



SUMMIT +

Cratejoy



**Identifying
Your Target
Audience &
Effectively
Marketing To
Them**

Wednesday, May 29, 2019
1:00-1:40 PM

PANELISTS



Ella Ozery
BarBella Box



Danny Taing
Bokksu



Chelsea Bergen
Dapper Dog Box



Marianna Alvarez
Enjoy Flowers

**Tell us about
yourself & your
subscription box.**

ELLA My name is Ella Ozery and I am the founder of BarBella Box – the premier fitness subscription box service, delivering premium CrossFit and weightlifting gear, apparel, snacks, supplements, accessories, and more each month exclusively for women. I launched BarBella Box in November of 2015 while still working my 9-to-5 job as a marketing manager for a digital marketing agency. I started BarBella Box out of necessity. At the time, there weren't any subscription box services that provided a fun way to try out new brands in the CrossFit and weightlifting niche. Although there were other fitness boxes, none felt like they were made for me – someone who used a barbell during a workout. Since the functional fitness industry was (and still is) in its growth stage, new companies and products were popping up daily and I realized that it was time for someone to provide an outlet to try those products, similar to how other subscription boxes work.

Over the last 3.5 years of running BarBella Box, I realized there was more to this business than helping women try new products. BarBella Box has brought together a community of likeminded, strong, beautiful, and inspirational women now called “BarBellas” through a private Facebook Group called the “BarBella Family.” This is a place where women can share stories, discussions, personal records, workouts, recipes, inspirational words, advice, feedback on boxes, and basically communicate with each other in every aspect of their lives. Now, BarBella Box has shipped more than 160,000 boxes to over 70 different countries.

I started Bokksu in 2015 to introduce people around the world to delicious Japanese snacks and teas only found in Japan. From the early days of me packing boxes in my living room to now shipping packages directly from Japan to over 70 countries, Bokksu has grown to become the #1 provider of authentic Japanese snacks and teas worldwide.

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We curate our premium snack boxes around fun cultural themes and hand-select artisanal products from over 50 local snack and tea makers across Japan (some of which are 200-year-old family businesses!). Every box also includes a Culture Guide that explores the theme of the month and details the stories about each snack, including flavor profile, maker name, prefecture of origin, common allergens, and even identifies which products are vegetarian-friendly.

CHELSEE The Dapper Dog Box is a a box for trendy dogs and their humans. Each month's box has a fun theme and comes with two types of treats or chews, two toys, and a unique bandana exclusively available from Dapper Dog. I'm the Product Manager and work on the Dapper Dog Box from beginning to end – from how we acquire customers to what brands we partner with to include in the box to making sure our fulfillment team has the resources to deliver to our customers.

I am an eCommerce and Marketplace expert from Colombia with experience working in startups and multinationals across Brazil, Colombia, England and the USA. I am trilingual and have a Masters in Digital Marketing and eCommerce from Universitat de Barcelona. Enjoy Flowers is a subscription box that's been delivering the freshest bouquets to doorsteps across the United States for three years! The flowers are grown and hand-cut on our eco-friendly farms in Bogotá and arrive just four days after they're picked. With no middlemen in the process, our bouquets last two times longer than store-bought.

**How did you
determine where
your target
audience lives
online? What
primary
channel(s)
do you use to
communicate
with this
demographic and
why?**

ELLA Having a background in Marketing, I understood the importance of really determining WHO your target market is. Once I narrowed down the type of person I wanted to market to, I was easily able to do some simple marketing research (Google is your best friend!) to determine which social media channels this demographic uses the most. In our instance, Instagram was a clear winner of where we should be focusing our time and money. Our primary channels to communicate with our demographic are Instagram, Facebook, and email marketing.

I personally am the target audience for my own box, so that really helped get me started in the **DANNY** beginning of where I thought I could find like-minded audiences. I researched subscription review blogs, gamer blogs, Facebook groups, and generally googled around for every variation of "japanese snack box" to see what the conversations were online about them.

CHELSEE We determined where your target customer is active online by looking at our competitors as a starting point and then testing for ourselves. We were able to determine pretty quickly that we get the best return from Instagram, so that's where we have focused our efforts. The more time we've spent on that channel, the more we've been able to drill down on things like the types of accounts and hashtags our audience follows and uses. We communicate with our target audience via Instagram for two reasons: our target customer is very active there and our product is very photogenic! With a box this visually appealing, and adorable canine customers, it makes sense to be sharing our brand via a visual medium.

We utilize these channels based on data showing that this is where our audience hangs out, and it's where they're open to hearing about flower subscription services: **MARIANNA**

- Google Search & Display Network
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube)
- Coupon Websites (affiliates)

**Did you create
target personas?
Tell us about that
process.**

ELLA Having a voice for your company is so important because you want to make sure you are always keeping a clear and concise message when speaking with your audience. This helps build trust between your brand and your target market. Having a brand identity is especially important, for example, the tone of voice you use in your website copy, emails, social media, etc. need to match the brand's personality – otherwise it can cause confusion and distrust. To determine what type of tone you want to use, it's important to understand what you are trying to portray. In our case, once we fully understood the type of person we were marketing to, we knew that our tone needed to appeal to strong women who are looking to be inspired but also wanted to feel heard and relatable.

Yes, but our target personas have evolved over time. In the very beginning, I assumed it would be somebody that had a strong affinity with Japanese culture and food that was in their 20s or 30s. However, as time went on and our customer base grew, we found out that Bokksu had a broader appeal than I had originally anticipated. It wasn't only people that had an interest in Japan, but also people who loved to discover new foods and cultures as well as treat themselves to truly high-quality snacks every month.

CHELSEE We've garnered a ton of information from our Instagram community and used that to create personas. We identified which types of posts got the most engagement and which types of dogs were most often featured in our customers' photos. From there, we were able to identify dog breeds that we're popular with [and] that are popular with our customers, and create personas geared toward the human customers who have those types of dogs.

We absolutely did! As a team who believe a well-developed target audience is key to profitability, we continue to refine our targets in our decision to invest our marketing and paid media budget.

We started by using Google Analytics and Facebook Insights to develop initial profiles. We merged that together with our purchase profiles to further refine. We continue to use those data sets, including running “common interests audience” tests to learn more. We've also conducted one-on-one interviews with customers to learn about what drives them to buy flowers in a subscription model.

**Did you survey
your subscribers
to collect data on
who is buying
your box? What
did that process
look like?**

ELLA We have not collected personal data from our subscribers because we feel we already have a clear idea on who they are based on a few factors:

- Rather than asking personal information, we do constantly survey them asking for feedback of what they liked/didn't like from past boxes. We also have completely open communication via a closed Facebook group and over the years of having back and forth with our subscribers to determine their personalities, likes, and wants. This helps us determine what type of products they are looking to see in future boxes.
- Google Analytics has helped us determine enough personal information to give us a clear picture on who our target market is.

Yes, but to be honest, we didn't begin surveying until 2 years or so after launching the company. **DANNY** In the beginning, my customer base was small enough that I could get a sense of their demographics and demands simply from the direct customer support emails I would do from my own email account. We also didn't have enough resources back then to properly survey on a regular basis. However, starting from 2018, both our customer base and team size grew enough that it became essential to survey our subscribers on a regular basis to get a sense of their demographics, buying habits, satisfactions (or lack thereof), and more to continually reiterate and better our service.

CHELSEE In the early stages of the business we had customers fill out a survey with information about them and their dog when they purchased a box. We did this during the checkout process on Cratejoy.

Yes, we have surveyed our subscribers to collect data and the process is very rewarding for both company and client! **MARIANNA** I interviewed 26 clients, selected from different groups (cancelled/active/gifting/self consumption). While this was a time-consuming process ([a] 30-minute interview with each client), the insights were invaluable. We continue to use the information gathered to make impactful improvements! Priceless information and worthwhile process.

**What other
methods do you
use to collect
customer data
and learn more
about your
target audience?**

ELLA We also use Instagram Stories to ask survey questions and post polls in our closed Facebook group.

In addition to sending out surveys to our mailing list, we have been using Yotpo to increase feedback engagement to great success. Thanks to their easy-to-use review platform, we've received well over 6000 reviews, which has really helped us understand our customers' needs. We also recently started a Facebook group called "Bokksu Unboxed" that has already surpassed 1000 members in just 1 month! Our members there are highly engaged and comment and share each other's opinions on a daily basis!

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CHELSEE We gain a lot of qualitative information about our customers from the messages they send us through email and social media. Having a good ticketing system is essential for tracking trends in customer needs, requests, and opinions! Additionally, Cratejoy reviews and customer feedback are a huge opportunity to identify the keywords our customers use and the pain points they have so we can then integrate that into our marketing efforts.

We collect insights from Google Analytics and Facebook Analytics about ad performance and user behavior. We also measure client behavior from paid campaigns to see if they are more interested in flat rate discounts or percentage discounts. We watch to see which style of messaging they respond to as well. We run A/B tests constantly!

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**What was the
hardest part of
identifying your
target market?
How might you
do this
differently if
you started a
new box today?**

ELLA The hardest part about identifying a target market is understanding that they may change or evolve throughout the course of the business. Being flexible and listening to what they want is very important with continuing to grow. If I started a new business today, I would most likely keep the same tactics I had when starting BarBella Box because with any business, listening and being aware of what your customers want will only allow you to create a flourishing business.

The hardest part was to take what was simply an intuition on my own part and execute it into reality with real customers, revenue, and data. I had competitors in the space already when I began, so I knew there was a general market for Japanese food boxes, but I was trying to create a new premium niche experience within this larger category, so I had no idea just how large this target market would be. If I started a new box today, I would do a lot more testing in the form of beta boxes before officially launching the product. I lost a lot of customers early on because my "official" box wasn't quite ready for market and had improvements that needed to be made.

CHELSEE The hardest part of identifying our ideal target market has been identifying audiences with high conversion rates and profitability. Sometimes, we've spent the budget on audiences that prove to be low-profitability; there's been a lot of learning along the way! If we started a new box today, we'd focus on people who are already familiar with subscription boxes.

Did anything surprise you as you researched your target audience? Did this revelation change your marketing strategy as a result, and if so, how?

I had always known that premium Japanese snacks would potentially appeal more to a female audience. However, I was still shocked when our initial survey results came out and our audience was over 70% female! Knowing this important data point, we changed our marketing strategy in 2 ways: 1) We tailored our evergreen marketing messaging to speak more to a female audience since we know the majority are, and 2) we started working on more male-specific assets/messaging to try to increase our male customer base.

After uncovering insights that pointed to medium-high household incomes and those interested in luxurious goods as audiences who would prove profitable for a flower subscription box, we tested strategy and messaging out to test this. The new communication converted well!

**Can you give
any specific
examples as to
how devoting
time to identify
your target
audience
benefited your
marketing
efforts?**

ELLA If I didn't spend the time identifying my target market, I fully believe that BarBella Box wouldn't have been successful. Before I spent the time researching our audience and figuring out their wants, I didn't really know them.

I wouldn't have realized that these women want to be inspired and to feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves. Without that realization, I wouldn't have understood how they want to be spoken to or what products to even include in the box!

Identifying your target market is important for so many reasons – it allows you to determine a brand personality, but also what types of products to include in your boxes, it also helped me determine the price point of our box because I understood how much they normally spend on fitness products monthly and how much discretionary income they have.

One easy example is that we very quickly discovered that the vast majority of our customer base was 25+. Most likely because of our slightly higher price point than competitors in the space, we rarely have customers under the age of 25, so we immediately started cutting out a lot of our paid advertising efforts to under-25 folks. This resulted in us seeing better conversion rates from focusing on our core 25-44 audience.

CHELSEE Identifying our target audience has helped us create imagery specifically targeted to those customers. We know what dog breeds our box is most popular with, so we can create images that feature that type of dog. People feel like they've come to the right place when they see a dog that looks like theirs on our website or Instagram. This has also helped us identify what influencers and affiliates to partner with to help maximize our efforts.

Devoting our efforts to audiences that are specifically looking for “monthly flower delivery” or “monthly flowers” has been key for us. One important factor here is that they already understand and enjoy the subscription box business model. The more specific marketing strategy has proven more profitable than only targeting those who are searching for “flowers” in general terms.

**What is your
biggest piece of
advice to
merchants who
haven't yet
identified their
target
audiences?**

ELLA If you haven't identified your target audience, you most likely don't have a written-out business plan either. If you are still in your planning phases, create a business plan right now and wait to launch until you have that in writing. Sitting down and creating a business plan answers so many questions you didn't even know you needed to know! If you have already launched, it's not too late to put a plan together. This will help you make the necessary tweaks to your business to grow and scale efficiently.

Though it is possible to grow your business to a certain level before needing to identify your target audiences, it will become crucial and will save you a ton of money in the long run if you identify your target audiences as soon as possible and continue regularly identifying them in case there are shifts of changes. All successful e-commerce companies I know have grown based on harnessing the power of their audiences' data, so I highly recommend you do so too!

CHELSEE Start somewhere and start now. How you conceive of your target audience will grow and change over time, but if you haven't done anything to identify your audience, you are throwing money away.

Test different, specific segments and audiences based on your unique product characteristics. Then, drive marketing efforts to the ones that work and let go of the audiences that don't convert.

Interview your clients, walk in their shoes... you wouldn't believe the amazing insights you'll gain!

Always A/B test! This will show you which path to invest in. Learn what your customers want, then tell them what they want to hear.