

## 2 Hands Made This - Ep 18 - Monica Thomas

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Hey there, Monica. Welcome to Two hands made this.

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Hi, Christine. Thank you for having me on today.

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Oh, you're so this is my pleasure because this is a different episode than what I usually do. Because you make something different than anybody that I've had on so far.

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I do I make food,

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oh, you make good food.

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So this is gonna be a really fun conversation. Because again, you know, you're a maker, and you make food, and you're a service as well. So it's gonna be really fun to talk to you about your business and your marketing and all those beautiful things that go along with it. Good. Yep. Yeah.

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I've always thought of myself more as a service provider, because that's what I do, because everything's customized. And so I was pleasantly surprised that you were interested in talking to me about my business.

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Well, yeah, I mean, I'll be kind because we're connected on other ways, too, you know, I was really thinking about this. And, and, you know, as how this podcast came around, is talking to small business owners and makers of some kind of product or service. I mean, you make product or service, but you make product, and helping other people like you that that, you know, there's not a whole lot of marketing really specific for product makers, like, you know, between food between skincare between soap between, Oh, my gosh, there's so many other things that, you know, again, Small Business Institute has some good information, so to score, but it doesn't have it specifically for the kind of businesses that we have. And so, you know, as we dive in and talk about this, there's always those great nuggets that come out that hopefully somebody would be like, Oh, I could try that. Or I could use that, you know, and, and a lot of it, too, is really getting down deep into what has worked and what hasn't. So I call those ugly cries because those ugly cries certainly have led us to more successful

campaigns. But they're real, then people think, Oh, well, I need to be perfect right off the bat or I need to do something that works. And if it doesn't work, I'm going to quit.

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You know what I've learned and this came from a coach of mine who said, Give it 90 days and say, you know, in when you introduce something new, a new idea, a new product, in my business, give it 90 days, if it's not flying by that time, no matter how scathingly brilliant it was, it probably never will fly and to learn to let go of those babies of yours, you know, those baby ideas that you think are just the most brilliant thing ever, and nobody wanted it. Or even worse is when people say, you know, that carrot cake you made, you should sell that I would buy that every day of the week. And then they they don't they, um, you know, you put it out there and no one buys it. So you're letting sort of, I guess a little bit of your ego go when you've had what you thought was a great idea and it doesn't work or again that delicious, what not that nobody wants,

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you know, that's such a good point to bring up because that happens to every single maker I know, has done that. Right. And you do you think it's the most brilliant thing everyone will buy this? No one does. In copywriting and I think you know this I've told you this before Monica and copywriting you know, we have those thoughts as well when we're writing and those things that we have to cut out we call it we have to kill your darlings. morbid, but you know, and that's, that's a really, you know, that's a really good point. Because otherwise, you know, as a service or as a product, you have way too many products. First of all, if it's not worth working, you're spending too much time and energy trying to make it work. And again, in a lot of cases, it's not the copy, it's not the marketing message. It's just that nobody really wants it. Correct.

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And that's that's a hard one for creatives to accept. And so that 90 day idea, I think is and I give that advice to the the my students who are coaching with me is so you want to offer freezer meals have you know that you can sell out of your commercial kitchen and people will come pick them up, give it a try. Try it for two, three months, see what happens. If it doesn't, if you're not selling out, if nobody wants it, then go on to something different. So it's it's that willingness to be continued to be creative. Continue to hone in on to what it is that the clients really the customers really want. And again, I

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think it's

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letting go of some of our ego.

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Yeah, totally is. And it's just making me think more about letting go of ego ideas, you know, because our businesses are personal to us, but not you know, but again, as a business, you have ideas that do need to come in and leave, you know, come in and come out. And so I like that you're talking about that as a commitment for two or three months. And then you say to yourself, you know, cut and run, or

working, then, you know, let's, let's, let's make it work. So I love that idea. That's a great idea. And I hope all the other makers out there listening to this too, because it's so easy, you know, to just, again, force it to work in it, you can't, right, so that's it, what a good point to start out on. I love that. So as we as I usually start with the podcast, too, is because we all come from somewhere. Before we started these wonderful little businesses, these little businesses that we make, that's kind of an inside joke, because you know, your your partners or spouses or something, when you first start, you go, Oh, hey, how's that little business, that little thing you're doing, until we make it a big thing that's not so little anymore. So it's a joke. So we talk about kitchen, a kitchen table, a Tiffany's, and I love your story, because you had a you went from one thing to another, and it was a big epiphany. It was fun. I

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confess to you, that I had multiple careers in my life. And that I, I guess in some ways, I've been a serial entrepreneur without realizing it without having a term for it. But I have done all kinds of wild things in my life. I started. I have four majors in college.

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But I didn't know that.

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four majors in college because I couldn't, you know, something shiny would keep going by. At the end of my junior year in college, my mother who was working very diligently at the university, I went to to pay for my tuition, said, I was the youngest child. You have one year to get out of school. Gather your credits is what she said to me. Like, oh, but I like this this week. And I like Matt next week. And yes, so I did gather my credits, I graduated with 30 more than I needed, because I tend to collect. And I ended up with a degree in elementary education. And I taught school for a while and I found I couldn't support myself on what public school teachers were being paid at the time. And then I went and I typed for a while, I almost doubled my salary from teaching to typing, which is a sad state of affairs. And then I stumbled into graphic arts while I was typing, because they would ask me to, in these days wouldn't have computers to do it. But they draw the pie chart, draw the bar chart, draw this draw that for reports that this consulting firm that I worked for was doing. So I stumbled into graphic arts. And then I ended up in a company that sold missiles and airplanes. And I was a vice person of administration for that company. And then I left. I left the corporate world, and I, I ventured out on my own and I was doing event planning, because that was a piece of my last job that I really liked. So I did event planning. And then I moved to another city and I worked for a caterer because I'd always wanted to cook. And they didn't want me in the kitchen. Sadly, they wanted me to be a salesperson. Oh, I thought, Oh, dear Lord, this is not me. I can't smell anything. And they like we'll give it a try. Just give it a try. accuracy, and I sold \$750,000 worth of business in the first year

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I was. That's amazing.

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I guess I didn't know how to sell and I think he didn't want it. What I found with that company was that they had the finest product in the city. I mean, their catering was magnificent, and it's easy to sell a

product you believe in. Oh, you have to. Right? Yes. And so that's what I have taken with me from that piece of my crazy career is that if you are a solid believer in the value of what you are offering to the world, it's a whole lot easier to sell it. And sometimes that's hard for the actual maker to accept and believe that what they're selling is super valuable.

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One of the hardest things because, you know, we think it but trying to sell our own stuff, and we don't want to sound salesy or pushy or all that other stuff. So yes, it is difficult,

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right. But again, once you understand the value of what you're offering, it makes it a whole lot easier.

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I went into

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let's see, I moved back to the Washington DC area, and I worked for another company for a while in a back end event planning, but found it was really, really dull, because a lot of the event planning in the DC area at that time was government related. I used to call it begging for bagels, you know, when you when you would set up a meeting in a hotel or another venue, you were always like, I have no money, but can you give us some bagels in the morning. So after three years of doing that, I said I just I want to leave. And I had looked at the personal chef world one other time. And I just decided to quit my job and go get trained and do it. And I took this virally really scary leap and did that 17 years ago.

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That's amazing. That's amazing with all you did, and I mean, it was kind of right in line with where you had been sort of at the end with the catering thing. So right,

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it kind of came full circle. And, and despite, you know, doing something for four years here, and five years there, and three years here, this is the job I've had the longest. And all of those bits and pieces throughout my life that brought me to this point, have given me some value that I've used in, in my business, you know, back all the way back to the teaching, I am now doing online classes with hate the pandemic last year, I typically go into people's homes and cook for them. Well, I couldn't do that. And I couldn't do that, like from one day to the next like boom, door slammed. So I, you know, had a few weeks of whining and

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whining and whining,

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whining and whining. Yes, exactly. You know, one day, I'd be all gung ho. And the next day, I'd be in the fetal position. So after about, I'd say probably six weeks, I realized this was going on a lot longer than I thought and I needed to make some changes. And I had a client who wanted cooking lessons for

their daughter, and the daughter and I had done multiple classes in person. And I said, Well, can we try this over online? You know, with zoom? God bless him, right? Yeah. Um, and so she was my first test case, and it's just grown and grown and grown from there. So it's been terrific. For me, I found that that passion for teaching came back. And that I could reach more people doing it online than I could,

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oh, yeah, totally

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person, obviously. And, you know, for a personal chef, the business tends to be very local. And this gave me the world

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so to speak. Oh, wait, though, literally, we're going to talk about that one in a minute. We're, yeah, we're gonna, we're gonna leave that as a little bit of an open loop hang for what will tell you that story shortly. Because so as soon as you started as a personal chef, you know, and it wasn't just a, you know, you didn't just drop into it. And like, all of a sudden, it was great, because you really did have to work and market it. And then last year, of course, with, you know, with the, with the pandemic, you had to do some major shifts. So, let's talk about let's, let's go back, let's go back a little bit. Where's that? Where's the heart music off to add that in here? Let's go back in time, to like, when you first started as a personal chef, and what was that? Like, is you you know, I mean, we talked about on the show was, you know, your ugly cries of failed failed campaigns, and then the sweet successes, but you have to start somewhere. And so what did that look like for you as far as building the tailor taste brand voice and, you know, what were some of the things you did marketing wise.

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did a whole lot of things wrong? Um, I, I really found that word of mouth was what helped me get the business off the ground and this is, you know, 17 years in the business so the world looks different, you know, even before the pandemic. You know, the the internet wasn't as prevalent and not everyone just pulled out their phone and googled something when they needed it. So word of mouth was where I started. I can remember My training the class on how to be a personal chef that I took, it was a week long course, like 55 hours. And it's really intense. And we spent the last day on marketing because to me, I was like, I know I can cook. I can do that. So how do I get myself in front of people who will pay me for this? And they talked primarily about press

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releases, and Oh, geez,

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okay. All right. And I came home and I live in the DC area. And my thoughts were, The Washington Post doesn't care that I have launched a personal chef business. And, oh, my God, made the biggest mistake of my life, you know, I was like, oh, okay, that's, that's what they got for me.

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I want to go back, they only spent an hour on marketing.

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They spent the last half day so about six hours. But we spent a ton of time on writing a press release, announcing that we were starting our personal chef business. And, and if I had lived in a small town, that might have been great. That might have worked, but it sure wasn't going to work where I was. So oddly enough, I came back and my husband happened to mention to a co worker, and my big plan was a key, I was going to take three months to get all my ducks in a row, right? initially launched the business. So I was gonna take a couple more classes, I was gonna try to find somebody to build me a website, because I thought I might need one of those. Oh,

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gosh, 17 years ago, they looked a whole lot different to

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Yeah. And I was gonna make a brochure.

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Absolutely, hey, they still work.

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And, you know, I had to design my business card, and I needed a logo. And I was thinking, who is my ideal client?

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Who is

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what should I be putting all this brilliant energy in front of, But lo and behold, my husband had a co worker who was like, Oh, my gosh, I need her to cook for me. And while they're talking, somebody boss pops up from the cubicle next cubicle over and says, So do I, Here's my card, tell her to call me. Oh, wow. So I call these two people The next day, and I had appointments with them. And I had to cook date set in, like, a week after I came back from school. Wow, yeah. What I'm doing at this point.

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So, business.

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So it was it was exciting. It was terrifying. And it really taught me a ton of, you know, sometimes you do have to make the leap without saying like those. You have to. But But um, but I you know, what I do when I'm training new personal chefs is I tried to give them those foundations. So that, that when those opportunities come, they're more ready than I was. And I did so many things. Christine, you talk about the ugly cries, I spent money to attend health fairs put out by insurance companies. And I did a Food

Fair one time and all people want in those. And those, you know, those may never happen in the near future. But in those days, they were just looking for free food.

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Absolutely. Give me a sample. I'll walk away here, I'll call you later.

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Right. So I mean, that was money poorly spent down the drains. And I did two of those and realized very quickly, this was not how to get business.

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Yeah, well, that's good that you realized it so soon, because there's a lot of people that that you have been told time and time again, do events, do these things, you'll find your people and whatnot, but again, kinda like what you said about, you know, give it two or three months, you know, give it a couple of times. And if it's not working, it's not your thing. Right. Yeah. And those are some big ugly cries for those. Yeah,

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they work because I spent money and I used Yeah, time and I you know, I? Yes, I agonize over what my little table should look like and you know, how many how should I change the business card?

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We've all been no and

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but I found I found that word of mouth and four roles from happy clients carried me until I could get a website built. And I and I wouldn't I certainly wasn't fully booked within six months, but my goal was to recoup the money I had invested so far and again, being a personal chef that doesn't have a commercial kitchen is a low overhead investment. It really was able to recoup the money and within a year, I was Slightly profitable,

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nice, good, well, hey, better than better than being Yeah, upside down on things, which is really easy to do, again, trying all these different things.

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The last thing I want to say about starting out is, I was hungry because I gave up my corporate job. And I knew I needed that fire under my feet, to, to do it, because I understood my personality, if I had kept one foot in the corporate world, and part time, I never would have made the leap, and I never would have made the success that I was able to finally get.

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And that's a good understanding about yourself. And I don't think a lot of people think that about themselves like, well, I'll just, you know, I'll work my day job and do you know, my, my side gig? You

know, my little thing at night? Right? Or, you know, when I have time off? And so, I mean, it's good that you really did that internal work for yourself to say, Hey, I know what works, and what doesn't? And if I dabble. It's gonna be the thing that it could be.

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Yes. If I dabbled that, that's what it would always be. So I always say fear of is a great motivator. Oh, not having the income I used to have. And then I need to, I need to hustle a little more. And, and I, it was real, it was a thing. It wasn't a hobby.

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Yeah. Yeah.

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And, and that's, I and that's the other thing I try to tell new personal chefs. You know, where is your heart in this? Is this something that is calling you and you need to do this, you have a gift you need to put out in the world? Or is this something you just are sticking the toe in over on the side to see if maybe I can do this. So those are, you know, the two different places mentally and, and, and monetarily of what's best. And once you're gonna reap,

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really, really good point to bring across to us because you really got to figure, you know, and and, you know, what we're talking about in this podcast, too, is, you know, people that are really serious about this, but what does it feel like? You know, where what do I have to wrap my head around in order to know maybe I did start out as a hobby, and I really, you know, making a thing out of this? Or maybe I did take that leap? So what does that feel like? Sure, it's scary. But the scary thing is, don't light that fire under you. You know, you can't you don't have a fall back on. Yeah, you know, it wasn't that great. You know, this time, I'll, you know, that's alright, I have my, my corporate job or whatever, you know, and again, that also leads to, you know, burnout and unhappiness. And oh, I wish I could, you know, so that was really good that you that you knew that about yourself. So as we as soon as you're diving in, and you have some of these failed, you know, you have these failed campaigns, but what what were some of the other things that you tried to, because you you've tried a lot, and you teach a lot to help your students

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I do. What has worked,

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you know,

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there were a couple things that work that I didn't do intentionally, but they actually when you start a business that has a plan, I'm sure it goes across all different products, etc. But especially in the food world, if you have a business that involves food, every charitable Association, oh, will find you and will ask you to donate an auction item donate a free service. And did that for a while, um, and nothing



comes of it? You know, yes, I give up a free service, let's say, but they're not necessarily my proper client. And your client that so? So two things I tell people is look at the charity. And if the charity is one of two things, it may be okay to go. The first is is it near and dear to your heart? Would you give this? Would you give money to this charity? Would you give your time to this charity if there was nothing in return? And if you can say yes, you might do that. And with one that was yes, I would give my time to it. I ended up with clients coming from that, which I did not expect. And then the second is, is the charity speaking to people who would be my ideal client? Yeah.

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And then yes,

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if they are and that's the right audience for you, then yes, go forward with donating something. And I always tell the new newer personal chefs because you'll get clobbered with this is sudo push your business and the requests come in. is to be the live auction item. Not the silent auction. Oh, that was such a good idea. Oh, I love that. And if you can be the live auction item, then you get some publicity, you could be there in your chef scope. You could be you know, you don't even have to be there if you've got a great auctioneer who can talk you up. And, and again, just making sure that you are getting bang for your donated buck at that point. And then the third thing is if the association is willing to share the email addresses of the people who attended, that's a list builder for you. And I'm sure people about lists.

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But there is never a time when you should never be talking about this having this conversation. Yeah, because list building when you're at events, auctions absolutely, if you can, you know, and that's a good point, because we actually haven't had anybody on the show yet to talk about it in this way. I'm Roberta and episode for her her businesses scrubs body and so she talked about having to donate a lot of product and she did some breast cancer, donations and work that was that were really good for her. But again, it was her ideal client. But we didn't real again, and that was a perfect thing for her and her business. But she's talked about same thing like you, how many times have I donated that didn't go anywhere. And some of them, again, being very strategic and how you donate? Because again, you could be you could be getting secondary clients from it. Where other ones, you know, if you're doing the plumbers Association auction, and you have whether it's a food product or or a personal chef service, you know, they're not, maybe that's not such a good idea to donate today. Right? Correct. You know, and so that's a really good point. But yes, to ask the the, the the organization if you can have access to the list,

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right.

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And what I'm telling people these days to for, for early on marketing is influencers, local influencers for for a personal chef business, again, we need to bring it back down to the local level. Yep. To do our main core business. So I have a coaching client that I'm working with right now. And she's doing great,

because she reached out to a couple of local in her area influencers, mom influencers. And she offered a FREE Mini service for them to try out. And then they did they love the food, they posted about it. And bingo, they've She's, like add inquiries left and right. Because of the list of the influencer, basically, because she was mentioned by the influencers.

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Oh, for a second, let's talk about influencers for a second. Because I know in so many other maker businesses they talk about, you know, should I find an influencer? And again, it doesn't mean you're finding a paid sponsor, like a star or celebrity, you're finding someone local that isn't, you know, local, or, you know, in your area of business, right. That is an influencer, like you said, like a mom. Right? To be, you know, a blogger could be, could be somebody that writes for the newspaper?

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Correct?

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That'd be you know, someone on the news to get you somewhere could be a local store owner. That's, that's right. So you're there. You're not talking about those big sponsors?

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No, no. And, yeah, because they're probably not going to want to talk to the little guy,

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fight. Um,

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but going along with that, when you were saying a store. What I have been trying lately from my business, as well as recommending to others is to collaborate with other businesses that have the same market, basically the same clients in a different industry. So

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this is where we're closing the loop. However, operation that she's doing, again, because of the pandemic, because you weren't doing you had to think of new things. And this is absolutely a sweet success for you.

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Yeah, so,

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um,

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I have a client that I had done multiple parties for in the past and she happens to be a travel designer. So traveling food, people who like to travel typically like to eat well. So I don't know it was like New

Year's Day and I was like, What can I do this year to stimulate some with this business, as you know, come January one, we were still looking at everything shut down and you know, slow rollout of the vaccine, all of that. So I reached out to her and said, Look, I got all these great flavors and you design really fun trips, what can we do together. And so we hopped on a zoom, and we started brainstorming. And because her clients are my ideal clients, and my clients are her ideal clients, we are in totally different industries. But we target the same demographic basically. So we have put together a series of virtual travel slash cooking lessons that we are doing online. So I do a 4045 minute lesson, teaching one recipe. And then she has brought in on the ground from the country that we're featuring local experts to talk about the country or the area of the country and our first set of classes were all on Italy. So it was fabulous.

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I was there.

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And so we did three region, different regions of Italy, we did them over the course of three Sundays. Now here's lesson learned from that three Sundays in a row is a lot of commitment from from the buyer.

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So we

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are now doing one a month. And we're picking a different country every month. So you know, we learnt lessons learned for us as well, going on, because this is brand new.

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Right? And this is where like we're talking about optimizing the offer. You know, maybe the offer it was it was good, but maybe it could be better. So you listen to your audience. Correct. And you're nice, and

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we're tweaking as we go. And, yes, our next one is supposed to be on Sunday, April 11. And we're visiting Ireland this time. So

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that's gonna be a fun one too.

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So that Yeah. And so what I'm telling others is to look at, you know, maybe in your town there is a distillery, an artisan distillery, or there is a winery, or an artisan beer, you know, a craft beer, business and talk to them, because the people who buy from sort of that one off distillery are probably people who would be interested in personal chef service.

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Yeah, right. Right. Artists, and other artisans, help artisans. And what's cool about this, so I want to dive into the marketing just ever so slightly with this, because it worked really well for you is that you're both are collaborating, you both have two different lists. And you both are bringing in people from from each side. So you're being exposed, you know, Monique, on your side, you're being exposed to totally new people that are your ideal client. And same with your collaborator, she's being exposed to your people, totally new to her business, but are again, part of her ideal client. So you know, it's amazing how collaborations like this work, and how quickly, you know, it can get you exposure to new people that you didn't even think that we're around. Correct?

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Correct?

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Yeah. And I mean, you can think keep thinking of different businesses that are near near you or not, you know, depending on if you've got a product, you can ship anywhere, it could be anywhere. Right,

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that your possibilities are.

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So,

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you know, if

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if I saw soap, and somebody else sells jewelry, they're not competing, but they could collaborate,

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right? Yes. Yes, totally. And I love you know, and I think we need to do this more and more, you know, again, not as many in person events, you know, that we're doing so how can you collaborate with somebody also, that you can do on zoom, or, you know, that you can do on a Facebook Live or, you know, wherever that you can be? Almost in real life? You know, that seems real life so people can see you and hear you and ask questions and participate and, you know, show them how to make something or do something. You know, it feels it just feels easier, more connected. Right?

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Correct.

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And I'm what we found. Cassandra is the name of the woman that I've been working with on these, this project. We we've done a Facebook Live a couple of times to we did a little quiz about the country. And part of that, why we did it was to show our personalities that, wouldn't you like come like to come spend 90 Minutes with Us, you know, and, and, you know, sort of, and we have very different personalities, as

you've seen. But we each bring something different to the to the table. And so, it was fun, and we just did a chitchat, a little bit like you and I are doing but we did it visually. And I think that really helped. We had a we had a huge number of reshares from the Facebook, the two that we've done, which Again, that has bumped my numbers up on Facebook and Instagram and LinkedIn. And done the same for her. I mean, right? grown her following list as well.

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So Right, right. So collaboration just does a whole lot for you. And again, this is something we haven't talked about yet on the show. I really wanted to make sure we dove into this because, again, collaboration is and they can look so different for everybody. Now you guys have really done something that's fun. That's an activity that people aren't just sitting around listening to, you know, they're actually participate. I had so much fun cooking. It was great. Yeah, I really, I enjoyed it so much. And then as I'm eating my meal, I'm listening to the travel people talk. I'm like, Oh, I you know, Italy is one of our favorite countries, like, Oh, I know where I'm going next. You know, so it was that was that made it really fun. And so yes, we were talking about collaborating, you'll make it fun for your people, not only in your promo pieces, we had the quiz and you're on Facebook live, and you're talking and getting people excited. Those are fun things to do to getting your audience into it. Right. So that's, yeah,

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then. And, you know, again, staying on brand and showing your personality. You know, that there's no better way than doing something like that. I Oh, yeah. Because we aren't, Cassandra are very different personalities, I think it came across that G will get a little bit of Monica and her teaching and and blah, blah, blah. And then we're gonna get some of Cassandra's personality. And then she cooks along to so she can ask all those questions.

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So let's talk about that for a second. Tonight, you're talking about that, because that's really good, too. So you and your collaborative partner can help each other along because she was if your participant pins aren't necessarily asking questions they're following along. But she was really good at asking those questions that potentially people are thinking of. So she really kept that going, that was really well done. And like you like with the, you know, with the travel part, and you're just like, asking questions that other participants may not think of, you know, really help each other along with that, too. And help your audience get even more engaged. Because, you know, sometimes people feel silly asking a question, or maybe their mouths full or

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Yes, I did learn to turn my screen off if I was going to eat.

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What I had just cooked.

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That's right. Right. Oh, that's awesome. So so. So again, you know, this is a big part of marketing and, and the collaboration, I guess, something I really wanted to talk about. So thank you for going into such

detail with this. And really sharing again, this was us, this has been a sweet success for you that I'm excited to see continue, because it is doing different things. And, you know, I think I think I wrote this denied that, you know, you can google different recipes that you can find, and you can use, you know, look for you to use, but you're not getting the interaction, and people are looking for that. So that's another thing that you guys did really well is is giving some, some people a new place, air quotes place to go while they're still at home.

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Exactly. That was Yeah. And again, this could be done, you know, online cooking classes that have been done over the last year, trust me. And I wanted this to be different. So that someone might say, Oh, that's a little different than just learning how to make you know, fettuccine alimony. And, and so that's why we decided to bring a little bit of the travel piece into it. So that sets my cooking class, apart from all the others, all the rest. And again, I think it's just a little bit of, you know, the old thinking outside the box, and how can I How can I find that ideal client, I keep coming back to that, but if you don't have a vision of that ideal client, marketing is a lot harder. Oh,

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it You're so on point with that, you have to have that idea you really do. And the other thing along with that is so you're talking about you guys know that you have you know, these clients together and they were your your ideal clients. What you also came up with is because you do have to have that unique mechanism. And you guys created that, you know, doing the same old, same old, you know, you're just gonna get lost in the sauce. And you know, when people Google you and they see, oh, hey, this might be fun, and they see Oh, you're doing the same old thing as everybody. They're gonna turn you off. So you guys created you guys had a really unique, unique mechanism to pull that off with too. So that was

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let's keep it going for the right.

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Yeah,

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we planned out the rest of the year. I'm wildly testing recipes from place You know, it's easy to do the, for me the recipes of the countries I've been to multiple times or the region's gets a little harder when we start branching out to places I haven't been yet. So yes, there's a lot of recipe testing going on in my kitchen. Oh,

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and finally, you know, we can because again, you know, you're starting to think of new and different things that you can do in your business as well. And cool things that you also not only in a cooking class like this, but also can bring, I mean, it's broadening your horizons to bring to your personal chef clients as well. So that's correct. That's cool.

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You know, we haven't yet we did record these. And so if you couldn't be on the call, you could get them later if you want to review them later. But it's something that could be evergreen, you know, yes. A series of and resell them, repackage them resell them.

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Absolutely.

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Absolutely. You online or anything you can make. evergreen is always a plus. And we tend to think of that, because we tend to think of in the minute and and in the moment. But yeah, if you can think forward to recording some of these things, and then

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out there from time to time,

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that's a good point, making them evergreen, you know, helping your clients out with something that can they can do over and over again, that doesn't get old that doesn't, you know, isn't based on some kind of timeline or, you know, whatever. So, yeah, that's awesome. So I'm, so I'm glad you brought that up, too. Again, you're making things evergreen. So collaboration is making sure that, you know, whatever you're doing is evergreen, you know, especially when it comes to kind of classes, you know, product, you know, when you're doing product service kind of things, it's you know, we're not talking about that, but we are talking if you can find a way to create a class around what you're doing, which I know a lot of makers do, or are trying to or thinking about it. So sometimes you just have to take that leap. But you know, it becomes passive income once you evergreen it.

42:00

Correct. Correct. Sort of passive income. Yeah. Well, yeah. I mean, yes, you can make money in your sleep, as they say,

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for those of us in the consumable world to make a proper product, like a video that can live longer is is puts us back in that category with some of the other makers you have.

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Yes.

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say they make jewelry or something like that, that's not going to go away. So yeah, we can maybe we can relate more to those types of makers. And they may too. Yeah, totally. Oh, totally. And

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you know, nothing that you said to make me think about how your audience to with with that, because it's a consumable, you know, we're always looking for something new, and How fun is it to be able to

not feel stuck, you know, with our, you know, whether it's, you know, food food prep, or you know, anything like that, you know, because it's, again, something that's fun and new for your people to do. Yeah, I love it. I just love it. I just love it. So, Monica, this has been awesome. Now I want I love to end with the three marketing tips, your top three marketing tips for our rising stars.

43:13

Um,

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wow, that's hard to pick three, I would say collaboration number one, I like that a lot. It's working. I mean, it's immediate, and that's at the front of my mind. Um, you know, it may not be a marketing tip, but staying true to your brand, figuring out your brand and staying on brand in every communication, every everything that you offer. And, Christina, I'm going to give a nod to you because you helped me very, very much with that. Because sometimes I get a little uncomfortable with multiple emails going out and you always help me bring it back. So that is my voice going out, it is my brand going out. So I think that it may not be a direct marketing tip, but it is a it is something you have to be aware of even when you first start out. I didn't I wasn't I kind of fell into my brand. But once I figured it out, I really embraced it.

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No matter what you have two things on it before you go to your third tip is that is actually a really important marketing tip too, because it is staying on brand. You know, it comes across in social media eat like you said emails, social media, whatever you're putting across, you know, it may be really fun to put, you know, cat videos out and you know, dog videos and you know, if you're if you're not a food person, you know, food recipe. But if you do that too much, you know, that's not part of your brand. You need to stay relevant. And I think I think that's actually a really major point is to be able to stay relevant. Because you're being on brand.

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Yeah, and I think I learned this from a business coach that you Almost cannot give your clients your audience too many choices, you sort of have to tell them what they need, and direct them to what you want to sell. If I say, you know, you can coach with me one on one, you can do my mastermind you could watch my videos, you could do this, that they're gonna go, what I need and walk away from you.

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Yeah. And and I can cook for you. So I can be your personal chef. So yes, totally. And that's knowing your audience well enough that you can lead them down that path?

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Yes. And I have had help with you for that as well.

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I could help with that. Yeah, that's a good point. Kind of. So



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one thing at a time, almost. And I'm in and no, I know when you should be pushing a product.

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And then

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I'd say you also always want to be part of your community, become the expert in your field. And I'm using little air quotes for expert. I always tell new chefs and you know, the chef world's unique, let me just put it that way that you want to be expert for your client, but you don't want to be the arrogant snobby,

46:17

expert

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client. So um, I always say you want to be the knowledgeable, but yet somewhat humble chef, if that works with your brand. Now, if you're that brash, screaming chaff that might work for you. And then you could stay true to that, but I always say, you know, people turn to us because of our expertise, whether it's making a product, like a soap or lotion, or, you know, hypoallergenic something or other I mean, I, I want that from a product and I want the person making behind that product, to know what they're doing. I want them to have the knowledge in the x. Absolutely.

47:03

And you know, what you do, especially even, you know, as a personal chef in with food, that's super important. You know, because, again, think of all the things that you do have to you know, be the expert on, you know, foods interactions, you know, you have to know how to make certain things and talk to your audience about allergies and, you know, sensitivity, you know, so that's huge. That's a really important point.

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Right? And, and, you know, I always say you want the people in your community when they think of food or personal chef, or whatever, that that that your face pops up in their brain when they think of that.

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Yeah, so

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to be part of your community, especially for if you're selling a more of a localized service slash business.

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Yeah.

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Yeah. So

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Oh, those are such great points. This has been such a fun conversation. And thank you so much for sharing that knowledge. You know, because you really have been, you've been doing this a while you've seen things that have worked, you know, you've thank you for sharing those things that haven't, you know, those ugly cries and then those sweet successes and then especially this new one that you're doing, and that you're open, you've been so open to trying something different, because you know, you have to make it work.

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Right. You know, there's no point in just keep beating something that's not going to work, you know, it's like, and, and we, I sadly have many of us were handed that opportunity last year to now what we've got to change and those who kept trying to make it work and not shift are the ones that went out of business last year. So yeah, just be open.

48:45

Be open, be open. Try new things when they when you know that they're working. Keep going when you know they're not started. Oh, yeah. Let it go. Let it go. Monica, thank you so much. This has been a great conversation. Thank you so much for playing with me today. This has been fun and I can't wait for the next we're going to Ireland. next book. I'm gonna Thank you so much. And thank you to everybody for joining us here on two hands made this we will see you in the next episode.