

## DETAILED MEETING MINUTES - Q&A FORMAT

### Discovery Meeting: Chocolat on James

**Date:** Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 4:00 PM - 5:07 PM ET **Attendees:** Greg Kowalczyk, Dan (Chocolat on James owner)

### OPENING & INTRODUCTIONS

**Greg:** How are you doing?

**Dan:** Good, good. I'm at the store - my third day at Chocolat Hamilton (Chocolat on James).

**Greg:** How's it going?

**Dan:** It's wild. It's a lot. A lot of stuff going on. Trying to learn how to make things, run the store, figure out what to order and buy, deal with staff, get CRA account going, QuickBooks, employee pay. The list goes on. Twelve hour days.

**Greg:** That's the beauty of being an entrepreneur - never ending story, especially with a store like yours.

**Greg:** Is Sharon coming as well or just you?

**Dan:** Sharon can't join. She's not really involved in the business aspect - she's part of the business because she's part of me. She'll help with design stuff and work the register while she's here, but not the business side.

**Greg:** You'll see - she will be involved eventually. Do you have a business partner as well?

**Dan:** Yes, I have a business partner who is more behind the scenes. It's mostly me running it and making decisions with help from a lot of beautiful people.

**Greg:** Is he a financial partner as well?

**Dan:** Yes.

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

**Greg:** Before we dive in, anything on your mind you'd like to cover today?

**Dan:** There were a lot of questions in the email you sent - good to think about, probably needs more time to go through. I really need to increase traffic and flow of people coming through. The online business doesn't exist at the moment. I think the online business and better website design will help, especially in the corporate world with baskets - bigger dollars. Right now it's not buying a \$10 bag of chocolate, it's buying a \$150 basket. But there's no way for them to design that. They can come in and buy one already made, or call/come in and tell us what they want. It'd be nice for them to design specifically - here's all the items, here's the baskets, pick what you want, we'll put it together. The revenue increase and online piece is important. There are a few other local markets worth tapping into.

### CURRENT BUSINESS ASSESSMENT - REVENUE & SALES

**Greg:** Walk me through a typical week in terms of sales. You mentioned \$500-1,500 per day in your first week. Is that constant or was that an anomaly?

**Dan:** In the first week, slow days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) are probably \$500-600, maybe \$600-700, but not much past that. That's mostly daily traffic walk-in business. There hasn't been a lot of phone orders, corporate orders, or bigger orders at all in the first week. We have ice cream too, plus chocolate and coffee. Friday, Saturday, Sunday were busier days and better revenue - Friday and Saturday were about \$1,500 each, Sunday about \$1,000. All walk-in.

**Greg:** December can be 2-3x other months you said. Give me a sense of what a normal month like August or September looks like in revenue.

**Dan:** It's hard to know - I've only been here a week. The years have changed quite a bit looking at the history. Their fiscal year end is September 30. For fiscal year ending 09/30/2025, revenue actually dropped about \$100K from the year before. It was closer to \$450-500K and dropped to about \$350K or maybe a little bit more.

**Greg:** Did she say why it dropped?

**Dan:** Not really. She's still here in the back, but no clear reason given.

**Greg:** Ice cream is your biggest seller. How seasonal is that? What happens to sales January to March when it's cold?

**Dan:** I haven't been able to look that deep at the stats from the POS system. She wasn't selling as much ice cream in winter - she shut down the machine and was doing scooped ice cream. But I haven't looked to see the change in revenue from busy months to winter months.

**Greg:** 2021 did \$750K, then declined 30%. What do you think happened? COVID related or something else?

**Dan:** That's a sensitive topic. I think she's been trying to run this place by herself and hasn't been doing any marketing at all - like zero. There's some retention of customers but not a lot of new customers. Obviously you're going to lose customers - they move away, don't like chocolate anymore, become diabetic, whatever. She's not bringing new customers in. In 2021 they had a pretty good base and were doing some marketing, so there was turnover but also new customers. I don't think she's been able to do that over the last few years and they're really starting to feel it. Plus the economy and chocolate prices increased a lot in the last couple years. But I really believe it's just not getting new customers to replace any customers she loses for whatever reason. You gotta find new markets - it can't always be the same 100 people coming in every month.

**Greg:** That makes sense. Chocolate isn't everyone's everyday thing. You need corporate customers who order regularly.

**Dan:** I asked her if she had a list of corporate customers - all these people who order mass amounts for December. No idea. No list. Can't email anyone. Can't call anyone. Just hope they call back.

**Greg:** I don't understand why people don't have this. I have a hairdresser in business 30 years still operating with a paper notebook. No emails whatsoever.

## **FINANCIAL TRACKING & SYSTEMS**

**Greg:** How are sales being tracked and inventory managed? Customer data you said is nothing. You mentioned POS system?

**Dan:** Square.

**Greg:** So everything is in Square. At least maybe some emails when they want receipts?

**Dan:** Maybe there's some. I would say there's not many.

**Greg:** Everything is manual. Walk me through how sales are tracked, inventory, customer data, POS system.

**Dan:** Inventory - just looking with your eyes. There's no record of inventory at all for supplies or product. Even the SKU'd items in the POS system - there's no tracking of that either. You can't tell what there is unless you go look on the shelf.

**Greg:** What about COGS (cost of goods sold)? Is this calculated before each product? Do you know exactly what one ice cream costs - the soft serve plus chocolate plus sprinkles?

**Dan:** No.

**Greg:** Is there an itemized list of what you put into the pot, produce as chocolates, what's left, the profit?

**Dan:** The only cost of goods sold is the monthly or yearly amount reported to the accountant or CRA. That's it.

**Greg:** But you still have expenses - you purchase ingredients. There should be a balance of what you put in and put out. That produces profit and margins. Do you know the margins?

**Dan:** It's changed a lot over the years. The accounting/finance side has been fairly hard to figure out. From 2021-2024, cost of goods sold was fairly consistent at about 61% of revenue. I was told for this year (ending 2025) it was going to be 40-something. That was her reporting and showing me an inventory ledger, but it didn't make sense. Chocolate prices went up - cacao is more expensive now. It should have went the other way if I knew nothing.

**Greg:** So you're dealing with very uncertain data. You're starting from scratch to figure things out.

**Dan:** What does seem obvious is it is making some money - enough to keep the doors open. There's seemingly good opportunity for growth. It's somehow surviving despite being run very, very poorly. Not too long ago it had revenue of three quarters of a million dollars.

**Greg:** That 2021 number doesn't mean too much. A lot of businesses boomed during COVID, including mine. People were at home, didn't know what to do, went out for coffee and chocolates. Now it's stabilizing. You should have clean books, everything itemized by SKU. You need to know what each item costs, the profit, everything. You have employees, yourself, your partner - everyone needs to be paid.

**Greg:** From gross sales of \$500-1,500/day, do you know how much is left after paying for ingredients, packaging, and employees?

**Dan:** Not really.

## **EXPENSES & CASH FLOW**

**Greg:** There was a section for expenses - roughly \$30K per month including staff and salary. Are you able to break this down? Salary, staff payroll, rent, utilities, insurance, software, marketing?

**Dan:** No, I don't have a good breakdown at this point.

**Greg:** Are we able to do something like this?

**Dan:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Greg:** Eventually, even for yourself and if we work together, you have to have monthly tracking of how much is coming in, coming out, everything. Is it balanced? Minus? Plus? Everything there.

**Greg:** Cash flow - do you know exactly how much you have each month to invest for growth, marketing, ecommerce setup, hiring new employees?

**Dan:** We have some, but I don't have a budget exactly.

**Greg:** Is it coming from external resources or covered within the business?

**Dan:** We have some operating budget in the bank to use. We're trying to at least break even every month, but we realize there's going to be some investment. That's why we're focusing on revenue streams that seem very easily tapped into that we can focus on so we can make other improvements. Those revenue streams seem easy to tap into with even how we're operating now - we just need to get into them.

**Greg:** Any debt for the business purchase?

**Dan:** It's all from my partner - being paid back to him. Just interest for the first five years I think.

**Greg:** So just interest, not debt-free but manageable.

**Dan:** Yep.

**Greg:** In previous years when revenue was \$750K in 2020-2021, any idea of profit numbers?

**Dan:** There's some idea. I'll send you a spreadsheet I created from the mess of documents she sent - from CRA documents mostly. You can see what the net income was over the years.

**Greg:** That would be helpful. There's a lot of missing points, but if we can get as much information as possible, that would help.

## **PRICING STRATEGY**

**Greg:** How do you currently set prices? Based on COGS markup formula, competitor pricing, gut feel, or previous pricing?

**Dan:** I've been here a week, so everything is just set up for me. The store was operating when I got it, it's staying operating, running as is with small changes I'm making. There's no rationale for any of that at this point - just gut feeling. You look to see what's on the shelf, what we need, and price it at what people will buy it for.

**Greg:** If we're going to grow revenue by 50% to \$500K, where does that money need to come from?

**Dan:** New customers.

**Greg:** That means higher volume, more sales, more people to hire. Still a balance. What's a realistic budget for marketing? Many businesses allocate 5-10% of revenue to marketing. If you have \$40K/month, that's \$2K-4K. Is this something you're thinking about or still untapped?

**Dan:** It's untapped. That sounds like a lot to me. Two to four thousand sounds like a lot.

**Greg:** Depends what you're doing. If you want to hit ecommerce hard and advertising - Google, Facebook, Meta - it can go really wild as far as expense. If you want marketplaces like Amazon, you have to invest in PPC (pay-per-click) advertising. You have to put money in to get money out.

**Dan:** I think there's been nothing done, so starting smaller to see what the changes are. If we start the online business and maybe some delivery and market through Instagram, Facebook, but also some specific local marketing - with the university, bigger corporations in Hamilton especially downtown - to get into those vectors.

**Greg:** There are many ways to approach this - paying money for advertising or spending time yourself or whoever is doing this. Universities - you'll have to get them organically on your list, send invitations. You'll be investing your time. It's whether you put money or time. Time equals money. At some point your time will be very valuable. It might be X number now, but once you're growing the business, your time becomes more expensive. You have to find the balance - how much is one hour worth? If your hour is worth \$100, then if a task is less than \$100, find somebody to delegate to. At some point your hourly work might be worth \$500 - different story.

**Greg:** For us, our business is a lot of ecommerce. We're spending 20-25% on advertising from revenue. It's different. Once you have volume, you have to put more in to get more volume.

**Dan:** Would you say your marketing is that much more because ecommerce takes less staff, less other expenses? You don't have the physical store, not as much staff.

**Greg:** I used to have more staff. Right now we automated a lot through AI automation. We reduced staff from 11 to 5 people including two owners. Everything else is done automatically or semi-automatically. Even advertising - there are automations to run this, managed by one person. There are certain things you can automate, but your physical store is different. We don't have a physical store but have wholesalers - stores selling our products. The advertising is the same as for you. Amazon too - you can sell on various platforms.

## **PRODUCTION CAPACITY**

**Greg:** Walk me through production capacity. If you receive a \$20K corporate order

tomorrow, can you fulfill it?

**Dan:** No.

**Greg:** What would be the constraints?

**Dan:** Staff. And I'm just learning the business right now - learning how to make the products. A \$20K corporate order per month is a lot of stuff.

**Greg:** You have to think about production time per batch, ingredient sourcing lead time, equipment bottlenecks, storage, refrigeration. In July/August, refrigeration might be a problem. Shipping, packaging - maybe for the future, but think about this.

**Dan:** Yeah, it's a lot.

**Greg:** You mentioned much is made in-store and some wholesale purchasing. What and why is outsourced?

**Dan:** Some products are more difficult to make and need other equipment. That's why it's outsourced - I buy it wholesale.

**Greg:** Is this outsourced to bigger factories you can scale?

**Dan:** I'm just buying wholesale so I could buy more. Their production is not a concern I don't think.

**Greg:** If your volume increases for ecommerce, do you have capacity to order more?

**Dan:** Yeah.

**Greg:** From inventory capacity percentage-wise, how much is wholesale vs in-store? 90/10?

**Dan:** No, it's more like... not counting coffee and ice cream, just chocolate, I'd say 65/35 or maybe 70/30. Just counting the shelves of things we have - 65/35 I'd say pretty close.

## **PACKAGING**

**Greg:** Are your current boxes, wrapping, presentation working well or any areas to improve?

**Dan:** I think it's okay. The creative side of the current owner is probably different than how I would want it. There's a lot of colorful bows and ribbons that are very cheap to buy but inefficient to use. When you have long rolls of Christmas ribbon, you have to wrap and tie everything. As opposed to something more costly but much more efficient - like when tying a sucker... [shows chocolate sucker] This ribbon is cut off a long roll and you have to tie it. It's finicky. But you can get twist ties that just bend over - done. Has little wire in it, probably 10% of the time to use it. There are things like that. And there's a lot of inventory of those supplies - 9,000 truffle boxes here for example. I suspect that's going to last many years if I keep it all.

**Greg:** Are they physically attractive or would you like to change them?

**Dan:** They're okay. I think a lot are probably usable without all the red and green ribbon tied on, or with different ribbon. One customer came in a couple days ago and said all these colors are sort of happy friendly, but nobody wants that. They

want black, beige, brown, more neutral tones. Makes it look more elegant. When you're buying a truffle that costs \$2.60 a piece, you want it to be elegant and classy and high-end chocolate, not necessarily fun.

**Greg:** Definitely. That's good feedback.

## **CUSTOMERS & MARKETING - SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Greg:** Let's talk about customers and marketing. Starting with Instagram - 14,000 followers. Not many comments but that's impressive. The last post I think you did?

**Dan:** My daughter's doing it.

**Greg:** Do you know where followers are coming from? Are they local?

**Dan:** No idea. I would suspect - it's not a chain, it's a one shop store downtown Hamilton - a lot is probably local. The store has been here 11 years.

**Greg:** What's your plan for social media? Is anybody able to come in front of camera and be the face of the company?

**Dan:** No plan.

**Greg:** Who manages? Your daughter?

**Dan:** Yeah, Tory. She's managed it for the last five days.

**Greg:** Posting engagement rate, follower demographics - we don't really know?

**Dan:** No.

## **CUSTOMER AVATARS**

**Greg:** For customers - you mentioned locals, some repeat customers, walk-ins. Do you know who your absolute best customers are? If you had to describe your top 10 customers, what would they look like?

**Dan:** The short answer is no, I don't know. If I think about it - being a high-end chocolate shop, people aren't coming in to buy a Coffee Crisp. They're coming to buy a chocolate bar that might be the same weight but \$11, not \$3. I'd say middle age to higher age, average to above average incomes probably is my guess for the most part. I think that's because those are the people out and about, walking around, and have the means to come in and buy the chocolate.

**Greg:** This makes you think about your customer avatar. Everyone has one or more avatars depending on the business. You create various types of avatars including their names, then it's easier to market to them. If I know exactly that Laura - my avatar - is a physiotherapist, 35 years old, has this education, this income, works there, her interests are this and that - it's better because even when you talk, you know who you're talking to and how to persuade her to buy your stuff. You'll have various types of customers, various ages - kids will come with moms. But you want to build that for the future.

**Dan:** I agree. I think there probably are other different avatars.

**Greg:** This takes a lot of time to build - from brainstorming to coming to ideas to putting them physically, naming them. Sometimes even draw them, make mascots, put them alive, characterize them. Even when you talk to employees, you talk

having your avatar in mind.

## **CORPORATE RELATIONSHIPS**

**Greg:** Corporate and gift orders - are those currently one-off requests or do you have repeat customers?

**Dan:** I'd say there's probably repeats, but we don't know for sure. I don't know who they are. There's no reaching out to them. It's just "oh you came again, that's great, thank you."

**Greg:** So no emails, not even a corporate order list history. Has that been on your radar to fix?

**Dan:** Oh yeah. I have specific markets I'm thinking about already. I've talked to a few people who've come in - like real estate agents. They have open houses and put a little basket of goodies for people to nibble on. Or when they sell a home, they might give a little gift to the person who bought the house. Pharmacies at the holidays often send gift baskets to their big customers like doctor's offices. Things like that. I have some connection to McMaster University. One of my dreams - I don't know if it was written in those questions - is to partner with the Ti-Cats (Hamilton Tiger-Cats football).

**Greg:** Tell me more about that.

**Dan:** To either create a chocolate bar they might sell at all their games, or they have rolling cart setups in some mezzanines selling local sausages or popcorn. To have a cart setup of just Chocolat on James chocolate. My idea is to create a section in the store that's all black and gold focused on the Ti-Cats, hopefully get Ti-Cat fans to come in and buy it, then get the attention of the Ti-Cats to say "hey look, he's doing this," and hopefully get into the stadium. The Ti-Cats are a huge thing in Hamilton - 25,000 people a game in a city that's only half a million. That's 5% of them at the Ti-Cat game.

**Greg:** I like that idea. That would bring a lot of clients.

**Dan:** You also mentioned the brewery next door and the cacao and hops idea?

**Dan:** Cacao and hops. That's the other part about this street - James Street North, being downtown - that whole vibe is really knowing our commercial neighbors, who our neighbors are here. When someone comes in and says "I need to go get some good soup," I'm saying "go to Burnt Tongue because they're right around the corner." [Someone enters store] Thank you Carrie, see you later. That part - when I want to build the brand of the store, right now it's called Chocolat on James. I want it to be "Chocolat on James - Hamilton's Chocolate." That whole sense of the city and community. That's why this shirt - "Hamilton is Chocolat" - if you look up True True Hamiltonian, that's the T-shirt company in Hamilton. [Shows shirt] This is Max Francis who made these shirts for me. His very first T-shirt was just "Hamilton is Home." Now you can get Hamilton anything you want - Hamilton is soccer, Hamilton is basketball. He'll make whatever you want on this style that matches the Hamilton is Home theme. That whole community piece in building that is an important part of what I want to do. It's why this business in this location



was of interest to me. If I had to think of a better location for a business I wanted to have, I couldn't. This would be it.

**Greg:** The location you have is really nice. High-end chocolate, different stuff for any occasion - Valentine's Day, dates, any type of occasion. Good ideas.

**Dan:** It's interesting - I've had a couple people come in buying gifts. One was for their friend who lost a pet, had to put a pet down. Another was a couple who had to put their cat down, but they were buying gifts for the vet. Sympathy gifts I wasn't necessarily thinking about.

**Greg:** That's material for social media. You have to talk about this. You give people ideas. We can talk about various media, but start with one and really become a master. Really become the face of that place. Be there. Eventually people will follow you and grow your account. Right now you have 14,000 but not much following, likes, because there are no videos. UGC content - user generated content - is really up there. You'll have to start producing.

**Dan:** I just saw on social media recently these counters that show your Instagram followers that someone can stand in front of. As soon as they follow you, they see the number turn. Have you seen those?

**Greg:** Yeah, I think it's artificial, maybe connected. I've seen that but not sure if it's real.

**Dan:** I wondered about those. I'm not good with social media, but I can imagine people who like social media when they see 14,399 followers and they follow and it turns to 14,400 - "that was me, I saw that, I made that turn." I didn't know if you ever saw it or know anyone who used it.

**Greg:** Not really.

## **VISION - 12 MONTH GOALS**

**Greg:** Let's talk about your vision. For 12-month vision you said \$500K year revenue, better work-life balance, partnership. Walk me through what an ideal day looks like for you a year from now.

**Dan:** Right now I'm here open to close basically - first week and will be for the first couple months. I've taken a few hours off to play my championship soccer game and go to turkey dinner, but not much. That's obviously not sustainable. When I went to visit a chocolate shop in Toronto called Stubbe Chocolates, Dan Stubbe was the owner. He was there to work but had invited us to come check out his shop. He was able to step away from the actual business even though he was still there. He had enough staff - they were still working, making products, running the front. His hours are 9-5 type thing. They close on Sundays. I would imagine something more - in a year from now, and I think that would change after that - but in a year to for sure have one whole day off per week. My hours in store would be more 8-10 than 12 or more.

## **VISION - 3 YEAR GOALS**

**Greg:** Three years from now you mentioned managing the business, more hands-off, not on the retail floor more. What does managing mean to you? Hands-off owner or still involved with a strong team?

**Dan:** No, I don't think I'd ever want to be completely hands-off. That would kind of ruin the point of it a little bit. In three years or more, I might hope to almost not be regularly needed on the floor. I could be here and be on the floor working because I'm still familiar with the store and able. Maybe I'll be more involved on the production side, but all the rest of the business stuff would be what I focus on - the marketing, the accounts. All the business side done behind the scenes, not involved in the retail of making coffee and ice cream and selling it all.

## **COMPETITION**

**Greg:** You went to Toronto to check out a store. Are you aware of any or all competition currently in Hamilton or surroundings?

**Dan:** I'm aware of some, not all.

**Greg:** Who they are, what they're doing, what difference they're making. Do you want to copy or see what they do? I know some places - Chocolate Bar, Chocolate Sensation in Burlington. Bigger stores like Purdys and Soma.

**Dan:** In Hamilton we have Laura Secord stores, Purdys, Walker's Chocolate. Then some other smaller shops making similar products but probably not as much. On Locke Street for example - pretty famous street in Hamilton - there's a shop making... I don't know exactly what. They're only open 3-4 days a week, so more specialty I'd say. Another one on Ottawa Street North making these really fat chocolate bars - she was pretty TikTok famous. Giant thick chocolate bars with all this filling. She cracks them in half and filling falls out. A lot of our product in store is chocolate-covered something - Oreos, sour keys, pretzels, chips. We do caramels, cookies, popcorn, toffee. Stuff that isn't... we either purchase and cover it or make it and cover it in chocolate. I don't know if there's a lot of stores doing it quite like that. A lot of those stores focus on more traditional chocolate.

**Greg:** Bringing up competition is just awareness, but also if we go for online growth, you have to always check competition - what they are, what they're doing, how they're bringing traffic to their stores. Copy, digest what they're doing best and try to do better.

## **GROWTH STRATEGY**

**Greg:** When you think about growth, would you rather grow revenue by selling more to your current local market or by expanding online and reaching customers across Canada?

**Dan:** I feel as though online ordering with local pickup or local delivery is where I want to start. When I think of markets that are very close - there's I don't know, 15 new condo buildings here in the last 5-10 years with 500-600 people in them, all within 2 kilometers. I'd say they're younger crowds. You see a lot of delivery.

People in condos are doing a lot of online ordering and delivery of stuff. That seems to be a place to go. Outside the corporate stuff, that seemed to be a market to target. Then the university. Kids at university are going to have some level of money just by the nature of it all, also kind of impulsive, a crowd that would like treats and sweets. An idea I had - if they were doing online ordering and every night or every couple days there was a delivery to the university. Like "come to Thode Library out front, that's where delivery is 7-8 PM." You do the online order during the day, come pick up your things at a certain time, certain place in the evening.

**Greg:** That's actually pretty good. That's how marketing works. First you work on organic marketing - articles, keywords, ranking. But then paid advertising - you can be really specific to a city or a block of streets. Geographically you can hit that 600-person building and be on their phone all the time, or university campus. You have to be in front of people with something attractive to show them.

## **DALE'S ROLE & E-COMMERCE**

**Greg:** You mentioned Dale's role - he wants to run the online site. Can you tell me more about his background and how much time he's realistically committing?

**Dan:** That's my business partner. He's a doctor but mostly in his retired years, about 10 years older than me. He was just trying to fit into the business, threw that out there to say "maybe that's something I could do." But that's as far as it got. He hasn't even been here - he's been away the whole time we've owned this place because he had a trip already planned to BC for business stuff. Just a throwing it out there idea.

**Greg:** You can learn a lot of stuff. Age is not a limit, just time.

**Greg:** You mentioned mostly no plan for ecommerce. If you could wave a magic wand, what would your online store allow customers to do that they can't do today?

**Dan:** Well there's no online store right now. I'd want them to go to the website, hit products, actually see what's there and available, be able to order it. The delivery part I don't know yet, but at least order it and pick up in store. I think the delivery part should probably happen fairly quickly along with that. But if the online store started and was tested with store pickup, it might be easier than jumping in with online store, in-store pickup, and delivery all at the same time.

**Greg:** That's just a switch - online or shop, deliver or pickup. That's the easiest way to do it.

**Dan:** I really also want - with the corporate stuff or baskets - to really have people an option to say "I want these 8 items in a basket," be able to order that and pick it up or deliver.

**Greg:** Other ideas - box builder, custom box builder. Or predetermined kits - packages. A lot of people don't want to pick themselves - "here's a \$120 item, I want that." Or quick order.

**Dan:** But at least with that online, it would actually list everything that's there. It's

not a guessing game like "just give me something for \$150." They'd be able to see what's in there. Greg, sorry, I do have just about a couple more minutes.

**Greg:** That's fine. We're 5:07, stretched out a bit. Let me ask - you're coming to Christmas time, 8 weeks away, your Super Bowl. Would you like something basic before that or first concentrate on basic building and having the store ready?

**Dan:** It's hard to say. One thing I worry about is having the online store ready, then running into Christmas and not being able to stock enough for the online business that might increase. Also practically - if they start ordering 5-10 baskets a day online as well as the 2-3x revenue of products we're already estimating, is that manageable? I don't know. I'd like to have it as soon as possible, but it's probably more realistic to think of the New Year.

**Greg:** That's fine.

**Dan:** But also the other part - there's two products we buy wholesale that are fairly easy to get with quick turnaround time. The pan chocolates - chocolate-covered nuts mostly, and fruit. Nuts and fruit chocolate-covered. They come in little bags - milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate, vegan chocolate. And the truffles. All of that is pretty readily and easily available, not a lot to package and have ready to send out. It could be the online store started with some of those rather than... a limited selection of things that might be easier for us to handle as opposed to the baskets and basket builder thing.

**Greg:** Okay. I think we've covered quite a bit of stuff. Do you have any questions or anything you need?

## **CONSULTING ARRANGEMENT DISCUSSION**

**Dan:** I certainly want to... from the moment I started talking about this, you were happy to help and talk to me, which is awesome. What does this mean to you though? What are you looking for? You can't just give all your time away for free.

**Greg:** For sure. I'm helping quite a few - not quite a few, but from time to time I'm picking up different projects, helping different businesses, either online or local businesses that want to improve. Especially now with a lot of knowledge of AI and how we're doing and how we can implement this into everyday business life and take advantage that not a lot of people are doing this. I'm open for various types of consulting. I can give you a rough idea, I can get into the business and give you a really detail-oriented plan to implement, show you many different ways of improving things. It depends how you'd like to continue to do this. Obviously I value my time as well. There are certain things I can present to you as friend to friend, but for larger projects I have to put a charge to it as well.

**Dan:** I guess that's what I'm trying to figure out - where that line is.

**Greg:** Initial things - for a few hours I usually don't charge. But then I'll present various types of stages of the business and assign a dollar number to it. Then it's up to you. If you'd like to work with me - not only with me but I'm bringing the team with me as well. We always use our own employees, or if we don't have capacity we can hire freelancers or people knowledgeable to do the job. Or we can

work with your specialist and do the management thing or advisory thing.

**Dan:** With the online store, do you guys manage whole websites?

**Greg:** It depends what managing means to you. At a certain point you'll have to take this over. I didn't really check your website - how it's built, what's required to bring it to a level that it's searchable with Google and everything. That's the initial stage - research your website, research your market, how. That's why the discoverability call is to find out what you really want. Then we can put this together and see how we can do this the best way. But to answer your question, yes we can manage the website. I think eventually the best way is when you learn yourself and manage the website yourself. That's the least expensive. We've done many different ways, even advertising - PPC. We spend so much money on external agencies. But to tell you the truth, no one will manage the same way you are managing because you know the business. I might know how to wiggle around and bring traffic to your store, but the creativity comes from you as well. Later on, your ideas... research is very important because we can research, put your current business under a magnifying glass and pull out all the loopholes. Check the competition, check the area, check everything, how to bring traffic to your store. But eventually your items are visually impressive. People are buying with their eyes, especially online. But even in your store they buy with their eyes. So photography will be very important, but regular photography can be very expensive. Right now since two years ago, since the AI era, photography is becoming really less expensive. But if you hire an external agency to carry your photography even with AI, they'll charge you an arm and a leg. What I can do is show you many different ways and how to do the photography online.

**Dan:** Sounds good. Alright Greg, I really appreciate your time and I have to wrap up. Are you going to summarize all this in some way? You got your summary recording there?

**Greg:** I'll send you the full summary and also a few quick wins - what you can do right now as far as even collecting emails, quick thanks for Christmas, some ideas you can implement right now. Even to change your Google visibility, how to see your store, your location, where to go to, that Google is actually searching you. I'll give you a few hints and how you can get that going and give you a few options for you to consider.

**Dan:** Sounds great. Perfect. Thanks a lot Greg, appreciate it. I'll talk to you soon.

**Greg:** No problem. Thank you. Bye bye.

**Dan:** Bye.

## **END OF MEETING**

**Total Duration:** 1 hour 7 minutes