

MAGIC HOUR

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

[Magic Hour | Ep 9 | Kathleen King](#)

Hey everyone, welcome back to the magic hour. I'm Hope from Unicorn Marketing Co. and today I have Kat from Shop Local on, and we're going to chat all about her business and talk about why it's really important to shop locally. I think we all know reasons why, but Kat's really going to drive it home for us and talk about the importance of supporting local businesses, especially during times like Preparing for the holiday season and getting gifts ready and talking all about black Friday, small business Saturday, all of that stuff.

So hi, Kat. Welcome. I hope. Thanks so much for having me. I'm super excited to be doing this with you today. I'm so fricking glad you're here. Tell us everything. Tell us a little bit about yourself and all about your business. Yeah, for sure. So my name is Kat. I am the oldest of three siblings. So, uh, sometimes people say you learn a lot by the structure of the family hierarchy.

So I'm definitely the oldest. I grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, and I actually now live in Langley, B. C. I've been in B. C. for about 12, 13 years now. So it's been a little while. So I live with my husband. We have two kids. I've got a A daughter and a son who are growing up way too fast. We also have two cats and a big dog, so our house is always full and busy.

It's crazy. I am a KPU grad. I actually graduated in 2016 when I was eight months pregnant with a degree in HR management. And my husband and I co-own multiple businesses. They mainly revolve around food trucks, festivals, and my kind of... Spearhead my baby is BC shop local, which is obviously the organization we're going to mainly speak about today and all of that.

So yeah, I'm super excited. Yeah. Tell me what BC shop local is. I follow you guys on Instagram, love everything that you talk about and share there. But for someone who hasn't heard about you, what could they expect? Yeah, so it's basically a community of a bunch of small business owners, local business owners.

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We really emphasize collaboration over competition. Within our community, it's really, really important to us. During COVID, it was a little bit of a decline in social networking in person. You know, we run events. Throughout the year and we weren't able to have those moments and so it kind of felt like there was a little bit of a void.

So we built out BC Shop Local as, as a little hub for these people to get together and just communicate and hype each other up because, you know, when you're down in the dumps for a little bit and your business kind of falling apart. You really need, you need support you need people there to kind of help you out of the trenches and so that's kind of the core of what our.

Our primary goals and outcomes are out of that through shop local, we have a whole bunch of different initiatives. We provide people with marketing support. We provide selling opportunities at markets. We've got a business directory that has almost over what has over a hundred local businesses now. And yeah, it's really great.

So if you're looking for people and you're like, 'Hey, I really want to collaborate with somebody that does this' or, you know, maybe you're putting together a gift box and you need somebody that sells soaps like we've got all of that available on our website. You just have to search it. We're really just growing and we're, our goal is to get as many small local businesses together in one area to just support and help each other out.

Amazing. Are these small businesses in their directory and part of your organization, are they all in the Langley area or in like the Lower Mainland and near Vancouver? Where are they at?

They're primarily in the Lower Mainland, but we do have a lot of amazing businesses also in the other. BC, we've got some from the island, we have some from interior, uh, some northern BC as well, and um, yeah, those ones I find super cool too because they have carved this niche little industry out for them, and you know, when you're a small business owner in a smaller community, it's really awesome how many people you really meet that are, you know, your neighbors or your friends, and yeah, I always love hearing those stories and seeing them being part of it.

Me too. And I love that this idea was birthed from COVID. As we know, it all kind of sucked and that was not a great time for anybody. But I really love hearing about all

of these like COVID business babies that have come to life since then. And this is one of these beautiful things that you've created.

It's so amazing. Yeah, it's lots of fun. There's a lot of really awesome things that came out of COVID for sure, even though it didn't feel like it at the time. Of course, as it usually does. So let's touch a bit more on that. What were some of the challenges that you encountered while growing BC Shop Local?

We had a few, every business we're a part of has challenges. With Shop Local, the biggest thing is starting off. We were obviously very small. We didn't buy over an Instagram account. We didn't like have much of a base other than our events that we run in person. And then when COVID hit, it was essentially just our community of market vendors who had been part of it for years prior.

We decided like, Hey, let's just get a place together and just kind of shout from the rooftops and tell everyone let's support. As much as we can, because these small businesses are really, really hurting. And, you know, there's, there's been some trials and tribulations. One of the biggest things that was super hard for us is we tried to kick off a online store to help them.

And while our intent was really great, it was. It was a lot more work. I tried to take on like a lot of the coding in the back end to build these stores out. We, uh, you know, bought a lot of really expensive plugins to try and make it into like a true marketplace and have things go. And a lot of people had a lot of time sitting at home during COVID and we got hit with some online phishing schemes.

And so it was not a lot of fun. They charged us like. 6-700 times with fake credit cards and it just came to the point where we were getting a lot of transaction. It was interesting, I logged in and I was like, oh my god, we got so many orders, like this is amazing, and I looked and like, oh no, this is not amazing, this is awful.

Oh my god! Yeah, it was, um, there's a lot of stuff behind the scene that a lot of people don't really think of. And so, for us, we pulled the plug, you know, it sucked because we really, really wanted to support these small businesses selling online. I thought it was a really cool idea and we had a lot of really great applications and submissions come through.

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It just, it was a lot more work than we were anticipating. And you know what, maybe it can happen again in the future on a different platform in a different way. But, uh, yeah, there's There's been a lot of fluidity in the way that we've offered services and programs to our vendors and our participants in our community because we really, after that, which was really my push, I kind of looked internally and said, Hey, you know what, like, let's listen to the crowd and see what they really want, because, you know, I have all these grand ideas.

And the bat.

Doesn't mean maybe I should, and we really started this all pretty organically with like, the directory was actually a member suggestion and they reached out to us and said, Hey, we really, um, would love to have a place where we can reach other local businesses and figure out how we can collaborate with them.

And I was like, wow, what an awesome idea. Let's do that. And then same thing with our, our gift guide, which we can talk about a little bit later, but that was also a member suggestion. So we always love hearing from our community. Cause I think that's really the most impactful way that we can grow. For sure.

I think intuitive listening is so, so important and really just taking a moment to come back to what are your core values as a brand and a business. And then how does that reflect for your people and your target audience? So great job. I know it's not always easy getting to that point. And sometimes it's hard to let go of like all of these beautiful, bright, shiny ideas.

But sometimes, you know, they, they come up in different ways and they might percolate and in the future it'll be re envisioned to something new. You never know. Yep, totally. And you know what? In the spirit of collaboration, I totally would partner with somebody in the future that maybe has a little bit more knowledge in, in creating those kind of environments.

Because for me it was a, let's just deep dive in this and learn it all myself. And uh, with Rachel's support, she helped me a lot on that. But uh, it was expensive and Uh, it didn't quite work the way we wanted it to do, so that's okay, you know, it's, uh, we just kept going and it, it is what it is today. A learning point for sure.

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Okay, we kind of skipped ahead and we're talking about BC Shop Local, but you have other businesses because you are a multi passionate person, which is freaking amazing. Do you want to touch on your other passions? Yeah, for sure. So our primary business beyond shop local and the food truck festival is actually a concessions company.

And my husband's family had been doing it, um, since the 60s. So it's been ingrained in, into his life for a really long time. But when I met him, that's actually how I met him. I was working in his cotton, well his, it was his parents at the time, but their cotton candy stand at the Peony. Oh my god. Yeah, super funny.

I just, that was when I first moved to Vancouver and I really needed a job. So I took that short term, uh, Peony summer job and turned out to, to format and change my entire life. But yeah, so we, uh, spend a lot of time traveling around in the summer. We go to the Calgary Stampede, the Peony, We do the Cloverdale Rodeo, all these big giant events with our trailers, you know, we, we're not as cool as like the street vending food trucks who have some really awesome menus because we sell, I mean hot dogs, cotton candy, corn dogs, like all your typical delicious fair food, but you know, that's a treat yourself thing.

So we actually attended small local events in our communities pre COVID and The previous organizer decided that she didn't want to do it anymore. So my husband and I being ambitious and young, you know, two young kids decided like, Oh, what are we, why don't we take it over? What are we going to do if she doesn't do it anymore?

So in 2018, we bought over a food truck festival, which is now the greater Vancouver food truck festival. So now it went from a couple local, small events to, and basically only operating before. And, um, I would say. I think it was April, May ish, maybe some in June, and now we operate from March all the way until October, sometimes in the winter as well.

But, um, yeah, yeah, we've got, uh, if anyone or any of the listeners have been to Food Truck Wars, there was one in Surrey and then one in Langley, we put that on and then we ran the Chilliwack Rim Fest this year too, so that was a lot of fun. Holy smokes, that's a lot of work. Yeah, yeah, it's good. It's rewarding work, you know, we get our steps in.

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Um, but yeah, we hit times like October, November, and we really kind of sit back and we're so thankful. And, you know, it's just, there's a lot of gratitude when it comes to being able to do what we can do. And we touch so many businesses and see so many people throughout the summer. It's incredible. It's, it's, uh, yeah, really keeps us going.

That's so amazing. I've not been to the Greater Vancouver Food Truck Festival. Tell me about it. Where is it? When does it happen? What kind of food trucks are there? I'm a total foodie. I love it all. Awesome. Yes, you should definitely come. We run up to 20 events per season, so we're all over the place. So we visit Langley, Mission, Chilliwack, Surrey, Burnaby, we really kind of stop in at one city for a weekend and then we move on to the next for the next weekend.

So it's like a traveling, traveling, uh, festival. And that's like our baseline community festivals that we put on. Those ones have, you know, it's free to enter, there's no cost, you just pay for whatever food you want to order. Usually it's about 25 food trucks. There's a lot of diversity in our food trucks.

We work with almost. Of I think 120 local food trucks. So wow. Yeah, they're awesome. They're it's and they're all small businesses too, right? Like you're not getting any corporate chains really that have food trucks. I think maybe Triple O's or White Spot might, they have a truck. They don't usually come out too often, but yeah, they're all locally owned trucks and these people really pour their heart into their food and their, um, their food tastes great.

And it's, it's amazing. Like a lot of things are handmade. There's a, a pierogi truck out there, old country pierogi. It's, he has these vegan cabbage rolls. They're to die for. I love them. Oh my gosh. Yeah, they're really good. We release our event list. We're in the planning stage right now, but typically January we'll be putting up all of our locations and our dates for 2024.

And within these events, we have our BC shop local market. So it's also a great place to come and shop. The local vendors that are participating, they do change every event too. We don't just have the same people cycle through it's, you know, some of them are, are lifers. They love us. They're going to be there.

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Every event we do, they're like, we're there. And that's great because you know, they know their network and our guests know where to find them. But we do also have a variety of new vendors that come in. You know, we support a lot of young entrepreneurs and vendors that are just starting off because they don't know what to do and, you know, running a business is a lot of work.

And so we. Just give them the spot and an opportunity and spend some time chatting with them and helping them out to figure out how they're gonna grow and what their plans are, which is a lot of fun. And then, yeah, there, there's live music, entertainment, also, uh, local, usually artists that come in and, uh, sing on the stage.

So it's a, it's a good family event. You know, sometimes there's a beer garden too, so you can sit and have a drink, eat your food, go shopping, and it's a pretty awesome way to spend your weekend. Oh, yeah. Sounds like a great day all around. Yes. So much fun. Yeah. I love that every avenue of your businesses have really.

Focus around the community instead of competition and it's all about really caring for each other and lifting each other up. I think that's amazing. Thank you. Yeah, it's a it was definitely one of our core pillars and deciding and what we do, especially even with our suppliers and everything we support local suppliers to as much as we can and they care, they everyone cares when you're You know, connected in your smaller community, it really makes a difference.

And there's that reliance on each other and almost like a family feeling that you get when you work with them. Yeah, for sure. That's so lovely. So how do you support small businesses through BC Shop Local? You talked a bit about what we're going to talk about the gift guide and you talked about the online store that didn't work out, but you do lots of great things.

Yeah, so we have a lot of free resources in our blog that we offer for For anybody who's just starting out and maybe doesn't have any funds to help, you know, get a consultant or speak with an advisor about anything. So those are always there. We have our bi monthly newsletter that goes out as well, which is filled with resources.

guest blog spot where we encourage anyone who's an expert in their field to come out and say, Hey, let me talk about this. I want to get in front of your audience. So if you have any other listeners right now, they're like, wow, I'd really like to speak to

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some of these people. Like it's a great opportunity to just kind of get your name out there and share your wisdom that you, you know, maybe have this new thing that you're really passionate about.

It's great way to, to get some listeners on it. And then, uh, we also offer. Free, uh, advertising on our, our social media through just sharing. If you guys, if anybody tags our company in a story or something like that, we will. Usually promote and share it back. It's, uh, we try really hard. We do get a lot of messages and whatnot, but we try our best to make it inclusive.

And we also have our directory, which it's only 40 a year. So it's really a fair price and you get a feature on our, our page. And then we also. Trying to share out some reels featuring your business. If we can get some video content from you and those usually perform really well, usually get a couple of hits back on it and then, uh, obviously helps boost your SEO on the backend with a link back to our site and you have the opportunity to participate in our gift guides.

So those are also really awesome resources for people who are trying to shop local and a nice form of advertising within our community. And in addition, we have our in person markets as well. So they're great selling opportunities if you really want to get in front of a new community and maybe you're a Langley based entrepreneur and you haven't been able to get out to Richmond and you're like, oh, I really want to try and see if Richmond will like my products or I want to expand my customer base and Uh, you know, even just educate people about what I sell or my services.

It's a awesome opportunity there. And then, yeah, we're always looking at ways to collaborate within our community. So when we have members come to us and say, Hey, what about this idea? Like we're totally open and always want to hear about it too. So. Amazing. Do you have lots of people who go and kind of like hop around to all the different cities at the markets or is it quite diverse?

We have quite a few people who will come. I mean, vendors and guests that come to different events and they're like, I have to follow you guys around. Like that's, that was my role. Like I'm just have to be there. So you've got those trying to loyal. And then you have the ones, usually those are the loyal ones are the ones that have been there for multiple years and they know, like, you know, this is my, this is my crowd.

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This is my jam. And then you have the newer vendors and, you know, sometimes even the newer guests that just don't know what to expect. And for some market vendors, it really shows them like, hey, my product has some weight behind it and people seem to really enjoy it. And, you know, I have a good thing coming here where they get some feedback where, you know, maybe they have a couple of different options available for products or services and some sell better than others.

And then you go to another community and you realize, Hey, my market mix is a little bit different in this community. So it's a really cool learning experience. And we encourage a lot of people to try different communities just to get that feedback because you know, it's very diverse. The Lower Mainland is a very diverse, just group of communities.

And so there's a benefit there to learn about, um, your clients and where, you know, people shop and what they're looking for and how to sell. And I would not undersell the value of an in person market. It's a lot of work. It's tiring. You know, you don't sleep a lot on the weekends, but totally worth it if you're growing your business.

Yeah. I love that your business has become like a hub and a catalyst for people to innovate and learn and educate themselves. That's so important when starting a small business and well, any level of business just to like get a pulse on like what's happening or how people react and meet other people and networking.

It's so cool. It's incredible. Yeah, it's definitely very critical. All of those things when you're starting a business, like that's, uh, all steps in, it's hard sometimes, especially if you're uncertain or, you know, you feel a little nervous about what you're doing. It's one of those things you just got to jump into and try it and, you know, not hope for the best, but, you know, try for the best.

That's the biggest thing. I think there's some people out there, they go into it and they're like, Oh, well, I'm just going to, you know, set up my tent and put some stuff out and sit back and wait for people to come to me. And typically that doesn't work. You have to really, Yeah, put yourself out there and say, Hey, like, you know, look at me.

This is my passion. This is what I do. This is why I do it. This is why you should spend your money with me. And, um, you know, it's, you see the vendors who have been

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there for a long time and know that, and their sales are a lot higher and, uh, it's, it's not to say that if you do it. You know, just kind of set up a small table and sit back the first time you do it is, is wrong.

It's just to say that, uh, you learn a lot, especially from your other market vendors, and they'll come and they'll help you. And they'll say, Hey, like, have you considered doing this? Like, you know, maybe you should try and arrange your table a little bit like this. And so that's also something I find is super cool from our community.

That's amazing. I love that everyone is again, so open to lifting each other up and sharing back and just sharing the wealth of knowledge. That's really amazing. If I was a business and I was thinking about signing up for a market or just jumping in. As a new entrepreneur, what would you tell me? I would say that prepare to face a lot of different challenges beyond just selling your product.

There's a lot of things, our markets are mainly outdoors, and it's okay if you apply and you're told no at the first off, like always keep applying, don't take that as like a big Slap in the face because there are I would say this year alone. We had over 300 applications for our markets, you know, it can be really discouraging if you apply a few times and you don't get in.

But those are the things that you really need to fight through. You need to be, you know, just confident in yourself and know that what you're doing is okay. And if you're not sure, and you really want to know why you didn't get into an event, you just just follow up With somebody you just ask them a question, say, Hey, like, you know, I'm really interested in doing this.

Can you help me out? Like, is there a reason why I didn't get in? Like, maybe somebody applied before you with the same product. Um, and then what, when you figure that out, like, you'll You'll eventually get in and when you do, um, there are other things that come up too, like for us, our outdoor events, you know, bring a tent and have weights because we've had so many times where we've had vendors in the, you know, the wind picks up a little bit and tents are like sails and, uh, you know, you'll see a tent just flying down the event site.

So, yeah, there's a lot of things and on our blog posts and our resources, like there's some tips and tricks for market vendors to, to go. through that and so yeah I guess

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my biggest advice would be to reach out and get some feedback and just you know talk to the organizer for the of the event and say hey like you know this is my first time doing this even maybe before applications come out like I'm really interested in attending what are the things I need to know about your event specifically and how can I set myself up for the most Success.

And they will always be willing to give you the most advice because the more prepared you are, the easier it is on the organizer's perspective and the better experience for everybody. Absolutely. When you're in this like amazing, nurturing, cultivating space, tell me about why it's so important to be supporting businesses like this in this way.

Bottom line, it's very important because these businesses have to be, um, around, I think, for our community to have culture and to be, you know, just give us something unique to look forward to. A world where everybody bought everything off Amazon is boring to me. Even in the way, when you decorate your house, you look at your house and you say, how can I make my house stand out?

You know, what can I put on my front porch to make it mine? How do I make it my home, right? Like, I look at your community and small businesses are what makes your community a home. It's, you know, that local coffee shop that you go to, that bookstore that you go to, that clothing shop you go to, like, those are unique to you and you're not finding those in, you know, the neighborhood across the city.

Like, that is your network, your community. And I think every time you support those, you're really growing those businesses and those services that they can support you on owning a business is expensive. It's, uh, you know, any mistake you make can cost a lot of money and you might not have that float to, to keep it going.

So, you know, having that community pop in and say, Hey, like I really say for a bakery, for example, like, wow, these. These items are great. Like, I really love these seasonal products you're offering. Please bring them back next year. Like that just gives that business owner that confidence that it's a great idea and that they really need to keep doing this and make some, when they go to bed at night with all the stress and everything on their head about worrying, it gives them that reassurance that they're, you know, they're doing the right thing and that, you know, there's meaning behind what they do.

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So yeah, people might think that words are just, you know, words, but they actually mean a lot to somebody who's running a smaller local business. Yeah, for sure. It's not just a nice compliment. It's something that someone can live on for a year. I don't know about you, but when I get negative feedback, I mean, it lived with me for a while and it goes for a really nice thing too.

I'm high, high on life for sure. Yes. Yeah, for sure. And let's be honest, most of us are living through imposter syndrome anyways. And, uh, so when you get that validation from somebody, it really helps, uh, you know, just. Keep you going and pump you up a little bit longer. Yes, for sure. So, everyone knows why it's so important to support local, and everyone knows that, like, shopping on big boxes or, like, going to Amazon is not the best thing to do.

I think, I think everyone knows. I'm pretty sure everyone talks about this all the time. And if, like, just hearing this for the first time, please, for the love of gosh, please. Shop local, but I would love to hear your thoughts again. Like why is it so important to support local businesses? Yeah, no, I definitely, I mean, I'm guilty of it too.

Amazon is, you know, it's the crutch. It's the convenience monster. It's, um, you know, you go to the store and it takes a lot of time to go shopping and, you know, you need to look for a specific product.

I think a lot of people when they're shouting and promoting like shop local shop local people who are not doing it already maybe internalize a little bit of guilt about it because they know they should be doing it and or at least like maybe trying to do it and it's just not convenient for their lives you know people are busy there's a lot going on so I think it's important as a shopper to know like okay you I don't have to do it every single time.

I just need to maybe like take the opportunities or put myself in situations where maybe I can support local businesses. And when you support them, it helps, you know, so many, so many different ways, a lot of which we've already talked about, but even coming down to employees and like, you know, you're, you're supporting your local communities and Amazon, Walmart, all these big companies.

You know, they have a lot of money already in their float. They can make mistakes and it's not going to cost them a lot. Um, you know, they can be sued and they can

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still be standing. It doesn't really, you know, their float is there. But we all have heard the rumors and, you know, not so great things about being an employee at these companies, especially the bottom level.

And, you know, for me, I personally believe that when you go to work, you really should feel like you have meaning and, and some sort of like passion behind what you do when you don't have that, you're not, you're not a great employee and, you know, you're not helping anyone and it's just, you need money, everyone needs money to be able to live, but, um, you need a purpose and meaning as well.

So the small businesses provide that a lot of the time with people, because you're meeting your, your community, you're meeting your neighbors, you're meeting your friends, you're meeting your family, and there's a pride. And a level of just, I guess, a level of pride behind what you're selling and you believe in it.

And, you know, your touch points to the top of the chain of command for making decisions is much shorter than it would be in these big corporate chains. So I think that that is super important as well. Like those people really care. They get your feedback. Yes, it's difficult sometimes to shop local, but really once you start doing it, you're going to notice a difference.

And also in quality, like, you know, Yes, you can buy something for cheap off Amazon and it comes to your delivery in the next day, but it's not going to be the best quality. It might not last you nearly as long. Like I've got some amazing keepsakes that I bought for my daughter from some of our market vendors.

I'm like, you're going to have this for the rest of your life. Like you can give this to your kid. And it like has special meaning to me because I bought it because it resonated for me to you. And so, you know, I'm not going to get that kind of customized feeling that I would get from buying something off like a big box store.

And then also. Of course, the environmental impact as well is huge, like you're, you know, how many boxes do people get from Amazon and, you know, the plastic wraps and all that stuff. And so when you're buying in just in bulk, even one Amazon order and you order four things, like they're not coming in one box.

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It's all coming in different boxes. And so that's a huge impact as well. And you shop local and you're, you're protecting a little bit more of your environment and trying to make a little bit more of an impact because we all sometimes feel like we're not doing enough on that front too. So. For sure. I know this is an audio podcast, so people can't see them.

I'm just like nodding my head to everything you've been saying for the past five minutes, but I completely agree. Totally. And I think it's so important to start out or have an intention of kindness and know, like, That it's all just about supporting and sharing and just doing what's good for you and your body and your mind and your soul and then supporting other people around you.

I also love what you were saying about having a lot of shame and guilt and I think That's something that I kind of didn't really think of before. And it's true. There's totally like a shame spiral related to shopping locally and you're like, Oh, well, I did get that thing online and, uh, I know I could have gone to a market, but I just didn't have the time.

I think it's all about just like the intention and like trying again, again, just like showing up with kindness and being like, okay, like tomorrow's a new day, maybe. Go check out a new market or support a new business or like a business's post on Instagram. It's all about just. Trying, really? Totally. Yeah.

And you know, it's the shame sometimes prevents people from doing it because maybe they're like, Oh, I don't want to go and see these things at the market. And then feel guilty that I didn't buy them from them. Like there's, you know, or, you know, a lot of people feel guilty when they go and look even at a vendor table and they feel uncomfortable because it's like, Oh, I have to engage in direct conversation with someone.

And what if I walk away? And like, there's a lot of people have different shopping experiences. And just because You know, there's a market out there. Doesn't mean that you necessarily need to shop local from the market. You can go onto your local Facebook marketplace. A lot of people are selling their local goods on there that they make, you know, go through our directory and you'll find a lot of local businesses and links to their shop.

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There's another really great platform that, uh, it's called fair. Um, they do take a commission. That's the first order is quite a lot, but I know a lot of people who've gotten some really good wholesale connections out of them, and, uh, it is. A awesome, just local business platform. And they're, you know, when you're looking at the bigger upper end stores, like it's probably one of the better ones.

There's Etsy too. I know Etsy, a lot of people start off on Etsy. It's kind of changed a little bit in the last few years, I would say. But, uh, yeah, it's, you know, there's resources there to help you if you don't want to shop in person and then there's resources to help you. If you want to shop in person, you don't want to shop online.

Okay, another quick thing I want to talk about. Again, I had this thought when you were sharing your previous response is like, yes, you can absolutely hold on to pieces and items for so much longer in your life. And yes, you are reducing your environmental impact. You're probably reducing the amount of boxes that you're using and you're probably Recycling a lot more or a lot less, you know, you're just, your environmental impact is lower, but also it's better for you and better for your body.

There is likely things that have been sourced locally and gone into say a makeup product or an hand lotion. And someone's really put that thought and energy into knowing like, that it's not going to harm you or physically alter your body, which I think that we often forget about is just like, there's a lot of things that aren't good for you out there.

It's crazy to be honest like every every now and then I look at I see articles from California pop up and it's like California band this or you know, you'll get something that's like I think it's like Prop 65 or something, California warning that this contains these chemicals that can cause this harm.

And there are actually studies now that show young girls are going through life changing moments three, four years earlier than what they normally do because of the chemicals that we're putting in her body. And a lot of that, you know, comes from skincare and shampoo. And if you ever look at the back of a shampoo bottle, it's a little nerve wracking when you start to see all these things that you don't know.

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What are in them so shampoo bars are huge right now in our artisan and local community. People are making, you know, just Back to basics, natural ingredients and they don't have to worry about shipping it across the world. It's just a, it's a natural made product and you consume them within, you know, six, six months and it's so much better for us.

Like, you're totally right. The impact there is, is huge. Speaking of shampoo bars, I have to say I jumped on this train this year and I was always like, what do I do? How do I use it? Like, how am I going to store it? And now I'm obsessed and I love them. They're great for traveling. And like my hair is healthier.

I love it. It's amazing. Totally. There's some amazing skincare products. And keep in mind, like just because you're buying a local product, doesn't mean that they don't go through testing and regulations as well. There's. But to sell cosmetics and whatnot at the markets, you need to have certain licensing and approvals to be able to do that.

So same thing with food. If you're a food vendor, you have to go through your local health authority. So there are some people who are probably a little skeptical. It's like, well, you know, they haven't gone through all this testing and they do pour their heart and soul into it. They're not just trying to make a back off you like their brand means a lot to them, especially people who are in skincare and, you know, they know that your body is.

Consuming these products. And yeah, I mean, it's, it's incredible to see the passion behind them and a lot of them have health related reasons as to why they started their companies. And so it's really cool to hear those stories. Yeah, there's a human, there's a person behind every business and you're supporting that person when you choose to spend your money somewhere.

And not to get like too meta, but you're really like creating the world that you want to live in when you choose where you're putting your money, right? Like. A hundred percent. Yeah. A hundred percent. Everything around you is definitely selected by what you decide that you want to buy. And again, no shame.

If you want to buy something off Amazon once in a while, it's okay, but, uh, you know, just making those little adjustments and little changes, I think you'd see a lot more

impact in your life than you'd expect. For sure. Okay. So this question is basically, what would you say to someone who is, I'm not going to say ignorant, but like blatantly choosing not to.

To support or shop local or doesn't know why they should, what would you say to them? Uh, there's some people who are set in their ways and they really like to stick hard to their points. And that's kind of just the personality that they have. And, um, you know, that's part of the beauty of life is we get to encounter many different personalities and the ways people work at the end of the day.

I, the biggest thing for me is like, do you want to spend your money five times on a piece of. Like something that you want to buy for your house, maybe like a cheap piece of art that you want to buy, like just to fill a space, like you're going to buy something, you're going to change it over with, with whatever seasons, because you don't really love it that much, but you just want to fill a space or do you want to maybe invest in something that's a little bit higher quality.

And it came from the local artists down the street that you can look at and be like, wow, this is amazing. Like, this is unique and nobody else has this piece. You know, it has a story behind it that, you know, just makes up a little bit more character in your house. I also. Would say like, again, you don't have to do all or nothing.

Like it's, it's kind of similar sometimes to when you think about people who are hardcore vegan and I'm plant based and vegetarian, but there's this weirdness around it that people say it's, you know, all or nothing and you're hardcore about it and that's your life and those are your founding principles, I guess to say.

And so sometimes a lot of those people are not actually against the principle. They just feel like they don't want to be told what to do. And for me, it's just. Just try it, just see, you know, what, what's the harm in trying and seeing you, you might really, really like this product. And when you do, you're going to realize that product is going to last you a lot longer.

It's going to cost you less over the time of your, it's life that it lives. And, you know, they are investments a lot of the time because. You can't just write the cost down when you're buying from a local business because they don't have as many ways to save money because it's not just mass produced.

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They are unique, but yeah, they're, they're investments. It's an investment into your community. It's an investment into the people around you. It's an investment to your uniqueness and your character of who you are. And yeah, it's, I think as simple as that you can choose to do it or you can choose not, but, uh, there's benefits that are there.

And I think when people do it, they realize that. For sure. Kat, so you have an amazing gift guide coming out. Shopping season has begun. People are starting to prep for the holidays. Tell us all about this gift guide that you have. Yeah, no, it's um, super exciting. This is the second year we've done it. Last year was a big hit, so we thought we'd bring it back again this year.

It's our local gift guide that features businesses in our directory, so anyone that's part of our directory can sign up for it and they get to showcase a little bit about them. They get to talk about what? You know, made them decide to sell their products that they want to sell and it provides links to all their shopping sites, so either they sell through their own site or Etsy or Instagram, so all of those things are there and you can research through.

It's a clickable PDF, you're able to download it and it's going to be coming out mid November. We are just working away at getting all the fine details, I will, I'm happy to say that. We've had almost 40 new applications in the last week to be part of this. So yeah, there's going to be some really incredible local businesses on here.

I'm really excited to see it put together. We've got Rachel in the back end who is doing the hard, hard, uh, awesome work to get it together for everybody. And so we all really appreciate her doing that and it's an awesome resources, especially for people who are trying to shop local and, you know, they want to make that switch and buy a couple of gifts for somebody else and they don't know where to start.

And, you know, it's. A little bit of a, it's a guide. It's just a little bit of, um, you know, you back in the day, you used to get those Sears catalogs come to your house. Oh my God. Yes. I loved that. Yeah. Yeah. It was so much fun. So just, you know, treat it like that and have a look through them and say, wow, this would be great.

And it doesn't have to just be a holiday thing. You can look at a business and be like, wow, like they have some really awesome products. Um, This would be great for so and so's birthday or, you know, maybe this person would really love this and, um, or,

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you know, for Valentine's Day, I should get my spouse this like it's more than just a November December thing, but I would encourage people to look at it early and go to shop early because Again, small businesses don't have the resources to be high production facilities.

So they do appreciate the lead time and you don't want to be disappointed because you weren't able to get what you wanted. So I would say reach out early so you can do your shopping, get it done. And of course, everyone loves to be stress free in the holidays. So might as well. Yeah. Where can people find your gift guide?

So it's going to be coming out through our email and our website. So the best way to get access to it is to sign up to our mailing list. So you can sign up through our Instagram handle. There's a link in our bio. Or you can also just go directly through our website and sign up through the mailing list there.

I believe Rachel is also going to be working on the landing page coming out right away. And so maybe by the time this airs, it's going to be live. Oh yeah, by the time this Awesome. Perfect. So we'll send you guys the link so we can make it a clickable link and make it super easy to access. So not trying to gatekeep anything.

It'll just be there for whoever wants to shop and enjoy. Sure. That's so exciting. I'm happy to share that with all of our listeners. So amazing. I think that Days like Black Friday and Cyber Monday, we're used to them, like they're here, they're not going anywhere. Is there anything that you can speak to that on like why it's important to shop locally or to find a local vendor on those blackout weekends instead of lining up at a mall for the same big box stores?

Yeah, so I think a big thing a lot of people don't know is, on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, those are marketing days for a lot of big companies. So you're not always getting the deal you think you're getting. A lot of the time they'll use a different serial number, they'll provide a product that's actually not the same, it's slightly Less quality version of what you think you're buying.

And so you really got to pay attention to those things when you're shopping local, you're getting what you're ordering, like, you know, what you're getting and these local businesses are continuing with the marketing trend on their own way and they

are. Providing deals and it might be an awesome opportunity for you to be able to snag the thing you've been looking at for a really long time at a little bit of a discount.

And, um, just, you know, know when a small business or a local business discount something like they're taking money out of their own pockets to give it to you versus these big companies that are, you know, maybe bundling things up or providing a lesser quality to save the cost. There is a lot of care behind those decisions.

And so I think, again, it's just another great way to support them. And, um, it's a. Take your first look there before you decide to go somewhere else. Love it. Yes. I agree. Amazing. Okay, so switching it up a little bit, say a listener is thinking about starting a business or in those beginning phases, what are some tips that you have for growing your business?

Yeah, so I took me a while to learn this. When I first started to grow our businesses, I tried to just do everything all the time. I was trying to be the master of everything. It quickly led to burnout and destruction. Um, there is not a lot of people that can do everything, especially with a young family in the background.

It was, it was a lot. And when you're working with your spouse, that's a whole other thing. That's, you know, uh, there's a lot going on. So hiring a VA to help with some of the administrative tasks when you can is huge. If you have a website and you need to help with your listings, you know, getting them.

Updated and making sure that all the links are working on your site. It's huge just to take that off your list. No, those are services that we can help as well with, but they're just the little things that makes a huge impact answering emails, checking your inbox. I am really bad for it, where I just sign up for almost everybody's mailing list because I love to see what's going on.

I love email marketing. I love. Everything. Yeah. Email marketing is one of my favorite things for sure. And it's just, uh, as soon as you, I opened my inbox and it's like, Oh my goodness, I got a hundred emails overnight. Like, it's really hard to, to keep on track of everything because you kind of have to drown out the noise.

And so when you have personal interests and your business interests, um, it's good to keep them a little separate, but, uh, yeah, there's that. And then I'd also say when you

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sit down, make a list of what you need to do, because. Again, everything stays in your head, you're only one person, if you don't have lists you can't delegate so you're not able to pass things off, you know, make sure that there's care in those lists and enough instructions because I've also learned that the hard way, trying to pass something off without enough feedback on it and just.

Doesn't comprehend or compute across and ends up in wasted time for everyone. Uh, but also when you write that list, take the five top things that you could do to help grow, whether that's like making a, a phone call to somebody that is a potential sales opportunity or creating that lead magnet that you might have been putting on the back burner.

Do the five things that you know are going to lead to growth or have the potential to lead to growth first, and then do the administrative stuff in the background because You're not going to grow if you're always just trying to stay day to day to day to day. Yes, for sure. I call it eating the frog. So when I look at my to-do list, I'm like, what is the grossest thing that I don't want to do?

And I try and do it first and it makes, mm-hmm, easier and it makes it better. And then, you know, it's like 10:00 AM and you're like, okay, I did it. Like that's over and done with. I'm on a, hi, I am ready to roll. We're onto the next. So yeah, maybe try eating the frog. I like the idea of making a list for growth and really focusing on that.

That's really important. Yeah, and it's great. And honestly, it comes down to when you do your planning to you look at your business and you say, Hey, when a lot of people do this in the next month coming up January 1st, usually January is the month of planning, and they'll sit there and they're like, Hey, where do I want to be next year when I'm in this spot?

Like, what does my business look like at that point? And you just work backwards. And you say, Hey, like, if I want to be here, these are the things I need to do. And if I need to do these things, when do I need to do them by? So it helps you look at it that way. Okay. So so true. So as you are a co owner and a figurehead of many businesses and you're a mom and you have a life, how the heck do you manage your work life balance?

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And how do you find like respite for yourself in all of this chaos? An exciting part, of course. Yes. Um, I would go back to collaboration over competition and say that, uh, you know, you find people who can do things that you're not that great at, and they can do it better than you. And you trust those people to do that because you can't do it all.

You know, I have a lot of support with our administrative team and my marketing team. Rachel has been like a godsend to me. Um, she helps. Like she pretty much everything you see through the Instagram and our email marketing and our website, that's all like updated and done by her. So like, I couldn't do this without her find people that you can trust that have the same passions as you and, you know, share in the successes together.

Because at the end of the day, if you try and take on everything, you're not nearly going to get as far as you would without the support and the help. And again, my partner as well, I really lean on him. A lot of the time he pushes me sometimes that. When he pushes me, I'm like, I just want to push you back, but, uh, you know, yeah, sometimes, you know, it's, uh, it drives you a little crazy, but at the end of the day, it's there to, you know, make you a better and stronger person.

And I think for me, like one of my, my pillars of success and where I want to look at my life when I'm older is like. Did I improve every year? Did I stay status quo? Like, what did I do to make my life better? My family's life better? You know, how did I make an impact on everyone else? And so I spent a lot of time reflecting on those things and just kind of feeling gratitude.

And yes, I'm tired and overworked. And I feel like I'm I want to cry sometimes because I've just get my toes in too many things. , but the end of the day, like there's a reason why my, my soul feels like I wanna do those things. And so it's, um, finding time for reflection provides a lot more balance. And just, you know, giving that grace and gratitude to slow down sometimes as well is super big.

And, and our kids work really closely with us too. They come and travel on the road with us. They work in our food trucks with us, so we get to spend time with them. And yeah, I'm constantly telling my daughter, my daughter to uh. Eat the frog first because she's, she's like me and we always put things off to the last minute.

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Like her room is a disaster and I'm like, lady, just clean your room first when you wake up in the morning and then it's done. And then you don't have to worry about it. Yeah, I'll do it later. Like, no, you're not going to do it later. Like, what's more fun coloring or cleaning your room? Like, yeah, you're not going to clean your room when you can color.

So, um, I mean, of course, coloring comes first, but you gotta eat the frog, right? I know. So, um, yeah, it's, I mean, our. Our businesses are our life and our life It's our business and, and they're also interconnected and I'm not alone when I say that almost all local and small businesses are the same. And, um, yeah, it really, to me, that's part of the reason why I'm so passionate about it.

Like I can never work a nine to five. I'm just not built for it. My husband's not built for it. You know, we pick our destiny and our choices. Sometimes we, we lie in the beds that we make. And sometimes after working 19 hour days for like. 20 days straight in the summer. July is insane. We're like, what am I doing with my life?

Unreal. Yeah. And so it's, yeah, it's a, it's a lot, but you know, we plan trips. We go, we were in Portugal, um, Amsterdam and London in January and February, early this year. We're about to leave to go to Mexico for a couple of days. And so it's yeah, really important that you work hard and play hard. Yes, for sure.

What do you think is the energy? I mean, I think Everyone listening, who's a small business owner or an entrepreneur and like knows what you're talking about and like feels the same way. And it's like, yes, that's it. Like, what would you call that? What is that word? Oh, that's a tough one. I just, I don't know if it's a word, but, uh, I think a statement that would help summarize it is just that growth is not linear and there's so many ups and downs and you're just, you know, sometimes you're riding the highs and you're like, wow, this is amazing.

I'm so happy. Like things are going really well. And then sometimes you're like. Oh my goodness, like, what, what just happened? Why is everything kind of a whirlwind of a mess right now, like, how do I get out of this? Like, I just want to go back to when it was all great. And yeah, you're, you're just in a, in a whirlwind of emotions and your, your life is, uh, is a circle of.

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Excitement. And, uh, sometimes it feels like suffering, but, um, Yes. Okay. Fair. Fair. I like that. And growth is not linear. So very true. And I think that we can all relate to this feeling and this emotion and this drive to do something or to not remain the status quo and to keep following what we're passionate about for sure.

Yeah. It's like a sense of individuality too, right? Yeah. Just those individual things that drive you and give you purpose. Yeah. And every little bit counts. Every step forward, it's a step forward. And if it's a step forward, it's going to help you get forward. And just, you just got to keep going. Right.

Yeah. No. And I think I read a quote somewhere. I can't remember who said it, but losing is not a failure. You have to just use them as lessons. As long as you use those lessons, you're good. That's a really good quote. I love that. Okay. So we're wrapping up. I am again. I'm so glad that you're here and that you've shared so many insights.

There's so many nuggets in this episode that people can pull away from. Is there any exciting news that you would like us to share for you? This is like, this is your soapbox. Tell us anything you want. This is your spot. Yeah, we have lots of awesome things in the works right now. We're really excited for next year.

So many more events that we're planning, um, a lot on the larger scale as well. So we can happily have more vendors and participate in our market, um, which is super exciting. We're also planning to do what we're doing right now with our gift guide again, but bi annually instead. So there's going to be two times a year that this is going to go out, which is super cool.

But our applications are going to be open. Been around January going for 2024. So if anyone is interested in participating in our markets or joining our community, we highly encourage to join our mailing list because that's where all the nitty gritty details come into. And when you apply. If you're the first applicants, it's always better for you because we do have a maximum number of categories that we can have in the events.

Like, we don't like to have like 10 soap vendors because we want them to be successful. So we're usually capped out around two to three, depending on the size of the event. So your chances are higher when you apply earlier. But yeah, I'm

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honestly, we're always open to collaborating with anyone. So if there's people out there that are listening that say, Hey, like this sounds like a really cool opportunity.

For me to discuss this idea that I've had for a really long time. Like we're all ears. We really love to hear it and, um, help support in any way we're working on our consulting in the background. So one of my side passion projects beyond all of this is helping particularly smaller, uh, new entrepreneurs in, in the business world, get their footing and kind of.

Make it feel a little less scary and overwhelming when they come into it because there's so many things that you can do and you don't know where to start. And, um, we have done almost everything. I feel like we've dabbled our toes in so many different streams to figure out how to grow our businesses.

And, um, I really love. The creativity and the innovation that's there when you start something new or you're new to market. And so we highly encourage you guys to reach out because, uh, yeah, we have some new opportunities coming in the pipeline of how we can work together on those things, but yeah, I just, uh, I love to hear from the community.

So anything people have to say, that's, uh, we're all ears. Amazing. I love it. How can people connect with you? So my email direct is kat@bcshoplocal.co. Some people confuse that. And then you can also reach us, uh, generally through the hello@bcshoplocal.co. Um, if you direct message us through Instagram as well, that gets to Rachel and Rachel's really good at passing along the message to me.

So either way you can reach out that way. And if you have any promotions or anything within your business that you're looking to share locally, please reach out to us through DM because Rachel will help share that as well through our community and network. And we'll put all of your links into the show notes and in the description of this episode.

So if you're listening, just tap a button on whatever platform you're on and you'll find it there. Hey, awesome. I'm super happy that you had me on here today. This is awesome. I was definitely a little nervous when we first signed up because it's the

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first time I've done something like this. But, uh, again, and you always got to try new things and put yourself out there to grow.

So I appreciate the opportunity and I'm super thankful you and your team reached out. Yeah. I'm so grateful that you, I'm your first podcast and this is like the first little step into something who knows what it'll be in a year. Yeah. Check it off my bucket list. I'm so proud of you. Thanks Kat for joining me.

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