[01:02.2]

Hey, everyone, it's Guy here. So this week we're bringing you an advice line episode from our archive which we really loved. It's the one with Ariel K. The founder of Parachute Home, and it was so great to have her back on the show, giving our callers and listeners some advice on growing their businesses. It's a super fun episode with so much to learn.

[01:19.8]

You will really, really get a lot out of this one. So without further ado, enjoy the show.

[01:29.1]

Hello and welcome to the advice line on how I built this lab. I'm Guy Raz. This is the place where we help try to solve your business challenges. Each week I'm joined by a legendary founder, a former guest on the show who will attempt with me to help you.

[01:45.6]

And if you're building something and you need advice, give us a call. And you just might be the next guest on the show. Our number is 1-800-433-1298. Send us one minute message that tells us about your business and the issues or questions that you'd like help with.

[02:03.4]

You can also send us a voice memo@hibtid.wondery.com and make sure to tell us how to reach you and we'll put all this info in the podcast description. All right, let's get to it. Joining me this week is Arielle K.

[02:18.4]

She's the founder of the bedding and home goods brand Parachute. Arielle, welcome back to the show. Thank you so much for having me. I'm glad to be back. It's so great having you back. You were first on the last year in the fall of 2023. It's an awesome episode, obviously telling the story of how you created Parachute Home and how you were like inspired by these direct to consumer brands like Warby Parker.

[02:41.1]

And you, of course, started the brand in 2013. You'd never run a business before. You had worked in advertising, you didn't know much about textiles or manufacturing, and now you've got a brand that's like a leader in this kind of affordable luxury.

[02:56.6]

And you got bed sheets and towels and rugs and pillows. You've done. Matt even opened physical stores. So it was just an awesome story. It was so fun having you on. Thank you. It was great to share. Before we bring in our callers today to hopefully to help give them advice, I want to ask you a couple questions.

[03:16.4]

The first one, Ariel, I wanted to ask you about was just some of the day to day or month to month or year to year decisions that you have to make. Like, for example, I Know, there was a time where you guys experimented with furniture, right. And I don't think you do furniture much furniture anymore.

[03:31.8]

Is that right? Correct. So when do you know, like, when you introduce a new product or line, how much time do you give it before you decide whether it's not working or what is? Like the timeframe you kind of allow for?

[03:47.8]

And when do you know it's time to kind of move on? It's a great question because. And it depends for us, we introduce new colors, we introduce new categories. Furniture was a unique example of a category that was very different than our core assortment.

[04:05.3]

And so, you know, we gave it a go for about a year, and we still do sell some bed frames. But it quickly just became clear that, you know, the supply chain, the logistics, the white glove delivery that brought strangers into the homes of our customers, I mean, there was a lot going on and the margin profile.

[04:26.3]

So it just, it impacted our business dramatically in a way that, you know, we could have anticipated probably a bit more. But part of what, you know, being a founder running a business is, you know, being comfortable taking some risks and knowing that they might not all land.

[04:43.3]

Yeah. I'm curious about this. Right. Because sometimes, like, you can't be risk averse. If you, if you're running a business, you have to accept certain level of risk, but you obviously want to mitigate that risk. And when, when something like that happens, you know, we've had, I mean, Jim Cook was on the show, the founder of Boston Beer Company several times, and, you know, sometimes they introduce beers and beverages that just don't work and that just kind of are duds.

[05:06.8]

And we've had brands that have put in millions of dollars into launching something, and it just doesn't work. How do you maintain your risk profile? Like, how do you maintain this willingness to be risky even when other risks that you took failed? Like, how do you make sure that you're like, you don't become a person or a leader who's like, you know what?

[05:26.8]

We cannot do that. We cannot take that risk. You know, we. We need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Yeah. And it's part of how you grow. I also think there are times in a place in a business where sticking to what you know best and being really focused on the core and the end to end experience for the customer is super important.

[05:46.8]

And where risk, you know, might. It might not be the season for that. And so we've oscillated through different moments in the business where we're, you know, super bullish on Taking a risk and trying something new and getting that feedback.

[06:01.8]

And other times where we, you know, think to ourselves, this is, this is a great time to focus on bedding and bath and the products that we know our customers love and you know, spend a little bit more time thinking about how we can try new things without such a big investment.

[06:19.2]

Yeah, Ariel, what do you say we take our first call? Let's do it. All right, let's do it. Hello, caller. Welcome to the advice line on how I built this lab. How you doing, guy? How you doing, Ariel? Hi. Hello. Hello. Hello. Who is this? Tell us your name, where you're calling from and a little bit about your business.

[06:37.5]

My name is Dane Brown. I'm calling from the Gold Coast, Queensland in Australia. I am the co founder of a business called King Brown Pomade, or Pomade as you probably say in the US and we are a men's grooming brand primarily focusing on hairstyling and recently moving into hair health.

[06:53.9]

Awesome. Okay, and what's your question for us today? We are up on our 10th year right now. We are very well known brand. We've always been more of a B2B business. We have international distribution, but we are self funded and right now I'm stock rich and cash poor.

[07:11.2]

So. I know, listen to Arielle's episode. She's done a lot of funding herself and I'm just wondering at this point in their business, should I be looking at investment which we have had offered previously, but not by people in our field. So I didn't feel it was bringing anything to the table.

[07:27.1]

So yeah, any advice at this stage? 10 years on would be great. All right, so 10 years, you started this in 2013. You're based in on the Gold coast of Australia. So that's like the tropics of Australia. Right. Like you grow mangoes up there. It's. It basically is, yes. Yeah, we're, we're an hour south of Brisbane.

[07:43.4]

Okay. And right now you're, you're mainly selling to like salons and barbershops and things like that? That's correct. Essentially we're professional supplier. So barbershops and salons. Yes. And you do sell through your website too? I'm seeing it here. King Brown Pomade, you sell on your, you can order through the website?

[08:01.6]

Yes, we do. It's always been a secondary focus for us. We always wanted to try and drive the consumer to the professional and to the stores and create that long term partnership that was a initiative from day one. But obviously things have pivoted a lot. In the last few years.

[08:16.7]

So we are definitely trying to drive a bit more of a B2C business model. So. So you're not really sold in stores in Australia? Not. Not fashion or retail stores, just strictly professional supply barbershops and salons. Yes, got it. All right, Arielle.

[08:32.3]

Yeah. Questions for, for Dane. So you said that you've had interest by investors in the past, but they weren't strategic? Yes. Talk to me a bit more about that. Did you go down through a process with any potential investors or.

[08:47.9]

No, we didn't. We had interest just from capital investment groups here in Australia. Just once we did sort of start asking questions. They didn't actually have any experience or any distribution networks. I mean, ideally for a brand like ours, I would, I would like investments from someone who maybe has some sort of distribution infrastructure already set up or a retail network that the brand could obviously be plugged into and then get some growth out of.

[09:12.5]

But no, those investors didn't have those opportunities. So we felt it was at that point was not the right time to be giving away a slice of the pie and basically we could be missing out on investment from someone better suited. Tell me a little bit about the, the general market for these kinds of products in Australia.

[09:30.2]

When we launched the back in 2014, there was not really many major competitors, if I'm honest. Most of the brands were coming out of the US and being imported. So we saw that, that opportunity and we spent a year developing the brand and launched the market with good success here in Australia.

[09:45.7]

And we were lucky to obviously be like many brands at that time, on the rise and rise of the Instagram train. So we got international notoriety pretty quickly. There's so many brands in the marketplace and we've had multiple new products developed but we've actually squashed them and moved into a higher price point product category and different product category with hair health.

[10:06.8]

Just to try and pivot and differentiate our brand from what's in the market now, even though we do have a good cult following, it's important to evolve and increase that order value for our brand as well. So we know that the market is about 31% of men are thinning or concerned about it.

[10:24.3]

So if they can do whatever they can. We've all seen the millions of TikToks and Instagram images of guys flying to Turkey to rebuild of their hairline. So we're trying to basically get in there early and prevent guys having to do that. So yeah, it's a direct to consumer subscription model is really where we, we See the value in that for our brand.

[10:43.4]

I did not know guys are flying to Turkey to get their hairline. Who. I learned something new every day. Yep. I gotta go on TikTok more. Three friends this week. I know that have spoken to me about it. Three friends this week who are going to go to Turkey to get their hairline.

[10:59.3]

So. Wow. And so this hair thickening product is. It's. Is a new line, right? You've. You've got the styling and the pomades and now thickening. And this could be a game changer. You're hoping it's going to be a game changer. Quick question for you. Is there a world where, I mean, your product is very masculine?

[11:15.3]

You've got a snake on it. I like it. It's cool. King Brown. It's cool. It's got. I mean, this is clearly. That's a snake here in Australia. King Brown is a snake. I got you. Okay. And see, again, amazing. But is there a world where. Because I, I think there's a world where hair thickening products could appeal to men and women.

[11:35.2]

Is there, is there, Are there products out there that are designed for. I don't know. Is that a possibility? Yeah, if I'm honest, most of my research, I don't. It's very rare that I look at the male market. It's quite juvenile compared to what's happening in female hair care.

[11:50.6]

And that's where the money is. Yeah, exactly Right. And that's not only with the hair thickening, but also other products. We've taken a lot of our inspiration out of female products. So, yeah, look, we. I've sold probably half a dozen of these, these new release kits to women in the last couple of weeks, just because they just asked me point blank, because this.

[12:08.7]

Women ask you straight away, they're like, is that, can I use that? And I'm like, yeah, 100%. Like, it's, it's got this and this and this and they know the ingredients. Guys go, what's dht? And what, what, what's balding? And like, I mean, I'm, I'm, I'm thinking you've got a rebrand or you got to have another line called Queen Brown.

[12:25.2]

Seriously? Yeah, there you go. Like Queen Brown, where you've got that, that product there too, or a slightly differentiated version of it, because that's an issue that men and women face. Thinning hair. Right. And so that's one thing. The question I have, because I know you come to us with a very specific question about money.

[12:43.0]

I Mean, I guess the question is first of all how badly do you need the cash? Do you need the capital? Our business model is the stock service program. So we funnel every dollar we get back into stock because if I don't have stock then my business is not, it's not doing its job. So we are sitting on a stockpile of both empty tins and then filled stock.

[13:03.7]

And look, I just know with money from marketing or and even point of sale in store, if I put a, had a chunk of change I could put into that it would probably help me penetrate the market and get the message wider, faster. So that's kind of where I keep looking at the capital investment thing.

[13:19.1]

We've sort of exhausted a lot of our resources with bank finance and different things and they're not offering. Like I said, I would love someone who'd come in and just help me go to that level. Well, what I was thinking when you said before that you had had investors express interest in investing is you could take capital that's less strategic and hire someone who is incredible at distribution and hire two or three people to fill those roles.

[13:45.1]

That could help you, whether it's on the marketing front, thinking about D2C, how to get to consumers, how to create the content. There's so much education. It sounds like in terms of the thickening and it seems like a great product for social media and bite size creation.

[14:02.6]

I would say with the 10 years under your belt and a lot of data and proof of concept and a brand that seems to be beloved both in Australia and beyond, you have a story to tell Dane. I also wonder about what's the market opportunity?

[14:19.5]

What's the market size in Australia? You mentioned that you've got distribution partners, you've got some overseas sales. I mean Australia is a significant economy, right? I think the population is what, 30 million? 25 million. 25 million. Okay.

[14:34.6]

So I mean do you have, do you feel like you need for this business to grow, scale and succeed? It has to. You have to have a distribution channel outside of Australia as well, a significant one. No, I don't to be honest. The business could be very like it could double, triple even within the Australian market quite easily just given the opportunity.

[14:54.5]

But outside the fact that we've diversified and gone outside just styling, it was something we've identified. There's huge opportunity. So no, I don't necessarily need to grow the business internationally to get the exponential growth. It's just market penetration and I suppose partnering up with the, whether that be pharmacy or that be retail partners I mean, there's opportunity, but I can now go and attack those markets.

[15:19.5]

Well, I think what's interesting with this new product that you have and focusing that on D2C, it's going to bring people to your site and they're going to see the assortment. And I think creating different bundles and creating different opportunities for subscription and just getting people into your life cycle and into a regular purchasing pattern, which is the upside of products that run out, you know, could really help create opportunity throughout the entire product set.

[15:47.0]

Yeah. Dane, what is your daily hair regimen? Just quick. Give me your quick regimen. To be honest, I own a hair company. I've got to put a bit of effort into it, so it's. It's probably a bit more than the average guy. There's a bit of blow drying, a bit of pre styling, and then, wow, finishing off.

[16:03.9]

You, man. I've got to represent. I have to. Yeah, you got to represent. Yeah, absolutely. Got to represent. Awesome. The brand is called King Brown Pomade. Dane Brown in Queensland, Australia. Thanks so much for calling in, man. Thanks for listening to the show. Really appreciate your time, guys.

[16:20.2]

Thank you so much and good luck. Yeah, I mean, I'm like, I'm looking at you, Arielle, and I know that your hair care regimen is much, much more complex and time consuming than mine.

[16:35.6]

Right. Like, you have to. I mean, because my wife, she gets her hair blown out every, you know, like, because she has long hair. Yeah. And. And. And so it's just something that I just. I'm like, I need a haircut. You know, like, I get a haircut every couple weeks and then that's it. And I just, like, roll out of the shower and then I'm.

[16:52.7]

I just put some stuff and I'm done. My hair is a big part of my identity. I mean, it's. It's truly, you know, you have long hair, long, thick hair, and you cannot use pomade in your hair. No, that would not be a good thing. No, it wouldn't work. But I do think that there's a lot of interesting stuff happening in the hair market, and I actually believe that that's a category that investors are very excited about.

[17:17.1]

You know, beauty has been such a big category, and I think that the hair world is. Is. Is really getting a lot of attention right now. Yeah. All right, Ariel. We're going to take a quick break, but when we come back, another caller, another question, and another round of advice.

[17:34.5]

I'm Guy Raz. Stick around. You're listening to the advice line on how I built this lab.

[17:55.7]

Welcome back to the advice line on how I built this lab. I'm Guy Raz and let's go ahead and take another call, caller. Hello, are you on the line? Hi, Guy and Ariel. Thank you so much for having me. Hello, welcome. Please tell, tell us your name, where you're calling from and a little bit about your business.

[18:13.8]

So my name is Deanna Blasey Dandino. I'm calling from Wall Township, New Jersey. I am the founder of the Mindset Tapestry, which is an innovative emotional health tool for children that really builds on a positive mindset, increases self esteem, and it's all done through affirmations, mirror talk and caregiver support.

[18:34.9]

Cool. And what's your question for us today? So I launched seven months ago and everything I had went into the inventory for this business. Now I'm realizing I have a product that I really need to educate consumers on and I don't have the funds for the marketing piece.

[18:53.5]

And so my question is how am I going to be scrappy in getting press for specifically holiday? Because I think that's a huge opportunity for my business to get on gift guides if I don't have the funds to hire a PR agent.

[19:11.4]

Yeah. Okay, cool. We'll get to your question in a moment. A bunch of questions for you. So this is a, so Mindset Tapestry. These are products for, to help develop sort of positive mental health, I guess, social, emotional learning skills for kids.

[19:28.0]

And it's through these like daily affirmation practices. So tell me what, what are the products like? Describe them for me. So I have one core product called the Mindset Tapestry. And what that is is really a wall hanging. It can hang in the child's bedroom on your pantry door.

[19:45.4]

It's a fabric like with like pockets or. Yeah. So it has a mirror on the top and the child could look at themselves and recite those affirmations. Oh, it's a mirror on its. Okay, I got you. So the kid looks in the mirror and. And what are the affirmations? Is there like a guide with affirmations?

[20:01.5]

Like suggested affirmations? So there's a pull down flap. Okay. So the child rips one off every day, sticks it to the mirror. They're on like Velcro or something. Yep. Okay. Okay. And what are they and what, like what kind of affirmations? So I am strong, I am confident, I am resilient, I am safe.

[20:19.6]

I have 30 of them, all developmentally appropriate for children age 2 plus. Really? Yep. And then there's a card pack that correlates to each affirmation tag. So there's a visual that I drew all the illustrations, and then on the back, it gives the parents, like, empowerment and education on how to talk to their kids about what that means and some activities that they can do to kind of instill those affirmations in their child's life.

[20:50.1]

And tell me, Deanna, how did this start? Because I guess you've started this a year ago or so, like, where this idea come from. I'm a former special education teacher. I taught through the pandemic, actually, all the while having my two babies. So really changed my perspective on really how early we start mental health practices.

[21:10.8]

Because I saw these children dealing with anxiety, depression at really young ages. And then that kind of got even more serious as I had my second son and went into a really bad, debilitating postpartum depression.

[21:28.1]

And one of the techniques that pulled me out of that was me learning how to rewire my brain and looking in the mirror and talking to myself. So that's when the light bulb went off, and I said, why aren't we doing this for kids? Like, why aren't there tools?

[21:44.1]

Why aren't schools doing this? Like, why are we not teaching such a simple thing to these children? So that's really what was the inspiration behind all of this, obviously. And just I think we all would all agree that we were, you know, like, postpartum depression.

[22:02.0]

And certain types of depression can be serious and sort of chemically driven. And affirmations or meditation or exercise alone don't. Don't always help. But for many, many people, they can be transformational. And here's the thing.

[22:17.9]

There are going to be people who hear this, and I'm sure you've come across this, too, Deanna, who are like, oh, that's all hokey, and that's all nonsense. But the thing is, is that affirmations. I've come around on this. They really do work. And I'm, you know, I'm about to hit 50, so it's taking me a while.

[22:33.8]

But, like. And also things like just meditation, they do really work. There is a physical, like, physiological, like, like exercise. They really do work. And so it's interesting that, you know, to take this approach, basically to get kids to say, I am strong, to look in the mirror, just to say that every day.

[22:54.5]

I mean, this is, like. Goes back to, like, Zig Ziglar, like, these guys, you know, or the power. The power of positive thinking. Norman Vincent Peale, like, all these people who had these, like, tapes in the 50s and 60s, they were basically saying, you know, repeat an affirmation or mantra.

[23:11.8]

Right. So there's something to that. Arielle, questions for Deanna? Well, I just think it's amazing what you've created. And as a mom of two young kids who is constantly thinking about the social, emotional development of their children and just how to support them and how to give them the tool tools, I think that there is such an opportunity for this product and I think that it's incredible what you've created.

[23:37.5]

So thank you so much. Not a question, but a comment. You know, I have some ideas. I'm not sure we're ready to dive in. I'll take all of them. Yeah, we are. Yeah. About how to get this into gift guides and press plays. And Ariel, you did this early on, like you got to the right editors with your products, which proved to be transformational for the business.

[24:00.3]

My first job out of college was in pr and I really do believe in the power of press. And I think that you're early on enough in this journey where you haven't had this big launch moment in the press. And I think, you know, just this, the whole mom influencer world is, has exploded over the past few years.

[24:18.8]

I think especially throughout Covid as moms were struggling with how to. To take care of their children and to support through a really challenging time. You know, I hear you that, you know, budget is very tight and that there's not a lot of opportunity to invest. I do think that there's a few things that you can do especially quickly in order to take advantage of this holiday season, which editors are already starting to work on.

[24:44.5]

You know, I think there are freelancers who will work on a fee per placement deal so you don't have to pay them. Most of those people have come from agencies and have really strong relationships. And so that's one route.

[24:59.9]

I do think that for gift guides in specific, affiliate is sort of king these days. You know, a lot of these publications are, are leveraging the affiliate commissions in order to just as like a bare requirement for inclusion.

[25:17.1]

And so there are affiliate programs and networks. There's one called shareasale that you can partner with and then you work with a sub affiliate network like Skim Links and you can set commissions and then pitch different publishers through those platforms.

[25:35.6]

Oh, amazing. And that doesn't require a lot of upfront investment. And during the holidays, people generally set a higher commission because it's so competitive. But that's really, you know, how many publishers are making real money.

[25:51.6]

So you know, a 15% or even a 20% commission really puts you on their radar. But for gift guides, which I agree is such an, like could be such a huge visibility moment for you, I think it's a, it's a really great opportunity and one that you should dig into.

[26:09.1]

Thank you so much. Thank you. That's incredible. I also think that you will be surprised at how many people will respond to you if you reach out to them. I mean, I know that as you say, Ariel, you know, mommy, bloggers and influencers are huge.

[26:24.7]

I have a kids podcast that I do and we've for years have worked with different influencers to get the word out about wow in the world. I think that you'd be surprised and delighted at how many people will respond to you, especially the ones that are focused on social emotional learning.

[26:41.7]

And so I would just start cold reaching out to some of them to see if they're interested in just getting one. I mean, I think that you're gonna, the investment you're gonna have to make is giving some away. Yeah. Oh yeah, I do a lot of that. I will be honest about that. That's kind of what I've thought is like, you know, that's the leverage I have is inventory and sometimes it is a little bit painful to just be shipping it out all the time.

[27:06.0]

But yeah, I have gotten a lot of great user generated content and people posting about it and really like following me on social media. But I don't. Maybe I'm impatient. I'm just not seeing the traction that I expected like midway through my first year.

[27:25.5]

And I think, you know, I have this huge vision and I just want to make such a big impact and I'm like, am I gonna get there? Like I feel like I'm snailing there. One of the other ideas that came to me is, you know, have you tried reaching out to other brands to do whether it's a co marketing giveaway or put, you know, a flyer with a discount code and boxes other kind of developmentally focused toys.

[27:55.3]

I can think of quite a few of them. You know, not everyone is on board for that, but a lot of people are excited to surprise and delight their customers and create some sort of added value. And that can be an effective strategy is just like a note card with a discount code.

[28:12.5]

A lot of those happen before the holidays because people are looking to build their email list and giveaways are usually an effective way to do that. So trying to tap into other giveaways or reach out to brands and say are you doing a giveaway? I'd love to be part of it.

[28:28.3]

No, that's a great idea. And I just actually did one this week for Back to School with. Oh, great. A bunch of different similarly aligned brands. And it. It was very successful. And I think it's something I definitely want to continue to do because I definitely see the value there.

[28:44.8]

You could do one every month. I mean, you know, I think at some point you could, you know, you might want to dial it back to quarterly. But, yeah, you know, there was a period of time where we tried to do those every month because it was the quickest and easiest way for us to grow our follower count, whether it was on social media or our email list.

[29:02.2]

Yeah, that's great advice. Thank you. Dan, I'm looking at your website, and I see that you've got. You've got an affiliate program and you've got this incident called Educational Partnerships. But what could be interesting to do here is to kind of make it easy for parents and grandparents to gift these to classrooms.

[29:18.5]

Because this is something that you write. I mean, it's something that would be. You can imagine I'm just throwing. Just kind of spitballing. But like a Montessori school, for example, like a lot of. In a lot of sort of kindergarten, first grade classrooms, you can imagine this just hanging in that room.

[29:34.8]

And so is there. Is there a way to. To create a gift, A gifting. Like, you know, gift this to your kid's classroom or to a school or whatever. I actually love that idea so much, and it's something I never thought of. So I'm so happy you just said it. Awesome.

[29:49.9]

I am in some schools, but I'm a former teacher and like, the success I've had in getting into schools is all through people I know because I'll call, call anyone, like, I have no shame. I'll do it. But I'm having trouble getting into schools where people don't know me.

[30:06.4]

But that's a really amazing and crafty way to get into schools. If the parents and grandparents. They paid for you. They paid for you. Here, teacher. Decorate your classroom. I love that. I also love the idea of reaching out to, you know, whether it's occupational therapists or baby groups.

[30:24.2]

I was part of a baby group for both, both of my kids. And whether, again, it's, you know, by offering a discount code or some sort of incentive for those groups. But, you know, there's baby groups everywhere, you know, and you could even focus on just a few specific markets and see how they convert I mean, there's Facebook groups, there's listservs.

[30:45.4]

I mean, there's so many Mommy. It's almost like 20, 24. It's, like, so much. It's like you don't even know, like, where to start, which is. It's a good problem to have, but it's a lot. It's oversaturated. It is, but it's a captivative audience.

[31:01.8]

And I think if you're providing a real product that's gonna help you connect with your child or, you know, just help them through a challenging moment or give them tools that are gonna be beneficial, I mean, we'll pay anything for that. You know, as a mom, you know, you're willing to do anything to.

[31:19.6]

To help your kid have those tools to succeed. I'm always fascinated by how few people do this because I get pitched. You can't imagine how much stuff I get. I mean, I don't even read it, right? I have multiple. You know, just. This is my official pitch right now. But just saying, I just get endlessly pitched, right?

[31:35.4]

So I don't even see them because it just becomes a blur. They're just. It's thousands of them a week. But what's surprising is when I do kind of dive into them, 99% of them are not relevant to what we do. On how I Built this, it's like, hey, my client just wrote a book about how to get the most out of your bitcoin investment.

[31:59.4]

And I'm like, great. When have you heard that? On how I built this, never. And so I think that somebody like you, especially given that you don't have the cash to work with a PR rep, do something simple. Go buy a bunch of magazines.

[32:15.0]

Buy all the magazines that you like and all the places that have gift guides, and just read them and look at the bylines and just try and find out who is writing about, like, kids stuff, right? Who's. Like, who is the reporter? You'll be surprised when you target somebody and you say, I know that you work on this, and I follow your writing, and I'd love for you to take a look at this.

[32:38.1]

When you respect them enough to say, I've been following what you do, and I'm targeting you specifically because I like what you do, you'd be surprised how many of them will respond, yeah, no, that's great advice, and I've done a lot of cold reaching out on LinkedIn, but when you say it like that, maybe I've been framing it the wrong way.

[32:57.7]

I also think on DM and on Instagram. I mean, I've had collaborations come to fruition based on someone reaching out to me on Instagram, and I got really excited about the opportunity, and it manifested into an actual collaboration that, you know, was out in the world.

[33:14.5]

Can I ask you a question about that? Yeah, because I think about that often, and I'm always sliding into the DMs, but when it comes to other brands that are, like, a lot more established than I am, like, I'm a little insecure about, like, when they see my social followers, are they just going to not take me seriously because of the amount of followers I have?

[33:38.7]

Or do you actually, as a founder of, like, a big brand and company, sometimes look more into, like, what the product is and the integrity of it? Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, there's. There's a time and a place for both. You know, there's. There are moments where we say, hey, we need to find someone and a partner with someone that has a huge distribution, because that's what we need.

[33:59.9]

And there are other times where we're, you know, let's curate stuff that we really love, that we know other customers are going to love and that are in line with our values. And I would say it's a range, but it definitely doesn't hurt to ask. And, you know, I would try to shake off any kind of insecurity around, you know, your follower count and really focus on the value that you've created with this product and leverage your testimonials, too.

[34:25.1]

I think people love to hear those stories. I mean, reach out to your customers and ask if we'll make a video for you that you can share. I think there's a lot of opportunity in just getting those stories out. Right.

[34:41.4]

No. Thank you so much. Awesome. The product is called the Mindset Tapestry. Deanna Dandino, thanks so much for calling in. Good luck. Thank you so much. Thank you. Awesome. Do you ever do that? I mean, this is a little personal question, but do you ever do affirmations?

[34:57.4]

Yeah, no, I. Yes, I do. And I do them with my kids, too. I mean, I. Our bedtime routine, you know, and I, you know, my daughter and I do them together. You know, she's. Yeah. When she's having a tough moment, you know, we look at each other, you know, we both say, you know, we're strong.

[35:15.5]

Like, you know, we say it together. We, you know, I think it's. I think it's really powerful, like, manifesting and, you know, visualizing, and it's real repeating yeah, these mantras can really transform. I mean, I have a gratitude journal practice.

[35:32.0]

It's, you know, quite similar to an affirmation practice. And I find even if you find yourself affirming the same things every day, you know, at some point it really starts to seep in and become part of your identity and who you are. It's actually amazing how something as simple as expressing gratitude is so effective.

[35:53.8]

When I'm feeling just, like, frustrated or mad, I'm just like. And I. And oftentimes my wife, and she's like, hey, can you stop and just think about all of the things that you have in your life, your kids and me. And I stop and I do it. And I'm like, like, wow.

[36:09.4]

Yeah, you're right. Like, yeah, you're right. None of that matters. Like, this thing is just a distraction. I don't know why I'm all tied up in knots about it. It's so crazy. And I know there are people and I've talked to people and I'm like, you know, it's. It's eye rolly stuff, but I'm like, hey, roll your eyes all you want.

[36:27.4]

Let us do the gratitude practice and watch because it's actually really powerful. It works. I try to write three things that I'm grateful. Four and three things that I love about myself. And some days, you know, I can't think of a single thing. So I just write whatever I wrote the night before.

[36:43.3]

But I find that, you know, ending my day with that moment, it takes 30 seconds. You know, it's such a short practice, but one that if you do it with consistency, it really can completely transform your spirit, I think.

[36:58.6]

Yeah. All right, we're going to take another quick break, but we'll be right back. We'll talk to another founder working to take their business to the next level. That's after the break. I'm Guy Raz, and you're listening to the advice line right here on How I built this Lab.

[37:26.5]

Welcome back to the advice line on How I built this Lab. I'm Guy Raz. All right, let's bring in our last caller. Hello, caller. Welcome to the advice line. You are on with me and with Ariel K. Hey, y'all, how you doing? Hello. Hello, welcome. Please introduce yourself. Tell us where you're calling from and just very briefly about your business.

[37:44.9]

My name is Megan, and I'm calling from 30A. It's in the panhandle of Florida. My business is Palm Floor Folly and it's a hard seltzer craft brewery. Got It. Okay, and what's your question for us today? So I hate my question, but I hate it because I have to ask it.

[38:01.8]

I really love Yalls advice on being a female business owner and just some of the bias that exists in the world towards female founders and especially my area that's super male dominated. Got it. Okay, we'll get to your question a moment. So let's talk about your products. Firstly, this is a hard seltzer.

[38:18.2]

That's what you're making? Yes, but it's not like anything else on the market. It's super unique. Tell me about it. Yeah, it's sort of beer adjacent, but better for you. Almost like an American fruit beer, but gluten free and truly a hard seltzer. We brew with fruit purees instead of a grain like a beer would have, but it's brewed in a process almost identical to beer.

[38:40.5]

So the idea has been to kind of take what's existed in the hard seltzer market, which is largely soda water and vodka or a cheap alcohol or malt based. And flavoring. Yeah. And flavoring extracts and just kind of usher it into a craft brewed market.

[38:57.5]

Sort of what happened in beer about, you know, 14 years ago or more where all we had were these domestic beers and then the craft market kind of exploded. That's awesome. How did you get into this, into this business? Well, lived in Fort Collins, Colorado for about six years and just love the brewing industry.

[39:15.3]

Fort Collins, home of Fat Tire and some great beers. Yeah. New Belgium is just my idol. Love and obsess over them. And so I just love that brewing is often collaborative. Breweries are family friendly spaces.

[39:32.1]

They're positive, they're happy. It's not a bar environment, you know. So when we moved down here about three years ago, I just was looking at what my next 20 years was going to be. You know, my kids are getting older and wanted to have my own business and so I decided it was going to be a brewery.

[39:49.6]

And when I started looking at beer styles, you know, I eat gluten free and I, and I try to not, you know, make myself bloated. You know, we're on the beach, it's a beach community. So I was like, what could we do that was a better for you beverage? And so often people here are reaching for the hard seltzer for that lower calorie, lower carbs, all those things.

[40:06.8]

But they're just not great products. A lot of them. Yeah. So it just all kind of pivoted from bring beer to bring seltzer and you mentioned, you said we. Is it, is it you? And presumably somebody else who's part of the we. Are you running the business on your own or with somebody else?

[40:24.1]

It is the royal we of me. Yeah. You know, I so often say that. No, it's really me. I'm kind of, I'll do that too. I'm a one woman show, but I do have a head brewer who's my right hand man and then I do everything else.

[40:41.2]

So you have just to be clear, you already have like a restaurant or a bar already in Florida that you run a brewery. Okay. Yeah. And do you sell the hard seltzer there? We do. So we're on draft at about 60 restaurant locations here in the Panhandle and in a couple locations in Alabama around Fairhope.

[41:05.2]

Ultimately, scale would be fantastic and fun and it'd be really cool to be a national brand, but it's so complicated. And so you are just before we get to your question, because it's about navigating bias, especially in this industry.

[41:20.9]

As a woman brewer, you are looking for capital, you're looking to raise money right now. Yeah. So here's, this is where the caveat comes. And I mean, I've probably sat down and met with, I'll be conservative and say 10 different people about investing and every single investor has been a man.

[41:43.2]

I've tried to get bank loans, especially at the beginning I was trying to get an SBA loan to get this off the ground and then just construction loans. Every interaction is with a male, you know, and I just, I didn't ever really foresee a problem until one day I was talking to my husband on the phone and I was like, had just talked to another investor and I was like, I just don't know that this is going to come to closure.

[42:08.0]

And he was like, you know, maybe you just need me to field the calls and you tell me what you want said in all of this. And I, he was like, I just wondering if it's. They're talking to a woman and not a man. And it never really crossed my mind.

[42:25.1]

And I literally had to hang up the phone with him. It made me so frustrated and upset. And I'm dying to hear your perspective on it all. I've got a lot of things to say. Yeah, it might be my part of the country I live in too. I mean, it's the South.

[42:41.5]

And then also I see all these groups of. We're in a very entrepreneurial community. There's almost no national chains that exist here. And I See all these collaborative business meetings happening, you know, on the golf course or all these different things, you know, it's. It is a bit of a man's world.

[42:58.0]

And I'll just pause there. I'm dying to hear what you have to say, Ariel. Well, I mean, look, less than 2% of funding goes to women, so that's just a fact. And we can all agree that that's what is happening in the industry and has continued to happen. I think that you are a female entrepreneur and that's not going to change.

[43:16.1]

And what you're building, it sounds amazing. It sounds like a product that I'd love to drink and something that is innovative in the space. And I think the opportunity is that you are a woman because this is a male dominated space and despite women being drinkers, you know, a lot of the marketing and a lot of the positioning goes to men.

[43:41.5]

And so I think that you actually should use the fact that you are a woman and you're a consumer. You know, that's. That you can understand this audience and the opportunity so authentically.

[43:58.3]

I think that's like, that's part of your superpower. You know, many of the people that are in those boardrooms and making decisions on how to market alcoholic products, they don't have that intuitive sense of how to speak to a customer like us.

[44:13.8]

And that should be part of how you communicate to investors. You can tell the story of your product better than anyone else. And the fact that you are at the helm in leading this. Yeah, I agree. It seems like you mentioned you spent time in Fort Collins and I keep thinking about Kim Jordan, who founded New Belgium and she was on our show a few years ago and an amazing founder and sold that business and a great brand.

[44:41.3]

But I think that the statistics are clear. This is an industry, whether it's beer or wine. Right now I'm in Sonoma County, California, dominated by men. That being said, it sounds like you have had a lot of traction with the product and I have.

[45:01.7]

Despite the challenges that you will face and that you have faced, you know, at the end of the day, the product is going to speak for itself. Yep. Like, like what you make and what you offer is, is going to, is that's going to win the day.

[45:17.0]

I 100% agree. You know, having that product to show investors and, you know, having people come to your tap room and try the product there, I think that again, like the marketing opportunity and this category which, you know, seems to be exploding right now, there's just so much potential.

[45:38.0]

Yeah, I'm curious, Ariel. And this, I think, hopefully will be useful for Megan. You know, when you started this brand, you know, we're talking now more than 10 years ago, you were inexperienced, you were younger. And I remember when we talked, when you're on the show, you expressed that you had some, you know, days where you would kind of show up to pitch meetings and try to be something, you know, and when you were kind of more aggressive and assertive, you found that people responded to you differently.

[46:12.0]

Now, you know, 10, 11 years into the, into the brand, you are the leader, you're a CEO, you're respected. And so with that comes confidence. Right. How long do you feel it took you to get to that place? I mean, it's an ever evolving journey.

[46:27.1]

But I do think that, you know, as you have more product market fit, the brand starts to speak for itself. So you become the voice of the brand. But you're using numbers, you're using data points, you're using anecdotes. You're able to speak to the opportunity in such a different way than when you're just getting off the ground.

[46:44.7]

You know, you have, even though it's, it's still new, you have two and a half, three years of a product that has become popular within your community, a place that is a gathering center. So I think having that passion for what you're building mixed with the real information that this is a product that people want and that would have great appeal on the shelves and just is going to require some capital to take it from point A to point B is a story that people want to hear about.

[47:15.3]

And I think you're looking for the right partner. So for someone who's going to understand, I think for me, that was also a great way to weed out people that I didn't want to work with. And you mentioned that too, that some of these people that have talked to you about potential investments you wouldn't want to work with anyway, and that's a really great bit of information.

[47:34.3]

And so if someone is hung up on the fact that you're a woman, I mean, it's not their journey. Like, they don't get to benefit from this ride. Totally. It just, it feels like a very different journey for women. And I feel like I shouldn't have been blindsided by that, but somehow I just thought maybe I wouldn't ever have to face that.

[47:56.4]

And it's really been surprising. It is. And I think also the, like, the sooner that you can let it go. Yeah. You know, the better because you're right. You know, there's a lot of golf course, you know, bro chats and, you know, deals done in that way and, you know, so be it.

[48:16.0]

That's not going away. But you've created a product that people love, and so that's so much more than most people can say. And what you've been able to do in a short amount of time is really impressive. And so I think that just focusing on that and putting your blinders up to the rest is the best possible path forward.

[48:38.8]

Indeed. I agree. Megan Easterhouse. The brand is called Palm Folly. Thanks so much for calling in the advice line and good luck. Thanks, y'all. Such a privilege. All right, Ariel, I'm wondering when you, if you were to go back to you in 2013 now and give her advice and not advice like, hey, it's gonna be okay.

[49:00.0]

I've got a crystal ball. You're gonna be fine. But more like, hey, you know, just focus on this. What would you have said to yourself? Oh, that's a great question. I mean, I think that for me, looking back, just always being true to who we were at our core, I think it's just, you're so.

[49:18.4]

There's so many bright, shiny objects, you know, and we talked about testing earlier in our conversation. You know, testing is important. Trying new things, not being too risk averse, but also just always coming back to that core and never losing sight of who you are at your core and why people fall in love with the brand to begin with, you know, and I think that we've done a pretty good job at that.

[49:39.4]

But there are instances and moments that I'm like, oh, you know, we could have just, we could have done that better. And so I think just like, really, really going back to those mantras and those, you know, affirmations like, who are you as a brand and making sure that that is your North Star from now until forever.

[49:59.8]

Amazing. Arielle K. Founder of Parachute Home thanks so much for coming back onto the show and for. For coming onto the advice line. This was so fun. Thank you. And by the way, if you haven't heard Ariel's original How I Built this episode, you should go back and check it out. You can find a link to it in the podcast description.