



S1E12

The Brands That Win Aren't Afraid to Experiment

Season 1 Episode 12 Notes

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bigleap

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Episode Synopsis

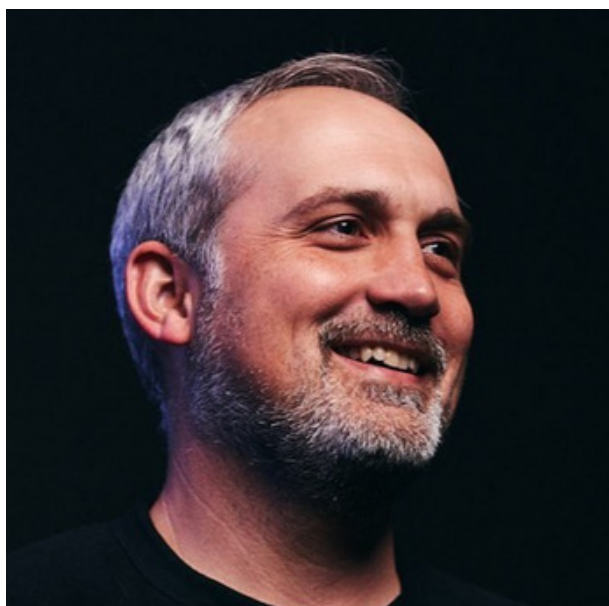
In the late 1990s, Alex McArthur was a BYU student trying to force himself through computer science classes, convinced tech was the only way forward. He hated sitting behind a screen. Today, he's a fractional CMO who has helped build and scale some of Utah's most recognizable brands, driving billions in direct-to-consumer sales along the way. The résumé? Purple from concept to public, the hands-free shoe company Kizik, which Nike invested in, and the smart-oven meal service Tovala.

In this episode of Sweet Takes, host Dan joins Alex over fresh-baked focaccia from F'kosh, a new bakery in Lehi, to unpack the philosophy behind that track record: most brands stall because they're afraid of their own customers. Alex digs into "fixed and flexible" branding, why Purple ran funny mattress ads for four years despite pressure from the board to get serious, and how Kizik stumbled into an unexpected breakthrough with nurses during COVID.

He also shares his "sweet take" on momentum, the idea that growth comes from living in the tension of your brand category rather than playing it safe, plus why he only works with companies solving real problems, what surprised him most about Just Ingredients, and the gloves-changing, loaf-cutting bakery ritual that turned a quick snack stop into a lesson on brand experience. It's a candid look at why the brands that win are the ones that aren't afraid to experiment, one bold point of view at a time.

About

Alex McArthur



Expertise: Brand strategy, marketing leadership, direct-to-consumer (DTC) growth, video-first creative, product positioning, retail expansion, and team building.

Alex McArthur is one of Utah's best-known marketing leaders, a fractional chief marketing officer and brand builder who has helped scale some of the state's most recognizable consumer brands from concept to category leader. Alex is best known for helping turn mattress company Purple into a nationally recognized brand through highly shareable, humor-driven marketing. As Chief Marketing Officer during Purple's breakout years, he helped transform a Utah startup into a major consumer brand, creating campaigns that generated hundreds of millions of video views and made Purple

famous for advertising that combined humor and education rather than traditional mattress messaging. The work earned him recognition as Utah Business CXO of the Year in 2017. He went on to serve as CMO at Kizik, the hands-free footwear company that attracted investment from Nike, where he and his team brought Purple's video-first expertise to a new category, and later at Tovala, the smart-oven meal delivery service. His career was rooted in digital marketing, with earlier executive roles at SEO.com and Orange Soda.

A recurring theme in Alex's work is that great marketing should be entertaining enough to earn attention, educational enough to explain the product, and tested relentlessly before scaling. He champions "fixed and flexible" branding, the idea that the companies that win are the ones unafraid to experiment, live in the tension of their category, and listen to the permission their customers give them. Today he applies that philosophy across a portfolio of fractional projects, partnering with mission-driven companies such as Just Ingredients, and gravitating toward brands solving real problems rather than chasing a quick buck. He also sits on the board of Pestie and previously served on the board of Signs.com.

Based in Lehi, Utah, Alex is a BYU alum, married with three kids and a goldendoodle. When he's not building brands, he loves to hike and play guitar.



Show Notes

In This Episode

- Alex's background, from a childhood spent moving around the country to building a career in digital marketing alongside Big Leap founder Bryan Phelps
- Why he gravitates toward brands solving real problems rather than chase a quick buck
- His work with Just Ingredients and what surprised him most about the company
- How Tovala's smart oven bridges the gap between low-quality microwave meals and time-consuming meal kits
- The story behind Kizik's unexpected breakthrough with nurses during COVID
- Why "fixed and flexible" branding matters, and how rigidity holds companies back
- The difference between executives who genuinely want to grow and those who just want money
- Alex's "sweet take" on momentum and learning to live in the tension of your brand category
- A visit to F'kosh and what makes founder Mia's approach to her bakery so distinctive

Key Takeaways

- Your customers are far more forgiving than you think, so don't be afraid to experiment
- A clear point of view is what turns a product into a brand rather than a commodity
- Real momentum comes from getting comfortable being a little uncomfortable
- Most brands have a document describing who they are but struggle to express it simply

Related Links

- [Alex's LinkedIn](#)
- [F'kosh: Handcrafted focaccia](#)
- [Follow F'kosh on Instagram](#)