

-- Speaker 0 00:04 They can write the manufacturing podcast sometimes in life and opportunity comes up to combine your passions and turn them into a business. No doubt this is a dream many have and would like to pursue, but very few do this week on make it right. One of my guests has done just that, bringing together his loves of beer brewing and chemistry to create a hops and hemp based organic skincare business. Dr checkbox Lee is a chemist and a certified natural and organic skincare formulator. His partner is Chris Rebsamen, a marketing and business development guru who was my guest on episode 65 and 66 and the make it right podcast in the summertime. And that's how I found out about batch 21 a natural and organic skincare line for men that spaced in beautiful park city, Utah. So I'm pleased to have both chat and Chris with me on the show today. So welcome to the show you guys and thanks for joining me.

Speaker 1 01:01 Well, thank you for having us.

Speaker 0 01:02 Yes, thank you. My pleasure. So, um, cha you're a chemist turned entrepreneur quickly explain how you, you took this path and God to batch 21

Speaker 1 01:13 Oh, a quick circuitous path we took. Uh, so yes, I, I was a chemist, uh, after, uh, finishing my PhD, I went on to work for a small, a ceramics company where I caught the entrepreneurial bug and just had a lucky enough opportunity to, uh, join a green chemicals manufacturing company that was so focused on, uh, developing really interesting materials for the cosmetics and personal care space. Um, and suddenly I found myself being thrust into, uh, becoming a cosmetic chemist whether I wanted to or not.

Speaker 0 01:49 Hmm. So what was this? Yeah, yeah. So what was this aha moment that told you that the pairing of hops and HAMP to create skincare products was a match made in heaven?

Speaker 1 02:01 Well, so we actually started looking at, uh, hops from a cause. It's from the brewing industry. Uh, you know, back before refrigeration, it was well known that, um, hops ratted as a natural preservative for the beer. Um, so we started looking at a hops for inclusion and skincare from that lens. That perspective of being like, could this be a really interesting and novel, uh, preservatives in our products, uh, that we were going to create. And then when we started diving into the science behind, uh, hot, uh, the essential oil that's extracted from the hops, um, turns out it's way more than just a really interesting anti-bacterial. Um, there's a lot of, uh, nice antioxidant anti-inflammatory behavior, um, that this ingredient provides. And so, um, it was sort of from there, it was like, Oh my God, this is way more than just a preservative. And it's way more than just a really interesting additive.

Speaker 1 02:56 Um, there's a lot of fun and interesting science behind, uh, its effects on the skin. So, so that was it, uh, for the, for the, um, for the hot oil. And then as the hemp, we needed something that was going to be a unique, uh, oil that was any help carry that, uh, hop to, you know, lower dermal layers at the skin that can actually have a nice skin penetration. Um, and so him being a, uh, an oil that's got a fatty acid profile that looks very much like what the, not just the oil production of the skin is naturally and they match really well. And so your skin is sort of, for lack of a better term, sort of used to this type of oil. And so it sorts really well, um, and therefore can carry the hops into the skin and really help, uh, you know, provide those beneficial attributes that we've wanted the hops to be there for.

Speaker 0 03:48 Okay. So you went through all this, this chemistry and understanding all of this. When did you actually say, okay, I'm going to make some products and I'm going to start selling them?

Speaker 1 03:59 Uh, when Chris told me that I should do that, one of those moments where we've been doing this in the lab for a, you know, quite some time just doing research and learning in, in, you know, being a part of, uh, you know, the whole process of developing the skin. And, and you know, it was just through probably multiple conversations with Chris where he was encouraging me to, to really put forth this into more than just a concept and actually develop the product and put it together. So it was through a lot of, probably a lot more prodding than he would've liked. But

Speaker 0 04:37 yeah. So Chris, what wa --

-- s it that you saw him like during those conversations that you went, yeah, this thing can work.

Speaker 1 04:45 You know, it was kind of first to market the concept of putting hops and hemp is the same formulation and then really understanding what hops can do okay. For the skin. It was just kind of seemed to be kind of a natural fit because in today's market, as we've talked about before, you know, innovation, um, and I just thought it was a very innovative idea concept. And again, no one has tapped into it based on my research

Speaker 0 05:15 <inaudible> so I really love the simplicity of the product line that you offer and the fact that you're actually targeting a male market with this product. So did the chemistry dictate that? Did, was it the fact that you think figured Hampson hopper gonna appeal to a male audience? Like what was the, what's the idea behind all that?

Speaker 1 05:37 That's an interesting question cause it's, um, when we started off with this, there was sort of this, um, I mean the hops in the hemp for certain, the hops are clearly, you know, something that we felt like would resonate, uh, with a male audience. Um, but when we created the products, we felt like they were skincare for rather than non gender specific, uh, type of products. But I guess as, as you start to develop the packaging and the brand has to look in this deal and the website that goes along with it and all that sort of marketing package that goes around it. And when you let two men do it with these,

Speaker 0 06:16 yeah,

Speaker 1 06:16 I'll land on that. Whether intentional or not. Um, what ended up happening or what ended up being produced is I guess somewhat of a more male leaning product, even though it wasn't design that way from a chemistry perspective. So what's in the bottle isn't necessarily a male specific product. Um, but apparently we've been told the packaging would lead you to believe otherwise.

Speaker 0 06:41 Yeah. So Chris, you're the marketer behind the product. So what was the, the thought process behind all of it? The whole look and feel of it?

Speaker 1 06:50 So there's, there's two points. One point is that I can't take any of the credit for the packaging.

Speaker 0 06:57 Okay. Okay.

Speaker 1 06:58 Took most of the credit because when I was in treatment for cancer, um, Chet actually took the lead and created all this and my influence on the packaging was very limited. Um, I think it's a very generic packaging style with the class and it can be sold both male and unisex because of the hops. I think the relationship of the hops is a tighter fit. It's a male than it is female. But in some of our data that we've gotten from the market is that it's both male and female user product. And the data that we have from our online purchases is that more females buy it, the males. Now, with that being said, the females can certainly buy it for their husbands and boyfriends. But it's a, it's a very strict balance. It's a very, it's balanced. I was going to turn it.

Speaker 0 08:00 Yeah.

Speaker 1 08:02 I don't think it really shows male or female. Um, I think the male market today is larger. It's a bigger growing entity. So that's just my input on it.

Speaker 0 08:14 <inaudible> so, um, whose idea was it to do, because I love this, you've got a subscription model and I think that that's fantastic because invariably people start to run out of a product and they don't get online to order and blah, blah blah. But if you have a subscription model, you know that, you know, whatever X number of weeks you're going to get your product in the mail and you're going to be good to go. Whose idea was that?

Speaker 1 08:40 I think it was a kind of a collective, I don't really recall. I think it was just one of the things as we were putting this together, it sorta just made sense because I think I can only speak for myself, but I'm somewhat lazy when it comes to like remembering my products.

Speaker 0 08:57 Yeah.

Speaker 1 08:58 Yeah. So I get, you know, several other personal care products, uh, and, and, and they're on a subscription basis. And so I guess maybe it came from that.

Speaker 0 09:08 So what kind of fell like challenges did you face getting approvals from say retailers from the FDA? We're talking about a product, it's certified organic and natural, uh, it's going on people's skin. What's, what --

-- 's all the detail in the background on getting things approved?

Speaker 1 09:28 So that's an interesting question. So it's, uh, even though it is a skincare product that you are putting on your skin and people are using, uh, hopefully daily, um, it's, there is no requirement for an FDA approvals for a skincare product that, um, I mean there are certain restrictions and qualifications to that. So if it's providing some sort of medical benefits and yes, the product would need to be, uh, FDA registered and approved. Um, however ours is, uh, is not in that category. And so, um, it doesn't require any FDA registrations. There are some, uh, certainly some safety protocols in the F the FTC. So the federal trade commission is one who regulates the, uh, you know, sort of the industry, uh, you know, in terms of marketing claims and things like that. So if your claims do get into an area where it appears as though you would become a drug rather than a, just a normal everyday product, um, then the FDA can step in and issue warning letters and so forth and so on.

Speaker 1 10:34 So, so we've essentially stepped out of that area and that's, you know, it's mostly about your messaging and how you're marketing the product. And so you can steer clear of getting in trouble with the FDA if you're careful. And so, you know, we've had some, some help with that through Chris and some of his contacts and, and so forth. And, you know, we'd have to change a few things along the way. Um, you know, Chris, I'm sure can tell you the worst stories with the, uh, the folks at whole foods who, uh, are very strict and regimented in, in their, you know, what's on the labels and everything like that.

Speaker 0 11:12 <inaudible> and get well

Speaker 1 11:13 trust the process.

Speaker 0 11:14 Yeah. And I guess with, with whole foods, if they approve you for their stores, that says something about your product. So Chris, do you want to carry us through that story about how you got got into <inaudible>?

Speaker 1 11:26 Yes. So we uh, yeah, it's been, I don't mean to laugh, but it has been a, uh, an interesting setup process. So whole foods, so in the natural market, so if you can get certified by whole foods, <inaudible> pretty much can almost get set up with any retailer because their requirements are so stringent. So to what Chet was saying, it's basically you have to be careful what you can claim on your label. So the labeling has to go through an entire process to make sure the verbiage is correct and the verbiage needs to match what's on the label and they do a website audit. So we've had to make some changes on our website as well. Second to that is then that's an ingredient audit. They go through all the ingredients and opponents of the product. Um, thou, you actually have to have a, a third party lab test, photograph and photograph all the items, document all the ingredients and it's kept on file and evolve.

Speaker 0 12:30 Mmm.

Speaker 1 12:32 Change it. Yeah, it is. So you're not in this, I evolve, I'm using it as just kind of just being a little sarcastic, but it goes into a system just to double check to make sure that it's just no changes along the way. So if you happen to change your product and not inform them of it, it causes other problems. But the set up process has been months and it's been, I get what they're doing, they're getting validation and making sure that we are compliant to their needs and wants to protect their consumer before they put their product, before they put our product on shelf. Um, so I can understand the system. It's just a very long, very laborious. It's just a long process and we've had some challenges around it. Nothing that we haven't been able to overcome. Um, but it's been a very interesting process and a learning. Um, I think it's been a little bit of a learning experience for both of us and, um, you know, it's great, but once we get certified by whole foods, we shouldn't have any issues with any other retailer.

Speaker 0 13:39 Like they're a gold standard or something. Pretty much. Yeah, it's a good way of putting it.

Speaker 1 13:46 But do you need this to the product is, um, I had reached out to the buying team and we send some samples in and followed up a couple of weeks later. And the buyer just honestly, she, they tested it out, she pass it around and they just really liked the uniqueness of the product, its story. Um, it's e --

-- ffect, it's benefits and I mean from a positive effect. Um, so it just all gel together. You know, we liked the, because again, one of the uniqueness of bash 21 is the elasticity of the product. You don't need a lot for it to accomplish its goals. Um, and that's, so it has a lot of less density from a cost perspective. Um, anyway, that's, that's kinda, it's been an interesting setup, Speaker 0 14:35 but I'm more excited than February. Cool. Yeah. The worst side is so Valentine's presents for everybody, for all the guys out there. That's the Ballantine present. That'll cut. There you go. Exactly. That's Chris Rebsamen

Speaker 2 14:52 and chatbox sleep, the two entrepreneurs behind batch 21 and they'll join me again next week to talk about how they source their ingredients and manufacture their hops and camp small batch skincare line and how they're moving their endeavor forward. I hope you'll join us then. The maker bride podcast is brought to you by Kevin Snoop, leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book. Make it right, five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. That's our show this week. Follow, make it right on Twitter and LinkedIn and subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. I'm Janet Eastman. And until next time, thanks for listening to make it right.

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