



BroadBranch Advisors

Spotlight: Boso Kitchen

BroadBranch Advisors helps organizations solve complex problems and find answers to hard-to-solve strategic questions. Strategy lies at the heart of any successful business but thinking about long-term business strategy often runs the risk of getting overlooked due to day-to-day challenges. Small businesses and start-ups are at greater risk of losing sight of the proverbial strategic forest for the trees as they scramble to get a foothold in their competitive environment. BroadBranch Advisors is proudly associated with a family-owned business called Boso Kitchen, an emerging company which has experienced steady growth by offering high-quality food and snack products to the DC market.

From Soup to Nuts

Located and operated in the Washington, D.C. metro area, Boso Kitchen (www.bosokitchen.com) is a small, family-owned business with a mission to create great food products while helping underserved communities. Rosalie Essimi, who grew up in Cameroon and launched Boso Kitchen in 2015, recalls that access to books and reading was limited for most



children during her childhood. Having discovered her passion for books and reading when her father gifted her a library card upon finishing elementary school, Rosalie wanted to share her passion for reading by providing children with easier access to books. To finance this dream

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and to make it a reality, Rosalie launched Boso Kitchen (“boso” meaning “forward” in her native language of Duala). A true family business with only four employees —Rosalie, her husband, and her two daughters — Boso Kitchen produces spiced and candied nuts (e.g., Maple-Dipped Pecans) as well as hearty soups such as her bestseller Black-Eyed Peas soup with Spinach and Kale. Each of the recipes are inspired by her background and continuously improved through feedback from family and friends.

Strategic Challenges

Just like any other business owner, Rosalie had to make careful strategic decisions along the way to ensure the success of Boso Kitchen. Offering a high-quality product has always been at the forefront for Rosalie, but keeping costs low while maintaining quality has proven to be a constant challenge. Rosalie decided early on that she wanted to offer both snacks and a nutritious meal in her product portfolio. She and her family prepare the soup and nut mixes in small batches in a shared-use commercial kitchen, which helps keep her overhead to a minimum. The successful sourcing of ingredients at competitive

prices remains the most critical requirement to maintain Boso Kitchen’s margins.

“As a small business, we are unable to buy our ingredients in bulk quantities and end up paying almost retail prices for our nuts and other ingredients,” says Rosalie. Boso Kitchen sources its ingredients through wholesalers and local restaurant distributors. “BroadBranch has helped me focus on the economics of sourcing my ingredients and analyze Boso Kitchen from a business perspective,” she continues. As Boso Kitchen continues to grow, they plan to evaluate creative new sourcing strategies for ingredients, such as bulk purchasing deals with local farmers.

The recent spike in inflation at both the consumer and producer levels during the pandemic have also affected Boso Kitchen. For now, it seems that the biggest impacts were caused by supply chain constraints. “We were ultimately forced to raise our prices to offset the increased cost of our packaging materials,” admits Rosalie. With food shortages predicted, caused by the war in Ukraine, Rosalie is concerned about continued increase in her ingredient prices.

To keep the cost of sales low, Boso Kitchen has opted for a go-to-market strategy that relies on direct sales to





consumers at local farmers' markets on weekends. Rosalie has also launched an online sales channel on her company's website (www.bosokitchen.com/local), which has been instrumental in helping Boso Kitchen grow.

Branching Out

When asked about the future, Rosalie is optimistic, saying that she wants to continue to grow Boso Kitchen under the condition that it remains a "family-owned and operated" business. "Keeping it in the family will help maintain the motivation and passion we hold for our products which have made us successful," she says.

To achieve the next growth stage, Boso Kitchen has been working closely with other businesses, such as BroadBranch Advisors, to offer custom tasty snack and holiday gift orders, significantly increasing planning certainty for ingredient sourcing and revenue. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, BroadBranch Advisors has been exclusively sourcing all of its corporate client gifts directly from Boso Kitchen to support Rosalie's small business in challenging times.



BroadBranch Advisors also provided Boso Kitchen with strategic advice on how to grow the business, and with Boso Kitchen's marketing efforts.

Rosalie's next big step is to enter the local retail market to counteract the challenge of scaling her direct-to-consumer sales at local farmers' markets. Her advice for anyone who may wish to follow in her footsteps and start their own business is to, "be meticulous, patient, and proactive and to have an overall appreciation of the growth process for your business."

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