

Audio file

[Interview with Bao Mar 11.m4a](#)

Transcript

00:00:00 John

So let's get started and just get you off on the first set of questions that we've got here, so.

00:00:10 John

So what are what are is some of the biggest struggles you have with just signing leases?

00:00:18 John

And I just wanted to hear you talk about your process of getting to elites and getting to a small business starting up in a physical location.

00:00:29 Bao

Yeah. So we.

00:00:32 Bao

This one.

00:00:34 Bao

Mostly talk about Finn. Right now, the coffee shop. I think that we actually weren't even looking for our space. It just kind of something that just kind of happened when we were just driving.

00:00:44 Bao

Around.

00:00:45 Bao

And had this idea and concept already in mind, but it wasn't. It didn't become like real until we saw the space and so just happened to be there.

00:00:55 Bao

So yeah, one of the things that.

00:00:58 Bao

We first did, which just contacted the leasing agent ourselves and, you know, make the initial contact and we're doing the thing was doing everything on our own until things started to get once like the lease and the the numbers start to come up and we're like, OK, this is like starting to get really.

00:01:17 Bao

And overwhelming and that's when I was advised by somebody else to get a real estate agent like, just like the that there are real estate agents for residential, there are commercial brokers as well.

00:01:33 Bao

And as soon as we and we were, you know, we basically put the conversation on pause with the lease, with the buildings leasing agent, the landlords, leasing agent and you know got a couple of referrals for yeah, a real estate broker, commercial broker and and talked to them.

00:01:53 Bao

And found out that it's all free. I mean because they, you know, it's kind of like they they take the the agent.

00:02:00 Bao

Whenever they're dealing with the commercial this their fee comes from the negotiated contract they take that right, the kind of like the 6% and it's kind of split between the asking and the leasing side, the tenant and the landlord side. And in fact like.

00:02:19 Bao

We had just done it all ourselves. The the landlord's agent would have taken the full 6%, but usually that now there's like conflict of interest too, right? Because they're representing both sides. And so now with our own.

00:02:33 Bao

Agent we. We thought I felt a lot more comfortable, just like and then after getting that, you know, working with the agent, everything felt a lot nicer. Like every other communication was done through through one person. Just and. And we just felt like he was there to, you know, represent us and and be the best bias.

00:02:53 Bao

So yeah, that was our.

00:02:56 Bao

Process and once the agent was in place so that kind of information, even that kind of knowledge, you know, we didn't know until somebody asked that that tell us. And so that was more.

00:03:08 Bao

I don't know if there is a way to get that information.

00:03:10 Bao

In front of people.

00:03:11 John

Hmm.

00:03:13 Bao

Right from the beginning though, it was really nice, so we didn't necessarily like, we didn't go through a pretty, we didn't go through a hard process of looking for space or anything because we were one like we were pretty.

00:03:25 Bao

Committed to being in the ID, the Little Saigon area, and two, we had a location basically in mind. We really want and ended up the terms ended up being really good, so yeah.

00:03:39 Bao

That's how it went down for us, yeah.

00:03:40 John

That's that's really good to hear that like you had you found the place really quickly and you're already pretty locked in on your area and then you found an agent who sounds like they're super helpful in terms of like knowing that this was like the right location, what type of research and or validation?

00:03:59 John

As you do for yourself, teacher, broker help with that.

00:04:03 Bao

Oh no, not necessarily. Again, we were kind of single minded. We didn't do so. That's another lesson I guess I would.

00:04:11 Bao

I typically share with other people is like, yeah, you might like a location. You might like a neighborhood that's great and do your best by it. But sometimes do you really want to know how the space?

00:04:19 Bao

Is.

00:04:19 Bao

Going to be you know, best thing is to just have to be there, hang out there, spend time in that.

00:04:28 Bao

Location. You know you're not gonna have access to it, but like, you can always hang outside. It's usually it's if it's a commercial space, the sidewalk is available and it's. Yeah, you know, just sit out there in your car or do whatever. Like that childhood you were like, you know, spend a couple of times in the morning a couple of times in the afternoon, come like, just see what it's like. There's one of things that we really.

00:04:48 Bao

I never realizing.

00:04:50 Bao

After moving in, doing all this, it's like there's a warehouse across the street and they do receiving and shipping with full on semi trucks on the street in front of us and you know on those days it caused quite a bit of a commotion outside and.

00:05:10 Bao

Sure, it would have been better if they're not, but you know, we just have to learn to deal with that. But that's something that at least if we had known, we could have anticipated and maybe you know.

00:05:19 Bao

Wouldn't wouldn't be in for a surprise kind of thing. So if we had spent the time just kind of like casing out the place, more spending more time out there, we would have known that. Yeah, but so.

00:05:36 John

So yeah, that's.

00:05:37 John

Really interesting. So you didn't actually use any tools, you just kind of.

00:05:40 John

Went a few times, spent some time there and we're like, this is good enough and went with it.

00:05:45 Bao

I yeah, I I mean, I feel like.

00:05:49 Bao

Yeah, I feel like.

00:05:50 Bao

We both kind of fortunate. We're both furnished little.

00:05:55 Bao

I mean mostly.

00:05:56 Bao

Fortunate that that everything's kind of working out well, we're in the spot where we like and we can afford as well. Yeah, yeah.

00:05:58 John

Yes, yes.

00:06:03 John

No, no criticism whatsoever. Like I'm not criticizing you. Actually, it's normal. It's we hear it's some kind of feedback. So it's just reaffirming that what some of the things we've learned are.

00:06:06 John

Excellent.

00:06:16 John

For your broker, how did you actually find your broker? How did you go about selecting them? Did you get referred to them or?

00:06:23 Bao

They they came by a referral because we ended up talking with one of the organizations down here. So the nice thing about the international district is that our organizations that are funded to help bring businesses in small, small businesses.

00:06:44 Bao

And so we ended up working with one of those organizations, the Seattle International District.

00:06:49 Bao

Preservation Development Authority skipped for short. They have a person you know, funded by the city. Actually, I think to to help connect tenants with Leonards and what some of the referrals that they have is also broker leasing agents and.

00:07:10 Bao

Dave.

00:07:11 Bao

Yeah. Now that I know, I know several people that they worked with to kind of help find a location and work with the landlord. And also, yeah. When we needed, when it was time, we had hit them up like, hey, do you have a leasing agent you like to recommend? And they had a Vietnamese one actually and.

00:07:31 Bao

Also didn't go through a bunch either, it's just like this.

00:07:36 Bao

You know we connected well and.

00:07:36 John

Sure.

00:07:38 Bao

Yeah, went from there, and I've actually, I've I've also since referred him to a couple of other my friends and they've actually used his services too. So right now word of mouth I.

00:07:49 John

Guess that's that's amazing. A lot of the local communities do have these resources, which is really great that you found your way to.

00:07:50 John

Yeah.

00:08:00 John

Did you even?

00:08:04 John

Did they? Did the broker help you like go through creating your business plan and your financial projections or were you already kind of on that path?

00:08:15 Bao

I was already doing that myself. I think he offered. But I was like, but it kind of I didn't really need needed it. That kind of service. And also because we didn't go through the traditional lending method that you know it wasn't as quote UN quote as necessary and.

00:08:35 Bao

We, you know, I did administrative work for a number of years, so I'm familiar with kind of doing some of this back end work and I had a pretty good idea at least and of where things are going to go and at the risk as well.

00:08:51 John

Yes.

00:08:55 Bao

Obviously, we didn't anticipate COVID, but I was able to like we really signed the lease November 2019, right? So two months later everything went into lockdown. But again like I feel.

00:09:12 Bao

Like I'm pretty capable of of like making changes and like being flexible and so we you know.

00:09:18 Bao

Went back to the drawing boards and made some changes to the the business plan and how we would operate, especially during lockdown and to go only kind of thing and one from there so.

00:09:32 John

That's really interesting. So you didn't need help with, like financial projections or business plans cuz you've had experience?

00:09:38 John

Doing that and then you said, like your financing was like different, we don't have to dive into too many details, but did you go and acquire a loan or do you not acquire a loan at all?

00:09:48 Bao

We did acquire alone, but it was from family and friends. So yeah, like a lot of other small business too. We didn't have to go to a bank. So that's yeah. Yeah, which I think would have if we had gone that way, we would have actually required a real quote UN quote real business plan or at least.

00:09:52 John

OK.

00:09:57 John

Standing.

00:10:08 Bao

More drawn out business. Yeah, yeah.

00:10:12 John

OK. One more question about the broker.

00:10:15 John

Experience actually, sure.

00:10:17 John

You know, when did they propose different areas for you? Were you interested in other areas potentially? And did you use any?

00:10:23 John

Tools to look around at all.

00:10:25 Bao

No, not us again.

00:10:29 Bao

I think they would have been totally up for it, but I think by the time that he came into the picture, we were pretty much settled into this space like because we already had a ballpark figure of how much it would cost. So we already OK with that, it was just just then about getting the.

00:10:47 Bao

The add the real number and some of the amenities and like what we you know, things like that getting the contract in place. But we weren't like and you know I think.

00:11:01 Bao

Things I don't know. Things don't workout and we would have looked at, but by the time that we we got into the contract, it was everything was already looking pretty good.

00:11:12 John

Yeah, it's. It was amazing. Like, you know, you knew kind of where you wanted to be. You find the place, you start negotiating.

00:11:19 John

Yeah.

00:11:19 John

It's like it all lines up really really well for you. Just think about as good of a happy path.

00:11:23 Bao

Actually, that side little wants to add when we.

00:11:28 Bao

First got the idea. We actually talked to skipped that the same person that I I mentioned you and they had a list of potential spaces too that if type in the place where we're at didn't work out, they already had like.

00:11:42 Bao

A number of other.

00:11:44 Bao

Spaces ready for us to explore as well.

00:11:47 Bao

So the option would definitely there for us. It's just I guess necessity.

00:11:47 John

That's easy.

00:11:55 John

I'm I'm going a couple more generic questions. I'm trying to keep this quick. Thank you for being here with a lot of context. I know I don't wanna like abuse this on your calendar, but I wanna keep asking some more rapid fire questions. What do you think?

00:12:01 Bao

Yeah, no worries.

00:12:11 John

Is kind of the best way for a new business to validate an idea or a concept like how would you recommend a new business starting up do that.

00:12:24 Bao

Ooh.

00:12:29 John

Maybe we should ask how did you?

00:12:30 John

Validate your eyes.

00:12:31 Bao

Yeah, honestly.

00:12:37 Bao

Not a whole lot of validation or testing to begin with, and it was something that we.

00:12:47 Bao

We approach it again as something that that we could fully fund, and it was.

00:12:55 Bao

More or less an intuitive kind of thing. I just. I was my my validation which was seeing my intuition. My intuition at that point was like Vietnamese coffee was about to have its moment.

00:13:07 Bao

Right. And that's something that is hard like I don't have. Like what about the hard data to like say that?

00:13:12 Bao

It's more like just.

00:13:14 Bao

Looking around and seeing certain patterns and certain trends and as an entrepreneur, as a business person, you kind of have to like take those. You know, you kind of train those senses right, that awareness practice of, like looking around, seeing what, what are some potential opportunities that are kind of bubbling up and.

00:13:34 Bao

Obviously. Well, that and obviously doing coffee some of the some of the data points that I gathered to kind.

00:13:40 Bao

Of help make the decision of it OK.

00:13:43 Bao

Coffee in Seattle, you know, tends to do well. And then two, the neighborhood that we're looking at didn't have a kind of space like this. Like they there weren't actually quote UN quote coffee shops in the neighborhood. There was eastern down in the Chinatown at that time.

00:14:01 Bao

But honestly, there was nothing else. I was all like was starting to be all boba or restaurants, you know. And so so that's another thing. Like it was a we saw. I felt like there was a need for a cafe kind of space. So that's number.

00:14:17 Bao

2.

00:14:18 Bao

And yeah, and then looking.

00:14:20 Bao

Seeing like the kind of the tension, the trend of Vietnamese coffee starting to catch on, we felt like we had a good opportunity to do something.

00:14:32 Bao

Yeah, that's how the decision was made.

00:14:35 John

And I'm generally aligned. I mean, I do think Vietnamese coffee is having its moment with a number of Vietnamese coffee places appearing. And you know, I see it between like a few of the different brands expanding to the east side.

00:14:48 John

Also.

00:14:49 John

What's interesting about this is like, you know, typically.

00:14:52 John

I think he asked this question because you know a lot of businesses need to kind of formalize their concept, test their concept, validate their concept and then take that and go to a lender, right. So I kind of wonder in your scenario.

00:15:04 John

Like you talk, you talk to your family about this and they're like, yeah, we, we we believe you, we trust you. And that was enough to get you off the ground for like they they think that this is a viable thing. They see the same thing you see and.

00:15:17 John

They're just bought in, right?

00:15:19 John

Yeah.

00:15:21 Bao

Yeah, basically that's how it happened. And it's kind of like this belief that we can make it happen as well ourselves.

00:15:29 Bao

We thought, or I thought of it as being a relatively low risk project as well. You know, it wasn't. We weren't taking on, you know, hundreds of thousands of deaths or or anything like that. And we weren't taking on a a lease that we knew we couldn't handle if things were to go wrong.

00:15:50 Bao

So we also approached it the other validation of it is just like OK, looking at all everything together, it was relatively low risk. So that's kind of helped.

00:16:00 Bao

You know the space is like 620 square foot. It's not like we're taking on a huge.

00:16:04 Bao

Spot here, yeah.

00:16:06 Bao

Yeah. So things like that and I I think in general actually your question.

00:16:12 Bao

I think running through your ideas with.

00:16:18 Bao

Not only your family and friends, but actually industry folks, industry professional.

00:16:25 Bao

Or it will not protect like people just in the industry, I think helps a lot too. So people who you feel would give you an honest feedback on things and also having a variety of people from different fields. So one of the things that we're driving by our other business now one of the most.

00:16:43 Bao

Like one of the validating things that we're hearing is not only like from customer feedback and everything, but you know we had a chance to talk to you and present an idea. Just this is kind of like a not in any kind of professional context. It's just like a friend like. But he's also like a.

00:17:04 Bao

Has a lot of experience in finance and in operations for businesses or corporations, various corporations and pretty well versed in the business field and presented him the idea, the product and basically just showing.

00:17:23 Bao

He just said, yeah, this is he feels pretty confident about the product and the company itself. So that's helps us feel a lot more confident in ourselves too.

00:17:35 John

So when you.

00:17:36 Bao

I think it's.

00:17:38 Bao

Just one, yeah, just one other thing. I think one of the.

00:17:40 Bao

Other thing is is.

00:17:41 Bao

Part of part of necessarily just like how much other people believe, it's like how much do you believe in your product too, right? Because because.

00:17:50 John

Yes.

00:17:52 Bao

At the end of day, like going down this route like you never know, it's a lot of it is based on luck and and you don't know what.

00:18:00 Bao

Kind of.

00:18:01 Bao

Like what trends are going to happen or how the market is going to react?

00:18:05 Bao

But.

00:18:05 Bao

Like one. Do you have the belief in your product and two, the flexibility to kind.

00:18:10 Bao

Of.

00:18:12 Bao

Make the necessary changes in order to stay.

00:18:16 Bao

Stay alive, basically, yeah.

00:18:19 John

That's really cool. I think this is a recurring trend or much small among small business owners. So like, gotta have that personal belief in the product handler service and like kind of the durability slash resilience to fight through any kind of adversity that.

00:18:34 Bao

Comes up, yeah.

00:18:35 John

It's also really cool to hear that.

00:18:36 John

Had some folks in the industry give you guidance, what question we often ask is about like mentorship like, do you do you? Did you get mentorship when you were starting and what do you feel like was good mentorship? Was that easy to?

00:18:52 Bao

I would say not necessarily mentorship, but a lot of support like friends support like I have a couple of friends in the food industry and and one in particular.

00:19:01 Bao

You know, it's just.

00:19:02 Bao

Somebody that I knew I could count on, not not in the same industry and food industry, but he runs restaurants.

00:19:10 Bao

And.

00:19:14 Bao

Yeah, I hope so. More with operations you help a lot with getting the space set up right and what kind of equipment like helped a lot in that sense. So definitely having somebody within the industry or at least adjacent to be there along the way and somebody you could you know to kind of.

00:19:33 Bao

Right by your side goes a long way and helps a lot make me feel. Feel confident, you know, still made mistakes. Still had to learn the lessons myself. But having those people around in terms of the business side of it, I didn't have a lot of.

00:19:51 Bao

Mentorship there. It was more trusting my own knowledge, you know, experience as well it's.

00:20:00 Bao

Yeah. And just kind of figure it out on my own.

00:20:04 Bao

I know there were there were. I know there were resources available, you know, I was referred to like the was it the Small Business Administration and I think the Washington state has some kind of like a couple of free programs as well.

00:20:04 John

It says.

00:20:20 Bao

For new business owners to kind of go through and learn the ropes of things, I looked at the curriculum and just felt like, yeah, it's it's, you know, a lot of this. I I kind of knew cuz.

00:20:34 Bao

Worked in.

00:20:36 Bao

Somewhat of an entrepreneurial environment before, so yeah.

00:20:42 John

Yeah, that's that's going. I mean, it sounds like you've have enough of a support network to really get you connected with all the right people, even if you had questions or unknown.

00:20:52 John

And that's really amazing. We definitely hear of some businesses who have that and we also hear some businesses who like, I can't find anything. I can't find any support or I don't know anything about all this. So it's really refreshing to hear that you've, you know, you can establish those connections. It's just naturally.

00:21:06 John

Had to make.

00:21:06 John

Your network? Yeah. I'm gonna ask.

00:21:09 Bao

Yeah, that's a lot. And I would say that that's something I, you know, I try to do for other people too when they come and ask for these kind of advice. So I'd also say, hey, you know, have to start building that team.

00:21:25 Bao

With your own network, or if you don't have that network that can help connect you with other.

00:21:28 Bao

People.

00:21:29 Bao

Like and then you can go from there. But yeah, I think that resource a little bit more available would be helpful. Like you said, for folks who come into it and maybe not don't have the same connections that I did. You know that would.

00:21:42 Bao

Be great.

00:21:44 John

Let me ask you a quick list question, OK, just list them off by name you.

00:21:48 John

Don't have to.

00:21:48 John

Describe why what pieces of technology or tools do you use today to just run the business?

00:21:56 Bao

Google Workspace, QuickBooks Square.

00:22:03 Bao

And Canada?

00:22:09 Bao

Yeah, that's. I mean, I do, I guess You Tube I do, I do a lot of research, studying, learning from there too.

00:22:18 Bao

Yeah, I think those are the main ones.

00:22:21 John

OK, one more kind of open-ended question like is there any point in this like you mentioned earlier, it might be useful that you know help people get to these connections and network a little bit.

00:22:33 John

Easier to help.

00:22:33 John

Them with their jobs is there.

00:22:36 John

Is there some place you think that tech or technology could come in and help solve a problem that would be useful for new businesses starting and or new businesses scaling?

00:22:47 John

They opened in it.

00:22:49 Bao

Yeah, my mind immediately goes to and something I've been talking to people about is just community, especially for a small startup and people with kind of, you know, maybe don't have to deep pockets. And so part of it is like we have.

00:23:07 Bao

To lean into.

00:23:09 Bao

So you know what I've I've been seeing a lot actually, so lately, right. The industry is kind of in a pretty rough spot, a lot of businesses are struggling in the service sector and every day I'm looking, you know, I'm following social media and seeing a lot of people just posting.

00:23:29 Bao

Both fundies and things like that and kind of try to get them through this.

00:23:33 Bao

Time and sure, like crowdsourcing, financial, financial crowdsourcing is one way for businesses to either get out of the gate or, you know, get through a rough patch. I also think it's not like super sustainable either, right? And so the other side is like, how can we Crowdfund?

00:23:54 Bao

Other resources, right? Not necessarily finance, but like the moral, the emotional, the kind of.

00:24:03 John

Like.

00:24:04 Bao

Like other kinds of resources that we can share as a community, and I think for particularly the small business entrepreneurs like each other having each other having ideas like, so today for example, I had two friends who who set two separate friends who are both small businesses.

00:24:26 Bao

Small business owners, right, and they were in the coffee shop together and, you know, end up introducing them, talking. And then so now like, one of them had a question like, brought it up. The other guy had a perfect answer, you know, and was able to help each other out. So that's that's kind of mean. Right. So how do you think technology can create those kind of?

00:24:46 Bao

Spaces where?

00:24:48 Bao

Just facilitate these kind of connections so that people don't have to like go to a coffee shop. I mean great than they do. But like how can we make that even?

00:24:55 Bao

More accessible so.

00:24:56 Bao

That sometimes as a small business owner, it's just one of us, right? We're just kind of in our tech space working on things and it's just nice to just throw a question out there.

00:25:08 Bao

Into like into a community in in space and then other people can chime in with potential connection potential knowledge that will help really help us out and make it. Yeah, it's it's also kind of weird to not weird but you.

00:25:23 Bao

Know.

00:25:25 Bao

Sometimes it's it's kind of awkward to go up to another business owner and start asking questions because I'm not even like you. I don't know you like, why? Why should I spend

my time with you and all that stuff? But that there's a space that kind of takes away that so that everybody who comes into it knowing like this is a space that people here for support and help. So then it takes away that kind of awkward.

00:25:46 Bao

Well, you don't have to like prove yourself, so to speak. Yeah.

00:25:49 Bao

Yeah. So yeah, this.

00:25:51 John

Is a recurring trend we hear also with just kind of community and want to be connected and supporting each other. I wonder if you you have like spent some time to like look for Facebook groups or Reddit groups or OK No, we haven't just check.

00:26:05 Bao

Because I like already sworn off Facebook, so that's not a space that I'm.

00:26:10 Bao

Really. Care to go to? I know that. And yeah, it kind of depends on.

00:26:16 Bao

And that's true, too, like a lot of people are all over the place in terms of, like, where what kind of platform they engage with. Right. And so, like, is this going to be another one of those? Like, another thing that we have to sign up for and participate in? So I don't know what that technology, you know, side of it looks like. I just know that having.

00:26:36 Bao

Some kind of common space which?

00:26:40 John

OK, I'm gonna ask you one last quick question and then hand it over to Amita if she has any other questions. I'm just list right off the top of your head. What are your three biggest challenges right now?

00:26:56 Bao

Cash flow.

00:26:59 Bao

Tax planning and.

00:27:05 Bao

I think just.

00:27:07 Bao

Marketing.

00:27:10 John

That's awesome. That's great.

00:27:15 John

I just wanted. I didn't. I didn't need any context around it and it's really good. I know what all those.

00:27:19 John

Things mean so?

00:27:20 John

Yeah.

00:27:21 John

They kind of, you know, have some details on that on my own amitha do you have?

00:27:26 John

Any questions for that?

00:27:27 Amritha

Yeah, I I just wanted to ask about like pop ups, what I've usually heard is that pop ups are a good way to market. Like, have you thought of using that?

00:27:41 Amritha

Approach. Maybe it could be like hosting or you doing pop ups to have more discoverability.

00:27:44 John

Yeah.

00:27:49 Bao

My opinion on pop ups, so I have a couple of things to say about that. I think pop ups are definitely a great way to test your product. I don't think people approach. I don't think a lot of people approach it in that way though. A lot of time and what that.

00:28:09 Bao

I've seen at least is at least to.

00:28:13 Bao

This sense of like, yeah, I I I I feel like it can give a soft sense of confidence or like or false affirmation validation is too because like the pop up scene is kind of based on like a scarcity mindset where it's like oh, it's limited.

00:28:33 Bao

And it's like, so you see a lot of like pop ups do really well and sell out and all that stuff, right. And I think that can give people the false sense of like ohh that means that must mean.

00:28:42 Bao

Like my product.

00:28:43 John

Is going to work in a brick and.

00:28:46 Bao

And it's different when your body is only available once a month is available 24/7. Basically right? And on a daily basis. And I so I think pop ups are a great way to test it, just just on the quality of the product, but it doesn't really say a lot about who you are as an entrepreneur, your capability.

00:29:05 Bao

And whether that product is like, I think like you know, it's going to do well in the market. It just tells you like.

00:29:12 Bao

And even then, I think the I've gone through a lot of two. I've attended a lot of pop ups and honestly, you know most of them are kind of disappointing. And just like this is a mediocre thing only because.

00:29:31 John

That's the last.

00:29:42 John

Guardian.

00:29:46 John

Into like a a rabbit.

00:29:48 Bao

Yeah. Oh, you know what? I think this because the phone call came in. So anyway, so for pop-ups, I think they can because of the scarcity model of it. Right. It's limited. It's once a month or even less than that. That that a lot of times the product itself.

00:30:08 Bao

It's not.

00:30:10 Bao

The reception is not an accurate resection of the product and it might give the false sense that this product is really great one, it's really not that great. And when you put it in a brick and mortar that operates daily.

00:30:27 Bao

That becomes that gets exposed and then like.

00:30:31 Bao

You know, and then I think the people running pop-ups too, can you know, maybe because they're running on that schedule like running that is different from running it from day-to-day and having to take on, you know, rent and utilities and labor. And those are things that I think people, people.

00:30:51 Bao

The public public space aren't ready for or, you know, and so it's it's there's that danger there in pop ups. So for us, you know, we haven't posted a lot of pop ups main. The only ones I've done are the ones that I.

00:31:08 Bao

They have a personal connection with the people or that actually feel good about the product. So then you know, as I feel like this is an interesting thing and.

00:31:18 Bao

I want to.

00:31:19 Bao

Do it. So that's me. That's us at the cafe or our waffle mix business we are now.

00:31:29 Bao

On the other side, doing the pop-ups right, but we approach it.

00:31:35 Bao

Strictly as a marketing exercise, right, we are there to give our name out. So we actually some of them, it doesn't matter for us whether we make a profit or not. We have. But like obviously it has to be fair, but we're mainly there to kind of get our name out. We're not building our business around it, right. It's not we're not there to test the market or anything like that.

00:31:55 Bao

You know, we have a clear business plan and do we we know our product is is you know we already believe in the product. We're just trying to get it out there. So that's for us. We approach UPS that way.

00:32:09 Bao

Yeah.

00:32:10 Amritha

One last question, do you think it has actually helped you with marketing when you hosted those pop ups?

00:32:16 Bao

Oh, absolutely, yeah, absolutely right now because our product is very new, so relatively unknown products and the you know the identity, the brand identity that we have is kind of like family friendly and where you're like independently owned local business.

00:32:36 Bao

So us being out there, engaging with customers and telling them about our product and our story more importantly.

00:32:45 Bao

Has been really helpful not only to, you know, increase sales, but we know that that that people and we learn from others like we were there to also engage with other business owners as well and talk to them. So it's for us it's an it's opportunities.

00:33:04 Bao

For us to engage with both the small business community and the customers.

00:33:10 Amritha

OK. Yeah, I think alright. I I have an additional question. I was supposed to say, OK, so you mentioned about like doing collaboration and you know like you did a pop up base with one of your friends like are you also open to do collaboration with other?

00:33:31 Amritha

Small businesses or like something where you both can market each other's product. Are you open to such opportunities?

00:33:42 Bao

Yeah, I'm always open to collaborating with other people. I guess my personal preference is on A to collaborate on a deeper level, meaning like I really want us to work on something that's a little more long term than like a one off pop up. That's why we haven't done a lot of like.

00:34:02 Bao

We get, you know, approach by people. Hey, can I do a public here and there and you know.

00:34:12 Bao

And I know that's pretty typical. A lot of places host these kind of pop ups, but personally I just want to focus on my time and energy and space with other people that I feel like are more.

00:34:27 Bao

Even more like value aligned. So let's say like I want so the the people that we've been working with.

00:34:34 Bao

Having few alright, only a few people, but the ones that we worked with, we've developed really strong relationships with and continue to collaborate and work with each other

outside of the pop up. You know just like that. So that's kind of how I approach it just personally.

00:34:53 Amritha

Yeah, that sounds good. Thank you.

00:34:58 Amritha

Yes.

00:34:58 John

I think we're.

00:34:59 John

Like 10 minutes over, we can cut the recording here. I have two other.