

THE **small** BUSINESS BIG **MARKETING**

show

INSANELY EFFECTIVE
MARKETING

Episode #455
**How to make
your brand a
household name**



www.SmallBusinessBigMarketing.com

Ben Goodfellow Interview Transcription

Tim

Ben Goodfellow from Tradie welcome to the small business big marketing show. Ben you seriously sound like you've got the man flu mate. Is it the man flu?

Ben

Oh I wouldn't have come to work today if it wasn't for the interview with you. It's a good case of man flu I'll make sure all my staff are very aware of that fact. I was looking for sympathy.

Tim

Correct correct. And every other female in your life as long as they know as well because as we know and as many of my female listeners know man flu is worse than childbirth and that's just how it is.

Ben

Look I'm not going to jump on that one that's all you.

Tim

Good on you mate. Thanks for leaving me hanging out to dry. Now Ben I'm really looking forward to this interview my big question which I am going to delay but is how on earth did you get the tradie brand to become a household name. However before we go there. How did you start an underwear brand in Australia and for that matter why?

Ben

It's it's been difficult there's no question that was the biggest challenge is to try and get one of the major retailers to take on board a new brand. I mean they're all pretty obsessed with brands that are well-known. Why would they take on a new brand that has no reputation at all. Look I was pretty obsessed with trying to build an iconic Australian brand from the ground up. I think Bonds has done is amazing and I have a lot of respect for them as a brand. So I thought someone needs to take them on and let's try and build something even more iconic and more Australian. But that's easier said than done. You've got to somehow try and convince a retailer to take it on board because you just can't get the volumes out of the smaller stores you really need one of the Australian majors to come on board and support you on the journey.

Tim

Can I just pause you there because you were obsessed. Why were you obsessed with creating and I should say an iconic Australian brand?

Ben

Growing up I was absolutely obsessed with branding. There's no question that I love the idea of having a brand and I also always hoped that I would have a brand that would be

associated to me that's what I did. And so that's sort of how it started. Also part of it is the family business. So certainly sitting around the dinner table I often talked about brands as my father actually ran Bond's for 20 years. So it was in the DNA from an early age to try and start a great brand.

Tim

What does a brand discussion sound like around the family kitchen table?

Ben

Yeah it was an interesting childhood. We we talked about branding non-stop and underwear non-stop so I think I appeared in a catalogue as a young kid selling pajamas for the old man at some stage. So yeah they were interesting conversations but it meant that the seed was planted early on and little competition was probably planted in me as well to try and do better than bonds.

Tim

I'm going to throw a brand out to you which I hope creates some emotion in you because it certainly does with me. Golden Breed.

Ben

Golden Breed gosh you show your age there.

Tim

Yeah no thanks Ben wow how are you?

Ben

I'm 36.

Tim

Oh yeah mate I'm 51 so I'm absolutely showing my age but you know the brand I'm talking about don't you?

Ben

Absolutely. They've got a great store in Flinders and Nick Bendemeer is the guy that owns it I believe it's a very small industry so everybody knows everyone. It's on the smaller side of the scale we try and support each other where we can and he's got a great brand that I think really feels a niche in Australia.

Tim

Well it does and you know one of the things I love and lets just have the brand discussion will come back to how Tradie and why you started this underwear brand but that whole branding thing. So many small business owners do ignore it at their peril. And I can already feel, my favorite definition of a brand is it's an emotional attachment and I can already feel for you that's exactly what you try to do with whatever you create. Would that be fair?

Ben

100 percent. So I see it as a tribal sort of attachment. I think that what we've got to do is create a great brand that people feel passionate about. Their actually almost want to go to the pub and preach about our brand and tell other people how good it is from all sorts of angles like from the marketing to the to the quality and all sorts of things that they can offer but it becomes tribal and they really associate themselves to it. And if you can create that then it's easier said than done then you've really got a wonderful brand you can do a lot for many years to come and it means that you're not just a fad for two or three years you can be a great brand for 100 years. It's really got to connect.

Tim

Back to how Tradie came about?

Ben

How did it come about as I said I was obsessed with starting a brand and I particularly loved the underwear space and so I heard that the top four sellers at Target top four out of five actually were the Chesty Bonds singlet and so I decided well shit I'm going to take on the Chesty Bonds singlet and everybody laughed at me particularly my old man because no one can take on an iconic product like the chesty bond singlet. But if they were getting the top four of the five at Target then I should have a crack. So for the next two months I didn't sleep I was a bit of an insomniac in those days so I rolled around in bed over and over again trying to think of a name. Initially I came to the point where I thought well who wears the singlet and it's the tradies. So I then went about getting a logo developed and then I got some product sampled. Starting with the singlet and away we went from there showcasing it to a couple of retailers and sort of selling them the dream of we're going to build an iconic Australian brand.

Tim

So just on that. From memory. The tradie singlets of choice up until you come along. Didn't hard yakka just own that space?

Ben

No its bonds. The Chesty Bonds singlet is one of the most iconic Australian things there is and they controlled in time.

Tim

And Yakka did not have a blue singlet. Was that a bond singlet? I'm thinking.

Ben

That was a bond singlet.

Tim

Wow that's the power of Brand.

Ben

Exactly and so it really was an amazing product that it did incredibly well for them. And no one had ever had the courage to take them on and no one thought that they really could and it was pretty stupid to take it on to be fair but it paid off in the end and we had to go. We managed to convince one of the retailers to put it in.

Tim

How do you manage to convince them? These guys are tough. They're Doberman's they don't give it away they just want blood. How do you go and convince.

Ben

They are tough. There's no question about that. And when you've got a 26 year old bloke rolling in and telling them that they really need to take on a tradies singlet brand they never heard of to take on the most iconic brand in Australia. The most loved brand in Australia probably wasn't the easiest sell I had to do my life.

Tim

So what was the sell? What was the pitch?

Ben

I think that I got in front of buyer that I still deal with to this day who so immediately had an idea in her head as well it sort of resonated with her. And she just saw the potential and so she jumped in and said I'm not just doing singlet I'm going to do underwear as well. And she had the foresight and that's luck. All these things like it will start great brands it only takes a little bit of luck

Tim

So there is the launch of the tradies brand. Your target buyer you get the deal how did that feel? Explain what.

Ben

It was actually Big W so I got my intel from Target and then I managed to sell it into Big W.

Tim

To all the target buyers out there who are now probably buying from you are they?

Ben

They are not. They shun tradie but that's fine we've got some wonderful partners that have been on board from day one and Big W has been part of our business.

Tim

Why would target be shunning do they have exclusivity around Bonds or you've just really pissed them off?

Ben

No not at all. No. We deal with target with some house brand items and private label. It's

just that target was taken over by Kmart management and Kmart management had a very focused approach to no brands and certainly going as cheap as possible and they didn't really want brands like us sort of offer a value equation. So we really didn't work with target on this one plus I think we've got such great relationships with other retailers like Big W your Woolworths and a lot of independents like boating camping fishing and all the rest of them that while at times is going through all their change and really trying to strip brands out we're better to sell to the people that want us.

Tim

Yes. Fair enough. Tell me Ben that moment when you got the deal with big W. How do you feel?

Ben

Like a pretty special. There's no question I was 26 years old and I managed to get a brand into a retailer with 200 stores. I remember it like it was yesterday I was absolutely stoked because I believe that was going to be a tipping point for what we were doing. It just gave us such a great opportunity. So yeah it was remarkable and I certainly went home extremely excited and then we went about working on the follow up to making sure I was right. But yeah I knew at that point we had a chance to really take on the big boys.

Tim

I've heard this story before where you get the big contract through and then create a problem that you're not sure that you can fulfill. Did you know you could fulfill that order?

Ben

I knew I could fulfill it. I knew I had expertise in the underwear space so I knew we could do. We didn't have that issue. The delivery was extremely tight so we had to make everything happen because it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. We turned around in ridiculous time so there was definitely a trip to China to try and make that happen which we did and then we got in there and once it got there it actually sold incredibly well which then allowed us to grow from there. I think it had gone in and sold well that would have been all over but the fact that it sold itself once it was in the buyer was 100 percent correct that it was a great idea.

Tim

What was it that made it sell itself. I mean the best marketing is a great product. Okay. You would have been assured yourself that it was a great product. The buyer has seen it. They liked it. They thought it is a great product underwear from memory I don't think you're allowed to try one in-store. You can't take it out of the packaging.

Ben

So there's a number of factors you've got to have a brand that people immediately resonate to so our brand tradie people believed to have been around for a long time. Also it's tribal in terms of if you tradie or your blue collar or low level white collar turns that you really resonate with that you know you want to be part of that group. And so people were really

born into that. The price point was right I was sitting at a really nice price where it was a lot cheaper than the other big national brand but it was also a price point above the house brand or private label and it looked great on the shelf. But most of all people resonated with that name and make it resonate with people more than I expected. And so it sold incredibly well to start with.

Tim

It's an interesting name. Long long time ago I worked in advertising and my colleagues in the next office was running the Mazda account. And it was a time when the Mazda rx 7 came out and they did a TV ad for it and the TV ad was a middle aged bloke in what looked like a supermarket but it was a gigantic toy store. And at the end of the aisle he looked down the aisle and there's this beautiful red rx 7 sitting there. And he goes and looks at it and loves it and the tagline was Mazda rx 7 something like big boys toys right. It failed dismally because no middle aged man wanted it highlighted the fact that they were after a big boy's toy you know. Yes they were but they didn't want the world to know about it. I mean it feels like Tradie should have fallen into that problem as well. It's like yeah I know it's a generic it's tradie I'm a tradie. So we're tradies like are we going to make office underpants for office workers saying I don't know. Office workers do you know what I mean. Are you surprised it worked?

Ben

No. I truly believe and I know I became pretty obsessed with my brand. But you never know. I think what it was as well that you know I had this theory early on was that tradies were really respected the time they were well paid. They were outdoors. If you're a tradie you still surf quite often you might. I don't have that theory the larger tradie with the plumber's crack out the back. I was of the opinion that no tradies young guys outdoorsy playing sport all the rest of it. So there is a 60 to 70 percent of men's underwear is bought by a female. And so females I think related to tradies are like good on them they're outdoors all active. And then guys are proud to be tradies or blue collar. And so I think that we may really capture that market. I think it resonated with the brand very quickly. This is before we went out I presented it. However I also did a number of things on the packaging itself. I like preach to my team and every product every garment is a billboard because we couldn't afford billboards at the time. So we made sure that there was a hell of a lot of stickers and a hell of a lot of swing tickets so that we could really scream out the features and benefits of why you should buy us and if I've got 10 pages in a Big W store and each one of those 10 pages is a billboard well that's pretty good.

Tim

I like that every product is a billboard. Make it work harder to touchpoint it's an opportunity for you to convert someone.

Ben

To someone that's never seen this before. I'm going to make them think they have seen this before and they're going to very clearly know what we're about by looking at my packaging and that's from a few different things always sat on top of the product. There'll be a swing

ticket and there'll be a sticker. And it really helps them to make their decision quickly. So yeah every product is a billboard we swear by that.

Tim

Now let's just rewind back a bit because you're telling me you're old man was in Bonds 20 years. You're also telling me bonds are your greatest and your nemesis the competitor that you want to beat to a pulp. What's going on here are you and your old man at each other. Do you get each other in headlocks when you get home and rub each other's years together really quickly.

Ben

It's an interesting relationship. I think he's very proud that we've had such amazing growth and then created such amazing brand people resonate with. I think there's a little tear in his eyes that his little baby is losing market share to us. I think he's also very sad that his little baby bonds got sold to the Americans in Heins. So we lost an Australian iconic brand so I think he goes right bummer. We've got to be the brand the actual. Now we are the Australian.

Tim

So your old man came across to tradie.

Ben

So yes dad was there for 20 years and then he got out probably 15 years ago now and then once he's non-competing it was up after probably three or five years. He then set up a number of small businesses in the sock space and the underwear space and I worked at Ernst and Young. I was a finance marketing graduate and I worked at Ernst and Young for four years and then he said can you come on board and run the underwear business which was failing at the time in many respects because all it did was private label and we had no brand. So he sent me the very easy task of turning it around and creating a brand from nothing. So I was like Thanks Dad. That sounds like a great idea.

Tim

So the power of the collective minds of your old man with 20 years experience with the biggest underwear brand for men in Australia. And women and then you coming in with this crazy passion for wanting to create an iconic Australian brand. This had no choice but to succeed.

Ben

Well maybe if it failed it would have been probably very funny for dad.

Tim

It would have a great marketing case study either way.

Ben

Absolutely. It's an interesting one. It shows you that the rag trade is in your blood and dad

certainly pass it on to me. And then I've been fortunate. One of my ideas paid off and I think you've got to have 20 ideas maybe 100 ideas though one good one to come along and then when you find that one good one you really really go for it. And that's certainly what we've done here probably above and beyond. I mean a good example is that we were doing some private label business which was declining at a rapid rate because all the retailers were going to China direct and cutting out middlemen like us. So I sort of calculated how much money do we actually make out of this private label. And I said well that dollar every profit there is really dead money that's gone. So when we put that money into marketing something it's our future and that's sort of why we've been able to be so much more aggressive in the early days and what really the turnover the brand is warranted. We like to think Kmart actually helped me build trading into what it was and what it is.

Tim

We're talking to Ben Goodfellow who is the mastermind along with his old man behind the tradie brand and we are discovering slowly but very surely. How on earth it has become such a household name so quickly. So Ben things take off the undies are selling beautifully. Clearly the first point of it becoming a household name is that you're making the packaging work really really hard. You've got a great product. What was the next step in the tradie brand once you got the underwear under control?

Ben

So then there was expansion very quickly in terms of once you've got a few styles work you very quickly got to develop multiple extra styles from sport styles to a long leg trunks to different fly front trunks you know there's a lot of different styles within the underwear space and we're purely talking men at this stage. So you get very busy with that so you quick expansion once you prove yourself you're going to sell. The retailers are very excited to take on the big boys and so they want to support you. So we got busy developing and then I very quickly did the numbers on that and said well we've got to start marketing let's not worry let's not think build it back in five years time and wish we'd gone harder. So we certainly had a crack inside I got into it immediately got into some advertising and I looked at a few different options and radio and bus backs and I went down the bus back park. I made sure that I parked about 20 to 40 buses outside big W's head office for about three months to make sure that they knew I was spending every dollar I had on marketing why we were expanding the range and that was quite fun at the time and it certainly helped.

Tim

Just to understand the idea because I love that. I did a similar thing when I was working on the Yellow Pages business many many many years ago where we'd make sure that a surrounding Yellow Pages headquarters there were lots and lots of yellow pages ads to remind that actually the staff their good the brand was way back then you put buses outside big w headquarters is that what you did?

Ben

So basically I picked buses that were on the route that went past the big w and Woolworths head office and we certainly had buses in other areas but I certainly went heavier on them

once around Big W because at that point we were releasing this product was selling really well itself and I didn't have a marketing budget that would allow me to spread it across Australia even though we had a national footprint all of a sudden through the Big W network so basically we decided we would market really heavily to the targeted person and those people were the buyers. So that worked really well because it gave them confidence that I was going to spend up big on marketing every chance I got. And then we developed new products which worked as well and so it just from there it just incrementally grew year on year.

Tim

What was advertising we spoken about this on the show previously. Advertising is a bottomless pit.

Ben

Sure.

Tim

It is for most small business owners a scary proposition for a number of reasons. A. It's expensive. B. The amount of variables you've got to get right whether you're talking about bus backs or ads in papers or radio TV you've got to even for like say a newspaper ad you've got to figure out which newspaper. What part of the newspaper right hand left hand side. Color mono what's the headline what's the creative. What's the frequency I mean there are just so many variables for you I guess your old man had a lot of experience in that advertising area or how do you how did you cross that fear?

Ben

He came up with some iconic ads himself. He did the Arne's pants ad that one second recs and he did a one day you're going to get caught with your pants with a whole group. So he has a list of good ads that we need to catch up on. So he certainly was helpful. There's no question that having a mentor that is close to you to me that is great. Everyone in a business when you're an entrepreneur needs a good mentor just happens that mines my dad but I certainly it was very nerve wracking at that stage just spending that money that I knew one was a huge bend for us. We've never done any marketing before and here I was 26 years old going. We're doing it no questions asked. So I remember meeting with radio stations and they want to take the whole lump sum that I had in one week and that's all I could get. I think I was only in Melbourne and Sydney that and then I realised that you know that's not going to affect the sales. What I really need to do is just try and encourage the buying team to keep backing it because it's selling at the moment. So I think you've got to be really careful with your initial spend. What is the greatest value you got to get out of it. For me it was actually to advertise to the buyers and make sure that the buyers bosses knew about us and that's why they were willing to support us because we were going to get the growth incrementally anyway. I think if I'd gone down the radio path and gone straight to consumer more so it really wouldn't have helped us as much as what I did. But there's no question that was one of the most nerve racking things I've had to do.

Tim

What did you spend?

Ben

Hundred grand which was a lot for us at that stage.

Tim

How was that sleepless night once you sign that contract?

Ben

Well my girlfriend at the time remembers me waking up in the middle of the night with a cold sweat still half asleep sitting at the end of the bed just saying seven pack undies seven pack undies over and over again in my sleep. So obviously I was talking in my sleep about undies non-stop so the stress levels are pretty high. The pressure was on at that stage but it was exciting as well because it worked. We knew that it was going to be a pretty big uplift.

Tim

What was the creative and what was the outcome?

Ben

The creative have what we did was we put on bus backs and I worked with an agency that I still worked with to this day we become very very close called the incubator and they came up with the slogan the ultimate tool box and so what we did was we had no models couldn't afford a model we needed to do as cheap as possible we just had a very close up photos of the undies. And then the ultimate tool box nice and big and then where you could buy tagged in the bottom and they floated around Sydney in particular and it said we've got a few responses a few letters from people's called it offensive. We pinned them on the wall whenever we get something like that because it means people are noticing our advertising.

Tim

Just on that. Great well done for doing that. Sometimes the small business owner can kind of freak out and lose confidence and quickly pull it. Oh you know we're getting you know because the minority sometimes gets heard you took the other view.

Ben

Absolutely and look the whole way through if you spoke to my media agency I roll the dice every chance I get. I really really want to build this into a great brand and so we will genuinely go above and beyond what the brand warrants at this stage. Just knowing we're going to get there so we are aggressive marketing business but that's because my love and life is marketing.

Tim

Just explain to me. You roll the dice every chance you get. So you take a route you are on the side of risk.

Ben

I think in terms of the spend compared to turnover we certainly do and I think we take chances when opportunities come up where there might be a last minute TV program that desperately needs a major sponsor and I've already committed what I think is our true budget. I will go for a long hard run and think about whether we want to jump on it and then generally I have and then fortunately the growth has come as well. So their calculated but we certainly are afraid to take a few chances here and there and it certainly paid off at this point in time which is why we are now more of a household brand.

Tim

What's the biggest risk you've taken that failed?

Ben: Oh that's a good one. I think it was actually last year where I sponsored the footy show they had a last minute pull out of a major sponsor and they needed that answer within a day and they didn't do a really good rate for me. But they needed a sponsor to come on board and responded nationally which was a huge deal for us and in many ways it was great because it put out our name amongst a fantastic one. However they sadly mistreated the NSW NRL Thursday Footy Show moved around from night tonight moved out to later changed the format without us knowing and their ratings absolutely bombed. So it was a risk that really fell apart. However it still worked out because of the long term relationship. So Channel Nine will do the right thing and catch it up. But that was certainly a big expense for us on top of what I'd already committed to the bachelor sponsorship and a few others that still positive came out of it because Eddie McGuire did an amazing job in Melbourne pumping up at the Victorian show. It was just the Sydney show. It was very disappointing.

Tim

What's your view on mass media Ben. Media has become so fragmented these days I'm sure. If you roll up your sleeves and really went down the path of chasing the different demographics that you appeal to you might save some money. A Facebook ads here and a bit of Instagram advertising and all this and you know some outdoor billboards and whatever but yeah you've just chosen this really mass broadcast approach.

Ben

Yeah well there's a few reasons for that I think that social definitely has its place but at the end of the day I'm selling through mainstream channels at this point in time. So while we're going through them I think that mainstream TV still has a wonderful effect for us and I think at the moment is working incredibly well. This does get brought up a lot with me going you know what. As a young Australian brand like these why aren't you doing more online. We still do some but we are putting the core into TV because I do love touching on true mainstream consumer but the mix will change over time and will evolve. I'm keeping my eye on it at this stage given my assets are very much in TV because each year I'm filming you know five or six TV ads. That's where I believe that I want to put my money into TV. Now that's just because I think we've come up with some really great fun simple ads that work. So if I didn't have those amazing simple ads with the honey badger and the girls

that we brought on then I might not be as heavy in TV.

Tim

Okay so just to wrap up that conversation, though I guess your TV buying unlike years gone by you may well not remember where you could literally buy a schedule across the entire day and night and you got a massive amount of the population. I'm guessing you need to be very selective you just buying the bachelor. You'd just buying love at first sight you're just buying I don't know just kickee shows because there's a lot of people not watching TV these days.

Ben

Correct. So what I did was I think I broke the rules a bit in terms of the media team would often come to me with a spot buy across all different things and I said no I've only got a limited budget guys I want to be really targeted and a million people watch The Bachelor. I want the entire million people to watch that show to know us by the end of the program. Now if I scatter across all sorts of shows if you're watching a different program in a way you might see it twice. You're never going to remember us I if I show my ad three times in a bachelor program for an entire 12 weeks or whatever goes for those million people will certainly know my AD. So what I do is break it down by markets like that rather than doing spot buys.

Tim

I'm going to race ahead. You did you mention the Honey Badger earlier. This is an international audience honey badgers a fellow Nick Cummins who is an Australian Rugby League Rugby Union legend I'm not AFL guy I don't even know Nick at all but he's been on. He was also on the bachelor so he's a bit of a known identity in Australia. How did that celebrity endorsement come about?

Ben

It was a pretty good story actually. I was year three and so I'd done the bus as year one year two I did a radio campaign and on the back of those radio ads and think that they were pretty humorous and then the next year I was like year three we've got to keep stepping out as hard as we can so I need an ambassador. So I started to look around obviously stay away from tennis players because Australians just don't relate to them. My number one rule was I was looking for a guy that I want to have a beer with and of the rest of Australia. The beer test I came across a few different people but there was one person that caught my eye the Honey Badger did an interview after a game where he had just finished a game in New Zealand and the interviews on YouTube and I saw it on YouTube when I was looking in a few different things. It was one of the funniest interviews I've ever seen because he basically just spoke in what I call Badgerisms and the commentators lost the plot I thought it was the funniest thing I've ever seen so I saw that. That's my man in a very unique look as well. You have a long hair and the headband. I said this guy was as Aussie as you can get my brand needs to be as aussie as you can get. So I went on Instagram and I found his Instagram site and I personally messaged him and said hey mate I've got this underwear brand called Tradie would you be interested in coming on board. He wrote back to me said

yep sounds good mate. And about two or three weeks later we had a long term deal together and now we've been running together for probably about five years now six years and we built a number of years still to go.

Tim

Wow. How beautifully simple. Good on you for seeing that interview and identify it very clearly that there is a guy that you want your brand to be like and he clearly had some very resonated deeply with your brand. And you just reach out to him on Instagram.

Ben

Looking back it's a bit ridiculous to be honest. I signed the contract with him myself. I didn't even do it through a legal team and then I went to a marketing agency and I said OK guys we need to do an ad for tradie. We've got to do it on the tiniest budget you can possibly do and I've already signed ambassador and then looked at me like I was absolutely mad. Now we're from Victoria so that no one had ever heard of the honey badger given were an AFL town and they genuinely looked like I was mad. My dad thought I'd completely lost the plot and then I said guy's write it at a really simple white screen just having talking Badgerisms. So they went away and came out some other ideas that weren't quite like that. I said no. Simple ads I want three clear messages. want good looking. Quality and comfort and I want him to say it in the most random aussie ways possible. He's got a twinkle in his eye. You'll make love to the camera or whatever you want. And away we go. They look to me again like I was completely mad and I started to get a bit nervous. But we turn up on the day and he was amazing he took some of the scripts that we'd written with some of his own lines and then he sort of freestyle a lot about 25 percent is written about 75 percent he come out with random things on the day and I think that's what people resonated with. Because it is very organic.

Tim

Absolutely. You know that agency thing I'm wondering were they being precious and fearing that their role as the copywriter and concept developer had been taken from them. Because here you are coming to them with the talent. Coming to you with you to them with the idea and essentially the talents writing the ads they had no role was that it?

Ben

Oh they are an amazing group the incubator because yeah most agencies would kicked me out at that point.

Tim

Yes.

Ben

They basically took an idea and look I couldn't put together 100 percent I said this is my idea. I see the twinkle in this blokes eye I am sure of it just make it happen and they made it happen and they wrote the lines. And the reason we've had great ads from then on is because they've been out to really dive into what the concept is and makes great ads and

they still get stede a lot by me but they don't get pressured at all because we really do it together because they understand that marketing is my obsession.

Tim

Yeah. Fair enough. Interesting choice with the honey badger because he is very new south wales centric in Victoria we have no idea who he is until he appears as the bachelor on The Bachelor. You didn't know that was going to happen.

Ben

It was a bit of a surprise.

Tim

What a bonus.

Ben

So we got some front page newspaper coverage for a long time leading up to it which is amazing. We knew something was going on because we had just pushed back our advertising shoots for about two or three months but that was a huge surprise. I knew he was going to do something TV related at some stage because I think through our ads we were on TV so consistently that people were really falling in love with the honey badger. And so I knew that something would happen at some point we're sort of been good for each other where he's built me up and I him building up and yeah then he went on The Bachelor and then it became a very interesting series.

Tim

Because your decision to take him on initially really I mean in NSW they are going to go well that's Nick Cummins representing Tradie underwear but everywhere else and Queensland but everywhere else we just saw him. I mean we just saw him as a funny guy right.

Ben

That was the greatest risk is that I knew we had to create we have enough personality enough interest in him to warrant the ads that the Victorian or South Australia would look at and go That was hilarious and that really came down the way he spoke in his Badgerisms and the way explained one of the key features of my product.

Tim

He's got a pretty grip to the boy.

Ben

Look he's absolutely shredded which is why I went to every shoot I do take a photo with him in my underwear.

Tim

Awkward

Ben

It's a bit scary standing next to him to honest with you.

Tim

How has your rig compared to the badgers?

Ben

Oh look I mean I run a business so it's hard to keep up with these pro athletes.

Tim

You have the small business owners rig. You continued the ambassador kind of marketing strategy. Ben you got Danielle Scott who is one of our great freestyle aerial skiers and you've got Kelly Cartwright cancer survivor Paralympic gold medalist. So did you hope that having Danielle and Kelly would work as well as Nick did or did you have different expectations?

Ben

Different expectations because I think Nick had a certain personality type and women's. It was interesting that women's was never part of my idea it was something they are throwing to me. I thought it was a real risk to go into women's and I always refused to do it because I knew the markdown support that I would need to give. If that didn't work was going to be horrific. Big W forced me to do in the end and thank God they did. Because we now sell more women's underwear than we do mens. What we were looking for in terms of female ambassadors I decided to watch the men's is obviously larrikins sporty fun. What's women's going to be. We still need the fun but we need it to be quite empowering like tradie is not a shrinking violet type name or brand. So I think that athletes have the way to go but they don't need to be the biggest name athletes and so I love the idea of supporting someone like Danielle who does have some sponsorships but she's certainly not in a glamorous sport that's got a Rolex and all the rest and knocking on her door. So I really like the idea of putting someone like her. I think her figure is perfect for our brand. She is sporting athletic shoes not just a skinny model. Tradie is not about that. When we brought in Charlotte Hazlett she's amazing. She's so proud of her physique. She's got incredible sporting athletic body and that's what we try to be. We want it to be empowering for women. So we're very careful about who we pick and then Kelly Cartwright is the cream on top. She's the most amazing woman I've ever met. She had to have a leg amputated but she did choose to have it amputated at 15 which is an amazing and incredible thing for a 15 year old girl to have to do. And then from that point on she went about creating an amazing identity and going to the Olympics winning the gold medal at 100 meters sprints. And now she does presentations and she's gone to the Olympics again and again powerlifting like people should follow Kelly Cartwright she's an inspiration and I signed her up because she posted a photo of herself in Tradie undies on Instagram and tagged us. I saw that I looked into who she was and oh this girl was amazing. So I contacted her on Instagram as well and she said yeah let's do it. And away we went and she came on board. So we're looking forward to doing some underwear ads with her in the near future and we certainly will.

Tim

Very interesting. So it's becoming pretty clear how this beautiful brand Tradie has become such a household name. Anything else Ben you kind of put your finger on that's really allowed that to happen in such short time?

Ben

Oh look it's just having a crack I think it's the Australian way once you get something that shows a bit of life absolutely go for it throw the kitchen sink in it. I think that's the key thing that we've been since it was who we brought on I think we brought characters that people really relate to. And coming back to beer test you go to Danielle Scott at the pub and say you want to grab a beer in a nice way she absolutely have a drink with you. Same with Nick. They're all wonderful people and fun whereas I think Australians see through these great ambassadors and I think that's what we've done well we've picked really really good personalities to represent the brand that I love.

Tim

Yeah very true. We see through brand ambassadors ain't that the truth. And I must say a lot of business owners listening right now going well we can't afford ambassadors. It's an interesting strategy because inherently it feels expensive. I'd like your comment on that. Suffice to say I interviewed Matthew Pavlik about four or five weeks ago ex AFL legend for those who don't know who the Pav is. He's now gone started a business called pick star and it does allow you to access known sporting identities from everything from having them to your kids 10 year old birthday party an appearance there through to you know appearing in your marketing campaigns and it's a technology company that allows you to go online and approach these guys who you'd love to have represent your brand. It is a fantastic idea. What's your view on it? Is it an expensive strategy? Is it for everyone? This whole endorsement by celebrity?

Ben

An interesting one. I chose people that well known that Honey Badger as much as he's one of the most famous Australians now when I approached him he was not well known at all. And so I was able to do much more affordable deal at the start now and a much more lucrative deal for him now because it's only fair that he gets rewarded for the growth that we've had and the girls we did good deals at the start and again some of that and has been renewed. So I started with lesser known people but with great personalities right. So it wasn't that they were necessarily the best at what they did. I was looking for someone with credibility but also had the personality and then I also went direct with Instagram right I have it right contact them through linked in whatever it might be because the minute you get managers involved they just triple the cost right. And it just becomes unbearable and plus a lot of the stars don't hear about it. So even now if I contact a manager about an AFL player it becomes even for me now where we're at. It just becomes too expensive. Whereas I know of that player hears from saying hey I want to put you on Tradie underwear ads and around the country that player probably wants to do it and they'll probably do it at a cheaper price. A lot of fund but the managers aren't telling them about it I think and they're

throwing prices on them that just don't warrant it. And so businesses like us walk away. So that's why I was very tactful and working with the people that I have that understood that we are a small business trying to have a crack and then down the track. You know they get more money along the lines.

Tim

Well you hit the nail on the head that's why Matthew talking about Pickstar was loving it. I mean one of his challenges was to get past the managers and now he sort of somehow negotiated that. So when you go and approach a celebrity a sporting star through Pickstar they are directly getting a text saying Hey someone's looking. There's a brief on pick Star for this someone you know are interested in it and here's the budget here's the dates and often I think what we forget you know we put these celebrities up on pedestals and think Oh I'd never have any time they're so busy not necessarily true and they do they yeah there's a money factor and they want to earn a quid from their celebrity but they also like getting out there and getting involved in the community and seeing what difference they can make and just enjoying that aspect of it. So I think the lesson there is just ask get on their Instagram and ask them.

Ben

Absolutely. Don't be afraid to be shut down. That's fine and nothing lost right.

Tim

Correct.

Ben

But I think a lot of these players. I think the top 5 percent of players are the ones that are getting the deals and so they're difficult to deal with. So who we've got to look for is the one that a lot of lesser known but have the quirks or whatever suits your brand and go for them. But yeah try and bypass the managers so that you can do it in a way that's effective for both sides and it's clear that what's worked with us is that my people that I've signed up have gone ahead and actually taken on more sponsorships as a result. With working with an underwear brand like us so sometimes you just got to see the big picture. I think managers don't always see the big picture they just want the immediate dollars certainly been lucrative for my team long term. Once I signed up.

Ben

Ben. It's a great story just to finish up. Scope. Given the size of the Tradie brand now SKU's annual turnover. Whatever you can do to kind of give us a sense of scale.

Ben: Yes I think we were. I can't tell you SKU's. I actually don't know but in terms of a retailer about 80 90 million and that we cracked 100 next year per annum. So we're going to be very excited. I'd be partying when we smash 100 mil per annum but we are we are growing. So that's not the end of it. We're going to keep coming. We're going to keep spending on TV.

Tim

I love it mate. It's such a good story. It's so wonderful to hear something you've started from scratch with your old man with great intention and really clear purpose by the way you knew what you wanted to do. You set out with a vision clear in your sight and you've just chased it down I think maybe we should have recognised that earlier because again having that purpose in intention plays a big part in knowing where you want to get to. I'm not sure just whether you know that as you speak about your underwear brand just how many times Ben you say the word crack.

Ben

Yeah that's interesting yeah. Obviously I'm just trying to cover up everyone's crack I have to take note and try to avoid that next time.

Tim

Ben you're having a crack buddy. Well done for those who want to check it out. Tradie with Tradie.com is where you can find out all about it. Ben Goodfellow thank you for taking us behind the scenes of a wonderful iconic Australian brand.

Ben

Appreciate it thanks for taking the time.