Third Culture: Turning a Passion Into a Product

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Behind the Review host and Yelp's Small Business Expert, Emily Washcovick, shares a look at this week's episode of the podcast.

Having a product worth waiting in line for is something many business owners aim for. This essentially proves that what you're offering is worth both a consumer's time and money. And that's what Sam Butarbutar and Wenter Shyu have achieved with Third Culture Bakery. In this week's episode, we talk with Sam about how their business came to life, how their commitment to quality has helped them find success, and how they have been able to build such impressive customer loyalty.

To exemplify this, we spoke with Yelp reviewer Cherie C. about her not one, but two reviews of Third Culture Bakery. Cherie describes herself as someone who "doesn't wait in lines." And at first, when she heard about the new bakery in town, she was determined to stick to that stance – but after first-hand recommendations, she decided to go against her rule. Creating a product that gets people to change their behavior and keep coming back for more is no easy feat.

Third Culture Bakery represents, in Sam's words, "someone who grew up in a culture that's different from their parents." They wanted to create a bakery that melds cultures—in their

case, Asian and American. But they didn't want to create a bakery that was just strictly for people who are familiar with those flavors. They wanted to be the "bridge between two groups of people."

Sam and Wenter built their bakery from the ground up; the recipes, the brand, the design. From there, they used old-fashioned, word-of-mouth marketing and found that the message really resonated with people. "That was the first time that the product and the message and the storytelling worked together and neither one is better than the other. If you have a story, your product has to match up with it and be at the same level, otherwise people are just going to be like, 'Yeah, it's a good story, but the product is not as good.' We wanted to make sure that our story and our product are equal and high-level. And it just kind of snowballed from there."

In addition to learning from the passion that Sam and Wenter put into their business, here are some of the other key takeaways from the episode:

- **Don't lose sight of your purpose when shifting to new pandemic operations.** For Third Culture Bakery, the experience and feeling inside the store is such a big part of their business. To ensure that feeling wasn't lost when they moved to curbside pick up, they made sure to focus on person-to-person interactions, whether over the phone or safely over the counter.
- **Environmentally conscious choices can attract more values-based customers.** Third Culture Bakery prioritizes sustainability and environmentally friendly products, which appeals to a big constituent of people who want their spending to reflect their personal values. If you appeal to values, you're more likely to create a loyal customer base.
- **Read reviews, and evaluate if something needs fixing.** All negative reviews sting, but it's important to think about how they can actually help you improve your

business. Sam and Wenter read each review with a critical eye, making sure if there is anything that needs adjusting in terms of service, safety or the product itself, they adjust accordingly.

Listen to the episode below to hear directly from Sam and Cherie, and subscribe to Behind the *Review for more* from new business owners and reviewers every Thursday.

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