

**2017 ACORN Conference & Trade Show
Best Western Glengarry - Truro, NS**

Workshop: Growing Your Market Based Business

Speaker: Jessie Palmer, Cabbage Patch Kimchi

Detailed Notes:

Jessie Palmer started Cabbage Patch Kimchi after spending time in Korea. She saw a gap in the marketplace and wanted to share the great health benefits of kimchi. Working full-time as an employment counselor for new Canadians, she reserved her weekends for starting and building her business.

A book she believes was key to her launching her market-based business was Good Food Great Business: How To Take Your Artisan Food From Concept To Marketplace written by Susie Wyshak. This book helped Jessie overcome barriers such as fear and the initial set up. Other organizations she found helpful are Centre For Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED) and Futurpreneur both based in Halifax.

Branding was the most important part of building her Kimchi business. David Hiatt's book Do Purpose was instrumental in keeping Jessie focused on what was important to her. She recommends hiring a designer and staying present for the process and even better, having a clear concept of what you envision the most important aspects to be.

Networking was the second most important business-building tool that Jessie talked about. From consulting with a Korean Canadian vendor at the Forum Market, to building partnerships with businesses, she has worked tirelessly promoting her kimchi. Her presence started out small, selling through direct market opportunities at a Shambala crafter's market, then at the Forum Farmer's market. She was doing everything herself production and selling during this time. She was contacted by Pete's and asked if they could carry her kimchi. Now, other retailers are selling Cabbage Patch Kimchi as well and Jessie expanded her market presence to Seaport Market and relies on vendor partnerships/friendships to sell kimchi at the Forum market still.

Customer loyalty is a big part of building her business; she listened to what her customers wanted and now sells kimchi in 250ml, 1l, and 4l sizes, in addition to the 500ml she started out with. She sells at 3 markets, 10 stores, and has product in use in 4 restaurants.

For the first year and a half, she produced all of the kimchi. Now, she has someone she oversees make the kimchi.

Social media was not in Jessie's life before kimchi but she says it is an important marketing tool that keeps her product in people's minds. She recommends managing your own social media and always offering something of value to your customers, along with great photos. She added that if your posts are funny and entertaining that is a welcome bonus.

Pushing herself outside of her comfort zone has also been what has grown her business. For example, taking television interviews and forging partnerships with festivals. The Oyster festival had a bottle of Cabbage Patch mignonette on every table. Her product is also used in local restaurants to make dumplings, Kim cheese sandwiches, and as an accompaniment to pulled pork sandwiches. Jessie emphasizes maintaining relationships with friends and family as a small business owner. Branching out into other kimchi based products, such as relish and stock for soup, have also grown her business.

Social Media:

<https://twitter.com/kimchihfx>

<https://www.facebook.com/cabbagepatchkimchi/>

<http://www.cabbagepatchkimchi.ca/>

Question:

Is there complication in licensing or approval?

Answer:

There are individual permits for each Farmers Market so a schedule B is the only permit. Products are tested by Dept of Agriculture/Environment. CFIA Canadian Food Inspection Agency approved Jessie's kitchen for the processing of Kimchi. Jessie has a commercial kitchen and this was all part of the plan in the beginning in order to sell to retail outlets.

Question:

The logo is very subtle - how do you balance that with in-your-face marketing needed for people to remember?

Answer:

Jesse says the contrast of the subtle and the in-your-face social media posts mixes the right balance.

Question:

When you sell to stores do you charge the same amount?

Answer:

Pete's set the standard for the purchase price and each individual store sells for \$14/500ml jar. A \$5 mark-up?

Question:

You mentioned a pamphlet. How early did you develop that and what information did you include?

Answer:

Early on, I made the pamphlet as a word document explaining what kimchi is. I added a vertical banner to repeat the information for those waiting to be served. A business card was the first piece of information made, with a graphic.