES PODCAST #152

Hello and thank you for joining us today. This is the Brand Secrets and Strategies Podcast #152

Welcome to the Brand Secrets and Strategies podcast where the focus is on empowering brands and raising the bar.

I'm your host Dan Lohman. This weekly show is dedicated to getting your brand on the shelf and keeping it there.

Get ready to learn actionable insights and strategic solutions to grow your brand and save you valuable time and money.

LETS ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND GET STARTED!

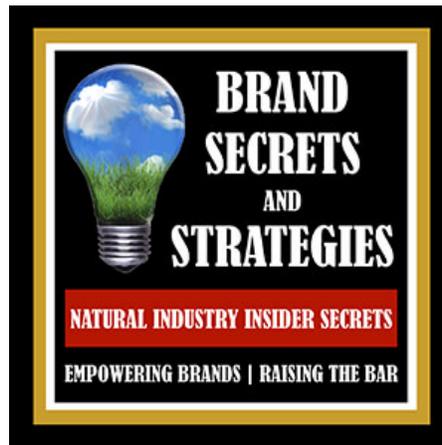
Dan: Welcome. I spend a lot of time on this podcast talking about what brands need to do to build a healthy foundation to grow your brand on. In other words, the healthier, the stronger the foundation for your brand, the longer you're going to be around, the more effective you're going to be able to reach your customers, and when I say how long you're going to be around, I mean a month, a year, a decade, or even longer. This is critically important that every brand starts outright, that you have the right strategies in place to support your growth, to help accelerate your growth. Unfortunately, so many of the brands that I mentor and work with from all stages of development don't



have a healthy foundation. There's something that they overlooked or something that they missed when they're setting their brand up, something critical that they missed when they were trying to decide what their go-to-market strategy was.

As a result, most of those brands continue to struggle to make up for what they didn't do ahead of time. This is where I want to help you. The reason this matters is because over 80% of natural brands fail within the first year. Now I'm committed to change that, and that's what we talk about on this podcast, giving you the strategies and the tools and the resources to help you do just that, to build a healthy foundation, to teach you what you need to know to grow, and then to help add rocket fuel to your growth once you get started. That's what today's story's about. Today's story's about the basics, and even if you have a brand that's been in existence and on retailer shelves for quite a while, these strategies can help you. Today's story's about how to use your audience, how to leverage your audience, your community to help you grow your brand. Where you can take your products to a community that's going to help support you, that's going to help you modify your products, or tailor them just perfect to support your growth going forward.

This is about how to leverage the strategies that most brands overlook, and the best part is that they're all focused on the consumer. The consumer is going to buy your product. Now, what I mean by the fact that a lot of brands overlook this, a lot of brands create a product. They put it in a package, they gain retail distribution, they put it on a retailer shelf, and that's how they test to see if the product's viable. Well, this is horribly expensive. And failing in this in a situation can cost a brand a ton of money,

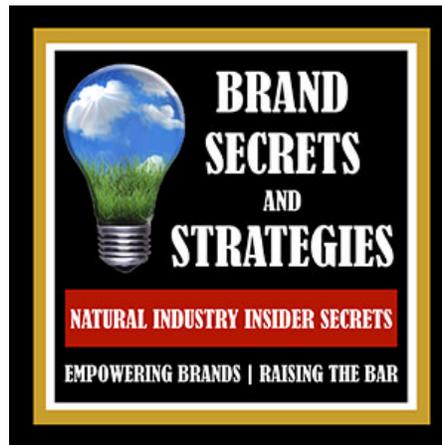


can even derail and even bankrupt some brands, depending on the size of the brand. What we're talking about today is a strategy that you can take your product to live customers, and test it, find out what they think about it. As you know, I'm a huge fan of being able to leverage the strength of your community to drive sustainable sales for your brand.

And again, that's what today's story is about. But before I go any further, I want to remind you that there's a free downloadable guide for you at the end of every episode. I always include one, easy to download, quick to digest strategy that you can instantly adopt and make your own, one that you can use to grow sustainable sales and compete more effectively with. Remember, the goal here is to get your product on more store shelves and into the hands of more shoppers. If you like the podcast, please subscribe, share it with a friend, and leave a review. Also, don't forget to check out my new YouTube channel. I've been putting a lot of great content out there, including some of the interviews that I've had on the podcast. Interviews with the leading thought leaders in our industry, interviews where we share the successes of brands, what they learned, the strategies that they leverage to help them grow, and more importantly, we help solve their bottlenecks, their most pressing bottlenecks, which are your bottlenecks too. Anyhow, you're going to want to check it out.

Here's my guest today, Sari Kimbell.

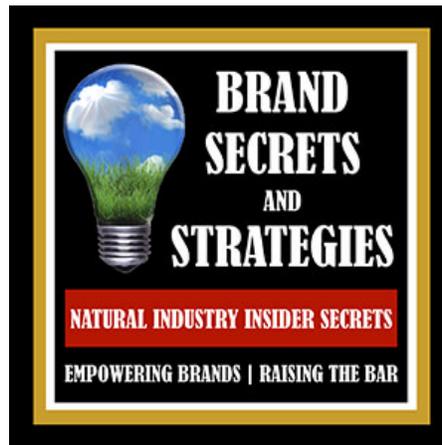
Dan: Sari thanks for coming on today. Can you please start by telling us a little bit about yourself and your journey to your consulting business?



Sari: Yeah, great. Thanks for having me, Daniel. My name is Sari [Kimble 00:00:10] and I'm the founder and CEO of Sari Kimble Consulting. Then I also create a food business, Success, that I launched here in 2019. My background, how I got started in this crazy CPG world, is I actually started in the food industry a long time ago, in my 20's, and got really hooked into food culture when I moved to San Francisco and was in restaurants and back of house, front of house, and just found myself in that food space, and just didn't want to leave it. Food is just such an amazing connector and I love the way that, yeah, food just brings us all together.

I've always had that passion for food in some form or another. It's really been a theme throughout my career and life. Then in 2009, I started working for a farm, an organic farm here where I live in Colorado and started a wholesale program. I was actually selling to restaurants and to small retail, and really learning about that side of the business and what it meant to sell into grocery store, smaller independents. I went to the other side, I actually went to Whole Foods Market, became a buyer, and then I was doing vendor onboarding, which is really kind of the basis of what I formed my consulting company around.

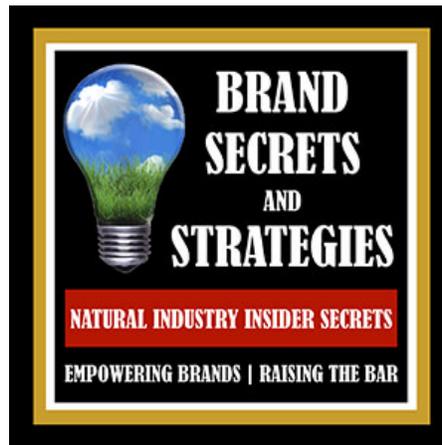
Basically, I was helping vendors, new, local vendors that we were finding to go into, we were going into new stores in the region, and we were trying to find new producers. I thought I was just going to get their stuff in the system, and they ended up needing a lot more coaching and assistance and understanding of what it means to be successful when you go into a large retailer, like Whole Foods Market. Then I went back to my store level, the Fork Homes stores, the third-largest grossing store at the time, in the



Rocky Mountain region, and was the marketing director for that store. Because local food has been near and dear to my heart, I really focused on how can I help our local producers get off of the shelves because they worked so hard to get on the shelves.

Developed a lot of local programming and demo programs, and how can we really help these producers be successful. I transitioned out of Whole Foods Market in 2015, and like I said, the food space is really where I want to play in, and so I wasn't exactly sure what that would look like when I started my own thing, definitely bumped around a little bit, but found myself managing a commissary kitchen that first year, and that was where I really have realized my niche, and that I really wanted to help those early-stage food producers who are coming in, they're so passionate, and they just want to make this recipe that their grandmother's jam, or some great Keto cookie, or salsa or whatever it is that they're really passionate about, and they really had no idea about the food industry or how to be successful.

I found myself really doing a lot of coaching work, helping them understand. I mean in order for us to be successful in the kitchen we need our clients to be successful, but they were often just a deer in headlights, like, "What are you talking about? Pricing, I don't know. I just want to make my salsa." I realized that that was really where my heart was at, was to help those early-stage food producers, both just get started, or to grow into that next level of wholesale, getting into Whole Foods Markets, and some of those independents and growing their business. That's where Sari Kimble Consulting was formed, and then those producers, I love them but they're also bootstrapping a lot of times, as you know. They're just getting started, they don't have a lot of money to



invest in getting a consultant. That's why I created Food Business Success, which is an online course platform program to help producers who are just getting started to try to flatten their learning curve.

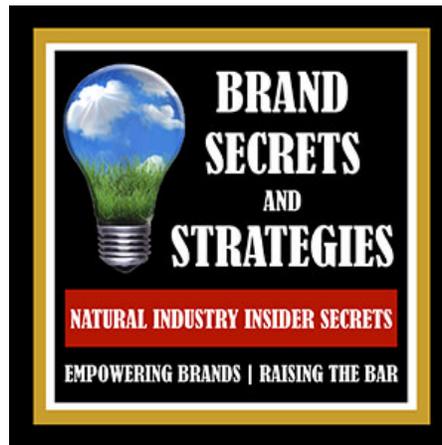
We do similar things in that area. I think we have some overlap, but we also do different things, but how can we help food producers who are on a budget, and can't hire that one on one consultant to have a little more direction, so that they can be more successful and not waste money and time, right. That's the purpose.

Dan: I love that, thanks.

Sari: There it is.

Dan: That's great information. Thanks for sharing that, and talking, going through all of that. Let's unpack a little bit about that. Where did your love for food come from, and how do you translate that into how you help brands?

Sari: Yeah, thanks. Like I said, I grew up, I mean I grew up with a garden, and I understood fresh food, but I also grew up in a very processed food household, maybe kind of a typical American household, busy parents, on to the go. I don't know that we were really celebrating food, or really enjoying it the way that I do now. When I discovered this local food scene in San Francisco, it was Alice Waters and Farm to Table, and people were really starting to embrace that. I just fell in love with food as a way of coming together as a community, feeling like it took down barriers. I think that's more so now. I love that it is democratic in

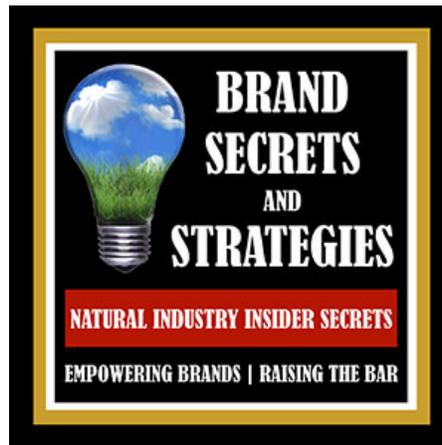


that we all eat, right and that there's a level of enjoyment that we can get out of food.

I think maybe I'm as idealistic about the power of food as many of my friends are, but that's hopefully a good thing. Balancing that with the reality of what it means to be in the CPG business and that it's a really tough business and you can make the best product, the most amazing anything in the world, but it's just going to be an expensive hobby if you don't understand how this all works, the food industry that we're in.

Dan: That's a great starting place. Thank you for sharing that. I always say that just because your mom likes it, doesn't mean that everyone else will. To frame it around that, but what I wanted to get back to is your love of food. This is critically important. This is the great connector, like you said, between generations, between people of all ethnicities and types and shapes and sizes and whatever else. This is where that common language begins. The reason this is important is because this is how we start to develop community. This is the easiest way to start developing a relationship with your future customers. When you were working for a farm and then starting to work in retail, how did you leverage that relationship that you had with food with retailers, and what was your go-to-market strategy, how did you help the retailer understand why you, why did your food matter different than someone else's?

Sari: Right. I think it comes down to storytelling, right. People want stories to tell their customers, whether it's a restaurant or retail. They want their customers to see that they're being more transparent. We know that millennials even more so really appreciate experiences with their food, and food that goes



beyond just the act of putting it in your mouth and eating it. Food is very experiential, and people love to have a story to tell their friends. The more, when I was selling, when I was a salesperson, telling that story of how I was feeding the chickens and they're roaming on grass and they're organic and they're eating bugs, and really trying to tell that story both verbally, but then also through your packaging and your messaging and making sure that all of that is tight in the product itself so that a customer, when they're picking up the eggs out of the door, they're not always going to have a buyer there, a grocery member telling them the stories, but helping you relay that story and that message.

If they're paying a premium for let's take eggs, because that was a big piece of what I did, I'm trying to sell pasture-raised eggs well before there was that brand, now there are brands that that's what they do, but this is 2009, so it was really early on in that stage of the industry. Why are people going to pay \$1.50 or \$2.00 more than some other egg product, another egg? You've got to be able to tell that story and connect with your consumer and get them on board with the why.

Dan: You let consumers buy eggs from chickens that ate bugs, just kidding.

Sari: Yes.

Dan: No the reason that's important, I don't think a lot of people really understand or appreciate where their food comes from. If you are what you eat, then what you eat matters. The reason I wanted to go here, and thanks for sharing that, is because chickens aren't designed to eat grain and hay and feed and stuff like that. It's a



very different product. Consumers need to understand not only where their food comes from, but they want that authenticity and that transparency. Where you've carved out the space that you've hung your shingle, is where that needs to come to life. It's where those consumers, those brands need to help celebrate how they create their product, that transparency, that authenticity. This is what consumers really want. You're talking about a strategy. How do you help your clients leverage that in their selling story?

Sari: Yeah. I call it being defensively unique. We've got to look at what are all the potential things that make our product different and will stand out in the marketplace. Now that said, just like you said, just because your mom likes it doesn't mean everybody's going to like it. I think a lot of people, we run into issues, I see a lot of people I work with where they feel like everyone is their customer, right. That's just not the case. A lot of people can like your product, but you have to really tighten into who is our customer, and who are we speaking to. I see a lot of people just throwing spaghetti at the wall and trying to be everything to everyone.

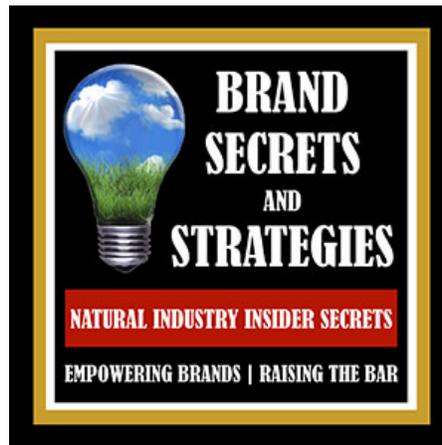
First understanding who your customer is so that you can then speak to what is important to them. Being very focused, very laser-focused around that message is really important. First understanding your customer, then deciding what are those unique qualities that are going to really help you stand out on the shelf, and whether that's, it could be everything from the flavors, combinations, it could be the actual ingredients, it could be a tribal diet, it could be where these chickens are eating bugs out on the pasture, you know, you're painting the story. It could be you, what you give to the community and your well known and



your relationships. There are so many different aspects. It could be you're giving back to, like 1% back to a certain nonprofit or something like that. Finding a couple of things that make your product really special where they're going to stand out. I know you talk so much about how do we compete against these big brands, as a natural food brand. That's the key, is to tell those stories.

Dan: Absolutely, thank you for sharing that. To go one step further, what we're talking about here is big brands talk at us. We're number one, we're great, look at what we accomplished, aren't we just the most magnificent brand out there period. This is why we're here. Small brands, however, have a competitive unfair disadvantage because they don't have the deep pockets to buy the velocity, et cetera, that's a whole other conversation, but the consumers that get it, the consumers that understand why this matters, they want to align with brands that have a common theme, or a common belief or a common alignment to a mission. Like you said, 1% back or something.

They want to align with brands that don't compromise our quality and quality ingredients. They have no probably feeding their chickens bugs because they understand why it's better rather than buying eggs that came from chickens that can't move, literally can't move, which is a whole different conversation. There's a big difference. A lot of people think, I believe it's true too, in terms of organic, or [inaudible 00:14:58] or culture, farm-raised, cage-free, et cetera. Those terms. Those terms mean a lot. When you're leveraging these strategies and you're working with a brand, why do you promote going to a farmer's market?

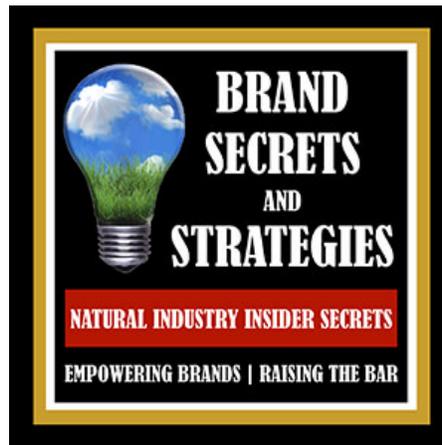


Why do you support that, and what resources do you have Sari to help brands succeed and thrive at a farmer's market?

Sari: Yeah, great question. I generally always recommend going to a farmer's market, starting a farmer's market first. Now, a lot of the people I work with are, that I attract, are typically, they have a full-time job, or maybe they're retired or semi-retired. I also get a lot of stay at home moms, or people who are in the middle of raising a family, and they just have this passion, this dream, this idea that won't stop nagging on them. Maybe they created some amazing treat for their kids that's gluten-free and meets all of the criteria that they want as a parent, or they've just been making this barbecue sauce forever in their family and they just can't this thing out of their brain, it keeps nagging at them. "This is a great idea. I think people would buy this. I think this is great."

I think that's kind of the category of people I work with. I do think we see, in our community, in our food community, that there are categories of people who come from the food industry, they're very strategic, they have some deeper pockets, this is their full-time job, they're starting a very different food business and they don't necessarily need to go to a farmer's market first, they understand the industry. If someone listening hears this, I just had this idea and I had this dream and I think this could really work, I always recommend starting at a farmer's market.

There's a couple of reasons. It's your best testing ground to figure out who your target customer is and to get away from the, my mom loves it, my family loves it, my friends and family all love it. You need to understand, meet your customers, figure out who they are, talk to them about what drives them, what's



important to them. It's a great testing ground for playing with you, I mean honestly your product itself. Making jam at home in small batches is very different than making large scale batches.

In fact, I just had a call last week, a client who is creating some gluten-free breads and she makes them at home, and that's a recipe, but scaling up to a formula is very, very different. She called me in tears, "It was a complete disaster. Nothing worked. I forgot to add this ingredient and I ruined 30 loaves of bread." Giving yourself a little bit of padding and soft landing to try that and figure out how you're going to scale out, and then playing with pricing, playing with your messaging and branding. It just is very forgiving, and ultimately, hopefully, you're making a little bit of money, at least some money at a farmer's market so you're putting cash flow out but hopefully, you're getting some back in. It's kind of a paid focus group if you want to treat it that way.

Dan: Love that. Actually, that's where I was hoping you'd go is that paid focus group. I love that analogy. Big brands really have their own focus groups. Focus groups tend to tell you what they think you want to hear, and they're not always as honest. I don't want to say they're dishonest, but they're not always going to give you that honest feedback that you truly need. In other words, this is what we think consumers are going to want, but yet how do you really use that product. The reason for this is that you're not necessarily talking to the core demographic that would buy your product. That's critically important, so thank you for sharing that.

From my perspective, I would agree with you. A farmer's market is the ideal place to try your product. This is where it's safe to fail. This is where you can tweak your product and the people that are there, they want to see you succeed and they'll tell you



to add that extra ingredient, or, "We'd like it better if you did this," so you've got that real feedback. The other thing that's really cool that I think people need to consider is that you learn to speak the language of the consumer that's going to buy your product. Big companies, "Hey we're number one. Buy our stuff." Whereas the smaller brands can say, "This is what consumers tell us. We innovated based upon what people shared. Here's what we came up with. What do you think?" So people will actually buy it.

They buy it because they want it, not because it's overly promoted. Again, another conversation. What I'm getting at here Sari is that big brands can promote the heck out of a product. You can buy volume. You can buy velocity by heavily promoting, and that's the push strategy. It's extremely expensive and small brands can't do that, nor should they try. If you have a message, a great story, that's where you can differentiate yourself. Thank you for sharing that.

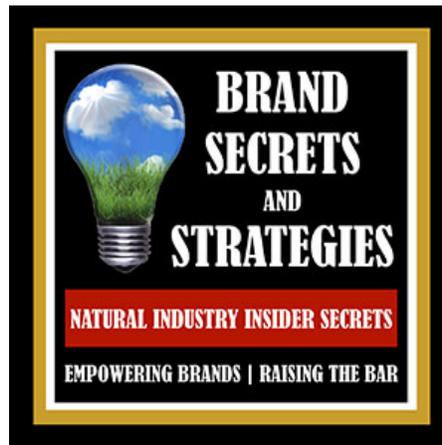
One of the comments you made, you were talking about big CPG people coming into the space. I wanted to throw a caveat in here. One of the things that I do is I help small brands compete head to head, toe to toe with the big buys by leveraging the advanced strategies that big companies use. The challenge is, is that most of the big companies that try to get into this space think that everything looks and feels the same way it does in big CBG. They think they believe that they have those, those misunderstandings about how promotion is the only way to drive a brand, and what do you mean we can't get a focus group. They don't understand our world at all. That's why a lot of big brands that buy small brands fail.



The reason this is important is because we need to remain authentic to the customer that is buying our product. Wanted to reinforce, the benefit of going to a farmer's market is it helps you stay in touch with your core consumer. The consumer who's going to buy your product, your community. This is very similar to some of the demo strategies, hopefully, we'll talk about that in a minute. Your thoughts?

Sari: Yeah. I absolutely agree. I think the more than you can stay connected with your customers, the better. I think it is a shift in mindset that, I think we all go into business for selfish reasons, right. We make a product, we love it. It's not a bad thing. We want to share it with the world, but I always have to ask people to remember that you have to put yourself in the mind of your customers, even though you're making the product and you're wanting them to buy it. Ultimately it's about them, not about you. I think farmer's markets get grounded in that pretty quickly for sure.

Dan: It can be quite humbling. Back to your comment, we all go into business for different reasons. Big brands tend to drive products that impact or hope to impact the bottom line. That's where the focus is. The focus for our industry is how do we make a difference. How do we impact and improve the lives of the consumers that want to buy our product? That means to stay, first and foremost. Thank you for sharing that. What resources do you have around a farmer's market? If I'm a brand and I come to you, I don't know what I want to do, I mean I've got an idea, I've got a recipe or something like that. I don't know how I want to launch a product. How do you help me leverage the farmer's market idea, strategy, et cetera, to start growing and scaling my



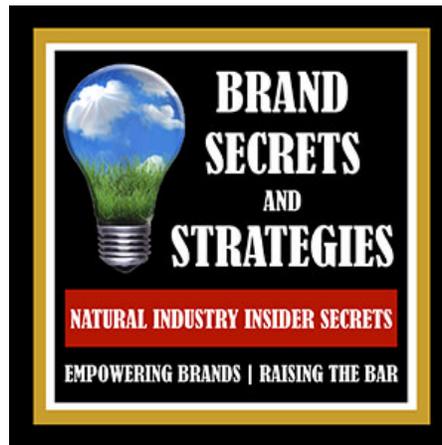
brand to get it to the point where I can validate that it's worth continuing?

Sari: Right, yeah thank you for that. I do have a free farmer's market master class that I talk about why I love farmer's markets, and the four things that you need to do, what are your first four things. I think just the idea of starting a food business, like quickly overwhelms people. They do a Google search and they're like, "Start a food business," and they're like, "Oh my gosh, no way. I'm super overwhelmed." It's Foodbizsuccess/masterclass. Hopefully, you can put that link in your show notes.

Dan: Count on it.

Sari: Yeah, so that's a free class that people can jump on and learn these core strategies, four steps, the four next steps you need to do to start a farmer's market food business. We talked about some case studies and why I like farmer's markets. I do have a farmer's market jumpstart course as well, so go into the actual getting people, the actual steps and resources and going beyond just those initial first things to get started, as well as give them a ton of selling strategies, which I definitely think we should talk about a couple of them because they play well with both retail and a farmer's market. I try to really put on my sales hat when I was at Whole Foods, how do I get people off the shelf and into people's carts, and not just looking pretty on a shelf.

Dan: Well that was actually going to be my next question, thank you for the segue. We'll definitely include a link in the show notes. Send that to me, that'd be great, to the links of all of your resources.

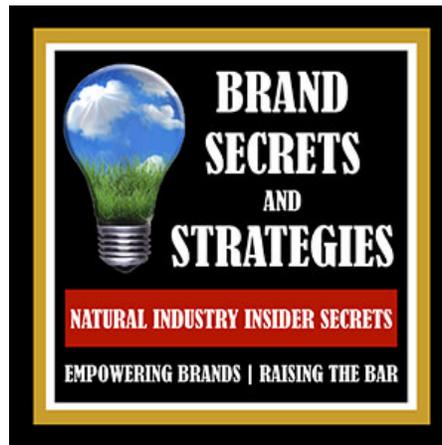


Sari: Sure, absolutely.

Dan: Thank you for sharing all that. Let's talk about the two different, so you've got a free product and then you've got a paid product, but the paid product goes more in-depth. That helps me learn more about what I need to do and talks about strategy, et cetera. How does that tie into your earlier comment, get local brands off the shelf?

Sari: Yes. I mean first, I'm talking about starting a farmer's market, but this could definitely work for if you're on a grocery store shelf of any kind. I think the first thing is you've got to get it into people's mouths as much as possible, so making sure when you're at a farmer's market that you have product to sample and that it doesn't look like it's a mess, it's organized and clean and easy for people to grab that sample. That translates, in the retail industry we call them demos versus a farmer's market sampling booth. I think that those two strategies, wherever you're at, are really important to get those right, and to be very welcoming, to have your booth set up so that it looks very clean. I mean we eat with our eyes first, so if I see a booth or a demo table and it's just a big old mess and there's jam on the table cloth and there's not great signage, or it's not easy for me to grab that sample, I'm just walking away. Really setting up your booth.

Get out from behind your booth and actually look at it as if you were a customer walking up and approaching it, you know. Get off your phone. Do we see that? You see demo people probably in the stores too, and I'm like, you know, you're on your phone, no one wants to come and talk to you and try your product if you're doing anything else. Really yeah, working on your sales skills



through samples. Samples are the easiest way to get people to come to you.

I use the three C's when I talk about how to get a product off the shelf, or product off the farmer's market table. It's captivating, connect, and then convert. You've got to captivate them first, you've got to get them to pick up the product, get them over to your farmer's market booth, get them to the shelf. You have a bigger challenge when you go from a farmer's market to a grocery store because generally, you're not there standing next to your product with samples. Your label and your packaging and your messaging have to do a lot more of the heavy lifting than at a farmer's market where you can, if your labels aren't amazing, you're there to explain and talk about the product and all the great benefits.

Either way, you have to first get people to the product, get them into your booth, through samples, through great packaging and messaging. You've got to get them to pick up the product, hold onto it. Then you've got to connect with them, tell them all the reasons, tell them the story why this is so great, get them to actually try it, and then convert. "Hey, how many can I ring up for you?" Actually, ask for the sale, or in the case of a grocery store, hopefully, you can connect and they're like, "Yeah I'm going to give this a try," or through a demo.

Dan: Then you're also going to get those great insights. You know when you started talking about this, I remember once being at Expo East, and there was a lady there who had a really great product, spent a lot of time on her booth. You could tell this lady was so passionate about her product. The product was an energy bar, and it looked like it was in a Ziploc bag almost, and it had a

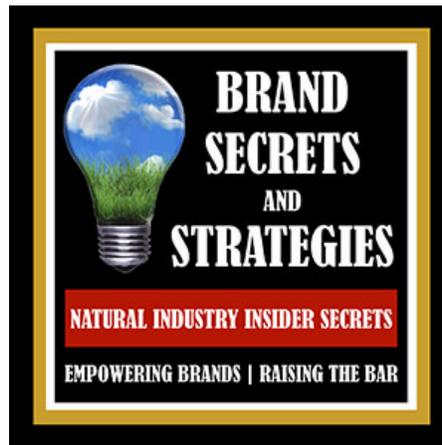


homemade label on it. She was almost in tears pretty much in tears because people weren't stopping at her booth. I felt so badly for her, because here is somebody who, at the product was amazing, here is somebody who had gone through all the trouble to create a product, to create the labels and all that other stuff, put her whole heart and soul in it, and spend a ton of money to buy the booth.

Sari: I was going to say-

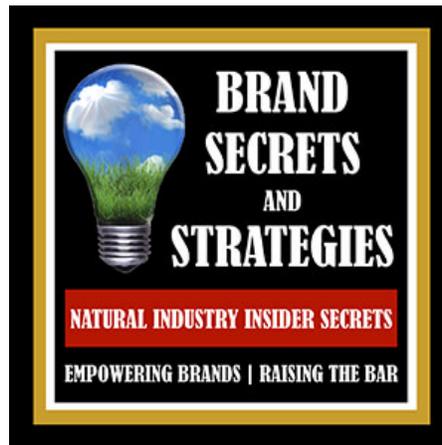
Dan: Yeah, that ain't cheap. But yet because the product did not look right, it wasn't retail ready, people were ignoring her. What I'm getting at is that the foundational stuff that brands need to understand, that's so critically important. Even going back to your comment about big CBG, if you don't have the opportunity, or haven't had the opportunity to work in the aisles and stock shelves and understand how the customers work, et cetera, then there's a disconnect between what you're doing and what consumers want.

Let me frame it this way. I used to be a grocery manager for Price Club, which is now Costco. Back then, I managed all the demo people, but more importantly, I actually worked and touched the products that were on the shelves. I was responsible for knowing how much my sales were for every given product, what were the turns, and all the metrics. What I was doing that was unique is I made a point of bringing local and natural products. In fact, I brought in one of the original natural energy bars, which looked like a loaf of bread, a really, really dense loaf of bread. That was a long time ago.



The idea behind that, where I'm going with this, is that being able to understand and appreciate the food, understand the way the consumer looks at the product, understand the way the retailers look at it and then point all those pieces together. When you're talking about someone that's traditionally classically trained in CBG, they typically don't have that experience. It's an item. I think the Achilles' heel of big brands is they focus on making margin on a single item versus how do you make that longterm connection with the retailer, I'm sorry with the customer, and then how do you leverage the strength of your brand with your end consumer? Can you speak to that a little bit, and how you would leverage that strategy when you're helping to get a brand off the shelf?

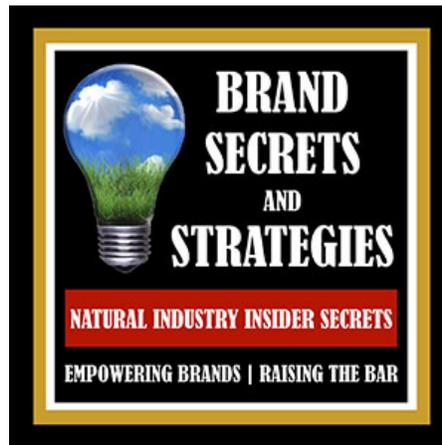
Sari: Right. Yeah, I mean developing those raving fans is important. They're going to be your cheerleaders, they're going to be the ones that initially go and support you. The typical trajectory of a small brand is farmer's market, small wholesale, bigger regional wholesale, and then maybe going into more of a national brand. Along the way, that's actually the best thing that these small brands having going for them, is their ability to create these grassroots, loyal, raving fans. I do think that's one of the best things that small brands have going for them, is their ability to mobilize those grassroots campaigns, those raving fans to really get people excited whether it be through social media, at the farmer's markets where you're building this loyalty, and really asking for their support and having them be your biggest champions and advocates and can really help you grow your business if you're able to work that well. It's a skill, it doesn't come naturally for a lot of entrepreneurs to be able to really, how do I leverage this connection with my customer. That is one thing



that I try to work with people on, is how do we actually connect and leverage all of those people who are very excited about the product that we meet at the farmer's market, sort of buy our product on the shelf.

Dan: It's so very important. Sorry, thank you for sharing that. Again, why this matter is there's an easy way and a hard way to do anything. If you're a big brand and you've got deep pockets you can try to influence that customer or manipulate the customer, however you want to word it, to buy a product because you lower the price or promote it or whatever. Wouldn't it be better if you could have that customer come back and buy your product because they love it because they appreciate because they have that connection with you? That's again, back to the pulse strategy. That's how you create loyal and thriving, loyal evangelistic customers and where I'm going with that is that instead of focusing on one single product, getting it off the shelf from a big CBG standpoint, now we're developing a relationship.

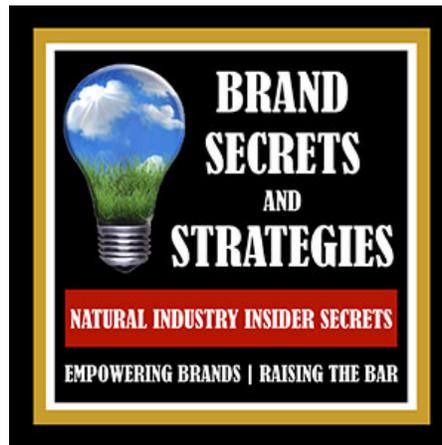
Not only with you, the customer that buys the product, but the customer as they take it home and then they share it with their friends and family and they evangelize about it. Instead of reacquiring the same customer over and over and over again, which is what a lot of big CBG companies do, we're trying to develop a relationship with a customer so that they're going to buy our product because it warrants being bought, because it exceeds or at least meets their needs, and because it's something that they truly want. Thank you for sharing that. Are these strategies baked into your course, and then can you kind of share a little bit about how you would help brand leverage what we're talking about through the products and the courses and through



the instruction and how you would work with them as an individual?

Sari: Yeah. I definitely do bake this into the course. We do talk about branding and marketing and how do you set yourself apart. I mean the reality is in order to have raving fan customers, you actually have to be speaking to your customers to their language, to what's important to them like we talked about at the beginning, and understanding that your customer isn't just everyone. I have an amazing client that makes a Paleo Keto mug cake, and they've done such a good job online, where they do have these raving fans who are just like, "Oh my gosh, you are solving my problems and you're providing this indulgence." Their reviews and social media, and so they're going to be able to translate that as we're moving them into retail, the brick and mortar shelves, we're going to be utilizing that fan base heavily to help us launch the product into stores. It doesn't always come naturally for a lot of people, especially social media can be a little bit intimidating on how do you do it correctly.

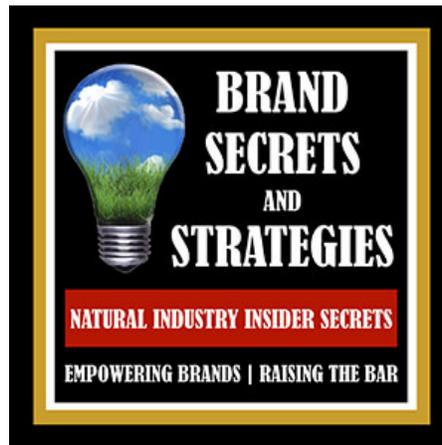
I definitely do talk about that in the Farmers Market Jumpstart Course, on things like having an email list, and how do you kind of set up your social media, just some of the basics to get it going. It's something I probably go more one on one with, with clients when they're really ready for wholesale rather than the farmer's market. I definitely give some great strategies for when you just start out. I don't want to overwhelm people too much when you're trying to just get your booth setup and a product with a label, you know a credit card machine and some of those basic things, but giving them some great strategies to at least get



started, to build that fan base, that customer base where they're going to help them in their journey.

I do have a longer accelerator course that I launch a couple of times a year, and we go a lot deeper into that. One of the things that I really try to do with Food Business Success is combining not only the online course platform piece where you can go at your own pace and lifetime access and you can revisit the materials and the resources, but I do combine it with one on one consulting, or group coaching because this industry is so nuanced and a dairy product is very different than a shelf-stable bar and very different from a pickle or acidified food. There's not just a one size fits all answer for every single question. I think that's one thing that makes Food Business Success unique is that I recognize that sometimes we need those one on one or at least access to talk and ask your questions and you can't get everything from a course. It's impossible to give blanket answers and meet everybody's needs.

Yeah, the accelerator launches a couple of times a year, that's a longer program, you get more access to me. It is more about scaling up and going into commercial kitchens and co-packers, getting on the retail shelves. Then I also work with people one on one, sometimes I find that people investigate the courses and they're like, "Wow you just showed me that this is a lot of work, so can you help me? Can you just help me do this?" It's interesting, I think. You probably hear this a lot too. It's like, people say, "Well I'll just figure it out myself," and then when you kind of show them, "Oh here's all the things you have to do," They're like, "Oh." That's when I need somebody, I'm willing to hire somebody to help. I love working with people in all

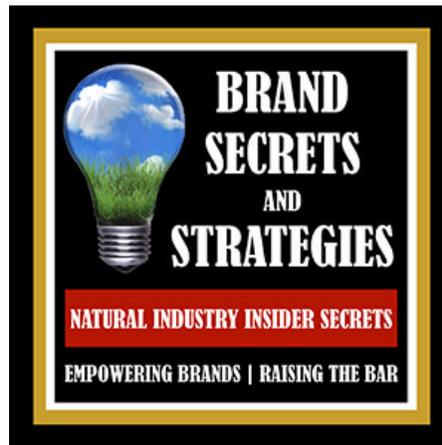


capacities. I just want to help people succeed and be successful in whatever path they choose.

Dan: Well that's why I do what I do, so thank you for sharing that. So we don't scare people, it is hard work but there is a path for it, and if you work with the right people and you leverage the right resources, then you can be very successful. Again, this is all foundational. If you start in the wrong way, you know let me rephrase it this way. I've got sort of a mindset, pay me now, pay me later, and whether you'll hire me or not, the point is this. It's going to cost you a lot more to fix a problem that you create because you didn't do something right in the beginning. Leveraging what you're talking about, leveraging the podcast, leveraging these resources et cetera, this is how we help brands succeed, how we help them grow and scale.

We help them have that healthy foundation, and that's what's critically important. One of the things that frustrate me about this industry is that there are a lot of people out there that, to your point, sell the one size fits all strategy. I talk about this a lot, can top-line reports. If you're using the same exact report to sell baby food that they use to sell motor oil in mainstream CPG, or they use to sell dog food in another channel, you're not differentiating yourself. There are a lot of other issues around that. Again, I talk a lot about that on the podcast, don't want to digress.

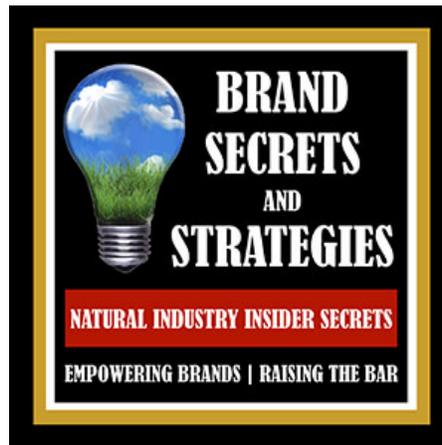
The point is this, you've got to understand your customer. You've got to understand your category, and you've got to understand what your retail partners want and expect from you. Actually as the podcast that came out today with Echo [Eko 00:41:14], he leverages some of the strategies that I talk a lot about where the



retailers actually give them access to insights that would be tremendously expensive if they had to go buy them on their own, that they're competitors don't have access to, et cetera.

The point is, if you have this healthy foundation and you've got a great story, and you've got all the components, think about baking bread or making a cake or something like that, and you bring all the ingredients together, then that's going to give you the healthy foundation to succeed, and that's why we do what we do. Thank you for sharing all that, and I'll be certain to put links to everything in the podcast show notes. When you talk about online, one of the things that you mention, and thank you again for mentioning this too, is the impact or the importance of social media. One of the most popular talks that I used to give was about social media because it's free if you know how to do it. Instead of talking up people, developing that one on one relationship with them, et cetera, and this is how you can really leverage and scale your brand.

For me, it's been a game-changer. I've been the number one Twitter influencer at the Expo East and West and the Fancy Food Store Show et cetera, because I've been able to develop that relationship with the community that I support, and give real value instead of just saying, "Hey just look at me." The impact of something like that, and being able to leverage those resources can exponentially help somebody. When you're trying, in our case, to do more good, you've got your YouTube channel, so you've got that, you're building it out, I'm building one of my own. Again, it's about these resources. What is Food Business Success, what does it look like and then if I'm a brand, what would I expect to get out of it? Why would it matter and how



would you help me go beyond the farmer's market and the other resources that we've talked about?

Sari: Right, yeah. Like I said, just like you do, a ton of free resources. I just want to help people flatten their learning curve somewhere along the line. Quitting will really slow you down-

Dan: Love that.

Sari: If you can't get the resources that you need, you're going to end up giving up. I don't want anybody to give up. If they are really passionate about their product and they really want to be an entrepreneur, I want people to succeed. One of the, we had referenced my 10 mistakes. I do have a 10 mistakes and how to avoid them, free PDF on my website. Well, number 10 is that you can't go it alone. Finding experts and resources and building a community and meeting other food business entrepreneurs and getting support is so important. Being a food business entrepreneur can be extremely lonely and isolating and frustrating, and so the more you can build your bench and build your resources ...

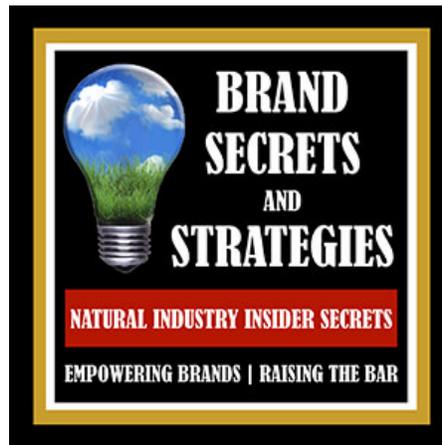
If people just want to start with my free resources and the YouTube channel and the blog and all of that, that's great, like the masterclass. I just want people to get started. Then if they want to join me in the farmer's market jumpstart course, there's more access to me, you're going to get the in-depth courses, resources with links so you don't have to go, all the things that I talk about with the FDA or your state wholesale or do you have to pay taxes, and all of these things. It's like here are the links, you don't have to go and try to search for them.



So many things I think people get frustrated in the food industry, they read all these different things and they're all contradictory to each other. They're like, "What's right? I don't even know. Do I have to put this on my label or that on my label?" Then I think the biggest thing, I mean I give a lot of courses and resources inside that jumpstart course, but how to put it all together and actually build a plan that you can execute, because again I think it can get really overwhelming really quickly, and so I actually walk people through, and I have a cheat sheet and I give them a couple of different ways that they can build a strategy and a roadmap to be successful and not, because if we just focus on the end goal we're going to be so overwhelmed, but let's break that up into smaller pieces and what needs to come first. I mean there is definitely the first step and a second step, and things you need to do first and then do later. Try to really help them create success that way.

Dan: Back to what we were talking about earlier, when you're making a cake, you're building anything, there's a hard way and an easy way and you've got to put the ingredients together in the right order, et cetera, if you want the thing you come out. You've got all those great resources on your YouTube channel. You've got the great resources on your website. One of the things that makes natural, natural, one of the reasons I love this industry is because there are people out there who have made mistakes, who have stubbed their toes, who have learned from their mistakes et cetera, that are happy to share that.

Again, that's why I do this podcast. When you have the opportunity to learn from a Gary [Hershburger 00:46:51], John [Foreworker 00:46:53], you name it, getting those strategies and

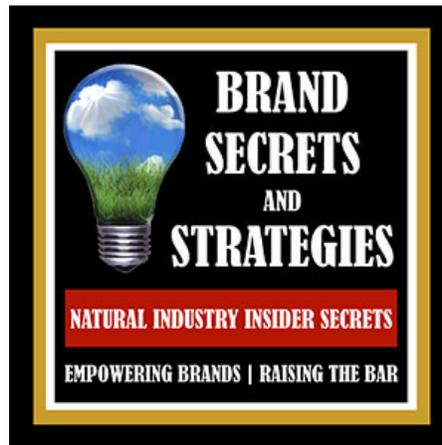


validating those strategies to help brands get over some of these hurdles, and then help point you in the right direction so that you listen to your YouTube courses, sorry you listen to the YouTube videos and that can help you get started on that path. Thank you so much for sharing all that. Can you tell us how to get ahold of you, and how to get ahold of your website, where do we go to look for you, and the resources that you have?

Sari: Yeah thanks. You can find me at Foodbizsuccess.com, biz, foodbizsucces.com. That's also my social media handles for both Instagram and Facebook. I do put up videos, do Facebook live, so try to be in all the places. We're also on LinkedIn too, if anybody is interested there. Then YouTube, I have the Food Business Success channel, so you can just look up Food Business Success. You can also go to my consulting website, which is Sarikimble.com. If you're in Colorado I actually have resources and a quiz that you can take to see which license you need based in Colorado, because it is so state-specific. That would take an army of people to build out one for every state, but that's a great resource if you are located in Colorado to get some specific state stuff as well.

Dan: Well thanks for putting together all these great resources. Is there a bottleneck that I can help your clients solve that you want to share?

Sari: You know, I think it is that next level, like when people start moving from small wholesale to getting into a couple of larger accounts and I think some of the resources you provide, and your expertise around how do you play a big player in the retail space, is definitely where people start to struggle. I always describe scaling up as a step ladder going up. You can start small with a



little bit of investment at a farmer's market, you know your risk is pretty small, your investment's small, but every time you scale up and you want to get into small wholesale and then bigger wholesale and national brand. I mean you have to come in with so much more planning and so much more capital, and I do think that's where people start to get stuck. That's the biggest thing you can help people with as they scale up, for sure.

Dan: Yeah and on that note, that's why I've got a lot of the content out there that I do about how to leverage or manage your product or how to decide what direction you want to go. How do you manage your trade spending, a critical topic? The thing I always focus on is giving brands the strategies, the understanding to be able to keep the hand firmly on the rut of their own ship, and then understand how to leverage those resources, whether it be your broker, your distributor, et cetera. Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate you coming on today and for making all these great resources available to our community.

Sari: You're so welcome. I really enjoyed this. Thanks for having me on.

Dan: Thank you.

Dan: I want to thank Sari for coming on the podcast today and for sharing her insights and her wisdom. Great advice for any brand, especially brands that are just starting out. I'll be certain to put a link to her website, Food Biz Success in the show notes, and on the podcast webpage. This episode's free downloadable guide is The Essential New Item Checklist - The Recipe For Success. These are the foundational things that every brand needs to have in place in order to build a healthy foundation to build your brand



on, that healthy foundation we were talking about throughout this entire podcast that's going to determine how long your brand's going to be around. And it's going to determine how effective you are at growing and scaling. You can download this instantly on the podcast show notes on the podcast webpage by going to BrandSecretsAndStrategies.com/Session152. Thank you for listening, and I look forward to seeing you in the next episode.

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Thanks again for joining us today. Make sure to stop over at brandsecretsandstrategies.com for the show notes along with more great brand building articles and resources. Check out my free course Turnkey Sales Story Strategies, your roadmap to success. You can find that on my website or at TurnkeySalesStoryStrategies.com/growsales. Please subscribe to the podcast, leave a review, and recommend it to your friends and colleagues.

Sign up today on my website so you don't miss out on actionable insights and strategic solutions to grow your brand and save you valuable time and money.

I appreciate all the positive feedback. Keep your suggestions coming.

Until next time, this is Dan Lohman with Brand Secrets and Strategies where the focus is on empowering brands and raising the bar.