

First Act – Manu Feildel

*Automated transcript

Cec ([00:20](#)):

Bonjour. And welcome back to First Act of podcast from Kochie's Business Builders. I'm Cec Busby.

Adam ([00:25](#)):

And I'm Adam Bub.

Cec ([00:40](#)):

On this podcast, we find out the riveting back stories of Australia's most fascinating entrepreneurs and business disruptors.

Adam ([00:48](#)):

Wherever you happen to be listening to us, whether it's in an office, your home office, a train, on a beach, we want you to leave each episode with a little light bulb above your head. This podcast is all about learning from people with priceless life and business experience. Like our guest today.

Cec ([01:04](#)):

Today's guest is one of Australia's most familiar faces in food. For 13 years running, we've watched him grace our TV screens as co-host and judge on my kitchen rules, helping turn dozens of home cooks into household names. But how much do you really know about Manu Feildel? Did you know he comes from a long line of chefs, or the fact that he headed up three-hatted restaurants in Sydney and that he's got a sauce range at Woolies, The Sauce By Manu, and a studio space for events in Sydney, La Botanique. And as a long time small business owner, Manu has numerous ventures that we're thrilled to be hearing about and what he's learned from those enterprises and experiences. Welcome Manu.

Manu ([01:48](#)):

Bonjour!

Adam ([01:50](#)):

<laugh>. <laugh>. It is fantastic to have you on. Actually no, I need to say, ca va?

Manu ([01:57](#)):

<laugh>. Ca va, tres bien, merci. <laugh>

Adam ([01:59](#)):

Merci. <laugh> We always kick our chat off with our First Act icebreaker. So, we just throw you a bit of a left field question, nothing too crazy, but I'm very keen to hear your response to this Manu. Your icebreaker question for today is, what is the most overrated food ingredient or trend on restaurant menus today?

Manu ([02:24](#)):

Wow. Actually, you know what, lately, and you know, I'm not an old fashioned chef. I like, you know, two experience with food, and I like the home cook as well as the fine dining, and so on. But there's a trend at the moment, which drives me bloody nuts, if you don't mind me saying. Caviar, they're putting in caviar on everything. <laugh>. They're putting caviar on chocolate tarts.

Cec ([02:53](#)):

Oh, yuck!

Manu ([02:55](#)):

Most people will say that, but apparently, it goes hand in hand. And I haven't tried it yet, but I'm curious to. But yeah, apparently the caviar trend is to put caviar everywhere on anything.

Cec ([03:10](#)):

Does it make it kind of like salted chocolate?

Manu ([03:13](#)):

I suppose, I suppose it would, but you know, caviar's got a nice kind of little fishy flavour too. So yeah. <laugh>, you know, I understand we use anchovies to salt some of the meat dishes in Italian cooking and so on, so I understand that it can happen, but I'm a little bit dubious about this.

Adam ([03:36](#)):

Yeah. Cuz I'm seeing all of these caviar bumps, these menus with caviar bumps that are really, that it has been rising in Sydney especially, and probably in Melbourne as well. So yeah, that is one to, I mean, chocolate and caviar. I mean, I feel like <laugh>, I feel I won't knock it. [Cec: I feel violated] but I mean, I won't knock until I try it <laugh>. I mean, we'll see. We'll see.

Manu ([04:02](#)):

That's right. We can't judge before we try it. You're correct.

Adam ([04:05](#)):

<laugh>. That's a good one. That's a good one. So, Manu, it makes sense for us to start this chat with food because that's where your passion has come from. Your great-grandfather was a pastry chef, your grandpa and your dad were chefs in France. What was that like growing up?

Manu ([04:23](#)):

Well, funnily enough, I've never met my great grandfather, unfortunately, but, apparently, as far as I understand, he was an amazing artist. He used to, all his window decorations were edible, so he used to spend weeks and weeks before Christmas and Easter and so on to decorate these windows, apparently. And I wish I'd been there to see that, but I didn't. But my mum tells me a lot about that. And going to my grandparents' for lunch on Sundays when we used to used to travel to them, was absolutely amazing because we, I mean, it was home cooked food, I suppose, but we used the best products, you know, the real chicken from the farm, the real milk from the cow, the amazing butter from the farm as well, and all those things. So, you know, I think before even considered being a chef, I just loved food in general. You know, food was amazing. And then I started working with my dad in his restaurant when I was 15. Not really enjoying school, you know, as a kid. Not that I was stupid, but I just wasn't interested. And I

remember the first day in the kitchen, my eyes just wide open. I was just so excited to be there. And that's, I realised that's the job I wanted to do.

Cec ([05:55](#)):

Was that kind of a trial by fire for you, starting as an apprentice in your family restaurant?

Manu ([06:02](#)):

I suppose, I was lucky to have that opening for me because, you know, the apprenticeship can be quite tough. And actually, my apprenticeship got a lot tougher when I moved from my dad to another restaurant. And that was the, not only the apprenticeship of my job, but that was the apprenticeship of my life. Like, it was a tough going at the time. I was 16, doing up to 80 hours a week. And it was a little bit like slavery to be honest with you. And you just had to work as hard as you could and more, if you could. And the pay was very little. At the time it was tough, but I look at it now, I really don't regret it. I think it was a really good kick in the butt.

Adam ([06:57](#)):

Was that in Paris?

Manu ([06:59](#)):

No, it was in Nantes in Brittany, where I come from.

Adam ([07:02](#)):

I see. I see.

Cec ([07:03](#)):

So what lessons do you think you learned early on about hospitality from that time?

Manu ([07:08](#)):

Just that life is hard regardless, you know, and you've gotta rise above it, you've gotta fight hard to get somewhere. You gotta fight hard to succeed, you gotta fight hard to get anywhere. And it's what life is about. Life will throw you a lot of challenges and you've gotta be ready for them. And I think if you get taught this very early in life, it's a bonus. I see the new generation now, and I'm not gonna criticise them because it's kind of our fault more than their fault. We are giving them everything they need and everything they want. And I don't think it's the right thing to do because when they're gonna enter the adult world, it's gonna be very difficult for them.

Adam ([07:58](#)):

So you did the hard yards and you went from, you're working in France, you're working in Brittany, and then you moved to London, and you worked in some of the top French restaurants in London. What memories come to mind when you think of mini Manu, the chef he is now, but who he was then and what you learned from that experience?

Manu ([08:21](#)):

When I arrived in London when I was 18, I could barely speak English. I just had very little education from school, so my English was very, very limited. And I only had 500 pounds in my pocket. The only good thing I had was the job already set. So I just kind of, you know, when I arrived in Piccadilly Circus with all my bags, I was like lost. I thought I was on a different planet cause I couldn't speak the language. And I just didn't know where I was. And it was such a huge city that I was intimidated very quickly. So all I had was my skills, and all I had is a job, and I just put my head down, bum up, and worked as hard as I could. But that was another chapter of my life where I realised that I had to quickly work hard and make some money if I wanted to live and pay my rent and put some food in my mouth. So it was pretty tough too.

Cec ([09:32](#)):

So what are your early memories of those days then?

Manu ([09:36](#)):

I think I'd say 50/50. A lot of crying and a lot of good times. You know, when you leave mum and dad and you live by yourself in a bedsit in London, it's not easy. But then I made some good friends in the kitchen. You know, the restaurant world is a very tight ship. We all work together as a team, it's like a football team. So, there was some good times and some bad times, but I just remember learning so much in the cooking world that it was exciting.

Cec ([10:18](#)):

Yeah, they do say that hospitality is like family, that when you work with someone in a restaurant or a bar, that they do become like family to you. So it's interesting that you say that as well. So given that you were working in some of the swankiest restaurants in London, do you have any cheeky stories to tell us about anyone you served that was famous or <laugh> royalty, perhaps?

Manu ([10:48](#)):

I'm sure I may have cooked for some famous people at the time, but you know, when you're down in the dungeon of the kitchen and you're only a commis chef or chef de partie, you don't really get involved with any of this. You know, it's head down bum up kind of thing. So I've worked in some great restaurants. The last restaurant I worked in was Live Bait, which was a seafood restaurant. And we were nominated one of the best seafood restaurants in London at the time, in 1995, on the side of Rick Stein. So Rick Stein was huge at the time, he was always popular, but I was a young kid. I was 22 years old, so I looked up to him. And it's funny that a few years later we're kind of friends; not close friends, but we've done some stuff together. We've been cooking together and so on. So it's been good.

Adam ([11:57](#)):

You were speaking just a moment ago about the hospo lifestyle and there's that level of camaraderie there. But it's also a world that's not for the faint of heart <laugh>. So at the high end, there's a lot of stereotypes out there of it being really, really cutthroat. And you said it was a bit like slavery at times. How do you think it compares, when you think about the UK and then you think about it in Australia?

Manu ([12:24](#)):

<laugh> It's black and white, my friend. You know, the European mentality of the kitchen. And I suppose there's a timeline as well; we're talking about in the nineties and we're talking about 2023. It's two

different times in the world, but I suppose Europe versus Australia. Europe is ... cooking is ancient, you know, we've been cooking in restaurants for a very long time. It's been a high regarded profession for a very long time. And it's a very competitive environment as well. Arriving in Australia, so much more relaxed, so much more, down to earth, and a lot less stress, a lot less competition, I suppose, between chefs and so on. So, you know, it is different, but as I say, it's also a different time. I suppose my grandpa and my great-grandpa would have a different story to tell, because in their time it was probably even more difficult. So it's becoming a lot easier now. There's more rules in the way that the staff is being treated, the amount of hours that you're allowed to work and so on. So the world is different today.

Cec ([13:51](#)):

Was that stress and the high pressure part of the reason why you decided to move to Australia? What motivated the move to come here?

Manu ([14:00](#)):

No, no, no. Not at all. I think we've got a fabulous job where we really can work anywhere we want in the world. The language of cooking is shared amongst all the countries, so that's what I wanted to do. I just wanted to travel. The idea for me was to travel the furthest I could from Europe and slowly come back. What happened is I never came back. <laugh>. I've been here 23 years, and the only reason because I just fell in love with the country, and I fell in love with the people, and I made my own world here. I've got my own niche, and I'm loving it.

Cec ([14:43](#)):

Well, you've carved out a pretty impressive niche, I think Manu, it's a bit more than a niche these days. You've had a pretty illustrious career here. You've opened restaurants in Sydney and Melbourne. You've had three chefs hats. You had your little place in Paddington with another chef's hat. What would you say was the secret sauce behind those restaurant successes?

Manu ([15:09](#)):

Well, there was some successes, and there was some failures. So I think the successes was just my character, my cooking, my joie de vivre, I suppose, that was all the success. And the failures was the lack of knowledge in the business world. And that was probably the toughest lesson as an adult, I suppose. But just loving cooking for people and putting a smile on their faces and coming out of the kitchen for five minutes and sitting down with a table and having a glass of champagne and going back to the kitchen again. And, you know, the world of running restaurant is a fantastic world. It's a brilliant world. It's magical. It's like a theatre, you know, it's like the curtains open every night when you open the doors. It's brilliant. The only problem is it's a very difficult business to make money out of. There's lots of costs. Overheads are huge. Staff is expensive. The food is becoming hugely expensive, as we know. And so the margins are getting very, very small. So to make a dime out of restaurants today, it's tough. And that's probably why I'm not in it anymore.

Adam ([16:41](#)):

That's probably why those caviar bumps are entering our menus.

Manu ([16:45](#)):

<laugh>. That's right. You could cover caviar bumps for 50 bucks, and that's where you make your money.

Adam ([16:50](#)):

You gotta cover the costs. [Manu: That's right].

([16:53](#)):

Chefs, as you've said that chefs - and this is something that isn't just chefs, it's anyone with a particular skill that they're really good at - can often struggle with the business side of things. We hear it quite a lot. How did you overcome those areas that you felt weaker in? And any advice you have for anyone listening who kind of feels that way? Who feels a bit lost in the business world?

Manu ([17:28](#)):

I think if I had to do, and I mean, I don't regret anything, I don't regret any moments of my life because they've all been a lesson. But if I had to do something extra, if I had to go back and add something to my life, I probably would do a quick business course <laugh> just to make me understand numbers and, you know, the difference between profit and turnover and tax, and all of those things that I had to learn on a way that cost me lots of money that I could have saved if I had a little bit more knowledge

Adam ([18:12](#)):

You mentioned that you've had to close venues as well, and I can't imagine how heartbreaking that must feel when you've put so much blood, sweat and tears into somewhere and you've employed all these people, you want to do right by them. Can you recall any moment of heartbreak, or a challenge that you just go, oh, that one really just still hurts.

Manu ([18:37](#)):

<laugh>? Oh my, yeah. 100% my friend. I've got one for sure. I opened a restaurant for a very short time in Melbourne with my dear friend George Calombaris. And we were only open for a time of six months. We had spent a huge amount of money in the fitout. We had a great menu with great staff, and we had a really bad review from a food critic. And it's funny, and that's why I was saying about the world has changed. In the old days, if you got a review from a food critic, you would've had to buy the book to read the critique, or you may have to buy the newspaper to read it if you were interested. But nowadays, it's printed on social media and it goes everywhere.

([19:42](#)):

Like it's gone crazy so everybody can read it and it becomes news of the day. And because of that, I lost customers. I lost turnover, and yeah, it just didn't make sense, I suppose, to keep going. And it was like a knife in the heart to have to tell my staff that we were closing down, and that we were putting the key under the door, and that was gonna be it. I went through a bit of depression for the full six months after that. It was a kick in the guts, I suppose. But then, you know, what they say is, the show must go on. Life continues on, so you gotta get your head out of the sand and just get on with it.

Cec ([20:39](#)):

That just actually must have been heartbreaking to put so much blood, sweat, and tears into a new venture. Something you're doing with a mate, you've got a whole bunch of staff counting on you as well. And then just one person can make it all come crashing down with a terrible review. It's just number

one, astonishing that that could happen and that it could have that kind of impact. But then the aftermath of that, like you said, it sent you into a depression. How did you manage to get yourself out of that?

Manu ([21:12](#)):

I was just very lucky to have a great wife and great friends backing me up and reminding me that it wasn't necessary failure. It just didn't work. And I just had to find the strength to move on. And it took years before I was confident with myself again. But you keep going and suddenly the trust comes back and you feel better about yourself. And then you've got a new project coming in and you get your teeth into that, and then suddenly you become someone else. You know, it's a new chapter, and you just get on and you learn more skills and you get into different businesses and when you've got a little bit of winning that makes you feel better about it, and you feel like it's worth fighting for.

Adam ([22:17](#)):

It's a great lesson in resilience.

Cec ([22:44](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. We'll be back with more from Manu after this short break.

([22:44](#)):

We're back with Manu Feildel. Now, My Kitchen Rules. It's been an absolute juggernaut for so many years. What have been the upsides and the downsides for you of becoming part of this massive brand and becoming such a public figure?

Manu ([23:00](#)):

I've never been asked this question, actually. It's good <laugh>. There's been a lot of upsides, but yes, there's been some downside. To be honest with you, when we did the first ever series, 15 years ago, I was a fish out of the water. You know, I'd done a little bit of TV on Ready, Steady Cook, which was nothing compared to what My Kitchen Rules' production was. So it was very scary. My English was probably worse than what it is today. My accent was probably stronger than it is today. I had a huge amount of scripts to learn, which was something that I wasn't very good at. And, yeah, it was really daunting for the whole series. <laugh> And series two was a little easier, but still quite scary. And then series three was better and 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and you name it, you know, it became my job. It became every day, and I got better at it, and I felt more more comfortable with it. And it's become my life, I suppose. It became my life. I suppose the negative part of it is there's not much private life left <laugh>, you know, everybody knows about what I do, when I, you know, scratch my nose or whatever it is, <laugh>

Adam ([24:41](#)):

Headline! Manu Feildel scratched his nose.

Manu ([24:44](#)):

Well, I'm telling you, when you see some headlines, you just laugh, you know, <laugh>

Adam ([24:49](#)):

Yeah. The good old Daily Mail headline

Manu ([24:52](#)):

You know, when my daughter was born, I was chased by the paps on a daily basis and all of those things. But as I say, it's part of the job. When you go to a restaurant, you don't know if it takes a long time to get your food because probably the chef at the back are working extra time on your plates <laugh> you know?

([25:16](#)):

But I can't complain. You asked me the question earlier on, why Australia? I think Australia was meant to be for me. I've got more than I ever dreamt of here. You know, I've had an amazing life, amazing career. I've got an amazing family, amazing friends. I feel lucky.

Adam ([25:46](#)):

Going from, as you said, going from being more behind the scenes when you're a chef, most of the time you're not really seen. <laugh> You're in the kitchen, you're slaving away, you're doing that hard yards, and then you go to living, to being very much front of everything. A public face, a public figure. How does that sort of attention impact? You've said how it kind of impacts your family life, but also the time that you can devote to your business ventures?

Manu ([26:14](#)):

Yeah, no, to be honest with you at the beginning, it's really cool, you know, everybody knows your name, everybody shouts at you, and you feel like a rockstar. Of course you do. You know, I'm a human being, so I really did enjoy the attention for sure. But yeah, at the end, then you realise you're a normal person and you've gotta do normal things. You've gotta take your kids to school, you've gotta go to do your shopping in a supermarket, and you've gotta get your haircut and go to dentist, all the normal things that people do. So you are not that special at all, you know? But life becomes busy because I think everyone wants a piece of you, I suppose, and you get involved in a lot of different style of work.

([27:05](#)):

You kind of represent brands and people want you to cook for them, charity stuff. And so your life becomes really, really busy, and it becomes really hard to juggle between life and work. But again, you know, it's not something I can complain about. To be honest with you, I love working hard. I love being busy. What I don't like is not having the time to take a holiday every now and then. But the work is always in the way, but, you know, it's my life and I really enjoy it.

Adam ([27:46](#)):

I reckon there's a lot more pressure on business owners to be the face of their business nowadays on social media. What kind of advice do you have for anybody who might be listening, who has traditionally come from being that behind the scenes person and is now having to treat themselves as, you know, the talent?

Manu ([28:06](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I think you just gotta believe in yourself and believe in your product, and believe in your business model. For me, it's hard in a way that I've put my face to a brand many, many times, being an ambassador of different brands. Now I've got my own brand, the message is to make sure that the customers know that this brand is mine. This brand is my sweat, my blood, my tears, my money. I'm not putting a name to someone else's product. And that's the difference between what I've done in the past. So that is a big message to put out there. And it's hard to communicate it. But it's getting there

now. I think people now knows the By Manu brand. They know that I'm the guy behind it, so it's good. But it takes a lot of messaging, a lot of marketing, I suppose, and a lot of throwing words at and sharing the knowledge.

Cec ([29:13](#)):

So since you've brought up The Sauce By Manu, how did that come about? What was the aha moment? When did you go, yep, I'm gonna put out my own product. I'm not gonna be, you know, just a name on someone else's thing. I'm gonna do my thing.

Manu ([29:31](#)):

There's different layers to the reason and the why and how it happened. Firstly, it happened after begging for sauce on the show, My Kitchen Rules. Always saying, oh, guys, where's the sauce? Where's the sauce? <laugh>? That sentence became, you know,

Cec ([29:53](#)):

It's synonymous <laugh>.

Manu ([29:56](#)):

Yeah. You know, people used to scream in the street, Hey buddy, where's the sauce?

Adam ([30:01](#)):

Have you got, do you have shirts? Do you sell t-shirts that say 'Where's the sauce?'

Manu ([30:05](#)):

Yes, we do.

Adam ([30:07](#)):

Thank goodness for that, cuz I think I need one.

Manu ([30:09](#)):

I'll send you one

Adam ([30:10](#)):

<laugh>. Yes!

Manu ([30:12](#)):

So yeah, it became a tagline for a couple of years, a few years. And then one day I just went back to the office and I said to my right hand, I said, why don't we do a sauce range? I said, oh yeah, what a great idea. And then we looked what was on offer in the supermarket chains, and it was really nothing that I thought was great quality or a great flavour, or was made the proper way. Nothing that I wanted to buy for myself and heat up and put on my steak. It was all basic and terrible flavours and terribly made. So we decided to go ahead and create our own recipes, and searching for manufacturing companies to multiply 250 mils into two and a half thousand litres <laugh>.

([31:15](#)):

So yeah, it was a long journey. It took us five years to get the product made properly, to the way I wanted to get it done. And then it took us all that time to be able to find a distributor to get on the shelf. And now we've been on the shelf for three years with Woolies. They've been very supportive of the brand. And we are just about to start with Coles this year as well, which is a great success to be able to be in a two major chains of supermarket in the country. It's funny because when the sauce was made and when Woolies got it, I thought that was it, that I didn't have to work anymore. <laugh> <laugh>.

[\(32:11\)](#):

But that's where the job started, you know, it's incredible how much time we have to spend on this product to make sure that the sales are repeated and that the sales grow and that it becomes a proper business, you know? We didn't know anything about the retail world, nothing at all. And we had to learn on the way which was very exciting, very hard, very tough, but very rewarding. It's been three years now and I think that the brand is finally anchored in the retail world, and I hope it's gonna stay there for as long as I live.

Adam [\(32:58\)](#):

So for a lot of business owners, wanting to create a mass market product that's snatched up by a supermarket, it would be the dream. What's your best advice for anyone about creating a product that's not just a flash in the pan, not something that is just on the shelves for a couple of months and then we never see it again?

Manu [\(33:17\)](#):

Well, I can tell you one thing is it didn't matter if I was Manu Feildel or anyone Joe Blog or anyone on this planet. My name maybe helped a little bit to get my foot into the door, but you have to knock on people's door. Coles didn't understand the product for many years and I knocked on Coles' door every single year. And every single year they refuse, and this year they accepted. So again, it's all about trusting in your brand, trusting in your product, trusting in your business model, and just knock on doors, knock on doors. And I'll tell you what, I'm the best rep of my brand. I'm the only one that goes around and knock on people's door and show the product and cook the product to anyone I want my product to be used. And there's no better sales rep in my team. I'm the one. And that's what you need to do. Until the business becomes big enough and you've got a team big enough to one day semi retire and, you know, finally go on holidays, I suppose. That's the end of the game.

Cec [\(34:39\)](#):

Yeah. I think you told a story when I was at La Botanique a while ago about how you would turn up with the sauce going, I'm gonna make you the sauce and try the sauce, and the reps would be like, what Manu is cooking for me in our kitchen?

Manu [\(34:58\)](#):

Yeah, that was, people are still shocked when I turn up <laugh> because they see me as the TV guy, you know, they don't see me as anybody else. And then they expect that the Sauce By Manu is made by someone else, and the Sauce By Manu marketing is paid by someone else and so on. But they don't understand that this brand is mine and I'm very proud of it. And the reason why I entered the retail world is because I knew that the restaurant, I decided to leave the restaurant business behind, but I still wanted to keep a foot in the door in the food industry. So instead of feeding the masses through a restaurant chain, I just now feed the masses through a supermarket chain <laugh>. And my product is as

clean as I would do it in my own kitchen. You know, it's made with real ingredients. There's no additive, there's no preservative, there's no added sugar, it's gluten free.

(36:08):

All you have to do is tear the packet, bring it to boil and pour it on your steak. And it's simple as that. I've done all the work for you guys.

Cec (36:34):

What is it that's kept you motivated to pursue this business idea and these business dreams, when quite easily, you could be that guy who is the TV star and doesn't have to have businesses?

Manu (36:58):

I suppose there's many reasons. I think one of the biggest reasons is I've worked a long time. I've been in the working world for 35 years now, and I've had restaurants that done well, but never been really, really successful. I've done restaurants that were a complete flop. I just wanna, I think I'm just ready today. I'm mature. I've got the knowledge, I've got the understanding, and I've got this, I think this product is now the success story. I think I'm going to finally be successful with one of the projects I've decided to create. I want this to be my retirement plan. You know, I think this is it, that I'm finally ripe to be successful with a food business.

Adam (38:02):

I do like that you use a lot of food words when describing things, using hungry and ripe. I know it's just so in your language, it's so in your vernacular that that's how you talk. I love it. One of the other businesses that you've had over the past few years has been La Botanique, a multi-functional catering, events and production space in Sydney. What have you learned from that business?

Manu (38:29):

So that was the first business I looked at when I decided to stop doing restaurants. And I wanted to start creating products. Which I didn't think the sauce was quite there yet at the time, but I bought the building in the dream of building a kitchen where I could do all my trials and my recipes and so on. But I was looking for something that was small enough to have maybe a desk, couple of desks and a kitchen. And this place in Botany, La Botanique, that warehouse - I walked in and it was such a huge space. I'm like, oh my God, no, this is far too big for what I was thinking of. But then my imagination just went wild, and I started saying, maybe we could have a filming kitchen and a commercial kitchen, and then we can do functions, and then we can have a bar, and then we can have an office over there, <laugh>.

(39:32):

And so my wife thought that was crazy, and I'm like, I don't know. I said, why not? You know? So we went for it and we started building during Covid, and it took a long time because of all the issues during Covid, but we finally got this space, which is our space, and which is incredible. And Clarissa, my wife, is the one that runs it; she runs all the bookings. And it's a great space now, and it's a multi-function space. A lot of filming is happening here for all the TV networks, but a lot of brands are coming to use it for videographing and functions and so on. So, yeah, we've got a nice little business here too.

Cec (40:17):

You certainly do Manu, and it's a beautiful location. If anyone's looking for a studio to hire and they're in the food space, I would say check it out. And if you've got an event, I would say check it out as well. Anyway, just to wrap up, what are you excited about at the moment? What's next for Manu? I know that there's some exciting news around raising some funds for the By Manu brand.

Manu ([40:56](#)):

Yeah, so we came across a company called Equitize, a company that deals with crowd funding. Crowd funding is a great concept, I suppose, versus getting a business partner that could throw you a big check, and in exchange they would want a return very quickly and then perhaps make a lot of the decisions for you. The crowd funding is more like going to the crowd. That's where the crowdfunding words come from, is going to the crowd and saying, listen, I've got a great business at the moment, I'd like to expand the business. To be able to expand the business, I need a little bit more capital. But I'm happy to share slices of the cake of this business with whoever wants to get on board.

([42:01](#)):

So, you can invest as little as \$500 to as much as you want, I suppose. And it's a great little way of being part of the By Manu family, the By Manu brand. So everybody can get involved, and become part of the family. And what's great about this is then if you're part of the family, then you tell all your friends and family that you're part of that family. And so, it's a tool that becomes also a marketing tool at the same time. And what we need the money for? It's to build a bigger team. We have a very small team and we've achieved a lot. There's just a few of us, but we need a bigger team.

([42:57](#)):

And we need a team of sales rep to go around the country, to make sure we can be in more shelvings in different supermarkets and independent shops. We also started working with a food service, which is working with pubs and restaurants. So I would love to expand in that way as well. And marketing. Marketing is number one in brands. It doesn't matter what you sell, you've gotta put the brand in people's face. They've gotta be reminded that the By Manu brand is there. The By Manu brand exists, and if you don't know about it, we're gonna tell you about it.

Adam ([43:54](#)):

Well, yes. We gotta get put the brand in their face and literally put it in their mouths.

Manu ([43:59](#)):

Exactly. Indeed. Yes.

Adam ([44:02](#)):

If we get the link from you, we can pop that in our show notes for this episode, Manu. Unfortunately that's all we have time for today. Manu, thank you so much for joining us. It's just been an absolute pleasure hearing your First Act.

Manu ([44:16](#)):

Well, thank you for having me. And it was a pleasure talking to you both.

Cec ([44:20](#)):

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Thanks Manu. And to find out more about the Sauce by Manu, you can check out at bymanu.co or visit Manu's website at manufeildel.com.au

[\(44:31\)](#):

Or follow him on Insta, Manu Feildel Official. Thank you for listening. And join us next time for another fantastic first act conversation.