

Experience This! Show Podcast

Hosts: Joey Coleman & Dan Gingiss

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Episode 121 - The Sound and The Story

Joey Coleman (00:05):
Welcome to Experience This!

Dan Gingiss (00:08):
The podcast that celebrates remarkable customer experiences and inspires you to stand out from the competition by wowing your customers.

Joey Coleman (00:17):
Each episode, we bring you a healthy dose of inspiring stories, funny interactions, and practical takeaways. Marketing and customer experience thought leader, Dan Gingiss...

Dan Gingiss (00:30):
shares the mic with customer retention and employee experience expert Joey Coleman, helping you to get people talking about your business.

Joey Coleman (00:40):
So get ready because it's time to Experience This!

Joey Coleman (00:49):
Get ready, for another episode of the Experience This Show!

Dan Gingiss (00:53):
Join us as we discuss products that provide their own soundtrack, rockstars that aren't real, and a story that made me want to try a brand new product.

Joey Coleman (01:06):
Making, faking, and salting - Oh my!

Joey Coleman (01:12):
We love telling stories and sharing key insights you can implement, or avoid, based on our experiences. Can you believe that This Just Happened?

Joey Coleman (01:26):
We've spoken about LEGO many times before on the show and as our loyal listeners know, I am a big fan!

Dan Gingiss (01:34):
I sure hope you're not going to make me go find all those episodes, but yes, we have brought up LEGO and, you know, just to say, Joey, I am also a big fan. Although I would say that when my kids stopped playing with LEGOs, I also did. And so, but I, I know the feeling of getting a new set and tearing, open the package and getting ready to build something new. And it's, it's definitely a ton of fun.

Joey Coleman (01:58):
It is, and I will say I played with LEGO as a kid growing up. I then didn't do as much LEGO before I had kids. Now my boys at ages five and seven are right in the LEGO sweet spot, uh, where they're old enough to not be playing with DUPLO and excited about building sets and can follow the directions. My five-year-old is regularly doing the super advanced sets and he gets a kick out of that. And I think it's fun too. And so just a big fan, but that's part of the reason why I wanted to come back to LEGO and no, I'm not going to make you Dan "Rain Man," us with all the previous episodes. You're right. But there was a new aspect of my LEGO experience that came up over the holidays that I wanted to share. So for Christmas, my two boys gave me the Iron Man LEGO art set.

Dan Gingiss (02:45):
Oh yeah. I think I saw that in a catalog or a circular or something. It's the one where you make a portrait of iron man

out of LEGO?

Joey Coleman (02:54):

You are correct. I love that you get circulars!

Dan Gingiss (02:55):

Oh, I get the Sunday paper, man. I read the ads.

Joey Coleman (03:00):

I love it. I love it. As part of their new art series, LEGO is celebrating some of the world's most iconic artists and bands and characters with sets that allow you to not only make wall art to display, but each set comes with several building options. So not only could I make a portrait of the famous Iron Man, Mark III, which for those of you that are not huge Iron Man fans is the suit that he wore in the first Iron Man movie. But with those same pieces and that same board, if you will, I could also make the Hulkbuster Mark I or the Mark 85, which the Mark 85 is famous for being the suit that he wears in the final battle against Thanos in the last Avengers movie

Dan Gingiss (03:49):

You asically lost me. But I think I am going to say that I know enough to know that Hulk Buster refers to "Incredible" not "Hogan."

Joey Coleman (03:58):

You are correct.

Dan Gingiss (03:59):

Okay. That's good.

Joey Coleman (04:00):

That's when Incredible Hulk got into like the costume and then they had to make the, a bigger costume so that Iron Man could fight Hulk it anyway, long story short, to be honest, I'm not as much of a comic book, aficionados as I might come off as in this conversation. But I was really intrigued by this, just this whole general concept of these LEGO art sets. And if that wasn't enough, if you purchase three of the art sets, you can combine all of them to create a giant picture or as LEGO says the "Ultimate Iron Man" piece. So as you might imagine, I'm in the process of building the ultimate Ironman piece, which is what I wanted to talk about today.

Dan Gingiss (04:39):

I think this segment might be better with video cause I could see this.

Joey Coleman (04:43):

I think it definitely would be better with video and in the interest of full disclosure, maybe by the time we released this episode about, uh, don't hold your breath fans. I don't know that I will be able to, uh, complete this setup before then. But if you go online and you look at Ultimate Iron Man LEGO, you'll see a picture of it, but long story short, instead of while video would make it great. I actually wanted to talk about the audio,

Dan Gingiss (05:07):

The audio? Our listeners are already experiencing the audio.

Joey Coleman (05:13):

Well, yes they are. But I wanted to talk about the audio experience of the Iron Man LEGO art set. So when you open the box, you find the assembly manual, as you might imagine. And in the front of that manual is a little QR code with the following text underneath it. And I quote, "LISTEN - start your exclusive podcast and immerse yourself in the Iron Man story. BUILD - follow the simple building instructions in this book to create your art piece, RELAX - LEGO art is the perfect way to disconnect de-stress and decompress." Now, when you open the landing page that the QR links to there is a one hour and 30 minute podcast featuring interviews with comic book aficionados members of the Marvel comics team that worked on iron man and the two Lego designers that oversaw the creation of this specific LEGO art set. It's entertaining, it's educational. It's just the sort of unique experience that adds an unexpected layer to the LEGO set.

Dan Gingiss (06:15):

Now, hold on, hold on. Before we go further, are you about to tell me that there's going to be a new LEGO set that comes out with a QR code that links to the experience of this show?

Joey Coleman (06:23):

You know, that would be pretty fabulous. We would have to work on that. No, but I love this idea of, and I'm not a huge

QR code guy, but ever since they made it so that your phone automatically links and you don't have to like have a separate app and figure all that out, it makes it a lot easier. But I want to play a little sample of what you hear when you start off the podcast.

Guest Voices (06:46):

It was just an interesting idea. You know, of a guy who has to wear this big bulky armor as he did at first, but you still have to build in that weakness. What is his weakness? Wait a minute. Why is this thing on his chest? Oh, wait, he almost died. You know, he's this very fragile guy in a certain way, but he's also like one of the richest guys in the world, a great inventor and so forth. He's a cool exec with a heart of steel. What else is there? Iron Man was always a, uh, an evolving look. It was interesting to see the story evolve because that first outfit that Iron Man had looked like a hot water tank.

LEGO Narrator (07:22):

Imagine crafting your own wall art. Maybe it's a passion that fascinates you, or maybe it's the promise of an immersive creative experience. Like no other, a piece of iconic art you can build for yourself, relax and reconnect with your creative side.

Joey Coleman (07:42):

Now this podcast, as you can tell is fun. It's educational. It's just some interesting yet relevant background sound to accompany you, building the LEGO set. And as I think Lego probably figured out, there are a lot of people who are fans enough of Iron Man to get the set, but they're not crazy fans in the sense. And I, and I say that lovingly not pejoratively. They're not going to know all the nuance of who drew, which comic and what the evolution of the various costumes were. But because they're basically showing the different outfits that are Iron Man wore, the different armor suits, they're walking you through the history and the evolution of the armor. And I got to say this podcast soundtrack thing that they did added an entirely new dimension to my LEGO experience. I've been building LEGO sets since I was seven years old and I've never considered what I'm listening to while I build the set.

Dan Gingiss (08:43):

So it's fascinating because we've talked before about different senses on the show. We've talked about adding smell to a hotel, lobbies talked about the bookstore that I didn't have any lights. And so this is interesting that we're adding some audio here. What my question for you is does it make it easier or harder to put together the LEGO set? Like, are you busy listening to the podcast? And so now it's hard to read the instructions or does it kind of just all flow together?

Joey Coleman (09:14):

Well, what's interesting about the Lego art sets is the best way to describe it is it's kind of like assembling a mosaic, right? You're looking at a grid and they're very specific little colored disc and you're putting them in rows. So it's kind of a rote task, you know, put the blue one here, put the black one here. Now put another blue one. So it doesn't require kind of the same level of mental engagement that building a set where you're building a tower or a ship or something like that might. So I actually found it additive. I could totally understand that thought of like, Oh, is it distracting? Which interestingly enough leads me to. The next thing I wanted to share, which is that not only is LEGO created soundtracks for the various Lego art sets and you can listen to these, by the way, on the LEGO website, you don't need to purchase the set. You can just go listen to the various soundtracks they built, but they also recently announced another sound project and knowing how much you're a Name That Tune kind of guy, Dan, I would like to play a little tune and see if you can guess what you're listening to. Okay. So I'll give you a hint, obviously it's LEGO related, but see if you can tell me what this is

Random Sound (10:42):

- sound

Dan Gingiss (10:43):

So it kind of sounds like a bunch of LEGOs falling down, but I'm not sure...

Joey Coleman (10:46):

You are so good at name that tune, Dan. Yes, it is a waterfall of LEGOs. And not only is it a waterfall of Legos, it's a 30 minute track of LEGOs falling of like just falling and falling and falling and fall sound. Yeah. And what's interesting is that is one of seven tracks on the white noise playlist from LEGO available on Spotify, which we'll link to on our show notes page. So the interesting thing about this is LEGO has realized that some people might want sound in the background and they created these long play, looping 30 minute things that are just ambient background noise, but is LEGO related. Now I'll be honest. It might be, uh, that might be a little too far for some people, but I just thought it was super creative that they did something like that.

Dan Gingiss (11:41):

Yeah, it is pretty neat. I mean, if it's something that you want to listen to, I don't know if does it help you go to sleep or...

Joey Coleman (11:46):
soothing background noise when you're making Legos, guess.

Dan Gingiss (11:53):
It kind of sounds like maybe I should create one with like pinball sounds or something.

Joey Coleman (11:57):
Yeah - exactly! Well, and I think, I think the moral of the story is Lego has recognized that they can add another dimension to their experience by thinking about the auditory experience of what's going on when people are building their LEGO set. So what can we learn from the incredible team at LEGO? Well, consider the environment where your customer is going to be using your product or your service consider why they use your product. And if the goal is something akin to LEGO users who have a goal of disconnecting and de-stressing and decompressing, you might want to help them achieve their goal by adding an auditory experience of your brand, what is the sound of your product? How can you use sound to entertain your customers? How can you use sound to educate your customers? Take note from the creative team at LEGO and make sound a bigger part of your customers' experience.

Joey Coleman (12:53):
Sometimes a remarkable experience deserves deeper investigation. We dive into the nitty gritty of customer interactions and dissect how, and why, they happen. Join us while we're Dissecting The Experience.

Joey Coleman (13:11):
I'm curious, Dan, have you heard this singer before? I'm going to play a little clip:

Guest Voices (13:19):
You my número, número uno, but we overdosed You were there in my orbit like Pluto When we used to be close You said you were home, but I just caught you High at Chateau People said we would fade like a photo Didn't think it would happen with you though I miss what we used to be Out every night in the streets.

Dan Gingiss (13:41):
Well, actually, Joey, this might surprise you... I have no clue.

Joey Coleman (13:49):
I had a feeling this one might be a little bit of a stretch, but before I explain, let me ask this. Is there anything that you can discern or tell me about this singer based on that little clip you just listened to?

Dan Gingiss (14:04):
Well, I mean, she's females, it seems like a younger woman and uh, definitely, she was definitely saying some words in Spanish. That's about all I got.

Joey Coleman (14:15):
All right. Well that is a pretty accurate guess. All things considered Dan you're right? That she is a young singer. She's 19 years old. She's actually a Brazilian American model singer and Instagram influencer. And she's also not human.

Dan Gingiss (14:32):
I'm sorry. I'll rewind here. I'm sorry. Not human.

Joey Coleman (14:39):
Not human. Correct.

Dan Gingiss (14:40):
All right. I'm going to need an explanation here, Joey.

Joey Coleman (14:44):
All right. Well, I was definitely a little bit confused and wanted an explanation as well. When I first came across Lil Miquela, Dan, as it turns out, Lil Miquela is a computer generated persona created by the Los Angeles based firm Brud. Now Brud is a "transmedia studio that creates digital character driven story worlds that unfold across today's social platforms." Now I know that's kind of a mouthful. That's the way it's described on their VC page. But the founder was previously a talent manager at Spotify and was helping artists build their personas. Now, instead of working with temperamental young recording artists, they build computer generated personas, and then bring them to life like Lil Miquela. She has over 27,000 followers on Twitter, which puts her at about 26,980 more than me. But here's the real kicker. She has over 3 million followers on Instagram.

Dan Gingiss (15:50):
And do people know that she's not real?

Joey Coleman (15:53):
That's the kicker everybody's in on it. Everybody's in on the joke. They know that this is a computer generated avatar. It's not a real human and they're okay with that and they're fans. And she interacts with people. Now we've spoken about something similar to this in our conversation about deep fakes being used in politics. And as you may recall, in that episode, we talked about deep fakes. It looks so real that they could confuse viewers. Now, Lil Miquela is admittedly, not real, but that takes us, I think, to a fascinating conversation about what's real or not real. And whether that actually matters or not. Does it matter if the influencer promoting your brand or product is real? Does the analysis change when the audience knows the person isn't real and they don't care or better yet, they actually prefer knowing the person isn't real like the case with Lil Miquela. Now I recently came across this website: ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com no, seriously, just type it in: ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com And when you go to this website, you'll see a picture of a person, except it's not a real person. It's a computer generated image made using software from Nvidia to create an image that looks like a real person, but it isn't a real person. And I'll tell you, it's almost impossible to tell the difference between what is the fake person and what is the real person.

Dan Gingiss (17:20):
ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com. Woah! She's pretty...

Joey Coleman (17:27):
Yeah!

Dan Gingiss (17:27):
It's just not real.

Joey Coleman (17:29):
Now. Now wait. And after a couple of seconds, a little thing will pop up. That explains that they use software to create this person. And if you hit refresh, you'll see a different face... You'll see another person.

Dan Gingiss (17:42):
Wow.

Joey Coleman (17:43):
Except except these aren't real people. Now what's crazy is the same creators of ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com, they have a website for cats: ThisCatDoesNotExist.com. Horses: ThisHorseDoesNotExist.com. Art! Well, you get the picture. And yet all of the pictures they're sharing are computer generated. They aren't real. Now while this is arguably a very interesting and maybe strange thing for us to be talking about on the experience. This show, I think this type of technology has a ton of experiential applications. I mean, within the last year of COVID protocols and lockdowns, imagine if you could still shoot commercials with quote "people," by building them inside the computer program, imagine a manager that never needed to worry about their singer trashing a hotel room. Imagine a studio that could have an actor, an actress that never ages. Now some of these concepts were explored way back in the 2002 movie *Simone*. You remember that one Dan with Al Pacino?

Dan Gingiss (18:42):
I think so...

Joey Coleman (18:44):
But what's interesting is in that movie, Al Pacino creates this computer generated actress who goes on to win all these acting awards. And that was science fiction in 2002, but that's reality in 2021. I mean, it's not even 20 years later. And this thing that was a Hollywood concept movie is a software that you can go on YouTube and watch a tutorial of how to make it create fake people.

Dan Gingiss (19:12):
Well now see, I was Lil Miquela. Cause you know, when you watch the video on YouTube, you can kind of tell it's a computer generated character and hey, if her music sounds good to people. That's all good, but I'm still stuck on ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com that I keep hitting refresh and refresh. I'm like, wait a minute. These people don't exist. They all look like unbelievably real. And that starts to get really, really scary, especially in a world that you and I have been living in, in the United States where real news fake, no news lie is true. We don't even know the difference anymore. This can make that even more complicated.

Joey Coleman (19:50):
Absolutely. And when you think about your brand and when you think about, you know, spokespeople or influencers

that you might want promoting your products or services, and then you think about customers that you might interact with, or customer photos that you might have on a website or use in your marketing materials. Do those have to be real people? I mean, I think at the end of the day, most Americans know when they see an advertisement that those are actors that they're hired to play.

Dan Gingiss (20:21):
Or are they?!

Joey Coleman (20:23):
But here's the crazy thing. What if they're not, what if you can get them to say anything? What if you can make a video or a computer generated persona that looks like someone famous, but isn't really them. I mean, there was an ad during the Super Bowl that was about all the lookalikes and it had Christopher Walken's voice and then the final, this, we're long enough after the Super Bowl, I feel like I don't need to say spoiler alert, but at the end of the commercial, they pull back and it's a guy who says, and I'm not Christopher Walken and they show the guy and he's definitely not Christopher Walken. And yet all this time, you've thought Christopher Walken was doing the voiceover. I think this is just crazy. When we think about building brands and building experiences and building interactions with our customers and with our employees, what defines real?

Dan Gingiss (21:14):
Well. I think that we know in customer experience that authenticity being genuine are things that customers value. So in the situation of Lil Miquela where people know they're listening to something, computer generated fantastic, right? I mean, that's part of the allure. And so I love that. I think we gotta be very careful though, when we're trying to deep, fake our own customers into thinking something is real when it's not, you know, you could go down a whole lot of bad paths with this, including, you know, fake testimonials and all sorts of things that I think are, we certainly would not advise on this show, but like the deep fakes that we talked about, I think it's great to know that this technology exists so that you can watch out for it - either you, or your competition, or whoever else - and be aware of it and look, let's keep it real folks.

Joey Coleman (22:08):
Absolutely. I mean, I don't think I want to be very clear. I'm not suggesting any of our listeners create deep fake customers or personas. But what I am suggesting is that the landscape of influencers and content creation is changing in ways that I think most people aren't even aware of let alone, considering I'd ask those people who are listening to answer this question, honestly, had you even heard of Lil Miquela before this segment? Now the answer is no. I'd like to suggest that you ask some teenagers, you know, or some folks that are in their early twenties, if they've heard of Lil Miquela and if so, what if they, what do they think of her or her music, or if you're not into regular conversations with, uh, teens or people in their early twenties go to Lil Miquela's Instagram profile and look through some of the images, try to find ones that you know are fake, but look real and then read her posts and the comments and the interactions and see if you can get a feel for what the personality is like. And then ponder the fact that you're considering a personality and a persona that is entirely computer generated, and then ask what would happen if you brought this same level of creative thinking and technology application to the experiences that you're creating for your customer.

Joey Coleman (23:28):
Almost everyone has interacted with chatbots, but all too often, it's been a bad experience. In MythBusters - presented by Solvvy - we explore a common myth about CX chatbots and see how the right technology can create a positive experience every time.

Joey Coleman (23:54):
Today's myth about chatbots? Chatbots are difficult and expensive to build and manage. Most people think that chatbots require significant time and an entire engineering team to build, not to mention dedicated subject matter experts and even more engineers to manage on an ongoing basis. Once the chatbot is put in place. In other words, chatbots require lots of time, money, and resources.

Dan Gingiss (24:22):
Now, while there is a myth that chatbots are expensive and difficult to manage, the reality is that modern chatbots are easy to implement and can learn on their own. Unlike traditional chatbots that require you to code for every possible question and answer combination you might possibly see next gen chatbots are able to access your company's help content and use that information to answer customer questions.

Joey Coleman (24:46):
You don't need to have a whole team on standby either. The chat bot learns and updates answers dynamically, which means the chatbot continues to get better with each passing day. Now, the best part modern chatbots can be fully rolled out and implemented in weeks, not months, and often don't require any engineering support, friends. This isn't like creating a computer, generated Instagram influencer and growing her following to 3 million plus people. No! It's

much easier and it requires a much smaller investment.

Dan Gingiss (25:20):

Well, that sounds so much better than what I was thinking, Joey, because let's be honest. I didn't exactly go to school to be a computer engineer. And I like how that a project isn't going to have costs that spiral out of control once I decide to jump in.

Joey Coleman (25:34):

That's another myth busted, thanks to our friends at Solvvy - the Next Gen Chatbot.

Joey Coleman (25:43):

Sometimes a remarkable experience deserves deeper investigation. We dive into the nitty gritty of customer interactions and dissect how, and why, they happen. Join us while we're Dissecting the Experience.

Joey Coleman (26:00):

I receive a fair number of e-newsletters each week and every once in a while, something grabs my attention and causes me to act such was the case. When I was reading my buddy Nathan Barry's newsletter. Now Nathan is the CEO of ConvertKit, a fantastic email marketing tool, and while his communications are often about advances in email technology or growing subscribers or turning audience members into fans, this particular email was all about salt.

Dan Gingiss (26:31):

Was it worth its salt?

Joey Coleman (26:34):

Gosh, I can't believe you went there. Yes, yes, indeed. It was worth its salt. So Nathan told this story of some salt that his wife ordered from San Juan Island Sea Salt. That's the name of the company. And the story was so different and so interesting that based on his telling of the story alone, I decided to order some, I then had my own experience with the salt, which I wanted to dissect in our conversation here today.

Dan Gingiss (27:02):

All right! Let's spice things up!

Joey Coleman (27:07):

Sorry ladies and gentlemen, he's out of control! All right. Let's get into the salt. All right. So first things first I went to SanJuanIslandSeaSalt.com. Okay. Real easy to remember URL San Juan,

Dan Gingiss (27:21):

It's real sea salt, right?

Joey Coleman (27:24):

This is not Lil Miquela's favorite sea salt.. And I immediately saw this text, "Sunshine and seawater. It's a simple formula. We rely on purely solar heat to evaporate our seawater. No fans, no heaters, no boiling." Now Dan, you've never heard of San Juan Island sea salt before, correct?

Dan Gingiss (27:45):

I can't say that I have Joey...

Joey Coleman (27:47):

But what do you think they sell?

Dan Gingiss (27:49):

Uh, I'm going to go out on a limb and say sea salt?

Joey Coleman (27:52):

Exactly. And where are they based?

Dan Gingiss (27:54):

Oh, how about San Juan Island?

Joey Coleman (27:57):

And how do you think they make the salt? What's the process by which they make the salt?

Dan Gingiss (28:02):

Oh, well it's a simple formula. They rely on purely solar heat to evaporate the seawater. No fans, no heaters, no boiling!

Joey Coleman (28:09):

Exactly. Now here's the crazy thing. I know you are a huge fan of clear language and using specific, clear, easy to understand by everyone language in your marketing. And here I am three and a half seconds into their website experience. And I know exactly what they do. That's not always the case when I go to a website. In fact, that's rarely the case. When I go to a website now, a couple of the text, I just shared with the images of the water and the various greenhouses, where they had these trays of water laid out to dry in the sun. And then more images of them actually scooping salt out of the trays. And I get it. So now it's time to check out their website navigation. So I see the following words for the navigation: Story, Salt, Shop, Honey, and Contact.

Dan Gingiss (28:57):

Well, this is very clear and straight forward and much better than navigation on a lot of companies, websites. We talked about this as well in a previous episode about how navigation I remember we had, we talked to those, to that design company that had gone through the B2B navigation site.

Joey Coleman (29:18):

Exactly! And basically found that the navigation was horrid. Yeah, actually, Oh,

Dan Gingiss (29:22):

Now I got it. Joey. It was Season two, episode 48. Of course it was Tank Design.

Joey Coleman (29:29):

Wow, impressive. Impressive. Yeah. I would not have remembered this specific episode or season as usual. I love it. I love it. So I decided that I would click on story because I to learn more,

Dan Gingiss (29:42):

You see, I would've chosen honey, but okay. Keep going.

Joey Coleman (29:44):

I figured as much exactly. Well then I learned that the business began when the founder is a young college student made sea salt for Christmas gifts. He and his friends boiled seawater on their parents' stove, but it took forever. It made a huge mess in a wasted, a ton of electricity. So years later, after working on a vegetable farm, he thought he could use his greenhouse building skills to create a salt operation. That was more energy efficient. He created a batch, took some jars to the local farmer's market and sold \$700 the first day.

Dan Gingiss (30:14):

I love it. He was like a self-made man with salts. I mean, it's, that's a fantastic story. And I love that story is even part of their navigation and, and you're right for going there because we all like a good story about a brand. We all want to hear where things come from. A lot of people, I know you and your wife care very much about how things are made and where they come from and how environmentally friendly it is and all that sort of thing. So this definitely sounds interesting.

Joey Coleman (30:43):

Yeah. You know, it's salt, it's something that we use pretty regularly. I would say almost every dinner. There's some involvement in salt, either in the preparation of the meal or in the actual eating of the meal. And this is kind of a fun way to support a local small business. So I'm in, unlike in the story, I think it's fascinating. And so I went to their shop and I purchased three jars of salt, their signature natural salt, a steak blend salt, and a bull kelp salt.

Dan Gingiss (31:15):

Of course you went for the bull kelp salt! What the heck is bull kelp salt anyway?

Joey Coleman (31:20):

Well, I was wondering the same thing. And when I read the description on their website, which I'm going to share here in a second, I was sold before I got to the last paragraph. So let me read this. And you tell me when you've moved from just being curious or intrigued to, I got to taste this. "Bull kelp (*Nereocystis lutea*) is the king of the vegetative waterworld here in the Pacific Northwest. It has always captured my imagination for the thick forest. It forms along our islands, Rocky shores and for its sheer growing ability. Its average growth rate is four inches a day. But what many people don't realize is that bull kelp is also a delicious and nutritious seafood. It's with this in mind that we bring you our Pacific Northwest inspired flavored salt. We source our bull kelp from a very cool small family business in British Columbia, Canada called BC kelp. The business is run by a lovely young couple and they wild harvest all different sorts of seaweed in a sustainable manner from the cold clean waters of the queen, Charlotte islands. In fact, they

learned their trade studying under the legendary wild plant guru, Ryan Drum of Waldron Island. The taste and smell of this product will remind you of picnics on a Rocky Northwest beach in the summer briny, salty, with a deep green earthiness. We like our kelp salt on eggs potatoes. And of course, salmon rounding out local seafoods "merroir" like terroir for the sea.

Dan Gingiss (32:52):

Oh, sign me up. I'm hungry, man.

Joey Coleman (32:55):

I mean, I, I read this and I was like, Oh my gosh, the story is in the product listing. And like, I want to know about this couple and I'm intrigued like, Oh, they're getting the kelp and they're mixing it in. And then as it dries, I've got little kelp flakes blended in with the salt and I'm there. So I put everything in the cart and I get a message saying that because of COVID they were only shipping once a week. So understandably expect some delays receiving the salt and then they signed off with a message. It said, "Thank you for shopping with us. It allows our family to do what we love for a living and live in the most beautiful place in the world. We're so grateful for the opportunity to serve you."

Dan Gingiss (33:31):

I see. There you go. You just put some money on your credit card. You could have buyer's remorse, but you get a message like that and you feel good about making that purchase.

Joey Coleman (33:40):

Absolutely. And let me tell you I've purchased salt at the grocery store many times over the years I've even purchased some kind of fancy salts. I've never felt like I'm actually helping a human live, their dream and help their family, and envisioning what their salt farm must look like. Now, despite thinking that it would be a week to 10 days before I received my salt, three days later, a package arrived in the mail with a sticker on the side that featured an infographic that explained the sea salt harvest process at San Juan Island Sea Salt and an illustration of Essene. I think I'm saying Essene's name properly, but if I'm not, please forgive me. Evidently as Essene is the employee that packed our salt and it showed that as Essene's favorite product offered by San Juan Sea Salt is their Chili Lime Salt, the favorite place on the Island is Ruben Tart park in the Moonlight, and a little factoid about Essene is that their first job ever was wrapping caramels with San Juan Island Sea Salt

Dan Gingiss (34:45):

Things here. Sign me up for some chili lime salt, please. And I also noticed that this company sells caramels with sea salt and sign me up for some of those too.

Joey Coleman (34:55):

Amen brother. Right? How classic that they've built this entire salt based ecosystem.

Dan Gingiss (35:02):

All right. So we got to get down to this. So yeah, open the package, cook up your salmon or whatever it is and you use it was this like better than the salt at the grocery store.

Joey Coleman (35:12):

Oh my gosh. Here's the thing. Not only do I think it tasted better, but I actually thought about the story while I was eating it. And I shared with my family, Hey, guess how they made this salt? I'm talking to my boys about how we made salt and I'll be honest. And maybe this shows bad parenting that prior to now, we've never had a conversation about where does our table salt come from,

Dan Gingiss (35:35):

Terrible.

Joey Coleman (35:37):

But I found myself talking about it and the boys were asking about the bull kelp and you know, how did it work and how, what does it mean to harvest kelp? And how does that work? And we're now living in Iowa and we've got a family farm here and so we are going to be, you know, the boys were part of the harvest that we had last fall and they're going to be part of the planting in the spring. So it just felt like this great opportunity to connect with the source of our food, which is you and I have talked about before is increasingly such a big part of what so many consumers are looking for. Now, you might be listening to this and thinking to yourself, okay, but Joey, I don't have a sea salt company. I don't have a product company. I don't...

Dan Gingiss (36:20):

Bring it home Joey. That's what they're saying. Bring it home!

Joey Coleman (36:22):

Let's dissect it. What can we do? Number one, make sure your website is straightforward and easy to navigate. Explain what you do quickly and efficiently. Go on your website right now and if in 3.5 seconds, a brand new visitor, who's never even heard of your company knows doesn't understand exactly what you do, start rewriting your copy. Number two, tell your story in a compelling way, your imagining what this family looks like. You're imagining harvesting the bulk help. You're imagining what it looks like to stand in these greenhouses and see the sun evaporating the seawater and leaving the salt that they then scoop into the jars. Why are you imagining that? Why are you imagining that? That's classic

Dan Gingiss (37:04):

Why are you making up words?!

Joey Coleman (37:05):

Exactly. Why are you imagining that? Because they told a great story. So explain your inspirations, explain your evolutions. Number three, make it easy to give you money. Oh man, the checkout process should be smooth and you should manage expectation. And they did a great job. Number four, be sincere. Say, thank you. Explain how much you appreciate your customers' patronage. Number five, deliver early. It's better to tell me the package will be there in 10 days and then have it arrive in half that time then to tell me it will take two days and have it arrive on day three. And number six, use your packaging to continue telling your story long after the sale has concluded. Don't make your packaging just about a brand expression. Make it a story expression. Now, if you've been intrigued by San Juan Island Sea Salt, I suggest you check them out. See if you like their story. And if you do buy some salt and by the way, there might be some salt sitting around here in some care packages that we send to some of our loyal listeners who reach out and share ideas with us for segments during season seven, or make suggestions for our new, ask us anything segment you might've heard about in one of our earlier episodes or take other steps just to let us know you're listening. Hey, we want to send you some salt and whether it's the chili lime salt or the bull kelp salt, you think you're going to like it!

Dan Gingiss (38:23):

And it's going to be worth it's salt!

Joey Coleman (38:25):

Thanks for joining us for another episode of Experience This! You are the best listener ever!

Dan Gingiss (38:36):

And since you listened to the whole show,

Joey Coleman (38:38):

Yay you!

Dan Gingiss (38:39):

We're curious... Was there a specific part of this episode that you enjoyed the most? If so, it would mean the world to us if you could share it with a coworker, a friend, or someone that just loves listening to podcasts!

Joey Coleman (38:50):

And while you're in the sharing mood, if you felt inclined to jump over to iTunes or wherever you find your podcasts and write us a review, we would so appreciate it. And when you do, don't forget to let us know as we might have a little surprise for you.

Dan Gingiss (39:05):

Thanks again for your time and we'll see you next week for more,

Joey Coleman (39:08):

Experience!

Dan Gingiss (39:08):

This!