



£200,000 is the average cost of bringing up a child from birth to 21

SOURCES: IVM/NETVOUCHERCODES.CO.UK



89%

of shoppers in the UK consult the internet before making key purchasing decisions

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Choc and awe

ENTREPRENEURSHIP Finding the magic in what we know can add a lucrative dimension to a business

In a quiet Brussels suburb tucked behind an unassuming garage door is Christian (known as Mr Manon) Vanderkerken's Manon Chocolatier. This factory of chocolate, founded in 1935 by Manon's grandfather, produces 80 different types of hand-crafted bonbons from all-natural ingredients, some of which come from Manon's own garden. These are offered at an equally unassuming retail location in downtown Brussels, and those not too delicate to travel are sent to destinations including Europe, Japan and the US.

EXCLUSIVE EXCURSION

Around 12 years ago, Manon received a call from a man who wanted a private tour of the factory. Interested to share his expertise and intrigued by the possibility of some direct marketing for the company, Manon agreed.

ENCHANTED RECIPE

Combining his vast knowledge of chocolate with a bit of magic learned from an old Chinese man, Manon created a tour that involved hands-on education, tasting, vintage chocolate-making equipment and a surprise ingredient thrown in for good measure. The result was such a success that word got out, and Manon began offering regular tours.

"When I did my first tour, it was for fun," he says. "Twelve years later, I still do the tours for fun. I never really imagine it as a business, but a chance to get paid for something I like doing anyway. In addition to eating 250g of dark chocolate per day (for health), I think that everyone should know about how chocolate is made, and that is my real goal."

SUPERNATURAL SUPPLEMENT

Roughly 3,000 people visit the enclave each year. At €12 per



shop following the tour, and word-of-mouth has placed him among the top 40 attractions in Brussels on TripAdvisor.com.

CONJURING UP A VENTURE

Manon challenges us to ask what business we are in. Is he in the business of selling chocolate? Certainly. Is he also in the business of education and entertainment around chocolate? Without a doubt. And by expanding the scope of what constitutes a chocolate business, he effectively differentiates himself from the numerous other excellent (many larger and better funded) truffle traders in Brussels. He also teaches us where to look for these unique insights. They come from the things we already have, and support the things we already do. Manon has 100-year-old chocolate recipes and Chinese card tricks. Chances are good that we all have something equally magical. ●

person, Manon is not in much danger of getting wealthy from tour proceeds. However, in creating a complementary business with little incremental cost, he is effectively being paid to do his own marketing. Most visitors purchase his handiwork at his tiny factory

Tasty tours
Differentiating your offering from the competition can take your business in all sorts of new directions

details

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Rat race

the world according to Beach



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