

# The Feel Good Factor with Juno Rosales

Welcome to the Forrager Podcast, where I talk with cottage food entrepreneurs about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill and today I'm talking with Juno Rosales, who has an incredible business journey to share. But real quick, I wanted to check, have you created a website for your business yet?

And if you have, do you pay for it? A lot of entrepreneurs still think they need to spend money to get a good website, and that is simply not true anymore. I am a really big fan of Square Online. That's what I use for my Fudge business website. And I created a free tutorial that will walk you through how to set up a totally free website in less than an hour.

And in case you think free also means cheap. It's actually quite the opposite. I think Square Online is hands down the very best website tool for most cottage food businesses, and it's even better than any of the paid services out there. So if you wanna learn more, you can check out my free tutorial by going to [forrager.com/website](https://forrager.com/website).

All right, so I have Juno Rosales on the show today, and like most of my guests, Juno started her food business from home.

But unlike most of my guests, that home was in the Philippines. Juno was living in Metro Manila in the Philippines when the pandemic hit and to find comfort. During the covid lockdown, she started experimenting with making desserts at night in her pajamas after her kids went to bed.

One night she made a frozen cake that she shared on social media, and that's how her business, The Pajama Baker, was born. Over the course of the next year, her frozen cakes became super popular and her business grew both organically and rapidly in the Philippines.

But then in 2021, she decided that she wanted to move her family back to the States and set up a second location. The Pajama Baker in Los Angeles, California.

Which she did. So she now runs her thriving business in the Philippines from overseas, and also has essentially a second business that she's running in California. Not to mention that she's also a dedicated mom of four children. Very crazy indeed. It is a fascinating business journey, to say the least, and you will pick up on many important insights along the way. And with that, let's jump right into this episode. Welcome to show Juno. Nice to have you here.

[00:02:25] **Juno Rosales:** Thank you for having me, David. I'm so excited.

[00:02:29] **David Crabill:** Well, Juno, you have quite an amazing business journey and story. Can you share a little bit about how this frozen cake business got started?

[00:02:39] **Juno Rosales:** the frozen cake business started during 2020. It was the peak of Covid and we were all stuck at home, locked down at home, doing nothing. so I started. Cooking cause what else is there to do? Right. after my kids would go to bed, I would stay in the kitchen, in my pajamas and start cooking anything.

Anything I could think of. Anything I see on TikTok or anything, you know, I crave for, I start cooking it after they go to bed. And so that's how The Pajama Baker was born. And this all happened in the Philippines by the way. I lived in the Philippines and obviously I was stuck there so I couldn't come back to America at the time.

And at that time we didn't know when the country was gonna open. And so after doing those little experiments, I'm like, okay, maybe we can start sharing it with friends. And that grew on to, okay, maybe we can. Selling it to friends. And then later on it was like, okay, strangers are coming in to order. And then later on it was like, now we need a website.

So it just grew and grew from there. And finally when the country opened up, I decided to move back to America. So now I'm here and I opened the same thing, but obviously it's not the same here and it's not the same in the Philippines. So there, it's kind of a different story, but the basic concept of Pajama Baker is sharing feel good food, and that's the whole purpose.

[00:04:17] **David Crabill:** Yeah, no, it, it's a crazy story. You know, we're running an international brand across the ocean and can you share a little bit? Out your background you were living in the Philippines when the pandemic hit, obviously got stuck there, but you also were living in LA Is that correct?

[00:04:31] **Juno Rosales:** Yes, that's correct. So I used to live in LA we moved to the Philippines a few years ago. In between, we were still doing LA in the Philippines, so we were really moving back and forth. We would spend a few weeks or months in LA then, most of the time in the Philippines, but be back here every like Christmas break or cause I have kids by the way, I have to follow their schedule.

So every time they get a break from school, we're here in LA. So before the pajama baker had a clothing business, a baby clothing business, and I would buy my clothes here in LA and sell it in the Philippines. So I was really doing the whole back and forth thing for a while now, but not with food it's still very different, but at least it was sort of my training ground.

Like it gave me an idea on how the Philippine market is very different from the US market. That was like sort of my intro to both countries and opening a business in both countries.

[00:05:28] **David Crabill:** were you born in the United States?

[00:05:31] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, no, I was born in the Philippines. I actually was born and raised in the Philippines. I went to college in America. I went to FIDM in LA so I studied fashion, which is very far from cakes, and then I met my husband. We started our family here, then decided to move back to the Philippines, and then now we're back here.

[00:05:52] **David Crabill:** But it's so interesting you're talking about your clothing business. So you're already a successful business owner before this whole thing came about. But it's usually the opposite, right? Like usually we're importing clothing into this country from overseas. You're doing it backwards. Can you share a little bit about why you started the clothing business?

[00:06:11] **Juno Rosales:** Yeah. So it started when I gave birth to my daughter. She was like my doll, you know, I was dressing her up, you know, in ways that I wanted to. And back in the Philippines, we didn't have these kinds of clothes. And then I, since I studied in FIDM, I knew where to buy things. They taught us in school, like how to merchandise, so, it was really just being at the right place at the right time.

I had a daughter, I knew where to buy the clothes and then I said, Okay, let's sell it in Manila cause nobody has it there. And then, within a few months, a department store in the Philippines picked it up. So I thought this was the way to go and then Covid hit and people weren't buying clothes.

No one wanted to buy luxury dresses in 2020. But people were buying food. And that's how this whole business shifted.

[00:07:04] **David Crabill:** Wow, that's so fascinating. So how long were you running the clothing business before the pandemic hit?

[00:07:10] **Juno Rosales:** Yeah, it was three years and then it's still up and running now actually. It's still in the department store and it's kind of a struggle to um, juggle. Too many businesses in two different places with different time zones. But hey, we're here

[00:07:25] **David Crabill:** Like I say, you essentially have, what, three businesses, right? You've got The Pajama Baker in the Philippines, you have The Pajama Baker in the US and you have this clothing store in the Philippines, and you're importing from the US and you're a mom and four kids. How do you make that work?

[00:07:42] **Juno Rosales:** People would ask me sometimes, like, what's a typical day for you? And honestly the answer is there's really no typical day, cause you really have to go with the flow. I mean, it's very important that you know what your first and foremost job is. And that's being a mom. And I know that, I know that.

So my days revolve around my kids. I know that I also need to be flexible. I need to know my priorities and. The ranking. You know, number one is still always the children, their after school activities, their schooling after that would be pajama baker, because that's in high demand. Like you know, every day there's something happening.

And so that's next in my list. After that would be the clothing business. Because with the clothing business, you have seasons and you can plan in advance after I ship it. That's it. It's the department store's job to sell it. So it's really having a ranking, a priority list and not doubting your list. Cause I feel like some people, they, they struggle with, Oh my gosh, I feel guilty, you know, I'm a mom, but I need to focus on this.

if your priorities are clear, It makes it doable.

[00:08:51] **David Crabill:** what would you say that your clothing business experience, what did you learn from that that helped you when you started the food business?

[00:09:01] **Juno Rosales:** I did learn branding. I learned it in school, so I had, you know, the basics, but to apply it and really create a brand from scratch, it was almost like therapy to me. You know what I mean? Like, I was learning about what I liked about children's clothing, but at the same time it was also giving me ideas about, Oh, because this is how I dress, but why do I dress this way?

Oh, yeah. Because I wanna. This way. Like I want them, my kids to look polished. So it's sort of like learning all those things. Branding, learning about yourself, what you like, what you don't like, what kind of branding works, what's your target market, That whole package, you can actually see the similarities with the clothing brand in Pajama Baker if you look at it closely, even the logos, they're like, okay this is just a kid version of the Pajama Baker.

But it also has like a small character so, you know what I mean? Like they have the same feel. And I think I learned how to create the Pajama Baker package after learning from my clothing brand package.

[00:10:05] **David Crabill:** And I did see that you really branded the pajama baker in a very like, elegant way early on. I mean, you're just selling frozen cakes, right? But like you added this level of elegance to a pretty, I don't know, not a super fancy product, right?

[00:10:22] **Juno Rosales:** Exactly, I mean, some people don't believe really in spending a lot of money in marketing and branding, but that's what worked for me. And I was surprised to find out that, wait, hey, I was good at it too. I didn't realize that like it worked. So it was such a, It's a self discovery moment.

[00:10:41] **David Crabill:** I know that you baked or, or made things in your kitchen, in your pajamas as like therapy because you're in the middle of a pandemic lockdown and I know kind of what the lockdown I experienced was over here. What was the lockdown like in the Philippines?

[00:10:59] **Juno Rosales:** one thing is that it was very long. It was really long, like my kids were still in online school up until, I wanna say this year, cause when we moved back to America, I didn't get to move them to a school here right away. So they were doing still the Philippines school online. And that was what, 2022?

it still is a very long period. They had more rules to follow as well. So we had to wear face shields for a long, long time. I remember traveling from Manila to

la, which is like a 16 hour flight, and we had to wear the mask and the shield at the same time, and that was 2021.

So you could say that it was a bit more complex in the Philippines versus here, and I'm just happy that now things are slowly getting back to normal, although I wanna point it out that because things are getting back to normal, my cake sales also shifted because I was selling it online.

now that people are back out, I realize, okay, people are buying from a store. So now I actually, I'm filing my license to sell in a store. I mean, we gotta go with the flow, right? We can't stick to just online if people are already outside. So Yeah, that's a good point to make.

[00:12:19] **David Crabill:** Okay, so let's talk about, you know, you started experimenting in the kitchen and then it sounds like this whole frozen cake business happened very. But when did you like when did you have a feeling that this might be something I could build a business off of?

[00:12:34] **Juno Rosales:** It started with just the taste. I was like, Oh my God, this is so good. We need to share. Sharing, like sharing for free. Cause I, you know, at the peak of Covid you were like, Oh, okay, people are suffering and all that. What can I do? What, would be my role? So I was just sharing this cake for people to feel good.

And then after that I was like, Okay, it doesn't just make you feel good, it actually tastes really good. And then when a friend actually offered and said, I can buy it from you, I was like, Okay, then this is it. Maybe we can start selling it. That was actually the, that aha moment. It was when a friend, someone you would give it for free to, she was like, No, I wanna buy it from you.

So that's how it started.

[00:13:14] **David Crabill:** once you know, you started to think, Okay, I can sell this. I don't know what the Philippines is like, but like how did you actually get your product out there? Like if you're in a lockdown were you just like delivering everything personally or were you using any service to like promote cakes?

[00:13:31] **Juno Rosales:** So in the beginning we, I started in a chat group,. It was that simple. It was a group in our village and people were exchanging like food as gifts. They were buying food from one neighbor and giving it to another

neighbor as a gift. that's how it started. So it was so simple. I could just walk to their house and deliver it.

And then after that, when friends started buying it, which was outside my village, in the Philippines, there's this, almost like an Uber Eats, I wanna say similar service, but they deliver anything, They can pick up anything and deliver anything. So it's sort of like an, or maybe like a Postmates.

So I got that and then after that, when things really blew up, I couldn't handle orders, giving orders one by one. It was just too stressful and it took us the whole day just handing out orders to each driver. So we actually partnered up with a reefer truck. it's almost like a freezer truck.

And then they deliver the cakes for me, which now is, makes everything way easier because they just come one time, you give the orders of for the day. And then they deliver it to all the houses. So in the Philippines, it's still very much the same. This truck delivers to all of my clients here in America.

Wow. It, it's still a struggle because we are so far apart from each other, you know what I mean? Like, like Santa Monica is very far from like Sherman Oaks, so it's hard to find someone who will come over to pick up a cake and deliver it to those places. So here what I figured is I can just have everybody come and pick it up from my place.

So that's what we do. But also I found a Filipino friend who was willing to deliver the cakes. So we hired him as almost like an Uber driver, and now he delivers the cakes anywhere in LA County. And also that pickup point in San Dimas

[00:15:25] **David Crabill:** yeah. I mean, it's so different like, trying to get this product out in LA versus in the Philippines. And here's an interesting question. Let's say you were actually locked down in, in California, right? And, and the same thing happened, You know, you're like stuck in lockdown. You started making things as therapy, found that dalgona TikTok trend, you made this cake.

Somebody, you know, like a friend offered to buy it from you. Do you think that you would've been successful, getting this business off the ground in LA as you were in the Philippines?

[00:16:01] **Juno Rosales:** I think yes, but with a different route. I would've done a farmer's market right away, you know what I mean? I, in Manila, I, I relied on social media so much because everyone was on social too, but here in

LA people like seeing it. Before they try it, you know, I gotta give samples. So things like that I would've done.

Yes, it would've been successful, but I would've gone a different route. Yes, I would do a website. Yes, I would do social media. delivery is just a struggle. So delivery is not part of the plan, or wouldn't be part of the plan in the beginning?

[00:16:38] **David Crabill:** Now this whole frozen cake thing, right? I feel like I don't know, like are frozen cakes really that common in the United States? Like, or do people know what you're talking about when you say frozen cake.

[00:16:50] **Juno Rosales:** No, they don't. And it's really a different kind of cake. So people know ice cream cake, right? Ice cream cake is ice cream. um, Layered a cake. So my cake is really frozen cream. Frozen homemade cream. it's not ice cream, it's frozen cream.

[00:17:07] **David Crabill:** Well, I actually know what it is cause one of the things passed down in my family is called an ice box cake. Right. And it's basically just like a cookies and cream cake. And it used to be very popular, I wanna say in my grandmother's generation. That's probably where the term ice box came from. but it's just become less and less popular in us.

So in the Philippines, are frozen cakes really like common? Like do people know what you're talking about?

[00:17:32] **Juno Rosales:** No, too, what's common is called the refrigerator cake. So it's still a different version of, your ice box. It's different cause it's there, it's refrigerator cake. And this is just a different version of it. But yes, they're the same. it comes from the same.

[00:17:48] **David Crabill:** So you, you feel like it was probably just as difficult to get your product out there in the Philippines, Like you just needed to educate customers about what this actually is.

[00:17:58] **Juno Rosales:** Yes. You know, in the beginning people will buy it, right? And I sell it as frozen cake. But because they're so used to refrigerator cake, once they get it, they put it in the refrigerator and then it melts. So it took a while. even my label on the cake, it says, Freeze me please.

And then it's like bright, It's like in a blue font or blue background, because it took a while for people to realize, okay, this needs to be in the freezer.. Yeah.

But yeah, it's the same struggle here. I even send out a card that has instructions, says, you know, once you get this, please freeze. Do not thaw before eating.

Eat it frozen. Because yes, it's new, but then that's what makes it good. It's different.

[00:18:43] **David Crabill:** So when you started this business in the Philippines um, obviously you started it from home. It was very organic. The laws I'd imagine are different. I have no idea what the laws are like for starting a food business. Can you just shed a little bit of light on like what the process was in order to I mean, was your business legal when you're selling these from home?

And then like what, what were the steps to get it legalized in the Philippines? I'm just curious.

[00:19:11] **Juno Rosales:** It's so funny you asked that. So in Covid, everybody started a business. Everybody had a food business, and so there was no like strict law about it. In the Philippines, everyone had an Instagram. But when it boomed in Covid, now they're like, Okay, we need to put something in place.

They started being strict about these Instagram businesses and they wanted these businesses to have the proper paperwork. fortunately my father is a businessman, so in the beginning he already told me, You better file for everything, even for your name, so nobody can get it. Thank God that I listened to him, because true enough, a little, you know, a few months later someone sort of copied the name.

It was a very similar name and only added one letter. But because I had the proper paperwork, everything was okay. But the laws are very different. And I could say that in America it's more, we have more rules over here. So it was a struggle for me to open here. It took a while for me to open because I needed to learn all these things.

I needed to learn. I mean, I didn't even know like frozen food, frozen cakes are tax exempt here in America, and I didn't know that. So I don't know if it's the same for all businesses, but in the Philippines it was the concept first. Then you file for paperwork after. But because also I knew America is stricter, it was paperwork first then you do the whole business thing after I couldn't really move until I had all my paperwork filed here in America.

[00:20:49] **David Crabill:** Right. So let's talk about like the trajectory of your business, the Philippines. Obviously you started with this like dalgona coffee cake that became really popular. And what did you add to that?

I mean, I know you started adding flavors, right? Like how, when did those come.

[00:21:06] **Juno Rosales:** Yes, So in the Philippines we have six flavors. So after dalgona I realized that the kids can't have it cause it, it is from real coffee. So I created the speculoos cake and that one was just such a big hit. That's my, my daughter's favorite cake, like she has it for her birthday every time. After that we had the banana surprise cake

this is in the Philippines. So we have banana, malted milk, Twix, and strawberry Nutella. But in America we only have the dalgona, speculoos, and strawberry Nutella. And the reasoning for that is the kitchen operation in America is different from the Philippines, so even pricing is different. So I had to pick and then see where this takes us, and then add from here.

[00:21:55] **David Crabill:** I know the, the speculoos cake is like, maybe your most popular second most popular cake. Right? but that's a new charm to me. I never heard of that. Like, what is that

[00:22:05] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, so speculoos is a Belgian cookie. Biscoff is the brand, but the cookie itself is called speculoos. They used to eat this in Belgium and they pair it with coffee. So I figured, wow, this is gonna be a good match. Dalgona coffee and then speculoos. It's like, you can mix it in your plate, It's gonna be real good. yeah, that was it. That's how we started.

[00:22:28] **David Crabill:** and how did you add these? Like did, did they come every few months or you add a lot of them at the beginning?

[00:22:35] **Juno Rosales:** No again, just like how I, my lifestyle is it just comes naturally, randomly, . So like this speculoos cake was because my son couldn't have dalgona coffee. After that was the banana surprise because one of my favorite fruits, Well, but I only love bananas. I only eat bananas and mangoes. Now I can add more to my list.

But growing up, those were my only two fruits. So I added banana after that was malted milk because my mom is just a fan of malt. After that was Twix because obviously Twix is the best chocolate in town in the world, . And then

after that would be the strawberry nuttella, which was just an experiment last December, 2021.

And that one is interesting because I was experimenting here in LA it was amazing. So I was, I texted my Philippine kitchen, I was like, Can we do this in the Philippines? So they also started experimenting and then, you know, the rest is Now it's six flavors over.

[00:23:33] **David Crabill:** So it's, quite one thing to, obviously start a business in the us Right. But it's a whole another thing when you already have I guess, two businesses running overseas. So when you moved back to the US after the pandemic led up, like you didn't just have to like create a new business in the us you also like had to, I guess automate the business in the Philippines, right?

Like, what was that like? Like how did you get it to the point where you could literally leave the entire country?

[00:24:04] **Juno Rosales:** Okay, so in the Philippines when orders started pouring in, it was one order after the other. I couldn't keep track. I couldn't just use an Excel sheet, and, and remember all the orders. So I had to figure out how to put it in a system. In the beginning, I used a form, an automated form. But after that I will still even, you know, now I need to figure out payment.

How would I know if this person paid? That's where I started So I had Shopify um, built in my website now things are easier. But then one thing to note is in the Philippines, people still prefer paying cash. So it was quite difficult for me because they would put the order online and then they would send me a copy of their payment, like a photo of their payment using like a Venmo.

So they would send me a copy of the photo and still had to match the photo to the order. So it's still a bit of a struggle, but we're used to it by now. And then some people are also open to PayPal, so, which is good cause it makes things easier for me. But yes, I was able to systemize everything, do everything online.

And December of 2020, this was around seven months before I actually moved back to America. So December, 2020, I had a flight to la I had to fix something in LA unknowingly. That was like practice run for the Philippines. That was the time I set up the website. So I was like, Okay, let's give it a go. I won't be there.

Let's give it a go. Let's try it. People started ordering on the website. Then I would, forward the orders to my kitchen in the Philippines. I mean, of course

we still had mistakes, but it looked like it was gonna work. And then come 2021, when I moved back, I had to let it go. I had to.

What I started, I had to trust that the system would work. I had to accept that I will make mistakes, which I did a lot of times, you know, in the beginning, since our time zones are different. In the beginning I couldn't sleep at night here in LA cause it was daytime in the Philippines and I had to make sure that the orders would get to the customers.

It was difficult. And you know, in the beginning too, I would wake up to customers being like, Where's my order? I'm like, Oh crap, this can't be. So I had to find a solution to that. I hired someone to facilitate the orders from kitchen to customer, so that relieved me from that headache. and that's how it's working right now.

Up to this day. That's how it's working.

[00:26:32] **David Crabill:** Now you said that you had the orders going to the kitchen in the Philippines. Is that like a co-packer? Like are they making the product for you or did you like, hire employees to make the products in this commercial kitchen?

[00:26:45] **Juno Rosales:** So the term we use is the commissary. So it's a professional kitchen and we have a contract that for them to make my cakes and keep their recipes within them. So that's who they are. They make the cakes for me.

[00:27:00] **David Crabill:** Okay, so interesting. So yeah, I mean, a commissary kitchen in the US would be like, you know, just a kitchen that you personally go use and you need to hire someone to work there if you wanted anything to get made. So it's like, a co-packer, I guess. I mean that's the, that would be the US term, I suppose.

[00:27:16] **Juno Rosales:** You know, it's funny you say that cause when I first came back I was like, Okay, Google commissary. And then I'm like, wait. But there are no people. It doesn't make sense. So it means I have to hire them. It like Yeah. It took me for a spin in the beginning, but I don't know if you know the story over here.

It's, I wanna say fate that brought us together, but I did sign a similar setup here.

So when I started. La I was making the cakes myself delivering it myself. Oh, no, no, no. I hired a delivery person. This delivery person by accident texted a customer and said, Hey, you're gonna get pajama baker cakes. But the customer goes, Huh, I didn't order any, You, probably texted the wrong number.

Then the girl goes, Okay, Oh, and then the girl who got the wrong message googled Pajama Baker. And then she was like, Oh, interesting. She makes frozen cakes. Apparently this person who got the wrong message is the daughter of an ice cream shop. No, an ice cream kitchen owner. So they own, they make ice cream.

And so one thing led to another, we talk, and then I asked them, Could you make my cakes? And. Luckily, I mean, I don't know what what you call it, but it was coincidence. They were looking for a new business model. They didn't wanna just stick to their ice cream, They wanted to venture out into something else, and frozen cake just made so much sense.

It was in a kitchen where they had freezers and cream. I mean, it was fate. And to top it all off, they're Filipino Americans too. I was like, Okay, this is just meant to happen. So the setup in the Philippines is the same as the setup here.

[00:28:56] **David Crabill:** Yeah. No, that's a, that's a crazy story. I mean, just the fact that they're also Filipino American on top of everything.

[00:29:03] **Juno Rosales:** I know, you know, I save the text message and it's on my phone up to this day, cause I look back and I'm like, Wow, look at that. Look at this story. It's just amazing.

[00:29:13] **David Crabill:** I feel like when you have something like that, it shows like you must be on purpose, right? do you feel like this is like what you're destined to do?

[00:29:23] **Juno Rosales:** I mean There are moments there of self doubt, you know, but I guess it's every business entrepreneur story. There are really moments where you're like, okay, am I doing the right thing? Is this really it? But when I reflect back to that moment, yes, this is it. And yes, it can grow into something else.

So I am sure this is the path for me, and I'm sure this is just the beginning. I mean, there is so much more to do. And my main goal in life is to just have feel good anything, you know. Like make my kids feel good, make strangers feel good. So, it is a purpose. You know, I wanna say I found my purpose.

It's still budding, like it's still starting, but I know I'm on the right track.

[00:30:06] **David Crabill:** You said that you have moments of self doubt. Like, what are some of the struggles that you've faced in trying to get this business off the ground in two countries?

[00:30:14] **Juno Rosales:** It's really time management because again, like what I said in the beginning, my first job is being a mother and my kids are 10 and six, so they're not fully independent. Like they still rely on me for a lot. So time management is a struggle, but I don't regret that. I don't feel bad about it, but I know that's one of the reasons why it's not as fast as I would like it to.

needless to say, I'm also very happy with the progress. I'm happy that every day there's still something going on, and it's not the end of the road for me. Every day. There's still, every day there's still an order. So that's amazing. And I actually hired someone in the Philippines to help me with social media too, so that it just, there are signs of growth and that for me is okay.

That for me, makes me.

[00:31:03] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I mean, so obviously there was this dalgona TikTok craze. Right? And then obviously people were cooped up in the pandemic. They were looking for comfort food. They were spending a lot of time on social media. So have you like seen your business kind of slow down since that

[00:31:21] **Juno Rosales:** Right, because of the trend. Um, No, no. And thank God no, because it is a really good flavor, a really good cake. So, no, thank God I didn't rely on that. But that also got me thinking I shouldn't stick to the name dalgona because I didn't wanna be associated with the trend. I mean, coffee alone is good.

I am thinking of eventually switching the name to Espresso. Did I see sales go down? Yes, I did. That's why I am converting, or I am moving to a brick and mortar in the Philippines. Because people are out and you gotta be where the people are here in America. I'm still doing it online because let's just me here with my kids.

So it's a struggle. So I need to stay online for me to be able to function as a mother first. Do I wanna be in a brick and mortar? Yes. And I'm working on that too. The best route for me would be wholesaling in the in stores and in

restaurants. So that's in the works. Again, it's not as fast paced as I want to, but I'm gonna get.

[00:32:25] **David Crabill:** I'm just thinking about these two businesses and I know you've got like, there's so many different moving pieces in both businesses, in both countries. How many people are currently working to help maintain and keep this going?

[00:32:42] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, wow. That's a good question. I don't have a count because it's all outsourced. So kitchen is outsourced. Three bakers in the kitchen, in the Philippines. I wanna say here in America, it's two main bakers. And then I, they hire assistant bakers when they make the cakes, but that's also outsourced. My social media's outsourced, and my warehouse is outsourced, so I, I don't have a, like a solid head count.

[00:33:08] **David Crabill:** Were you pretty like, comfortable with outsourcing work with, just in the process of building up your clothing business? Like was that something you did to, to build that?

[00:33:18] **Juno Rosales:** No, actually I wasn't so, like with this cake, it's the pajama baker, so it is the baker. So in the beginning I was like, it's gonna be me. Everything me, because it's The Pajama Baker, it's me. But later on I realized to scale this business. I can't do everything. I can't control everything too.

I mean, I'm going to be making what 50 cakes a day and then I'm going to tire myself out, no time to do the social media work and all that. So it took me a while to realize that I mean, even giving my recipe, you know, how hard that is. Like that's your bread and butter and you don't want just some random stranger knowing it.

It was a struggle, but was also, huh, what was it? Maybe like a covid awakening, you know, where I was like, But this is your chance. There's an opportunity. You gotta grab it while it's hot. And so, yeah, I gave in after that my social media, even that was a bit of a struggle in the beginning because I, I wanted to control what people see, but finding the right people actually helps.

It helps you still keep up with the demand. It helps people still know your brand, it helps you function. It helps the whole business. So yeah, it was a struggle in the beginning, but I know it was needed. And now outsourcing is my go to. It's the way to go.

[00:34:39] **David Crabill:** Well, I noticed something interesting when you started your Instagram account. This is way back in May of 2020, right? Just after the pandemic hit and you know, you posted a few pictures on your Instagram account and they were fine, but they, I mean, it looked like you had taken them with your phone or something.

There wasn't anything wrong with them. But then like I'd say within the first two weeks, it just all of a sudden shifted to bam, like amazing food photography. So did you hire a food photographer for.

[00:35:11] **Juno Rosales:** Yes. And that's where the branding part comes in. When I had my clothing business, I had a vision. And the same with this. I had a vision, but I had to experiment. That's why if you see the first few photos were from my phone cause I wanted to see, okay, well people even follow. when I started seeing people following, I was like, Okay, I better start building it the way I envision it to be.

So early on, I knew it had to be professional. Early on, I knew people would see the photos, and it had to be photos that you wanna bite, You wanna bite it when you see it. So I knew early on that this was what I wanted it to look like. Actually, it did take a while. I had this like vague concept and then I hired, I outsourced a marketing expert to help me narrow down the vision that helped a lot.

Now you can see clearly what Pajama Baker is. You will know, Okay. it's like luxury. It's elegant, but it's also very simple and just feel good like it was. So, it's easy to spot because I did that. Partnership with a marketing expert.

[00:36:14] **David Crabill:** It seems like, you had quite an investment into the business, both businesses really. You know, obviously you're, you're putting some investment not only in time, but money into, you know, trying to get this business off the ground in the Philippines. And then obviously moving over to the United States.

That was an investment as well. Like, it seemed like you're taking kind of big risks. I mean, I know it grew organically, but like, I guess especially with the LA move, like how did you research, like risk assessment?

[00:36:45] **Juno Rosales:** I didn't, I didn't well, I guess, I guess you can say I'm a risk taker. And I just, I'm very goal oriented and I knew what I wanted which meant I knew I wanted to get there and it, the risk, was there, but I just, it wasn't

in the forefront. I knew, and, and, and maybe also that's why it's taking time because I, I would've called for an investor, right?

I would've, I, I could have called for someone to invest in the company, but I'm not ready for that. It's probably one of those things where it's hard to let go. It's the same as outsourcing. Like it's not yet time, maybe eventually, but right now the risk I take. Is very calculated because I have a goal, so I didn't do research.

For me, the goal was more important than the risk. Does that make sense?

[00:37:35] **David Crabill:** Did you ever think you'd be running a business of this size and scope?

[00:37:44] **Juno Rosales:** No. No. But it was always a dream.

[00:37:49] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I, I saw a quote from you, you said the pandemic made me realize that life can change in an instant, and if we don't act on our dreams, it will remain intangible.

[00:38:00] **Juno Rosales:** Exactly. and my dream doesn't end here. I still wanna expand some more, and it may take a few more years. I don't want another covid to hit for me to, for me to act on it. Yeah, that's what it was. I didn't wanna settle for just keeping it as a dream. I wanted to act on it.

[00:38:20] **David Crabill:** That's surprising to hear because, you know, you were already running a business before this, right? Like you're already running your clothing business, so it's not like, I don't know. It didn't seem like you needed to fill this dream of running a business. So what's this dream that you're pursuing?

[00:38:36] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, it's, it's a dream to have something international, to bring pride to the Filipinos, basically, because having a business internationally means Filipinos can compete globally. And that's maybe a chip on my shoulder maybe it was a goal. Maybe I just wanted to prove that, hey, you're not just a Filipino.

If you're Filipino with a dream, you can make it. Act on it, you can make it.

[00:38:59] **David Crabill:** And so where would you like, are you wanting to expand into more countries? Like is this something you'd like to take the entire world?

[00:39:08] **Juno Rosales:** Yes, I do have friends who are already signed up. Like, they're like, Okay, if you're opening in Australia, let me know. If you're in London, let me know. I'm like, Okay, we can talk. We can actually do this. Cause now after opening America, I realize, okay, there is just one sort of step-by-step program to do this and we can do it in any country.

It's just finding the right people, of course, timing. But that's my big plan. My big goal is to have Pajama Baker everywhere and my big goal is also not to stop at frozen cakes, expand it into something else. But who knows? Well, well we'll see when we get there,

[00:39:45] **David Crabill:** Well, you know, when you expanded into la right? And you had a US base and you were selling online, right? You could have reached the whole country, right? I mean, you weren't serving a cottage. Food businesses. Not even, these aren't even allowed as a cottage food business in California. So you know, you could have shipped across the country, right?

Like, but I know you decide to just only deliver locally. What went into that decision?

[00:40:12] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, it was, uh, more of a logistics issue. Oh, well, it's a delivery issue. I still have to figure out how to deliver a frozen cake to a different state. And I did some research, I did some interviews about that. So it is dry eyes, but then apparently you're supposed to take classes to be able to deliver dry eyes because it's a hazmat item.

So, That's one of the goals too, one of those that I kind of put in my back pocket. But the plan is to get there too. Figure out how to deliver to a different state and keep the cost low. Cuz I mean, let's face it, who would pay for a \$200 frozen cake, right? So figure those things out. Then I know there are brands that ship frozen goods from different states.

I've seen like cheesecakes from New York being shipped to la so I just need to figure out how they do it. Then the plan is to do it for Pajama Baker as well.

[00:41:08] **David Crabill:** Let's talk about pricing a little bit. When you introduce these cakes, On in the pandemic into the Philippines. what were you charging for your cakes at first?

[00:41:19] **Juno Rosales:** So in the Philippines right now it's like \$8 and 50 cents for a cake. In the beginning I sold it for like \$6 and 50. Pricing in the Philippines is very different because obviously labor is cheaper.. Also, the cake

size is a little bit smaller by like 0.5 inches and ingredients are way cheaper. So obviously the factors for the pricing in the Philippines would be different.

In the beginning, the \$6 price point was enough for me cause I was doing it at home. I didn't have to pay for workers. I didn't have a license to pay for. And I thought that was the fair price. You know how it is in the beginning, you're scared to price. You think, oh my God, it's going to be overpriced.

No one will buy it. People will think it's a scam. But one thing I realized and I've learned this from my marketing expert friend. She was like, pricing puts you in the right place. If you price it low, yes, you'll have all these customers, but also all these headaches because they probably won't value your cake how much you value it.

And when I increased the prices, I did notice a shift in my customers. And these are people who wouldn't buy a cake just because it was trending. They really enjoyed the flavor. So yeah, so that's how pricing was here in America. It was very straightforward because I've already had that experience in the Philippines, so I figured, okay, get the price.

That's sounds right, you know, And everything is covered. That's why we're here at \$39 and or \$35. Strawberry Nutella is \$39, the rest are \$35.

[00:42:55] **David Crabill:** yeah, I know you're doing like 35 and up in the US and is that what you introduced it as when you started it, Over a year ago in.

[00:43:05] **Juno Rosales:** It was \$30. 28. I forget something like that. Not 35. one of the things I forgot to include in costing in the beginning was of course labor cause I was doing it myself. And ingredients. In the beginning it was easy to source ingredients because it was a very small operation. When the LA market grew, I had to purchase more things and it now became a professional department.

We had to call distributors to get the ingredients. Actually, one of the, the main ingredient, the main cream is actually a Philippine cream. And that's not easy to find here in la. So that alone contributed to the increase in the costings. So we had to increase it to 35 and 39 respectively.

[00:44:01] **David Crabill:** Did you have to change your cakes to start producing in the US just due to different ingredients?

[00:44:07] **Juno Rosales:** Yes. Yes, I did. Oh, that's a good question because R and D took a while and I tasted so many cakes while doing it. Ingredients are the same, but you know, the measurements are different and I didn't know that when I started. It's in the same can, the same brand, but if you look at the weight of the same, let's say cream, it's different.

So proportions were different. Plus the can size here is bigger, so everything had to change even. crust to butter. it was a whole different show. So that took a lot of research and eating but we narrowed it down. We got it to, we now we have this magic recipe and now that's what we use for the American Pajama Baker.

[00:44:54] **David Crabill:** Would you say that the cake is actually different? In the US than it is in the Philippines.

[00:45:00] **Juno Rosales:** This is so funny. You ask, you know how Oreo is different, Be like, Oreo in the Philippines is different from Oreos here in America. It's probably the same logic. It's the same cake, but it has this something, it tastes a little bit different,, but it's the same thing.

[00:45:17] **David Crabill:** What would you say, like, I mean, thinking about maybe customer preferences, it sounds like the difference in these cakes is just due to logistics and ingredients, but like also when you sell in different places, you're obviously selling to customer's, tastes, people have different tastes and different places.

So did you run into that at all, like with the reception of your cakes in the different countries?

[00:45:40] **Juno Rosales:** Yes. Filipinos have a sweet tooth. No, actually, Americans have sweet tooth too. But let me think. Did I want into difference in flavors? I do wanna say that I, learned later on that Americans are very conscious with their diets. And so in America, I had to come up with a gluten-free cake. That's why our.

Strawberry Nutella and our dalgona coffee are both gluten-free for speculoos I couldn't make it gluten-free cause speculoos itself isn't gluten-free, but the crust is gluten-free. So those were the little modifications I had to do here flavor wise. I mean, frozen cake is sweet. So in both countries it's a sweet treat.

I noticed here in America during the summer, there is a peak in sales and Christmas, even if it's cold, well maybe because of, gatherings, but in Manila it

is hot, like all year round. So there's, there's not a significant difference in the Philippines, but here in America, yeah, you can see the, the difference like during the summer, summer months.

Oh wow. It's like, It's actually very satisfying to have a frozen cake during a hot summer day.

[00:46:55] **David Crabill:** You know, you're talking about the pricing in LA being \$35 and up and obviously wanting to do gluten free and that Filipinos have a sweeter tooth. Uh, I feel like it's just the uniqueness of LA, right? Like \$35 only sounds about right because it's LA and you know, obviously people could be a lot more conscious about what goes into their food and it's just sort of the unique area of the us.

I think that you started this, you Probably could have done the same cakes that you do in the Philippines and other parts of the country, I'd imagine.

[00:47:28] **Juno Rosales:** I I get that. I see that. I see that. But there's also one thing, like people would compare the prices. Like they would convert it and they'll be like, But why is it this much in the Philippines? I'm like, Okay, one thing. It's not gluten free in the Philippines. So yeah, that's, that's something that's like a funny.

It's a common question, and it's so funny that when I tell them it's gluten free over here, they'll be like, oh, okay that's so LA.

[00:47:51] **David Crabill:** Well, I mean, you know, things in the Philippines are just not the same price as the United States, obviously. But I was wondering like, you know, you said you started at \$6, you moved it up to I think eight 50, what is that like in the Philippines? Is that actually a high price or is that a like higher end price or is that, a low price or can you give us a sense for what the pricing was like in the eyes of somebody in the Philippines?

[00:48:18] **Juno Rosales:** So the cakes are, are very unique since it's a frozen cake, so it's hard to compare. But I would compare it to the other cakes that are um, What is it called? Like a dream cake. They call it a dream cake. The better brands of the Dream cake are priced almost the same, but there are cheaper dream cake brands that are not at par flavor-wise, I wanna say.

But price-wise, it's almost the same as the dream cake. And so it's not, it's in a good position. It's like cheap luxury, but not cheap. Cheap. it's luxurious, but it's not like a \$20 cake. but it's simple luxury.

[00:49:01] **David Crabill:** So I, I saw that, I guess at least in the early days, it might have been pandemic stuff too, but you're building, this businesses starting to catch on and you know, you not only are growing as a business, but you're growing as a person too. And you said you had to hire a therapist. I, I guess things are overwhelming.

Like can you talk about what, like how you've grown as a person through building this business?

[00:49:24] **Juno Rosales:** Oh, wow. I can take forever answering this, but growing, starting a business is unfolding or removing so many layers of you as a person. I realized that, oh, I tend to be very controlling, so I had to figure out. How to let that go? I tend to be very sensitive with customers.

It stresses me out every time there's like unhappy customer. It stresses me out to the point that I can't eat. I feel like it's my fault. I had to figure that out. I had to process it. It's a business. You can't be emotional even if you're emotionally attached to it.

And so I needed a therapist to process things with. I had things like, you know how parents are, they try to give you the best advice, but that's the best for them. And then I realized some things were like, but that's not what I think it's best. It was hard for me to wear my adult pants and be like, I need to make this decision because I know it's what's right for my brand.

And as I mentioned, my father is a businessman, so when he was giving me like an advice that I didn't believe in, it was hard for me to go against that. And it took so much courage and therapy and healing to be able to say, No, I think this is what I wanna do. And I wanna point out that I guess it's probably like in our culture where you you respect your elders way too much to the point where all your decisions are based of what they tell you.

So it took me a while to, to also get to that point, to realize that I was doing that and I needed the therapy to see that and then to heal from that. it's amazing. There's, there are a lot of self doubt moments when. Running a business. So how do you deal with that? How do you, First you gotta figure out what's, what's causing that self doubt.

Then you need to attack that cause. And it took me, so, I mean, I'm still going through it now, but it was therapy that helped me, it gave me courage to even take that leap. Okay, go back to LA and start it. I needed to be strong enough to

be able to do it here. So yes. And up, until now, up until now, my therapist is on my speed dial

[00:51:37] **David Crabill:** If you could go back in time, to the beginning of this, what advice would you give yourself, or what advice would you give another mompreneur or home baker who's trying to get off the ground?

[00:51:49] **Juno Rosales:** You have to take things literally. This is, this is very important. You have to take things one step at a time. It can get so overwhelming. Your kids don't stop growing too. So, while they're doing things a hundred miles per hour, you gotta keep up with them. But then you also have to remember the side business that you have.

And so don't let that frustrate, you know, that you, again, like what I said earlier, knowing what your job is first, being a mom is first. It's okay. It's okay if things and your business are not as fast as your kids are growing up. It's okay. You gotta take things one step at a time. You gotta learn how to be open to so many changes like Unexpected curve balls.

I think one of the best traits that I probably learned over time is to be able to adjust to things quickly, and that's one of the most important traits that you need as a business owner. You see, like my example, I was online since the beginning, but now when things started opening up, I had to change.

And that's the only way you can have a successful business. If you know how to change with the times. Don't settle for what you started with. You'll never grow if you stay in your safety zone. You gotta be open to change. You gotta be open to being uncomfortable, embracing that. I mean, the rewards are just way too good to pass up.

[00:53:22] **David Crabill:** Well, clearly you're doing something right cause you now have an international brand. What does it feel like to deal, to say like, I'm the owner of an international brand.

[00:53:32] **Juno Rosales:** I'm, I'm still going through therapy. There's one of the things that I gotta work on. I am still, I don't have this sense of ownership. It's not, Maybe also it's because my purpose is really for other people to feel good. It's not me. It's not about me, it's not about my business. It's not about my business growing.

It's really for other people to have this sense of comfort as, you know, you had a long day at work. Get your pajama baker can and, and feel good about yourself

afterwards. So, I, I can't answer that and say, Oh, it feels good to have this international brand cause I'm not there. I do this for that feeling.

Good factor. I don't do it for myself. I don't, It's just, I, I can't own and say, Oh, it's amazing to have this business. It's,

I guess it's a purpose. So I, I don't know if that makes sense. It's, there's no ownership there.

[00:54:19] **David Crabill:** Where do you feel like the business would have to be for you to feel like,

[00:54:23] **Juno Rosales:** Successful

[00:54:24] **David Crabill:** Yeah.

[00:54:25] **Juno Rosales:** that's what my therapist asked me one time,, he was like, How would you know if you're successful? I still don't have an answer to that because that's what I'm working on. Where does it stop? what's that point that will make you say, Okay, I made it.

I'm still working on that and I just don't know when it's safe to say it's successful, but hearing me talk about it today was like, okay, maybe that was a good journey.

I mean, we were, we're now in R and D for both countries, so I'm a creator. I. new things right away. I like getting to the point where I can start selling them. Right now, we're both in research, so I'm like, okay, this is boring for me and I, cause I sort of lost the fire.

But doing this with you today was like, This is exciting. What am I talking about? We've come this far. This is like just the beginning of the journey.

I guess I'm impatient.

[00:55:15] **David Crabill:** Fair enough. Well, I mean you're, you said it is important to do things step by step. Maybe you don't know, like the end goal of what is gonna look like a success, but what are your next steps? What are you looking forward to say, you know, next year?

[00:55:30] **Juno Rosales:** Yeah. So here in la I wanna be able to ship to different states. I also wanna be able to have the cakes in restaurants and in stores. Actually, that's already almost there. We started developing a solo size cake. It's still in the works, but we're working on that because the restaurants here, they don't wanna be, they, they wanna be the one slicing the cake.

They want to just serve it to the customer. Cause obviously it's labor. So we're working on solo sizes here in la in the Philippines. We are working on getting ourselves in one of the biggest groceries. We are also developing a new product that will be an add-on to the frozen cakes. So that's a, a sort of an in the works and in sort of a secret.

So I can't really uh, talk about that new product in the Philippines.

[00:56:16] **David Crabill:** It's, I mean, it's so cool to see where your businesses come just over two short years it's an amazing story through and through and I'm looking forward to seeing where it is gonna go in the future. So, anyway, thanks so much, Juno. Now if people want to learn more about you, where can they find you or how can they reach out?

[00:56:35] **Juno Rosales:** So the website is [la.thepajamabaker.com](http://la.thepajamabaker.com). Our social media is [@thepajamabaker\\_la](https://www.instagram.com/thepajamabaker_la) Um, you can order cakes from the website, but you can also talk to me on Instagram. I'm the one replying, I'm the one, you know, if you have any questions about frozen cakes, I'm there. I'll, I'll reply to you right away.

Um, But yeah, those are the two ways you can buy the cakes and reach out.

[00:57:02] **David Crabill:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing with us.

[00:57:06] **Juno Rosales:** Oh my gosh. You're so welcome. Thank you for having me.

[00:57:11] **David Crabill:** That wraps up another episode of the Forrager Podcast. For more information about this episode, go to [forrager.com/podcast/77](http://forrager.com/podcast/77) and if you're enjoying this podcast, please take a quick moment right now and leave me a review on Apple Podcasts.

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