

7-MINUTE

SCALING  **SECRETS**

EPISODE 21

**HOW TO HAVE EVERYONE
TALKING ABOUT YOUR BEER BRAND**



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GUEST SPEAKER
WILLIAM SCHEFFER
CO-FOUNDER & EXPORT MANAGER
chez MONTE CARLO BEER

Alvin Poh 0:00

Hey, everyone. Welcome to another exciting episode of 7-Minute Scaling Secrets, where we interview entrepreneurs and learn a secret on how they scaled up their businesses. Today, we have a special guest, William Scheffer, who has been a serial entrepreneur and has always been heavily invested and present in the f&b scene. Hey William, welcome to the show. Please tell the audience a bit more about yourself.

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William Scheffer 0:57

Hey Alvin, thank you very much for the opportunity. That's great. Yes, I'm.. so I'm William. I was born and raised in Monaco, Monte Carlo. I'm half English half French. Yeah, I'm a serial entrepreneur as you said. I've lived 11 years of my life in Asia, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. I've always been in f&b industry. I've started and run different businesses in bar, restaurants, distribution business. And now my latest venture was.. it's in beer industry. So I founded with my co-founder, my friend yeah and co founder, Anthony, Monte Carlo Beer, which is a.. the first beer approved by the palace and the government of Monaco. We found it out three years ago in 2019. And yeah, and so far the journey has been amazing.

Alvin Poh 1:54

Yeah. And I happen to know an interesting nugget. The prince of Monaco actually drinks your beer.

William Scheffer 2:04

Yeah, that's a great achievement. Very proud of this. We started actually very strong. We went to see all the big bosses in Monaco, we started making some noise. And the TV started to, you know, do interview, radio, the interview with a few podcasts as well. And then the prince yes, hearing from us. So he decided just to order to try and and he's been ordering ever since. So it's been almost three years now. So yeah he loves it from what we heard.

Alvin Poh 2:37

That's a great endorsement. Tell us more like how does a, you know, a brand that came out of nowhere, managed to get interest from everybody, managed to even land the rights to use the word Monaco? And how does that even work?

William Scheffer 2:59

Yeah, you're right. I mean, the Monaco was, the name is of course a country but it's also a brand. It's been protected by the government and trademark and protected by the government of Monaco. So they are very careful in how they use the name, they don't want to use.. they don't want anyone to use the name just to sell more products, which makes sense. So we did

the right way. We contacted the government and say that we want to.. we're from here, obviously, we are not just benefit.. we just don't want to take advantage of the name. We just from here. We want to do something that it doesn't exist in Monaco. With my business partner and I have always had experience in the f&b business, in bar businesses. So we found that interesting that Monaco doesn't have its own beer. Every.. I mean, I guess 90% of countries do own a beer. I mean, do have their own beers, local beers.

So that's what we wanted to do. We did apply as like an application basically, which got approved after actually a month or two. And then at us, so we had to go through back and forth with the packaging as well. We have.. there were a few details that we couldn't use on the bottle. So we had to change the packaging a couple of times, but then eventually yeah, we got the name approved, which was a great first step. That was even before we could start the company. So that was the first step.

Then we started a company and the idea was not only to sell a good looking beer with you know, with the Monaco name on it. We also wanted to do something out of quality. It was the ingredients chosen and the process we use is very meticulous. So we wanted to do something, a high quality, high premium beer with premium ingredients as well. So all our ingredients are from sustainable agriculture from France. We filter our beer. It's the whole process. It's very meticulous, as I said. So it's not only about a good looking beer not only a name, it's also a quality product which is inside yeah.

Alvin Poh 5:14

I'm a big fan of beer myself. And recently the craft beer scene has exploded, right? Not just, I'll say everywhere. And I think getting quality beer, beer that's been like through a very artisanal process results in something that's totally different than any of the commercial beers. And I love what you guys are doing and I can see the bottle in the background, it looks really pretty. The.. it's a shade of pink, and there's a white bottle as well.

William Scheffer 5:50

It's white and red. It's supposed to be red. It's because of the white. It does come out a bit pink, but it's supposed to be red. Yeah. They're both the same color yeah. Red, it's obviously out of the Monaco flag which is exactly the same flag as Singapore. And this is a funny story. The fun fact yeah. But yeah, no, you're right to go back to your.. it's people are getting more and more cautious about what they drink and what they eat as well. It started with the foods but people also have.. they don't.. they have been getting tired of drinking those industrial product, I mean drinks in general.

So the craft beer has really taking a lot of importance into our world and into supermarkets as well. If I don't know if you realize but in supermarket now it's.. the aisles of beers are just getting bigger and bigger. People are really cautious and love trying new beers and love also hearing stories about new beers. So it's a great moment to start momentum.. to start that business and yeah, so far, so good.

Alvin Poh 7:04

And what was the angle that you guys adopted so that there was so much publicity and hype about Monte Carlo Beer? Was it because it was the first beer in Monaco? or like what angle was used?

William Scheffer 7:23

Yeah, so good question. We.. because we're both from Monaco but Monaco does have this image of you know, like very.. I would say like glamorous you know, it's very shiny. It's very luxurious. It's people think.. when you think Monaco, you think about Formula One, yachts you know rich people. We grew up here so obviously there was also another side of Monaco, which is our.. you know, our world. So the idea was to put Monaco on a map, and to show that Monaco is not only you know, bling, bling. It's not only shiny, it's not only yachts and money, it could also be people with passion and good products. And yeah, and then people.. they work hard as well to, you know, to do something meaningful and good.

So yeah, that was the angle. The angle was to put Monaco on a map, but put a different image of Monaco. And, I guess, and the also.. the marketing we use was basically my business partner and I. Which is just two of us, just going on TV and just saying like, Hey, this is what we do. We love Monaco, we love beer. We travel the world, this is what we do and people like that. People like that. They were just like oh, it's finally something different from Monaco. Not just like oh yeah, this is rich guy that did this and did that so now it's.. we did displayed another image of Monaco, I'd say. So I guess, I want to say and then I want to hope that it's.. that's the reason why Monaco beer, Monte Carlo Beer has been successful so far.

Alvin Poh 9:03

Awesome. And between you and your co-founder, is either one of you the brewer? or..

William Scheffer 9:15

No, no. So we.. we're both businessmen. So my business partner, he's my best friend as well. We've been knowing each other for 20 years. We are businessmen and salesmen. So before we started this business, we thought that it would be great to surround ourselves with a great, you know, professional team. And that's what we did. Instead of setting up our own brewery straightaway, what we did is we went to different breweries in the region that already exist and are already brewing their own beer and to introduce our project.

Some of them you know, so we didn't have the recipe but we told them basically what we wanted. And so we chose one, we picked one and we worked together on the recipe. Those guys have a team of five people dedicated to brewery. They're basically experts. They.. for me, they're cooks, you know. You just tell them what you want and then they assemble all the ingredients and then come up with a great recipe. So it took us a few months as well to get the perfect recipe, which we did. And today, we've been working with them and doing the marketing and communication.

Alvin Poh 10:32

Nice. And I know a little bit about your backstory and this is a great segue into the questions that you know, I asked all guests. You have an interesting backstory because you went to school in Asia. And after you graduated, you decided to set up a business right out of school. That's pretty incredible. Because the story doesn't end there. You've moved countries and setup business after business. Now you're back in Monaco.

This is great, because the two questions that I asked everybody, every guest that comes on the show is number one, what is the most important habit in order to be a successful entrepreneur like yourself? What goes through your mind, right? And number two, what advice would you give another business owner? Let's start with the first question. What would you say your most important habit is?

William Scheffer 11:31

Uhm. I think for myself, is the fact that I never.. I always thought that I could.. okay, how to put this. Like, I don't believe in failures. I always thought that what I'm doing at this right moment will bring something amazing to my life. And from.. it's been yeah, I've been an entrepreneur for what? 12, 13 years now. And everything that I've done so far, led me to who I am today and where I am today.

So my habit will be just to always believe in myself and I mean, always believe in myself in anything I do. I play sport as well. I play tennis. I always believe that I'm capable of doing it. And with this habit, you know, remain positive, stay positive. Again, I did encounter failure, if you can, I mean, as a business owner, but again, without this, I wouldn't be here today. So yeah, always believe in.. I always believed in myself. I guess that's my, I don't know if it's a habit, but it's just my, what I always believed.

Alvin Poh 12:43

Yeah, it's absolutely essential. I think people fear failure. But that's not supposed to be the case. Just one step along the journey to success. And I think that's a great habit and mindset to have as an entrepreneur. And the second question, what advice would you give another business owner?

William Scheffer 13:05

What advice.. I'm trying to think what advice I would have liked to receive that, you know, 10 years ago, but there was a sentence that is in French, but I'm sure I can translate it in English. It says, always believe in yourself. Luck helps, but hard work always pays off. So I guess I mean, every entrepreneur here in this world, I guess, know how to even what it is to work hard, but it's sometimes you do work hard, and you feel that it doesn't pay off. You're just like, Oh my God, I've been working so you know, so many hours, I've been working my ass off on this project, on that project, and you feel that it's not going anywhere.

But I can tell with my you know, small experience that it always pays off. And even though it's not the right project, and you might fail that one. The work you put on for that particular company will yeah, it will pay off for your next project. And eventually, you realize that it was not

for nothing. So yeah, I don't know if it's an advice, but I like that sentence that yeah. Always believe in yourself. Luck helps but hard work always pays off.

Alvin Poh 14:23

Yeah, I'm a big believer of trusting the process, committing to the process. Because eventually, we kind of know where we want to go. And sometimes it's not a straight path. Sometimes the path just..

William Scheffer 14:38

It was never a straight path.

Alvin Poh 14:39

It's zigs and zags and maybe it will takes you one round and round but eventually committing to that path and just making sure that we take one step at a time does lead us to where we want to go. Absolutely love that piece of advice. William, if people will want to you know, find out more about you or connect with Monte Carlo Beer, where should they go?

William Scheffer 15:05

So yeah on like social media platforms, Instagram - Monte Carlo Beer, Facebook, LinkedIn as well. Our website is www.montecarlobeer.com. Very easy, very straightforward. And I'm also reachable on LinkedIn. William Scheffer, my name. I usually reply to messages as well. So yeah.

Alvin Poh 15:32

Awesome. Thank you so much for being on the episode. And thank you, everybody. Thanks for tuning in to another exciting episode of 7-Minute Scaling Secrets. If you guys liked this episode, please remember to like, comment, share, and subscribe to the 7-Minute Scaling Secrets podcast. Take care, everybody, and I look forward to catching up with you in the next episode.