

# THE MONTH END

## EPISODE TEN

Jar Goods



MELISSA VITELLI

## SHOW NOTES



### SPEAKER BIO

Melissa Vitelli is the CEO of Jar Goods, a company that makes ultra-premium tomato sauces. Compared to other sauces, Jar Goods sauces contain more tomatoes and olive oil making them thicker, richer, and more flavorful. The inspiration behind the brand was to create a versatile, high-quality sauce that could be used to create a quick meal. She started the company with her sister-in-law Laura about six years ago.

### TAKEAWAYS

#### Sales Channel Breakdown and Advice

- 70% of Jar Goods sauces are sold in retail stores through distributors and the rest is sold via e-commerce; wholesale sites, Amazon, and their website.
- They are having difficulties with their distributors, KeHE and UNFI. Now that they have seen consumers flip to being so much more inclined to go to individual brand websites to buy their products, they see an opportunity to flip their sales channel breakdown and would like to go 70% e-commerce and 30% distribution into brick and mortar retail.
- There are so many hidden costs when working with distributors. They have seen a lot of bizarre deductions from the distributors, and they have won a lot of their disputes.
- Their plan moving forward is to focus on digital marketing.

## TAKEAWAYS (Cont'd)

### Inventory and Supply Chain

- They work with a co-packer and have just-in-time inventory.
- When COVID hit, their entire supply chain was disrupted--their glass, lids, and ingredients. It was a challenge, but it also helped them realize how many people were behind their product, and they got reassurance from their customers.
- They track their inventory using spreadsheets. They rely on thinking through things and using data to make decisions.

### On Being Part of The Chobani Incubator

- It was a six-month program that culminated at Expo West with a pitch session. Melissa “can’t even quantify” how much she learned throughout the experience and would encourage others to find incubators to work with. Each industry has its own nuances that you’ll never understand unless you’re told from somebody who has been through it. Knowing the pitfalls and the challenges has made them more prepared. It’s been the gift that keeps on giving as they still have access to Chobani mentors and employees and can reach out to them when needed.



## CPG BUSINESS DO'S AND DON'TS

### CPG Business Do:

Do the hard work in terms of thinking through it. Thinking through who you are, who your brand is, and how it's going to fit in the world.

There are so many good ideas in the world, but it's not always the right time, in the right place. You need to think that through and make sure that it's a good fit with where you're trying to sell the product. Maybe it's ahead of its time or maybe it's too late and it needs to be tweaked.

Melissa encourages people to do the hard work and think. Thinking is one of the hardest things for people to do sometimes, or facing the facts is really hard, but it's important.

### CPG Business Don't:

Be careful who you take advice from. As Melissa says, "there are so many people who I have come across, even people close to me, who I trust with my life, who I can tell are just beating their chests. However, there are people who, with knowledge, who are not just trying to lord another person and it's important to know the difference, and to know when it's time to take something with a grain of salt or to take something to heart.



## NOTABLE SHOW QUOTES

### **From Melissa on Defining Her Role:**

“When you’re a startup, everybody does everything. You can’t really have defined roles because there are things that need to be taken care of that might not fall in your wheelhouse and you have to rise to the occasion and figure it out.”

### **From Melissa on Looking Into Deductions From Distributors:**

“We have to pay attention because we’re small.”

### **From Brad on Breaking Away From the Big Distributors:**

“Distribution has been completely democratized by the internet.”

### **From Melissa on Having an Online Presence Through the Pandemic:**

“I don’t think that we totally know what’s going to happen after the pandemic is over, but I do think that if people weren’t digitally native before, they are now.”

### **From Melissa on Working With a Co-Packer:**

“We were in the Chobani incubator and something that Hamdi said was not to build out your own facility until you’re at about 50 million.”

### **From Melissa on Tracking Inventory on Spreadsheets:**

“Google Sheets is where I live.”

### **From Brad on Using Your Systems Consistently:**

“Whatever system you’re using, perfect that as much as you can.”

### **From Melissa on Choosing Your Business Partner:**

“To have complementary personalities; one person who is detail oriented, and one person who is big picture, it just makes so much sense. I would encourage anyone going into business to make sure that you have that complementing relationship of personalities.”

### **From Melissa on Standing Out From the Other Sauce Brands:**

“You really have to get deep and philosophical when you’re trying to differentiate and brand yourself.”

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- The Website ([www.jargoods.com](http://www.jargoods.com))
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### LINKEDIN

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/jargoods>



### CONNECT WITH MELISSA ON LINKEDIN

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissa-vitelli>

## VISIT THE JAR GOODS WEBSITE

[www.JarGoods.com](http://www.JarGoods.com)

