

# Rob Sanz with Rise Artisan Sourdough

**David Crabill:** 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 Rob Sanz.

[00:00:11] But before we begin, I'd like to thank the sponsor for this episode, Simply Bread. Rob mentioned the Simply Bread oven in this episode and other guests have mentioned it in the past, but if you haven't heard of it yet, it is a pretty unique oven.

[00:00:25] It combines traditional baking techniques with cutting edge technology, so it's both practical and futuristic. You can use it to bake breads, desserts, and more, and it is a workhorse. You can bake up to 15 loaves in just 40 minutes. You can connect it to Wi Fi, control each of its three baking decks separately from each other, plus many more features designed to help you get the perfect bake every single time. And Simply Bread doesn't just do ovens, they have a growing line of high end baking accessories available because their mission is to make the world's highest quality baking products accessible to everyone.

[00:01:05] So if you're looking to upgrade your baking game from beginner to professional, They simply have the right products for you. I encourage you to check them out. And I think you will be impressed too. To learn more, go to [forrager.com/simplybread](http://forrager.com/simplybread).

[00:01:23] All right. So I have Rob Sanz on the show today. He lives in Rockville, Maryland and sells sourdough bread with his cottage food business, Rise Artisan Sourdough. Rob is a longtime fan of the podcast, but he told me that he doesn't always resonate with guests because in many of my podcast guests have gone full time with their businesses or they're aspiring to, whereas Rob doesn't want to leave his full time career and has intentionally kept his bakery as small as a result.

[00:01:53] One thing I love about the cottage food industry is that it can cater to so many different needs, and Rob is a good example of that. In this episode, Rob shares how he's found the right balance between his family, his career, and his growing cottage food business. And with that, let's jump right into this episode.

[00:02:15] Welcome to the show, Rob. Nice to have you here.

[00:02:16] **Robert Sanz:** Thanks, David. I'm a huge fan of the podcast and I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to talk with you today.

[00:02:22] **David Crabill:** Well, I'm glad you're on the show and can share your story. So you kind of know how it works. Can you take me back to the beginning? How did this all get started?

[00:02:31] **Robert Sanz:** Sure. I've always loved baking. I didn't really get into it until maybe a little later on after I'd gotten married and my wife and I had purchased a home uh, and really started to settle in here was really kind of when my interest took off in baking. I was actually gifted a book from my mother-in-law.

[00:02:51] It was Ken Forkish's Flour, Water, salt, yeast. That was my Bible for a little while while I was learning the ropes on, you know, mixing percentages and how to handle dough and, and all that stuff. I would say for some people it comes naturally for me, I would say it probably didn't. I think it had a pretty steep learning curve when I was first getting into it.

[00:03:09] Being able to recognize, different stages of the dough when it's ready when it's under, when it's overproofed. And so a lot of the early days were just spent kind of experimenting with really no goal in mind, just kind of making bread when I had time. I also at the time had a coworker that found out, that I was baking just kind of in passing and he gave me a recipe for English muffins that he described them as little clouds of sunshine.

[00:03:35] So he sold me on those. And so I tried those and it just kind of built from there. it really just kind of started a

[00:03:41] passion for me. It's one of those things that, you know, I've had a lot of hobbies in my life, but this is the one that just kind of clicked for me right from the bat. And I guess the rest has been kind of history. It's just been building since then.

[00:03:51] **David Crabill:** So about what year Would you say that you got really into bread baking?

[00:03:57] **Robert Sanz:** Well, it was really kind of an infrequent hobby where maybe once a month I would bake for a long time. And then I think like a lot of folks during the pandemic is really, you know, I find myself at home working

from home and just had a lot of extra time. And it was one of those things where, I crave the routine that I was missing.

[00:04:17] during the lockdown and I started baking every morning just to try to establish some sort of routine. And it really helped at the time just to kind of keep me centered and, keep some, I don't know, some sense of reality or normalcy, in my daily routine.

[00:04:30] **David Crabill:** You know, obviously a lot of people picked up sourdough during the pandemic, but it sounds like you had been doing this for maybe many years before that.

[00:04:39] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I hadn't been doing sourdough actually. I had been doing yeasted recipes. And over the pandemic. We had a friend who gave me some of her starter. And again, I'd always actually been intimidated by sourdough in the past because the whole feeding schedule and trying to keep this thing alive and having to feed it every day, even though you weren't baking every day, that didn't really click with me because I was doing it, you know, semi frequently, not every day.

[00:05:04] But once you gave it a starter, it kind of just got thrust upon me and I started doing research and the more I read, the more I realized that it really wasn't as overwhelming as I was making it out to be for myself. So I've learned over time that it's really a pretty hands off thing where, if you're gonna be baking, you feed the starter a day ahead and it takes all of two minutes to feed the starter and then it sits and then it's ready for you, do have to schedule a little bit.

[00:05:29] when it peaks and when it's going to be ready to use in a recipe. But beyond that kind of scheduling piece, it's really a pretty hands off process. So from that respect, I was actually able to fit it into my schedule better than like a yeasted recipe because yeast makes the dough rise very quickly.

[00:05:46] And so you have to kind of be on it and babysitting it and you can miss it. if you're a half an hour late or 45 minutes late so from that regard, I think it's just one of those things that sourdough was actually a little slower and was actually easier to manage and fit into my schedule.

[00:06:01] **David Crabill:** You had mentioned that this process didn't necessarily come naturally to you. So what do you feel like kept you going or like, why didn't you give up on this? What was I guess really captivating about the bread.

[00:06:15] **Robert Sanz:** There's two things that come to mind. Number one is I love bread since, since I was a kid I've loved bread. Bread was always served at dinner and in my house and. sandwiches are one of my favorite food groups for my whole life. To this day, And then secondly as I mentioned, I had just kind of been baking infrequently. However, when my wife got pregnant with our first child she had a pretty tough time in the first trimester with you know, with like nausea and, and not being able to eat much. And the one thing she was able to eat was my English muffins.

[00:06:48] So during that, during those few months, I was making them. Like several times a week just to be able to keep up with, you know, she was eating them almost every meal and I had to keep baking them so that, so that we could keep, you know, the stock full for her. So I think those two things just gave me the, drive to keep doing it.

[00:07:04] And I wanted to get better at it. the thing about bread baking, it's interesting because even if the proof isn't right or the rise isn't good the flavor is usually there especially with sourdough. So It still tasted good. And like I said, I love bread. So, I would eat the loaf and have to make another one.

[00:07:20] And, I think from that regard, I just kind of kept doing it just out of, I don't know, pleasure. It wasn't like, it wasn't any sort of need or anything that, made me do it besides just like, I liked eating it. And so my family liked eating it and I just kind of kept making it when we ran out.

[00:07:35] **David Crabill:** so needless to say, there were no business ambitions for quite some time here.

[00:07:41] **Robert Sanz:** Oh no, not, not at all. especially, pre sourdough, there was definitely no, that was, purely just for pleasure and as a hobby and, just to, going to go ahead and stop the freezer for my family. But once the sourdough started I guess because of the pandemic, I was making it so often that I was getting into a really regular practice of it.

[00:07:59] And, I know that some people might say there's no way I could bake every day. And for me, it was like, it was therapeutic. To actually bake every day. Like I mentioned, having that routine was something that I kind of latched onto. And it's never felt like work for me. It's always felt like a, pleasurable thing and something that is therapeutic for me.

[00:08:17] Just, you know, the stretching and folding and measuring everything, you know, to the right gram. And those are all things that resonate with my

brain and have just kind of I don't know, brought me joy over the past few years.

[00:08:26] **David Crabill:** Well, so it sounds like by the time you considered selling your bread, you didn't have to learn bread baking. You, you already knew that you were doing it on a daily basis during the pandemic. So when did you start to think, well, hey, maybe I could start making some money from this passion of mine?

[00:08:44] **Robert Sanz:** was never really in my, like front view to start a business. It was more again, kind of baking regularly. And once the idea started to creep into my mind I started watching this YouTube video series from Proof Bread out in Arizona.

[00:09:01] And he started their business very much on a whim. And there was a local baker that, I believe the story goes that there was a local baker that they enjoyed and it came time for that baker to sell his business. And they just didn't wanna see that. product die for that community. So they just took it on really with no knowledge or, or know how.

[00:09:22] And, you know, listening to that story kind of inspired me to say, look, I've got actually a pretty good foundation. I know how to do it. It's not perfect yet by any means. I'm going to have to learn how to scale up. Because I'm not going to be making one loaf a day. I'll be making, probably six, eight, ten loaves at a time.

[00:09:37] So I knew I had a lot to learn on that front, but at a certain point I just kind of decided that it's something that I thought I could do. And as you know, I have a full time career that I do alongside with this. And so at the time it was just a particularly difficult time at my full time job.

[00:09:53] And I was looking for an outlet, whether it was creative outlet, whether it was just having control over something that only I had control over and I can do it my way and not have to worry about. Any politics or any, any repercussions beyond, just not selling bread that day. It was very approachable from that regard because in my, regular career, it's much more high stakes.

[00:10:13] And so it was a different animal. And I guess I was craving just that kind of approachable and smaller scale type of endeavor at the time.

[00:10:21] **David Crabill:** And so what is your full time career?

[00:10:25] **Robert Sanz:** I am an architect. And so I work at a, Medium to large size firm. It's like 50 people and there's always, you know, a handful of projects that you're managing at any given time and it can get pretty hectic. And so it's a very complicated kind of busy career path. And Again, I think I was just looking for something a little bit more streamlined that I could do on the side as a way to, I don't know, to keep perspective on things, I guess.

[00:10:53] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I know before the interview, we were talking about how you don't want to leave your career, you, you enjoy your career and you appreciate having the business be something that you do on the side. So I was just wondering, When you're considering turning your bread hobby into a business, what was the motive for doing that?

[00:11:12] Was it to try to make some more money or was it to share your bread more widely? was it to bake bread more often? Like, what were your motives for starting, the cottage food business?

[00:11:24] **Robert Sanz:** for me, it wasn't really about the extra income. I'm pretty well compensated in my full time career. There's a lot of benefits that come with it that you know, the

[00:11:35] The routine that comes with it, those are all good things that I appreciate about my full time career. And that said, it's, it can be stressful. So I think. The baking was something I was already doing. And again, going back and watching some of these YouTube videos that some of these micro bakers are making there's always some form of like community interaction or, or, community impact that they have.

[00:11:58] And that was very appealing to me. we don't really know a lot of our neighbors. And Our kids, you know, have started a school at a new school. And so I was really interested in the community aspect, just meeting more people and, you know, sharing good bread with them. And I think there's a lot of appreciation, at least from the folks that I've, dealt with so far in my micro bakery that that has been very rewarding and that holds a lot of value for me, even It's not a lot of income at the scale that I'm doing uh, which is okay.

[00:12:27] I'm, I'm really, really enjoying the community aspect meeting folks, chatting with folks, and just sharing, you know, sharing good bread.

[00:12:34] **David Crabill:** Alright, so you obviously picked up bread baking a lot more when the pandemic hit. So can you just share a little timeline of when



you actually started thinking about opening a business and then when you actually started to sell your bread?

[00:12:50] **Robert Sanz:** Sure. So early 2020 is when I really got hot and heavy into the sourdough. I think after a year I really kind of started mastering it which I think is a pretty long time. I, like I said, I don't think it came naturally to me. Um, It took me quite a while to feel comfortable where I could get, you know, reproducible results.

[00:13:12] And I would have felt comfortable like giving it away or even trying to sell it. So I guess after a year I started thinking and searching for kind of that outlet to, From my career uh, something different than I could do, completely unrelated, that could bring me some levity. so I guess that would be, early to mid 2021, I actually started thinking about, well, what would this look like and what would it take and, and what are the steps I would need to take to get, you know, an LLC or a sole proprietor or, you know, some of the business aspects that you kinda have to think about when you're starting.

[00:13:42] But then after that, it took me a whole another year to actually pull the trigger and, execute the LLC and start setting up, business pages on Facebook and Instagram and, and ConvertKit and all that stuff. So, um, by the way, I, your series On starting a CFO was actually one of my main resources.

[00:14:01] And so I'm very thankful to you for having put that together because I took a lot of my startup tips from that series from using ConvertKit and setting up an email list to offering kind of a giveaway to start. I thought that was a great idea and that's how I did it. And I just wanted to commend you on that because I really got a lot out of that and use a lot of those tips when I was starting.

[00:14:23] **David Crabill:** Well, thank you. Yeah, I actually wanted to ask you about that because I looked back, I know you've been following the podcast for a few years, and I could see that you took the mini course March of 2021. And then I also know that you didn't start your business until October, 2022. So it took about a year and a half from when you, I guess, were starting to really think about it to the time that you finally pulled the trigger, as you said. So what do you think kind of held you back during that time was, did you think that you're going to get started selling sooner?

[00:14:56] **Robert Sanz:** Uh, I think I was intimidated by just all the logistics at first getting the LLC. I, you know, I hadn't done any research really on that. And I know you don't necessarily need that, but that was one of my priorities. I

think before I started was to have something in place that would protect myself and my family and kind of our assets.

[00:15:14] And I didn't want, I didn't want to put any of that, on the line. So it was just having the free time to research that process of getting LLC. As it turns out in Maryland, it's really not that complicated. It's, it's actually quite simple. It took all of like two hours, I think. And, You know, had I known that 20, in 2021, maybe I would have done it sooner, but I don't know.

[00:15:34] It was just kind of how it organically happened. You know, I was busy at work and my kids were still young and when 2022 came around, just things were a little bit more manageable and, and the time felt right. And so I guess that's when I just actually did it, took the plunge.

[00:15:47] **David Crabill:** Well, you said you started by running a giveaway launch. It's something that I recommend and I've taught in the past. So can you just share what that was like?

[00:15:58] **Robert Sanz:** Sure, so I had a Facebook page and an Instagram page, but I had zero followers. So I figured that probably wouldn't be the right venue to try to offer this. So I went on actually next door and just wrote, you know, a very simple post like, Hey, I, bake as a hobby. I'm looking to start a small business soon, and would love to get some of my product out there and get your feedback.

[00:16:21] And I decided on offering the English muffins, the giveaway, and the reception and the The feedback was excellent. I had like 20 people that wanted to try the English muffins. So off I went. I'd never made that many English muffins at once before, but I figured, you know, this is for free. And so, you know, if they don't turn out well, then they're not paying any money.

[00:16:42] So I wouldn't feel so bad about it. And I decided for that giveaway that I would deliver. So, you know, I got everyone's addresses and drove around one afternoon with my daughter and we had a, we had a grand time just delivering English muffins, meeting people and kind of describing what I was about to set out to do.

[00:16:57] And after that, you know, I opened up orders and the next week, to my surprise, I actually got some orders. And there were folks that had sampled the English muffins. So it wasn't many, it was maybe three or four orders, but it's more than I thought that I would get. I thought I would get, if I was lucky, maybe one or two.



[00:17:14] And so from there you know, it was, the next task was to figure out how to, how to spread the word. And so that was really the next, the next hurdle.

[00:17:23] **David Crabill:** That sounds about. Right. You know, you, you had about 20 percent of the giveaways convert into orders and I'm just curious, do you know if any of those people are still customers today?

[00:17:37] **Robert Sanz:** Yes, I have one who is still a regular customer. And we've developed quite a friendship And that's just the coolest thing that, from something that I did kind of on a whim it's developed this kind of personal relationship with this customer. And I have had other regular customers come and go over the year and a half, but that's the one that's been with me since the beginning.

[00:18:01] **David Crabill:** Well, take me forward. You know, you started by doing this giveaway, you know, that kind of got you to test the waters a little bit about baking larger batches and, putting yourself out there making some sales. So how did you grow from there?

[00:18:16] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I think my first task was to put together a menu there's a couple of things that I knew I made well. There was the bagels, there's the English muffins, there was, you know, just the regular sourdough loaf. And after the giveaway, I kind of formalized that into like a PDF document and with some pricing that I thought was fair. And, then from there, I continued to post on Nextdoor but I wasn't getting much engagement there after the giveaway.

[00:18:44] And I also started to post on local groups on Facebook. And that's really where I got my name. A lot of the initial engagement was from my local community Facebook group and a lot of people, a lot of interest from, you know, sharing some nice photography of a couple of the loaves. And that really got me started and got me some traction.

[00:19:02] And actually Reddit is the other one that I've gotten really good responses and gained a lot of customers from Reddit as well as Facebook.

[00:19:08] **David Crabill:** Reddit, you know, that's, that's a first. I haven't heard anyone talk about that. So can you share a little bit about how you spread the word, I guess, through that platform? Thanks

[00:19:19] **Robert Sanz:** Well, it's, it was very similar to Facebook. I mean, you find the local community they're called sub Reddits where you can. Join or

subscribe to that subreddit and then it shows up on your feed. And so, I went to the local Montgomery County, Maryland subreddit and just made a very similar post to what I did on Facebook.

[00:19:39] And the response was actually probably even greater got on Facebook. I mean, the number of likes, the number of responses, the number of inquiries on how can I get some, and you know, how does this work, and how do I place an order was, much greater on Reddit, and what I've found is that the demographic on Reddit skews much younger, so.

[00:19:57] Not that it matters, but I just found it interesting that the customers that I was drawing from Facebook are older and the customers from Reddit are, 30 something, 40 somethings. I just found that interesting. it was a pretty clear delineation between the two.

[00:20:11] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I mean, that sounds about right. I mean, I've used Reddit many times, and subreddits, but I usually think of Reddit as like more of a topic based platform, you know, and not necessarily a location based platform. So it's definitely interesting to hear that you're using it, you know, with your local subreddit, and it's definitely something that I'll be looking into for my business, come the next time I sell it at the end of this year, so that's a great tip.

[00:20:42] Um, Alright, so you were getting more customers through Reddit and some through Facebook and social media, and is that sort of how you carried your business forward? Did you start doing markets or anything like that?

[00:20:55] **Robert Sanz:** So I haven't plunged into markets yet And I've been doing a lot of reading on them, and from what I've gathered, once you start going to markets, you start to grow pretty quickly. And That would be wonderful, but I'm not sure, again, trying to strike this balance between my full time career and just doing this on the side for enjoyment I didn't want to put that pressure on myself to one, you know, fully stock a market table, which is quantity wise much greater than what I'm doing right now um, Patreon.

[00:21:24] You know, having to quote unquote deal with, you know, the increase in popularity. Most people would, jump at that opportunity and, yeah, I mean, if, if this is your main income, absolutely. I would encourage them to do that. But for me I'm trying to be very deliberate about.

[00:21:38] How I grow. And I do still have some room for growth, I think just in terms of getting regular orders in. But I just haven't taken that step yet because I don't know, again, maybe I'm just intimidated by it. And there's a lot of folks out there that are really inspiring that are, you know, newer to it than I am that are just taking the plunge and doing markets and, and selling out and having a lot of success, which I think is awesome.

[00:22:01] I just haven't taken that plunge myself yet.

[00:22:03] **David Crabill:** So It sounds like you're doing porch pickups at the very least, or are you just putting stuff out in front of your house and saying, come get it, or is everything pre ordered?

[00:22:15] **Robert Sanz:** Everything's pre ordered and I have a set pickup time once a week. That's like a two hour window that if they'd like to place an order I try to accommodate folks that are, that say like, I'm going to be like an hour late. And if, you know, if I don't have any plans that day, that's not a problem. But often I do have plans on that day.

[00:22:33] And so I'll tell them, let's delay your order until another time that you, you know, that you can, you pick up inside the window. So I don't know. I've, I've been kind of very intentional about when I'm able to offer bread and learning how to say no was tough, but I've learned how to say no and, I don't know, it's been good. It's been a, it's been a good balance between, trying to accommodate and, but not kind of overextending myself or, cheating myself out of the things that I want to do in my personal life, you know, outside of my career and outside of this bread business.

[00:23:00] **David Crabill:** So it sounds like you are always present when the customer picks up their order.

[00:23:06] **Robert Sanz:** Yes, I meet them at the door with my little square reader or if they want to pay with cash, I say hello. Again, that's one of the things that was alluring about it to me. I want to interact with these people and I think they appreciate it. It's, great to meet them. And, I've had some really cool interactions over the year and a half.

[00:23:22] I've had people bring me newspaper clippings that are about sourdough. I've had people share some of their jams that they make, their favorite olive oil that they like to put on my bread. That's one of the best parts of it. And so I certainly wouldn't want to, cheat myself out of that experience.

[00:23:36] I actually really enjoy that part of it. So yes, I'd greet everyone at the door. I do set up a table put all the bread out when it's done and packaged. And then, I'll meet each one out there and collect their payment and have a little chat and then they're on their way.

[00:23:48] **David Crabill:** I'm just curious, like, for someone who's like, oh, I can't make it within the order window, could I come an hour later? Why wouldn't you just say, sure, let me take your payment right now, and I'll put it outside, and you can come pick it up, at your convenience.

[00:24:03] **Robert Sanz:** I certainly could do that. I happen to live in like a very wooded area with a lot of critters around. So if I were to do that, I have to figure out some system that's like either a locking cabinet or a cooler or something. I certainly could do that. My payment system though, is. don't have like an online ordering system right now.

[00:24:22] it's actually on my to do list for this year, 2024, to get that set up. But right now I handle all my orders through email. So it's just kind of additional logistics that I would have to work out very manually via email. And, I don't know. I just haven't, been drawn to do that up until now.

[00:24:37] **David Crabill:** so what would you say your growth has been like in the beginning?

[00:24:42] Was it about what you expected? Was it slower than you expected? Faster than you expected?

[00:24:47] **Robert Sanz:** I guess overall it's slower than I expected. But again, I haven't. really been like burning the midnight oil on marketing or like hitting the marketing aspect very hard. So I'm okay with how it's grown, you know, the beginning, I would say the first six months I would get maybe three to four customers a week.

[00:25:06] And that really amounted to like a couple of loaves of bread and then whatever special I was doing that week, maybe a couple dozen. And then. Up to now, you know, I'm pretty regularly getting 10 to 12 orders and sometimes because I'm not, open every weekend and I. In my weekly newsletter, I do put out my four week look ahead on when I'm going to be open, when we, when I'm going to be closed.

[00:25:26] And I've started to have people put in like bulk orders so they can freeze it. Or if, one of the specials is their favorite, you know, I only, I offer my

specials on a rotating schedule. So I've got, I think, Five specials now where, it's one special per week in addition to the regularly available bowls, baguettes, and focaccia.

[00:25:44] And if someone really likes, let's say the bagels, you know, I have people putting it in order for like 18, 24 bagels so that they can have a stock, you know, to last them until the next time that I offer them. that's pretty cool to see that where, folks like my product so much that they feel the need to stock up.

[00:25:59] You know, before, next round of that special comes around,

[00:26:02] **David Crabill:** So do you currently put a limit? On weekly orders, like at some point do you sell out?

[00:26:09] **Robert Sanz:** I do. So for a long time, I guess there's been kind of two phases of that in the beginning, I was baking just with Dutch ovens in like our kitchen, conventional oven. And so from that regard, bake everything morning of. And so from that regard, they're just, I only had so many hours and I can only do at a time and each round of bulls, like 50 minutes.

[00:26:35] And so, yeah, I can only take orders for like eight of them. Because if I wake up at three in the morning to start baking, then that gets me to like 7am. And then I had to leave time, to also bake whatever special I was doing that week. So yes, at the beginning, my limits were lower.

[00:26:51] Since then I've invested in a bread oven and that's expanded my capacity. So the limit, the bottleneck was never my ability to like mix the dough or store the dough, it was my ability to bake it. And so now I can do 12 bowls at a time. And so there's really no limit. I mean, I haven't gotten any orders above 20.

[00:27:11] So that's, that's really only two shifts in the oven or two bake cycles in the oven. And everything bakes a lot faster in there. So I would say right now I don't have any limits on the boules or the baguettes or the, the focaccia, but I do have a limit on the specials because those are much more labor intensive.

[00:27:28] I'm not really interested in, you know, rolling dough and, rolling cinnamon rolls or laminating croissants, you know, for eight hours that morning. So, that's just a personal choice that I certainly could do it, but I just choose not to do it that way.

[00:27:42] So I'll usually limit the specials to like six or eight dozen depending on the product. Just cause I know that's kind of my, personal, limit on, how much energy I'll have in the morning to do it.

[00:27:52] **David Crabill:** Now you mentioned that you have a weekly newsletter that you send out, and is that how you get most of your customers on a week to week basis?

[00:28:03] **Robert Sanz:** Yes, so that's a good point because I would say that the social media posts, what that does is that converts those people into subscribers to the newsletter. And so I'm not necessarily getting orders directly from the social media posts, but I am getting a lot of email newsletter subscribers.

[00:28:20] And by this point, people know my schedule. It's a weekly order to do by Thursday, pick up on Sunday morning. But I find that. I really don't any, don't get many, if any, orders for that week until I hit send on that newsletter. As soon as that newsletter goes out, the orders start coming in. So I would say the newsletter is the biggest factor for actually getting orders in.

[00:28:40] **David Crabill:** And I think you said you use ConvertKit for it?

[00:28:43] **Robert Sanz:** Yes. So, about how many people are currently on your email list.

[00:28:49] I have about 300 right now, which doesn't sound like a lot, but I've actually gone through periodically and removed people that I see that are not engaging or opening the emails. I'll go out and kind of clear the list periodically, maybe remove 10 or 12 people quarterly, maybe. And so I guess, In terms of total subscribers, that's kind of suppressed the total, but I'd rather have a higher engagement with a shorter list than have a really long list with like a very low percentage of engagement.

[00:29:18] **David Crabill:** Yeah. And that, that is, recommended to do as well that you should be removing inactive subscribers. And I'm sure that 300 will sound like quite a lot to a lot of the listeners on here. And that is actually quite a lot and definitely enough to sustain a pretty healthy small business.

[00:29:36] So. You send out to about 300 and then about how many orders are you getting on a weekly basis today?



[00:29:43] **Robert Sanz:** I would say I'm getting about 10 to 12 on a weekly basis. It depends on the special. Some specials are more popular and I'll get more orders that week. And I found that it's usually the special that, brings the customers. And they'll just happen to order, you know, a boule or a couple baguettes along with their special order.

[00:30:03] which is not the way that I thought would go, David. I thought, the sourdough boules would be the draw. In fact it's been the specials that have been the draw, which has been a surprise to me. All my products, by the way, are sourdough based. I don't use any commercial yeast. The English muffins are in my humble opinion, you know, the best that I've had. And then the bagels as well. I mean, I think people really enjoy the depth of flavor that the sourdough brings. And they're not used to seeing a sourdough bagel or a sourdough English muffin, or even a sourdough croissant.

[00:30:34] And I've gotten a lot of comments on just how surprised they are at how good and, and I've never had anything that's good and, that's really rewarding to get comments like that

[00:30:42] **David Crabill:** so it sounds like most of your customers are recurring.

[00:30:47] **Robert Sanz:** I wouldn't say most, I would say, I don't know, maybe 50%. Yeah, I'm at less than that. I would say maybe 33%. A third of the customers are, I would say recurring but they cycle in and out, you know, I've had customers that have been, you know, weekly regulars for like a four month span and they kind of disappear you know, for whatever reason, I certainly don't hold it against anyone.

[00:31:07] I know that that. Life gets busy and situations change, people move and whatever is going on in their lives, prevents them from, ordering. So I don't have, I don't take any offense to it. But would say I get a pretty good amount of new people on a weekly basis just based on those social media posts.

[00:31:23] And I've had some people that maybe have been a newsletter subscriber for a year. And are just, you know, a year later getting around to actually placing an order. And so I always thank them, you know, for being a loyal subscriber and for reading, you know, my newsletters. And, that's really rewarding too, when someone's been engaged for that long and just hasn't gotten a chance to order for whatever reason, and then they finally get around to it.

[00:31:43] That's pretty cool.

[00:31:44] **David Crabill:** that's all pretty typical. And I'm just curious with your emails, you're sending out to 300. What is your open rate looking like?

[00:31:54] **Robert Sanz:** It's usually in the low 60s, like 61, 62%.

[00:31:59] **David Crabill:** Okay, so that's a, an extremely high open rate. So you're getting a lot of engagement from your emails, and what are you writing in those emails?

[00:32:08] **Robert Sanz:** So I use the newsletter at almost like a journal. Just what I've been working on, some recipes I've been testing and some failures I've been kind of keeping folks up to date on when I get new equipment, like the new oven, the new full size refrigerator that I use for proofing, the new quart mixer that I got.

[00:32:27] And I always thank them. You know, it's, it's them that makes it possible by buying my bread to help me to one, make my life easier in the bakery. And to just expand, you know, from that aspect, because before I got some of these pieces of equipment, I was totally capped out. Like, like I said, it was. I only had so many hours in the day, in the morning to bake before pickups.

[00:32:48] And getting some of this equipment has really helped me expand with the same time limitation, which has been really awesome.

[00:32:54] **David Crabill:** Well, I'm just thinking about your numbers here, and uh, not to get too much into the weeds of it, but, you know, with your subscriber base if you get about 12 orders a week, then we'd say that's about a 4 percent conversion rate that you have on, you know, converting an email into an order which is actually very typical.

[00:33:16] That's a normal number for email marketing. Typically with social media, it would be significantly 12 out of 300 doesn't sound like a big number to people. That's actually pretty good. But. You're getting 60 percent open rate, which is extremely high. You know, we'd be looking more at like the 20 to 30 percent range of something that's typical.

[00:33:38] So that's kind of telling me that people really like following you. They really like getting your emails. And that you probably could be having more customers, but I'm wondering maybe if, if it's just the fact that you have very specific limited windows of, you know, when you sell your bread, when they can pick it up, that's probably significantly limiting your business.

[00:34:00] Does that sound about right?

[00:34:01] **Robert Sanz:** Yeah, a hundred percent. I think that's exactly what's going on. Cause I've gotten several messages saying, you know, I'd love to try your bread, but I can't make it in that window. Or I'm always out of town. You know, when you offer on Sundays or I've gotten suggestions, like, Wouldn't it be better if you did it on Saturday so that people could have their stuff, you know, for brunch on Sunday and, all those things are true.

[00:34:21] But this is just what kind of fits into my lifestyle right now. And so I've kind of just offered it up to, you know, whoever can come can come and whoever can't, can't. And again, I'm not. Right now, this phase of my life, I'm not really interested in, in exponential growth of the business. I'm just interested in making bread for people and, having them enjoy it.

[00:34:41] So whoever can make it, you know, that's great. And whoever can, hopefully we can, they can find a time, you know, sometime soon to come try it.

[00:34:48] **David Crabill:** Yeah. Well, I always say, you know, it's, it's your business. You get to make the rules and I think it's Great that you have sort of intentionally found what works well for you. And I know that's something that you wanted to talk about in this interview is just sort of how you have intentionally tried to keep it small.

[00:35:07] but I also know you mentioned to me that one of the struggles you've had is sometimes finding the balance between your career and your bakery.

[00:35:15] So how have you sort of found that balance as you've grown?

[00:35:18] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I think I've had to be very intentional about setting boundaries. I'm very deliberate about when I do and when I don't think about or work on. You know, the bread stuff. I do kind of have desk hours, quote unquote, for my career, but over the years I've, gotten into position of leadership where you know, it never really ends, the day never really ends from a, my career perspective.

[00:35:42] So There are weeks that get busy where, I try to send out my newsletter on Mondays, but there's weeks where I don't get around to it till like Wednesday night. And my order deadline is Thursday. And so I'll, I'll just know that week that I'm just going to have a couple of orders this week, which is fine.

[00:35:57] And, I've gotten to the point where I'm just okay with that because obviously the career is priority for me. It's my main income. Like I said, provides us all of our health benefits and the stability for kind of our lifestyle. And so that has been and always will be, I think, the priority.

[00:36:12] And The micro bakery, it just fits in where it can. you know, there are some times where I do force it and I'm tired, a particular Saturday morning when it's mixed day and, and I've had a long week, you know, with my career. And I've taken the orders and I've committed to these people to make their bread. So I'm going to do it. But once I get down here in the bakery and start mixing and start putting my hands in the dough, that all goes away.

[00:36:33] I mean, it's just such a therapeutic thing for me and that's really how I've used it, is Just kind of an escape from the stresses of my career and some time for me where, I can get some music going and just get into a zone where it's just muscle memory for me now. So I'm able to turn my brain off and, do what I do down here in the bakery, and it's just really one of the things that I, that I love right now.

[00:36:56] **David Crabill:** Yeah, you mentioning the baking hours. That's just, comes with the territory. So what does your bake day schedule look like?

[00:37:04] **Robert Sanz:** My bake weekend, so the schedule really starts on, I would say, Thursday night, where I'll take my little bit of starter that I have left from the last week's bake, I'll take that out of the refrigerator and just put it on the counter to wake up overnight and then the next morning I'll feed it so that would be Friday morning, I feed it, go to work that day, Come home in the evening have dinner with my family.

[00:37:27] And then before I go to bed, I'll feed it again. And that's really the bulk feed because when you're, baking at scale, you have to have a lot of starter. So on Friday evening is where I will feed it to get all the starter that I will need for the order load. that weekend and then that will rise overnight, and then by the time I wake up in the morning, it's ready to be used.

[00:37:46] And I'll usually wake up, depending on how tired I am, either 5am or 6am on Saturday, just to get an early start. Especially if we have, like, a family activity that afternoon that I want to get to. I want to make sure that my mixing is done, you know, by noon. So I'll get up early and mix all the doughs and then let them ferment on the counter.

[00:38:06] do my folding and all the steps that come along with, your typical sourdough process. And then my goal is usually to have everything in baskets or in their buckets and their proofing buckets into the refrigerator for the overnight fermentation by noon or one o'clock. So that I can have the afternoon to run errands or mow the lawn, or you know, whatever else I have to do that I have going on.

[00:38:28] So that's Saturday morning, and then on Sunday morning, that's the early day. my alarm goes off at 3, so that I can get down here to preheat the bread oven. That takes about two hours to preheat. So if I turn it on at 3 a. m., that means it's ready to bake at 5 a. m. And so, while that is preheating, that's when I'm doing my heavy labor on the special for that week.

[00:38:49] So, if it's bagels, you know, I'm, partitioning them out to the right weight for each bagel, and then you roll them, and then you shape them, and those need a couple of hours to proof. So after shaping the special, I'll set those on the counter, and those do their final proof. While I'm launching the loaves or the boules into the oven. Those will bake for like half an hour or an hour, hour and a half, depending on how many shifts I need to do. And then by the time those are done, you know, the bagels are proofed. They're ready to go into the boil. I'll have the boil set up. I'll start boiling my first batch of bagels and then into the oven they go.

[00:39:21] And then during that time, when the specials are baking is when the boules are cooling, because it has to cool, I would say for a good three hours. Before they're ready to be packaged. The specials are smaller, so those can cool in like an hour or so. If you package too soon, you get a lot of condensation in the bags and, stuff, and not to get too much into the weeds of things, but that's just kind of my process.

[00:39:41] Everything's kind of timed just so in relation to everything else I have to do that morning. To make sure that everything is ready to get set out on the table by like 1045 in case somebody shows up early, which does happen on occasion. So yeah, it's a pretty full weekend

[00:39:55] **David Crabill:** well, considering how labor intensive it all is, where does your pricing land? what did you start out with, and, and where is it now?

[00:40:05] **Robert Sanz:** when I started, you know, I was obviously concerned about overpricing and driving, you know, scaring people away. So when I started, my bulls were priced at \$8 each for the plane. And then I was doing some inclusions at the time that I priced, I think at like \$3 more than the plane.

And then when I first started, my only specials were bagels and English muffins.

[00:40:29] And for the English muffins, I believe I was doing 10 for a half dozen. And for bagels, I was doing 12 for a half dozen. the, order volume started to go up, I just very quickly realized that. This is way too much work for what I'm charging. and by the way, ingredient costs were going up a lot at the time as well.

[00:40:47] I think flour costs were at an all time high in 2023, I think it was. And, you know, right in the heart of, the first year of my business. So because of all those things, I did make the choice to increase my prices about a year in. So I bumped the bowls up to 10, the inclusion bowls to 13 and then everything else was kind of just like a, 20 percent increase.

[00:41:09] Like the bagels I increased to 15, and the English muffins I increased first to 12 and then to 13. It just got to a point where it just felt right, you know, I, I felt that it was worth it. to do all the effort. Be able to justify like, yeah, all the effort that I was putting into it.

[00:41:25] Again, this, this is not really uh, A super for profit type endeavor.

[00:41:29] It's really just for the love and for the passion of doing it and for sharing the bread with people. And it's really to cover costs, for the ingredients, for the equipment, for the energy bill, you know, that, that this giant oven takes to fire up and I really look at it more of a self sustaining hobby than I do, you know, an income generator.

[00:41:46] **David Crabill:** Well, I have to ask you, because I know, you know, like you've been saying, this is not about the money, and you know, want to keep your full time job, you want this to be intentionally small, but It's over three years ago now that you reached out to me when you signed up for the mini course, and you were specifically concerned about your state sales limit.

[00:42:08] Now, I know Maryland at the time had only a 25, 000 sales limit, so that's quite low, but I was just curious what were your concerns about that at the time? Have those changed at all? Obviously, I know that Maryland has increased their sales limit since then, but I was just wondering about that because it did seem like The amount of money that you were going to make was a concern at least at one point in time.



[00:42:31] **Robert Sanz:** I think that was just more of an exploratory time. I would be lying if I said I've never thought about, you know, if this could be a sustainable career. It's just kind of human nature to wonder and to see if it's viable. I think just over the years I've come to the realization that it's not.

[00:42:48] I think the limit now is 50,000. There was a law change, I think last year, that raised it to 50,000. And it's just, even then, it's, it wouldn't be a viable option for me to have this as my sole income. You know, our lifestyle, the area we live in is, is unfortunately very expensive and, you know, my full-time career is, is like integral to making sure that we can kind of maintain our lifestyle here.

[00:43:09] So I think just with that reality and bread making being extremely labor-intensive. I think this year I'm projecting to bring in like maybe nine or 10,000 in sales, and it's just, it's a lot of work for that little income. So I think I've just learned through the process that it's not for me and for our situation it's not really a viable full-time endeavor, I don't think.

[00:43:32] **David Crabill:** Now along those lines, I remember you saying that you started out using Dutch ovens. So what have you done in terms of equipment or how have you, you know, maybe improved your efficiencies as you've expanded your production?

[00:43:47] **Robert Sanz:** It's interesting because even back then when I was doing Dutch Ovens, that wasn't my bottle, it was my bottleneck, but my bigger bottleneck was my mixer. I just had like a little KitchenAid countertop mixer and to mix eight loaves, I had to do four batches in this mixer. So the first piece of equipment. And the last I purchased that I thought would make a big difference was the mixer.

[00:44:10] I got a 20 quart mixer. And it did. It made a huge difference. could mix all my, loaves in one batch. can mix, I think I've tried up to 14 loaves. That just barely fits in there. So if I ever get a week, I've had a couple of weeks with more than 14 loads where I've had to do two batches. But that was like an immediate bump in efficiency, which was awesome for not really a large investment.

[00:44:34] I think it was like 700 or something. It was really not a large investment. I don't think

[00:44:38] **David Crabill:** all right. So you got the mixer. And then at that point, what are the Dutch ovens, your bottleneck?

[00:44:45] **Robert Sanz:** Yes, the Dutch ovens became my bottleneck. And I started researching, like the Rofco or the Simply Bread, or the Rack Master and all those, you know, all the big names that are kind of in this micro bakery, home bakery space. And the cost of those just made my eyes pop. I mean, it, it's a big investment.

[00:45:05] Even the Rofco, I think is on the low end. And that oven is, I think, 4, 000 plus and I just wasn't, I mean, I wasn't getting many orders at the time, and I wasn't really interested in investing that much at the time. But I would say about a year in. the first year I brought in about that much, it was maybe like 4, 500.

[00:45:25] And I was like, Hey, you know what? This was the point of this was, it was supposed to be a self, funding hobby. And I've made the money now to purchase this oven. And so I took the plunge and I ended up purchasing, I actually purchased the Nero. It's called the Nero 400. It's kind of like a.

[00:45:40] And equivalent to the Rofco, the Rofco have a very long lead time. I think they're very popular and, and you have to order it like months in advance. And the Nero was much more readily available. So I just I ended up going in that direction. it's about the same cost and has all the same features and you know, whatever.

[00:45:56] So yeah, about a year in I decided to stop doing the Dutch oven shuffle and went for the bread oven and I knew going into it that it was going to have a learning curve. It's a different process, different timing, different temperatures just different way of baking. You know, you're launching 12 loaves at a time as opposed to, carefully placing one at a time into a Dutch oven so you don't burn your wrists.

[00:46:17] It's just, it was a huge upgrade and it's made my bake mornings just much less stressful. So that was a big improvement. After that, my bottleneck then became the cold proofing capacity. So when you cold proof, you put everything in the refrigerator.

[00:46:33] And so the last piece of equipment that I got was a full size Refrigerator. it's all refrigerator. it sits right next to my oven and I can fit everything in there without issue.

[00:46:42] And it's just right here in the bakery, which has been a great improvement also.

[00:46:46] **David Crabill:** So you are doing all of your baking in the basement of your house, not in your main kitchen.

[00:46:53] **Robert Sanz:** Correct. So we have a finished basement and it's great because, we've had a sink down here already.

[00:47:01] And I just happened to have 240 power down here for the oven, which I think I was just lucky from the previous owner So it's really worked out really well where I kind of have everything.

[00:47:10] Have everything I need down here. I've already got eyes on my next bottleneck. Which is really my counter space where you know, once everything is shaped and proofing, I'm really short on counter space to, to be able to take things out of the oven, let them cool.

[00:47:23] So it's interesting because like I've described, each piece of new equipment has been a huge improvement, but it makes another bottleneck float to the top.

[00:47:30] And it's been kind of a fun Iterative process in that regard and trying to figure out what's the best way to tackle this now new bottleneck and, and try to do it, economically, because again, this is not, a business that brings in a lot of money. I just, I'm trying to keep things small scale and, kind of live within the means of, the business itself.

[00:47:47] **David Crabill:** Oh, I did see on your social media another piece of equipment you didn't mention there, which is the sheeter.

[00:47:54] **Robert Sanz:** Yes. So, it's actually been a great addition. I do use it for the English muffins and for the cinnamon rolls, but I think the biggest development from that piece of equipment was it enabled me to really think about doing croissants at scale. I've had now two weeks where I've been able to offer the croissants and each of those weeks has been an adventure because of all the products, the croissants are far and away the most labor intensive but that, piece of equipment I think has injected, I guess, the most innovation into what I do just by changing the process on a couple of things and really allowing me to start to explore, you know, laminated dough, laminated pastry. Very exciting.

[00:48:35] **David Crabill:** Well, I do have to ask about what I would say looks like your most interesting piece of equipment that I see in your social media feed, which is your bread slicer.

[00:48:46] **Robert Sanz:** Oh, how could I have forgotten to mention that? So, we were in Miami last summer, just for our summer vacation. And um, we found a bakery nearby so I bought a loaf and they asked me if I wanted it sliced.

[00:48:59] I was like, yeah, I would love to have it sliced. I was expecting the guy to pull out like a big, bread knife and slice it by hand, but he'd toss it in this machine and I mean, it made perfect slices in a matter of ten seconds

[00:49:11] I was like, that's probably the coolest thing I've ever seen that's bread related. So I took a picture of it and I started researching you know, what this thing is and how can I get one or whatever. And you know, I was expecting it would probably be splurge, like maybe a thousand bucks or something.

[00:49:25] These things are like 10, 000 new. And I was just blown away. I was like, well, that's never going to happen. So I don't know, I guess a few months went by and I do frequent a local uh, auction, kind of a restaurant auction website. Just for fun, just to see what's available.

[00:49:42] And wouldn't you know it, one of these bread slicers popped up and I was like, oh my gosh, I have to have it. you know, I put in my bid, not really expecting anything out of it. I put in a pretty low bid and I was just like, ah, we'll see what happens. And. The bid stood. And so I ended up winning the bread slicer off of this auction. So I convinced my brother to, grab his truck and meet me at this place and expecting it to be pretty heavy.

[00:50:06] I underestimated how heavy it is. the two of us could barely lift it. So somehow we got it on the truck and then we got it to my house. And then the next trick was to get it down to the basement, down the flight of stairs. So our backs hurt, I would say for a few days after that, but we got it down here and cleaned it up and tested it out and it works like a dream.

[00:50:26] And it's just been kind of one of those really cool gadgets that I probably should highlight more, I think, on. My social media, because it's so unique. I think it's pretty unique to my scale of bakery. But the customers love it. They love to get their bread sliced. And I'm happy to be able to offer that service because I have this machine.

[00:50:45] And it's been a wild ride with this thing. it's a beast. Like I said, it weighs a ton. It's loud. It's ugly, but it's pretty fun.

[00:50:53] **David Crabill:** I'm just thinking about, you know, how labor intensive bread is. You've obviously got this career and you have a family. do

you feel like having this whole bread making hobby turned business has added a lot of stress to your life, has taken away from the amount of time you could spend with your family?

[00:51:13] **Robert Sanz:** I would say, no, it has not added stress. There's been moments of stress where like I'm running tight on time and I'm kind of Scurrying about the morning of, but I think the reason I've continued to do it is that it's given me perspective, meaning that my full time career, I would say is.

[00:51:29] Um, And this is something that I have control over it and I have control over every aspect of it. And the mixing, the mornings of mixing, my kids will usually come down to the basement and, you know, watch a cartoon or they'll play with their toys kind of in the background. And, and we kind of exist, coexist in this space. And that's kind of how we spend time together. And we'll interact, of course, while I'm mixing and we got music going.

[00:51:53] And so it's just kind of become a part of our family culture where, Oh, Saturday morning, dad's making bread and, what's the special this week that means we're going to have it for breakfast tomorrow.

[00:52:01] And it's kind of become ingrained in our weekend routine, which I think is. It's been fun. Yes, it's a lot of work, but my career is, based on kind of long timeframes.

[00:52:11] In architecture, like you design something, and you've got to wait like a year, sometimes two, three years to see a project to completion. Whereas this, I mean, in a single weekend from start to finish I'm seeing the result and I'm seeing the smile on people's faces when I hand it over and getting the feedback that I get, you know, that, oh, the bagels last week were amazing. And the bread bakery has just been my chance to do a small thing my way. And that's really just been super valuable to me.

[00:52:39] **David Crabill:** One thing that you mentioned to me is that hearing a lot of guests on the podcast talk about, you know, taking their business full time, being able to invest there all into their business has made you feel like, you know, maybe you're not making the most of your business. Can you just elaborate on that and that feeling and what you meant by that?

[00:53:00] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I think, you know, when I hear about all the success stories, which is amazing to hear, you know, these folks that have started very small like I am now and, have created either this social media

influencer type presence or have gotten to the goal of opening a brick and mortar.

[00:53:17] It kind of makes you doubt yourself, I think, when others are taking this so far and, you've still kind of stayed in this small, very small scale type situation, which, as I've said, is kind of what I want it to be. But I don't know, it's just I feel like there's always this external pressure, whether it's social media, I really don't know what the cause is, but there's a little voice, you know, inside you that says, well.

[00:53:37] I mean, if the demand is there, why wouldn't you take it further? you know, are you selling yourself short? Or maybe this is a viable career and it's just kind of makes you question what you're doing And I think part of it is just kind of self validating and saying, it doesn't have to be this, giant. That's the only thing that grows into a national corporation or whatever it wants to be. It's just, this is what's right for me right now.

[00:53:57] And this, this is right now, I mean, three years from now, who knows? But right now this is what fits into my lifestyle, into my family's lifestyle. And. It brings me joy at the scale that it is now. So it's okay to keep it small.

[00:54:12] there have been guests in the show before that, are similar which I've appreciated hearing because that, that's kind of reassuring from that regard that again, it's okay to, to stay small. And if this is what's right for you, then, then it's right.

[00:54:24] **David Crabill:** Yeah. You know, as you're talking, you know, It's like I'm stepping back into episode 41 with Eric Sorensen. He said the exact same thing, also a fellow bread baker. So I was just wondering, you know, like sometimes people get competitive and they want to just grow it because they can.

[00:54:42] So what do you feel like has kept you grounded in sticking to, keeping everything small?

[00:54:47] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I would say just by nature of not needing for it to grow. You know, I've got a steady income in my full-time career. And I Think, a lot of times when folks are frustrated with their career or looking for just something else to, you know, some, another way to take, The trajectory of their lives that, if they had got an opportunity to grow their bread business and make it a full time thing, then that's what makes sense for them.



[00:55:11] And that's awesome. again, I'm always super inspired by those people. And, it's just right now in my phase of life. It just doesn't make sense to grow this thing. I think it could grow for the record. I think if I started doing markets and really upped my marketing and upped my social media interaction, it really could grow.

[00:55:30] And I would obviously need to change like this very narrow window once a week that I would offer it. But I think I'm just not ready to do that yet. And I don't know, like I said, like I keep saying, it's just, it's what works for me right now.

[00:55:41] **David Crabill:** Well, yeah, I mean, based on the engagement that you're getting on emails alone, I would say you probably could grow quite a lot, more than you currently have it. But I also think you would agree that, even though you're keeping it smaller, like you are a very successful business, you know, it's exactly what you want it to be and it's fulfilling your needs.

[00:56:03] So it's just as much of a success as any other guests that I've had on the podcast, in my opinion.

[00:56:08] Now, as you look ahead, where do you see this going? I know you're not going to be ramping up super fast, but if you could look down the line two, three, maybe five years, what are your goals?

[00:56:23] **Robert Sanz:** Well, I think I am eventually going to dip my toes into the farmer's market. Arena. I've been thinking about it for a while. I think it will eventually happen. I actually applied to, it wasn't a regular market. It was like a seasonal market, just a one time seasonal market that happened once per season.

[00:56:40] And I actually didn't get accepted to it. I guess they had another baker at that one already, so they didn't have space for me. So from that regard, I've, kind of started already down that path and I think eventually I'll get there. I just don't know if that means when I do that, that I'll stop taking pre orders and only do that, or if I'll do the farmer's markets like just kind of seasonally or infrequently and continue the pre order type system that I have now.

[00:57:04] I haven't quite decided that yet, but I just know that once I go to markets that it's, It's going to ramp up for me. And so I just want to make sure that I'm, you know, mentally prepared for when that happens and, physically that I can do it. And I think I have all the equipment that I need to do it now.

[00:57:18] So I think I'm in a good place to maybe actually start considering that, you know, if not this year, maybe next year,

[00:57:23] **David Crabill:** Now, before we hop off, I'm just thinking about somebody who maybe is in a similar position to where you were a couple of years ago. They have a full-time career that they really enjoy. They don't want to leave that, but they're thinking about starting a cottage food business. Do you have any advice for someone like that?

[00:57:40] **Robert Sanz:** I think again, it's wanting to let, you know, folks that are in my situation that are trying to juggle, two things that might be happy in their career or their career offers them a lot that it's hard to walk away from that you can still do something, that you're passionate about outside of your career.

[00:57:59] Whether it's bread, whether it's, you know, some other type of cottage food type of business that there's space for it. you may have to carve out space for it, but there is space for it. And so I would just encourage, those types of people to go for it.

[00:58:13] I think this little bakery that I've built has, you Brought me a lot of joy. And it offers so much more than the income. it offers me confidence. It offers me validation. It offers me a lot. And I'm really glad that I took, the step to do this.

[00:58:27] **David Crabill:** Well, awesome. Well, thank you so much for sharing all of that with us today. Now, if somebody would like to learn more about you, where can they find you or how can they reach out?

[00:58:39] **Robert Sanz:** The best way I guess is Facebook and Instagram, so it's at Rise Artisan Sourdough on both platforms. And then you can find a link to my website that has my menu if you're curious about how that Um, And yeah, I would just love to get more interaction on my, on my social media and meet more people out there in the, in the cottage food industry that uh, we can compare notes and, and share war stories and yeah, I would love to hear from folks.

[00:59:07] **David Crabill:** Great. Well, thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing with us today.

[00:59:12] **Robert Sanz:** My pleasure, David. It was fun.

[00:59:14] **David Crabill:** That wraps up another episode of the Forrager podcast.

[00:59:21] For more information about this episode, go to [forrager.com/podcast/116](http://forrager.com/podcast/116).

[00:59:28] And if you're enjoying this podcast, please take a quick moment right now and leave me a review on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a long review, but it's truly the best way to support this show and will help others like you find this podcast.

[00:59:40] And finally, if you're thinking about selling your own homemade food, check out my free mini course where I walk you through the steps you need to take to get a cottage food business off the ground. To get the course, go to [cottagefoodcourse.com](http://cottagefoodcourse.com).

[00:59:53] Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.