

# a branded world

PODCAST

with  
**Luiza Campos**



006 | JAMES BOETCHER TELLS THE  
STORY OF HOW HE BUILT THE FIASCO  
GELATO BRAND FROM THE ASHES

**EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

marca strategy

## A BRANDED WORLD PODCAST - 006 | JAMES BOETCHER TELLS THE STORY OF HOW HE BUILT THE FIASCO GELATO BRAND FROM THE ASHES

### Show Notes:

**Luiza Campos:** [00:00:00] You're listening to a branded world podcast episode number six.

**Announcer:** [00:00:09] Welcome to a branded world podcast where we explore great brands and give you tips tools hacks and guides to create brands that captivate clients and drive growth and revenue. And now your host Louisa camp.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:00:25] Welcome to episode 6 of a branded world podcast. In today's episode, I interview James Boettcher the owner and chief media officer for fiascoes gelato. James tells us the story of how he built this extraordinary brand that Fiasco's gelato is this is really a story about overcoming major setbacks. You know it's a story of resilience of dedication and commitment even in the face of adversity. What I really love about this story as well is again how James and the fiasco team had developed their purpose and their values and they really stick to it even when they're faced with extraordinary setbacks. And even though fiasco xylitol is an amazing brand they are still a small business so this episode is a great example and inspiration for all of those who are also small businesses and nonprofits. This really illustrates you know what it takes the effort and the areas that you need to pay attention to and to really nourish within your organization to be able to develop a great brand. So, this is a great episode with some amazing insights and it's truly a great story. So here we go. James Boettcher from Fiasco's gelato.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:01:48] Hi James how are you.

**James Boettcher:** [00:01:50] I'm very well thanks for calling Luiza.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:01:52] I'm very excited to be able to talk to you about your experience and what you have done for FIASCO. Which is no small feat especially thinking where it is. FIASCO Gelato is in Calgary Alberta which is a place where for a lot of months out of the year is very cold and many people may not think of gelato right away. So, it's no small feat. So, James can you tell us a little bit about how you began your career and how you ended up purchasing the company.

**James Boettcher:** [00:02:29] Yes, a fairly lengthy story but I'll try to keep it to the Coles notes. As a young young lad, I always found myself trying to keep myself busy. We didn't have a lot of money growing up. I grew up in a single parent home. And so, I just found a way to help put a few dollars on the table so we could afford to eat. And my dad got a gig early on at Sunterra market it was called Sudfeld before and I got to go help him close the store a couple of times. And so, I told him that as soon as I was allowed to work I wanted to work so on my 14th birthday I started bagging groceries at a natural food store not really realizing that would come full circle. Twenty years later I see putting our delicious gelato on the shelves there. Along the journey I got the opportunity to work with some some other amazing Canadian small natural food brands like Happy Planet juice and Kicking Horse coffee and when I was with Planet foods and after some churn I had the opportunity to work with

another great grocer that's no longer in business unfortunately probably because they put a 17-year-old in charge of the store I was the assistant manager so going to high school. But what I didn't realize is that you know what my future life all of these things that come together and understanding of what grocery retail looks like and the wholesale distribution with climate foods and then I was fortunate enough just based on how small Happy Planet and Kicking Horse were that I would get a chance to kind of sink my teeth in a little bit and learn a few things by osmosis at a very young age. So yeah now we're here with a team of 40 brilliant minds trying to change the world every day and the thing I love the most is that we've sort of got this level of ignorance when we approach sort of traditional business. And I think that gives us an opportunity to disrupt disrupt the category as well as the grocery industry.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:04:41] So that's fantastic. So, you were exposed early on to some pretty great brand says you mentioned Planet food, Sunterra, Kicking Horse and you kind of learn from those and got also, of course your experience in the grocery and retail. Can you tell me a little bit how you got in the vision for Fiasco because it is a very different brand than, I don't say normally, but most brands? I mean you can feel the brand in every point of contact that you have as a customer. So, can you tell me a little bit about what is the vision you had. And was that something you had from the very beginning or was shaped through time and how do you instill that vision within the team.

**James Boettcher:** [00:05:40] Yeah. You know it's tough to really pin point where it kind of took shape that it has today. I think just like you know a human throughout their life gets exposed to different things and then he starts to fundamentally understand a little bit more about yourself and who you are and I think the same goes for our brands. Early on in Fiasco's journey and just for the listeners, it started out as sort of small scoop shop in 2003 by a gentleman named Matt and he sort of set out to create a gelato store front because he's from Winnipeg and cold's there and if worked there maybe it would work in Calgary. I was doing freelance graphic design and small brand strategy on the side while I was working at Planet food. So always wanting to be busy I found a way to stay out of trouble by being entrepreneurial and FIASCO in its infancy was just a fun brand. People would go to the shop you know on a sunny evening in the middle of summer and the store was sort of like pastel colors. And it was just kind of a neat ahead of its time kind of retail experience. As I got a little more immersed in the brand I started to sort of you know in my wildest dreams and so call that Fiasco. But coming up with ideas and sharing them with Matt and we got to a point where he said it's apparent here that you kind of love this company more than I do and he was down a path of building a family and he had some other entrepreneurial endeavors so with a handshake deal in eighteen hundred bucks in my bank account, we kind of took over to sit around this fiasco version two. And for me I knew sort of the get go that the service experience kind of been lackluster. Unfortunately, the management that was in place wasn't upholding Matt's vision was and people weren't getting the greatest experience. So, for us you know we had to kind of you know under new management sign I don't think works well in very tough spots so you just got to kind of make it feel different and then when people ask you if thi is new ownership or something like that then you get to share.

[00:08:01] And we ran into a bit of adversity as we're kind of heading in that direction and there's a fire in our store in 2009 and Matt and I had really only really done ahandshake deal at the time so he said you know if you want to pass on this because it's kind of in a bunch of ashes he sould understand. And at the time I was 25 and I just kind of said you know I've got

nothing else to do. So why not rebuild this place and see what I can make of it. And I think fundamentally that you know again you don't really realize these things that occur in your life that play such a monumental role in your in your future. But now that sort of gumption and persistence and resilience to basically you know have an opportunity just walk away and choose a different path. And my saying let's try this and see what we make of it becomes a big part of what people interact with the brand now you know nine 10 years later that they're like wow this really feels like there's these deep roots and for me I've kind of always been told they have an old soul or you know whether it's my integrity or are things that you know fundamentally important to me. Those transcend into the brand and become part of that DNA. So, when it comes to you know what fiasco is now I think it's very similar to a journey of a person and you know you get all these forks in the road you get to decide.

[00:09:34] And a big thing for me has always been like OK well you know let's take the path less traveled. Let's challenge ourselves a little bit more and really think of what it would be like if we were on the other side of this, meaning you know we are interacting with the brand or the experience or the product or you know and what would really wow us. And over time it's just been you know very much a learner or a student around you know what makes great brands like Virgin with Richard Branson or Starbucks or Google or all kinds of different landscapes. I'm just saying to myself OK I've had this sort of emotion or feeling or respect for what's been built here. How do we learn from that? And then again build on who we are and that's really, I think fundamentally how it all begins and how it will always continue.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:10:29] That's amazing. So, you literally rebuilt it from the ashes up.

**James Boettcher:** [00:10:36] Twice.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:10:37] Exactly because there was a second fire, right?

**James Boettcher:** [00:10:41] Yeah.

**James Boettcher:** [00:10:41] In 2015 it's a bit of a crazy story. So, you have this fire in 2009 and really you can just decide to pack it in but you don't and then you go through in the last three or four years what a call like that excruciating almost Navy Seals like training in entrepreneurship where you know you're figuring everything out and sleepless nights and you know not paying yourself so that you can pay your staff and just really bootstrapping scrappy start up. And then you get to this point where you come in we call them inflection points but it's like we kind of hit this point when the flood in Alberta happened and we supported the zoo because that's where the business took a bit of a big pivot and we're available in grocery now so we go from you know where we're really great numbers. We'd worked very hard to build our restaurant and coffee business meaning our products were available. We were at you know every single event in Calgary and found ourselves in a space where we were on the profit 500 pretty early as soon as we're eligible on the site your space in that first year I think it was 12 percent growth.

[00:11:53] So we were doing really good but when the numbers are small it's kind of easy to attain that, it's when you're jumping from you know one hundred twenty thousand the first year to for 480 to 1.2 million. Those are huge numbers and are really exciting. But you know the real big inflection points are when you are from you know 1 million to 3 million or whatever it looks like. So, we're going through this high growth phase. And I've always said

you know it's kind of like gambling in business you got to know when to put your chips in the middle. So, we had acquired the space in 2012. Twenty-five hundred square feet. We thought it was huge. And behold 18 months later we're literally standing on top of each other. And we had to find a new spot. So, we find a spot in the late 2013 early 2014 and that takes us about a year and a half to build it out and every single cent from every corner of my life, I have two other businesses and I borrowed everything from there. I did everything I could leverage into my personal life my homes everything. And so, everything is on the line and we get into the space in August 2015 and it's this Willy Wonka meets Google. It's this like Google facility it's you know everything I would ever want if I worked for somebody. And it's really been my mantra always like don't build it like it's a business build it like you would want to walk in every day that you work there and be like this is the greatest place.

[00:13:22] And so you know we didn't cheap out if you ever get a chance to come it's a really open environment there's glass to the whole production. So, in the morning you see know natural light as the sun comes up comes right into production and I don't think there's another production facility in Canada that could offer that.

[00:13:41] So we built this amazing place and about four months later and five days before Christmas December 19th, 2015. I got a call from the land lord telling me there's been a fire and I was kind of in disbelief. I literally didn't believe. But then I realized we had a serious situation so I went over to the building as fast as possible and there had been an electrical fire from two of the what we call our sort of coffee bar which is a bit of an experiment scenario to try a bunch of unique flavors and really experience how gelato is made. It's like the Willy Wonka gelato kind of thing. So, this fire is luckily contained to the front of the space about 25 or 20 square foot area but the smoke and water is really where all the damage occurred. So, this screw up the whole building. Immediately it's assessed as what they call a large loss of the insurance business which means more than half a million dollars damage. And I distinctly recall one of the guy's telling me it would be at least eight months until we could reopen. And unfortunately, in the grocery business no matter that we're no champions in that space and people love us and love our products, retailers aren't going to put a sign on the shelf that says James is a nice guy or his team is really great and we're going to reserve the shelf space until they're ready to go. They'll fill it with something else just as soon as it's empty.

[00:15:08] And so we were you know on this brink of being out of business. We worked so hard to build that we had put all our chips in the middle for this new space. And then this occurred. So, I feel very blessed in so many ways. And the biggest one is the team you know immediately said like how do we solve this. And with a little bit of what I call augmented reality it's that famous thing that Steve Jobs did to get sort of extraordinary results of his team. But I told the team like you know we're going to get through this and provided what maybe was an audacious plan for the rebuild and rehired the original contractor but we ended up getting sort of the check marks that we were good to make gelato again on January 16, 2016. So, they told us eight months to rebuild what we did is we just focused on production. We built that and everything else just on top of the rest. And then we could get product back into those grocery stores within three weeks.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:16:13] That's an amazing story. I mean talking about resilience.

**James Boettcher:** [00:16:19] Yeah but you know I don't know that if we hadn't gone through all the things we had in you know the first five six years leading up to that or you know the

adversity faced in my personal life growing up that we would have been able to do that and a lot of people that you know have failed businesses that I interact with now are just like I wish I had that type of courage when you know our business took a turn for the worst kind of thing. So again, very blessed for that.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:16:50] Absolutely. And it does I think reflect a lot on your actual brand because I agree with you a lot of people even faced with least adversity than that would have given up where or would have thought it was not worth it. And also, you know the focus that you and your team had faced with that adversity to say OK how can we solve this.

[00:17:13] You're always focusing on the solution always focusing on the yes in almost trying the impossible to see how far you could go. Is that do you see that very much as part of your culture?

**James Boettcher:** [00:17:26] 100 percent. And you know when I am essentially standing in it in this moment. We had some unforeseen delays with some of our seasonal packaging for holiday collection. And you know you can't sometimes foresee outside circumstances that affect you and the team sort of saying well that's the way it is and we're going to have to delay all this stuff and yada yada yada, and disappoint a bunch of people. You know the team immediately on Thursday reassess the timelines. And we had an amazing team step forward for our production yesterday to get a bunch done and then this morning.

[00:18:09] You know a team that has already put in you know five or maybe even six days of work and still show up at 6am on a Sunday and that's without being told to do it. Very rarely do these types of decisions come down from me. It's the same understanding that we'll always do whatever it takes. And you know in those moments of pain where you're like I have to get up at 6 a.m. at 5:30 on a Sunday or I have plans and I've got to start to negotiate those. What happens is on the other side all of the team knows it's sort of for a particular purpose. And they know that I'll always be looking after them whether it's you know we rarely have people out for pay increases because they know that as soon as the funds available and the recognition is as constant or we have a guy that just returned yesterday five weeks in Australia and you know any normal employer or the delivery guy asked for five weeks. Well essentially, he's asking to be let go from the company and you know we let him go in and we celebrate his journey and then he comes back refreshed and excited to be a part of it. And so, all these contributing factors are just really you know intrinsic to the DNA of the company in every way shape or form and I think it's not for everyone. But along the way you get to meet these amazing souls these amazing people that have always had this desire of belonging and being a part of something much bigger than them.

[00:19:46] And they know at the end of the day that even if they don't become good gajillionaires their skills that they learn or the friends that they make or the impact they have in the community or the stories they get to share are worth far more than a few hours on a Sunday morning.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:20:05] And that's amazing because I feel and some of the comments that you've already talked about really reflect your focus on the people and on the community and your clients. I mean you talk about building your physical location not just for the practicality of it of where you need to get work done but building as a place that you would want to go in or talking about how it feels on the other side if it is a customer or a member of

your team. So, you have this sensitivity to your team and to your clients and I think that really translates into how your team also just seize the work that they are doing. But how do you implement that? I mean, do you talk to your team about it or is it only based on how you yourself act and the decisions you make or how do you instill this focus on the clients and on each other?

**James Boettcher:** [00:21:16] It's I would say there's a twofold process.

[00:21:21] So generally you know if a new person is excited about joining the team it's kind of starts with our hiring process. It's quite extensive it's anywhere from four to eight steps that are involved. And throughout that journey I think people get a good sense of what it takes to be successful here.

[00:21:45] And you know the first one is a phone call and just a quick connection and a little bit more understanding of some simple things like how does this person react to any sort of conversation or you know punctuality and like simple you know call it the skills like the brass tacks on being able to work with others. Then we get them in and have a great chat about things that are important to them and where they see themselves going and we keep it quite fluid you know. We always encourage people to take time with their answers and not just say what they think we want to hear or you know admit that they maybe don't have an answer. That's OK too. And then my questions like what are you not great at? What do you suck at is actually one of the questions and part of that is to understand what people self-awareness looks like. And then also I'm actually really bad at X. Well now we can evaluate the position we're hiring them for might not even require that. So, it might be organizational skills are not really great at organization and then you say OK well they don't really have to be organized in this job so that's OK because I think most employers are nothing like that. They expect everyone to be a robot without personal errors. And then you miss the opportunity to hire some really great people that might suck at organization but are a tremendous team building or culture or whatever. So, all of that and then we get them in with the team I've always used this analogy.

[00:23:14] If you need a new kidney and they find you the greatest kidney in the world it might be some prince's kidneys or something. If the body doesn't accept it doesn't matter how good the kidney is. And so, we get them in for all the cost option and then sometimes a work project depending on what they do and really, we just get a really good idea on the front side. And I think for them they get a really good idea of what we're all about in that process. And then the final step is a quick intro with me and you know I generally wear a T-shirt and sneakers so that they don't feel like they are dealing with the CEO and they can let their guard down a little bit. I can find out a bit more and I've always again said I'm going to spend the majority of my life with these people and even more so than my family. You know that the requisite almost is could you drink beers with this person and then it makes it a lot easier once you kind of get to that phase where you're working together.

[00:24:21] So that's kind of the starting point. Once people are immersed in what it is we do we invest more than any company I'm familiar of in kind of our space especially but we have all staff meeting on Mondays and team lunch together every day. So, it's crazy to facilitate this. It's not like we have to pull a bunch of people away from positions. Everyone sits down and eat lunch together every day so we kind of double up on the Monday and then on the Friday same thing and I'm present for about 90 percent of those. And so, it gives us a really

great opportunity especially in business I find some people get on this hamster wheel and they're running for god knows how long before they get to do a check in or have a better understanding of what's really occurring. And for we run these short scrunchies, Monday to Friday. I'm really good at sort of setting objectives or course. And so, all of these things tied together allow for people to really start to get how this is very different than anywhere else. And then also start to take these I don't know if you call them skills but abilities into their personal lives. And I think that's where we've been fortunate through all of that sort of almost manufacture this deep sense of purpose and belonging and knowing that you know even though you want things to go perfect often are not going to end.

[00:26:02] And one of our core values is have the courage to own your mistakes and learn from them and I think that as a group we get to sort of see it from all angles and attributes to again people feeling not afraid to come to work or are afraid to make mistakes or are afraid to innovate or create and all of those things transcend again and to how building out that DNA of the organization. So, you get a chance to chat with somebody from the team whether it's a demo person that only works weekends and maybe at the grocery store. You know I always challenge just to ask them how it really is on the inside or or come by introduce yourself and they'll tell you better than I can about what it's really about because they get to live it every day and they've made a choice to be a part of it not because we pay extraordinarily, we are quite the opposite. We take care of everyone but we are a small business trying to do it right.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:27:04] So yes. So, it's you know you have this amazing ability and not just I shouldn't say ability I think it's a very focused very deliberate effort in building your team in making that very strong.

[00:27:20] Everybody feels that they belong and have a very strong sense of purpose as well which I want to talk about that because when I see some of your materials and of course you have those values which you talked about one of them being the courage to own your own mistakes but you have things like which you can buy quality and integrity. We will always be innovative and creative.

[00:27:45] We won't forget where we come from. And then you have what I want to ask you this is your sort of why purpose or your brand purpose which is y we are committed to enriching people's lives one tiny spoonful at a time. Is this sort of your or your brand purpose or your or your why.

**James Boettcher:** [00:28:07] Yeah hundred percent you know why discovery for me. I kind of became a very real thing. I would say 2011 when I first read of an introduction to Simon Sinek.

[00:28:20] And when you know it's really interesting when start asking people questions about very simple things like why are you doing that?

[00:28:31] And often people don't really know the answer or what you want? And lots of people really struggle answering some fundamentally easy questions because they've been conditioned to just do things without really understanding why they're doing them. And so, when I think about our mission statement it's been our mission statement since you know those early days it really sums it up from all angles. So, I would say 90 percent of the mission



statements I read are kind of like the idea of talking to you. So, the way they're kind of blasting this message from some CEO level executive's mantra that they think is good for the brand and they hope to buy into it. Often, it's very customer centric it's not really talking about the totality of business which is very simple if you think about the triple bottom line. But I've got to look out to the planet, people and it's got to be profitable. So, if you think about those three things again I'd like to come back to why are you doing that or what you want. Well first of all are important so the enriching people's lives is again you know a lot of this comes as an extension of who I am and I think I've always lived my life with this intention of how can I make things just a little bit better for someone else you never really know. People have tough lives. Life is very hard and I think sometimes we forget.

[00:30:15] I saw it yesterday with a gentleman downtown a homeless guy asked him for change and he, kind of just didn't acknowledge the guy and I always say hi I never give change because I do a lot of other stuff but I say hi how are you kind of thing. And those are the small enrichment pieces that I'm talking about. So, when I look at the mission statement on the wall with the team I can say, OK if I'm going to honor this because this is important to me, I've got to literally think about every person who touches this brand. And it starts with the team. And if I'm not nurturing their lives and you know understanding what's important to them or what's challenging them or what they want to do with their lives. I'm playing an active role in making these things better for them then it's kind of bullshit. And I think that is where it starts.

[00:31:06] The next piece becomes a play on now we're selling a product. And how does that product make somebody's life better. So, I was talk about the emotion behind brands that is that so many of the things you buy very rarely are they strictly for use. You know it's like all about how we feel. And I always use the analogy of power drill. Right. There's lots of power drills out there. But I know that the power drill I have the hand feels nice and I like the color. It's totally ridiculous stuff that doesn't even matter when drilling a screw into a wall but because that has enriched my life a little bit. And then all those little idiosyncrasies things we don't even realize are happening. That starts to enrich the way we feel about things. It's even like we see the light come on when we open the refrigerator so when you get in your car and it says hello on the stereo or little things like that right. And so, when you start to think about all those things and applying them to your business or your everyday business it starts to multiply and then you get past that and think about OK.

[00:32:18] Now let's talk about how we're you know enriching the lives of future generations environmental sustainability or how are we nurturing the lives of the vendors that we sell products to or the people that saw us. And so, when you start to think about it you go from probably thinking about singularity and like one small space and also you have this massive wave that goes out and if you really continue to challenge yourself you get to decide those things a little bit easier. So, I always talk about it as like a bit of a north star or a compass. You know hopefully most people have.

[00:33:02] You know some form of moral compass. Well think about how you take that and apply that to how you do business every day. There's a handful of stories where I've been on the phone with someone in customer service and they say sorry sir we can't change your flight or we can't amend this thing or no refunds or all these things. And often I would just say Can I enroll you for a second. You know let's say is Margaret on the other side of the conversation and I'll say Have you ever been in this situation and these things happen and

you're really not trying to scare anybody and you just want what's fair. And now you've got this problem on your hands and you just really want the person on the line treat you with some respect and dignity and sort of you know treat others the way they would want to be treated. And I would say you know my success rate maybe isn't 100 percent but you know seven or eight out of 10 of those they're like OK. Just a second and that's the human way of dealing with it. And so, for us you know within the team literally the empowerment you know is grand. I always tell a team as long as they're not giving away helicopters because someone you know didn't have the number one experience. So, they kind of do it you know have somebody that had maybe not a perfect gelato I know sent a Facebook message. And the next day they would receive four pints and an apology card on the front doorstep.

[00:34:32] Because for me if the goal is to enrich people's lives then you know correcting what maybe didn't enrich their lives. You can't really think about the costs associated with it. It's not about that.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:34:48] This is gold. You just touched on some really crucial and important things for a brand to be successful.

[00:34:58] I completely agree people don't buy products the buy feelings right. And having a good product or service those are just sort of the table stakes. Nowadays that's not enough anymore so you really have to focus on creating those feelings that wow or as you say in your statement those in reaching lives moments. But the other thing that is very apparent when we're talking to you and when experiencing if anyone has had any point of contact with Fiasco is that this is not just you know a nice statement that you have in your annual report or in your web site, you actually do live by this which is a much harder way to run a business I think because you have to really go out of your way and truly genuinely think about your team members and your clients. And even people that you work with like manufacturers or suppliers and so forth and if you really want to honor this mission statement if it's a true vision. So how do you bring your investors along. Because you obviously are also a profitable business and you also have to look for for those profits and to have the business be successful. So, what is your focus on that or what is your sort of mentality around that if you honor this mission statement then you will become more successful.

[00:36:42] Or how do you convince people and a lot of our listeners will have board members that they have to bring along in this journey. So, what would you say to them.

**James Boettcher:** [00:36:53] Well you know there's so many things that come to mind right now.

[00:36:56] One that immediately sort of I was reminded of is very early on in my entrepreneurial journey. You know we get these plants for it's like we could probably do this cheaper or we could you know negate this or whatever it's just unfortunately the way business folks will say, right? Like one that comes up immediately for us is if you look at glassed out salaries for kitchen help well the median salary is \$26000 which is effectively \$13 an hour which is far below a living wage. And that's just the way the world works. And so, you know we have this amazing discussion last week about you know we pay people a living wage as soon as they get up to their 90 days which is \$19 dollars an hour with benefits at fiasco and you know we could have come up with all the excuses for paying people to backs

while that's what everyone else pays and yada yada yada and people thirteen bucks. Well that's what everyone else pays yada yada yada all this stuff. But you know. This early on in my entrepreneurial career I said if you do what's right the money will come. And when I made a decision for us to really be. Amplify what it meant to be a living wage leader. We kind of ran a bunch of numbers in math and come up with all the reasons why we shouldn't do it. And that would be where you know what you're saying for that shareholder accountability right. Sure.

[00:38:34] You know I we have friends and family as shareholders so I'm a bit more fortunate that maybe some of the other entrepreneurs out there because they didn't and they didn't buy into the company without understanding at the core what's important to me and realizing that you know I'd be glad to hand their check back if they had a problem with this corporate integrity based principles that drive the business. So, you know first things first do what's right and the money will come if you live by that you'll find a way to make it make sense. And also, you know as we continue this journey realize that the bigger you get the more businessy it gets. So now we have what's called over and above trade spend and we've got all these numbers that we never really had before it was simple we'd make a product we jumped in the van and we drive it over to Sunterra. Well now when you ship you know overnight to the warehouse in Vancouver and your one day late they'll charge you a \$3000 penalty for literally being less than one day late. You got to say OK how do we account for these. This margin of error. How do we how do we make sure we don't go out of business for those things.

[00:39:50] And I've always said this as well as like as soon as we find ourselves in a race to the bottom in terms of pricing or you know what the product stands for or the packaging that it goes into or the quality of ingredients like we're going to shut the doors because that is where it's such a dangerous slope. And we really truly get into if you're to think of it in a human element you get a new place for you you're willing to commit a crime for a few extra dollars. And so, I think the thing that's always been very important is that if you set the standard and you never ever ever waiver on it and then you enroll others you enroll the team and that's why they are core values are not just core values, that's why we call them committable core values because in decision making every single day the team is explicitly invited to interrupt any conversation where we feel that we are disobeying what is fundamentally our beliefs. And so, if you do all of that stuff I know because where we're making a case very quickly by how we built fiasco and you're going to find it easier as you go down that journey to make those decisions. And when I think about shareholders and the traditional sense. Again, it comes back to how I think about business in the traditional sense. And if you put yourself in a situation where you're going to take money from someone that's going to tell you that you need to make some decisions to pay people less or use inferior ingredients or cut corners or whatever is required. No, I'm not talking about efficiencies I'm not talking about good business practice from an ethical standpoint.

[00:41:42] But if you invite those people into your tribe which is really what it is, sooner than later it's just going to start to take on a whole different shape and I hear these horror stories from other small businesses that are tight on cash and they got started a romanced by someone with pocket book and all of a sudden now they are you know a few years removed and they totally lost all control of the company that they fundamentally built to make the world a better place. And I like at that point it's like why even bother and you know probably the most famous one is Steve Jobs if you look at his removal and all of that he just you wouldn't stand for it. And I would even go as far to say since he passed away I think Tim

Cook is a great leader but even my small interactions in the Apple store they just don't have Steve's DNA in them and it's very unfortunate because he built something that was going to last forever.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:42:48] You know it's incredible James because what I love about you and your story is because you have been in positions, and we've talked about this with the fires for instance, where it would have been so much easier to fall into the temptation of not follow or sort of disregard just for a moment or so your mission, right, and your values, to keep the company alive. But you never do that. You really are leaving proof that you can be a very successful business and not straying away from your values from that mission statement, exactly the opposite of it.

[00:43:41] Because not only, I mean you are a b Corp right? You use clean energy you compost or divert most of your waste, I think more than 95 percent of it from landfill. You're leaf certified, you buy local you donate to the community, you're super active in terms of helping community projects and so forth. So, I mean this is incredible because it can be so much easier not to do all of those things.

[00:44:13] And there's so many temptations that a business can go through that you will be just a lot easier to not focus as much on doing good for the community. Right?

**James Boettcher:** [00:44:27] Yeah absolutely yeah, It's nice to hear you say all those nice things about us. I always joke that in my job I don't have a boss to pat me on the shoulder very often to tell me I'm doing a good job. So, it's nice when someone outside of the team recognizes some of what we're doing and what when I think. Go ahead.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:44:52] No it's just I was just going to say it's very refreshing because the world I work in with brands and you see these remarkable brands like Apple or Starbucks and you mentioned some of them or Virgin but they're so big that for smaller businesses it seems like almost impossible to reach to those standards. So, it's so nice to see and talk to a company like Fiasco who are a few steps ahead certainly from a lot of other companies but you're still a small business and living proof that living by your purpose being as you call not only for profit.

[00:45:35] I love that term. So, it's a purpose driven organization.

[00:45:40] And you can be highly successful and still not just in business and numbers but also highly successful in doing good for the world and for the community you live in.

**James Boettcher:** [00:45:54] Well there's a couple of things you said it's so easy for companies to decide not to do these things and then I think it's like anything in life or business.

[00:46:06] We have a thing right when we come up the stairs at fiasco and it says good work takes hard work, and for us to do all of those things to put all those things into action and show up for our community and show up for our people and our environment. It takes a lot of additional resources a lot of capital or additional people like part of the team has to spend a good portion of their week on what we call our giving gang and our people potential on things that are generally just overlooked in organizations. So, there's always this easiest path

possible to sort of ignore those things. But I think inevitably they're not sustainable. I mean you mentioned a guy like Richard Branson or some of these other companies that have built a legacy around things that people think are extraordinary. Well that's really what it takes that's the investment required for them to build something that's going to be there hundreds of years from now. And it will slowly have an impact on the way the world works. And another one that is a big one for us and I shared that at a B corp speaking engagement this week and it's like inherently when I think about business someone has an idea and they see a need in the world for whatever they're creating so it could be the automobile center at Ford it could be gelato with fiasco doesn't matter. You see a need in the world.

[00:47:43] And so you decide you're going to do it. And really, it's the world that gives you that opportunity. If it didn't exist before you know I heard an Aboriginal guy say we are property of Mother Earth basically the world doesn't belong to us we belong to the world. And so, you set out on this journey and I'm sure early on almost every company there's a lot of gratitude for initially getting into business and creating something but then you get further down the path and just like everything we develop some form of entitlement whether it be when you think about the first world prices third world or lots of things along the way. So, we've got a saying on the wall and we live it every day which is leave it better than you found it. And so, I think you know that inherently businesses need to recognize that what they have is a gift. I talked about it my fiancée gets sick of me saying this but I say often every day I say we are so lucky and not in the sense of like we put 100 bucks on green and we had one number out a 37 match on the roulette wheel which maybe we did and in a business sense but no we generated our own luck by creating an environment that creates this momentum but we're still extremely lucky that anyone really cared about what we were doing. And along the way more and more people continue to want to be a part of what we're building.

[00:49:14] So when you look at it through that sort of scope or that lens I think the decision making again becomes super easy. And that's why you know it's very easy for us to throw all the garbage out. Like everything that comes into the building into the garbage bin out back and they come and they haul it away and it's gone. But before we existed that amount of garbage didn't exist. And so, it's our responsibility now to figure out how to sort it and recycle as much as possible. And figure out the compost obviously we deal with a lot of food. Get back to the place now to those facilities that do that. And then just be even smarter like I have a bit of an initiative on our jar is a challenging one for me. It's beautiful. It definitely is an integral part of our success. It's clear it's got all this greatness to it. And when I look at it it's like OK well how do we make that same jar five years from now where it can be made of post-consumer resin. We upcycle we encourage everyone to use it and do the things to it which we see some amazing people you know use it for storage or lunch or whatever. But how do we get to the point where I can do that. And you can also if it ends up in the landfill doesn't have a significant impact on the world. And so, these constant challenges of just saying how do we do it better. A lot of companies just choose to ignore it. They set it and forget it it's fine. Who cares.

[00:50:54] We've got to think about the bottom line or the shareholders and say No wait a second we really commit to these things. The connection to our community and the environment which are core values at fiasco only gets stronger and we should be prouder of what we do. And in the process a big big part and maybe part of the reason on the call today is encourage others to do the same. You know when we set out and donate an amount of money it's not that we think it's the most amount of money and everyone is going to be you

know we donate to the Red Cross and the fire in Fort Mac. Well it's not about the 16 grand It's about the 50 other companies that realize they can have an impact now as well because fiasco said if we can do it you can do it or to do it too. So many of those things are so important.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:51:44] Yeah. And you're saying some things that are so important James and are so admirable because yes it takes a lot of work and it's like if you want to be in the Olympics yeah, it's going to take a lot of work. It's going to be hard. You're not going to want to do it ninety five percent of the time. But there's that commitment and it takes that amount of work to get there. And I feel it's the same with these remarkable brands which fiasco obviously is an amazing example of that. It takes this very deliberate ongoing effort and commitment to your purpose to really honor that purpose and not only just establish you know a few things and you say OK we're good. We don't need to continue to think about it but what do you do. You keep looking for new ways or better ways to become even better and to evolve because you were saying in the beginning just like a human being that's what a brand does right. It evolves and grows with time with the days and that's exactly what you do. So, I think the world of fiasco, I love the brand I obviously loved the gelato. But you know it's amazing. And we are so fortunate to have you right here in our community doing what you're doing. And I love what you do for the brand and for the community so thank you so much.

**James Boettcher:** [00:53:10] Thank you. And like I said I feel I'm born and raised Calgarian. I feel so fortunate to get to play the role that I do whether it's fiasco or some of my extracurricular commitments or work with YYC Food Trucks and really truly being a testament to how great the city is and how great the support is. The community around fiasco is so strong. We do a thing like doors open every year and we get thousands of people coming through wanting to just be even more connected to the brand and sure can say well thank you for doing it but now I said thank you for anyone caring about what we do.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:53:52] Well it's because they feel that sense of belonging right. People want to be part of something as you said bigger than themselves which fiasco certainly is. So, for people who have not gone to fiasco I really highly recommend you physically go in not just buying it from the grocery store but actually going to the location which is awesome. So, you can actually see what James is talking about the building being just an awesome space that you really just want to hang out in. Where else James can they also find out more about fiasco and you.

[00:54:28] Yeah fiascogelato.ca if you jump on there on the splash page see what we make and how we make it.

[00:54:39] And then if you dig a little bit deeper there's quite a bit of that about our internal culture and the team and you know things that I'm very proud of. There's a little page on me now that I have more opportunities to kind of share the mission of fiasco across the country. And then if you're at your local grocer I would say ninety five percent of the ones in Alberta and I would say 60 percent across Canada have fiasco. If they don't, please ask them to make a call to get it. And if you live in Calgary we're just off by Deerfoot and Memorial or if you're visiting town come on by and we've got a bit of an open-door policy so if you come in and ask anyone that works and the coffee bar for a tour or you want to find out more or even ask if I'm available. We're very open. You know that the package is clear with intention on the

side it says look inside we've got nothing to hide. You know for the people to get to look in the windows as they come into the space and see how the products is made and are very transparent that way and then again, our tours serve as an immersion into the culture and what we do every day. If you're going to make a statement that you're open and honest. There's a lot of companies that say that but they don't want to do what it takes to share that.

[00:56:14] So big ones for us so I hope I hope a bunch of people can make it by and we look forward to including in our story.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:56:24] Yes. And if you if you've never tasted Fiasco's gelato you're missing out big time. I can say that from experience.

[00:56:32] Make sure you ask for it at your grocery store and make sure you come in visit. James is it OK. I would love to share with our listeners some of your materials in the show notes. The core values of fiasco and some of your I don't know exactly what this is. It talks about being rules and guidelines has just sort of the one page that talks about how quality means to end it right when no one is looking. And so, for us a bit of an introduction right and to your cheat sheet that talks about show you have to find the way to yes be approachable that sort of thing.

[00:57:16] Do you feel comfortable sharing these things.

[00:57:18] Yeah, we're about to launch what's called the Fiasco culture book and unfortunately maybe for everyone you've got to be an employee at fiasco to get your hands on a copy. But some of those are you know I would say one per percent of what will be included in that book. But yeah you know those things are not designed so that we can have them as proprietary documents. We want to inspire other businesses and other people they want to be a part of great companies to take you through them and understand really at the core of what it takes to do it right. Anything else you would like to know it's always a great conversation around. You know what it takes to build something that matters. And I think my number one thing as a takeaway from anyone is if you work in a company. Find a way to challenge your employer to make some better decisions on the way they treat the people and how they look after the environments and don't be afraid to and I think that if you are afraid you're probably working in a place that you shouldn't be. And then if you have your own company it's really again very easy to say I'll take the easy road or these things don't really matter to the bottom line. So why would we do them.

[00:58:58] But it's every business is bigger than itself and you've got to find a way to get past that traditional sort of definition or vocabulary or business and just do it as if you would do it in your own personal lives.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:59:12] I love it. I love it. And just be true to your "Why" statement to your purpose and find ways to always make sure that you can bring that to life.

**James Boettcher:** [00:59:24] Absolutely.

**Luiza Campos:** [00:59:25] Thank you so much James I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to us today.

**James Boettcher:** [00:59:31] Awesome thanks this was great.

**Announcer:** [00:59:36] Thank you for listening to a branded world podcast discover more at a branded world podcast.com.