

# Ethical chocolate with big flavour combos, meet FATSO

*As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Ella McKay, cofounder of FATSO about dark chocolate, building relationships with retailers, unexpected flavour combinations and more dark chocolate.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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Believe it or not, FATSO all started over a conversation between friends about ice cream toppings! We were lamenting the lack of exciting options for dark chocolate. The dark chocolate scene was on the up, but let's be honest, it was all a bit beige. Bland flavours, packaging that looked like it belonged in a museum, and portions that left us underwhelmed. That's when the light bulb went off - create a dark chocolate experience that's just as exciting and delicious as milk chocolate, but for grown-up palates with a sense of humour. We're talking chunky, flavorful bars that'll have you saying "cheerio" to boring chocolate forever.

## Tell us about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

FATSO is a brand that's all about fun and flavour. We make chunky dark chocolate bars packed with exciting mix-ins, a total rebellion against the boring, stuffy world of dark chocolate. We want to be the go-to brand for anyone who craves a delicious and decadent dark chocolate experience, without compromising on quality or ethics.

Being a self-funded startup, we didn't have a Scrooge McDuck money vault. We haven't had a huge budget for fancy ads or mass sampling. Instead, we've focused on building relationships with amazing independent and premium retailers. They understand the FATS0 vibe and get our bars into the hands (and mouths) of discerning chocoholics. Social media and some killer articles have been a big help in spreading the word organically too.



How has the business evolved since its

## launch?

FATSO launched in mid 2022. It's been a whirlwind! We've gone from brainstorming flavours to seeing our chunky bar creations on shelves nationwide, including in major premium retailers like Harvey Nics, Liberty London, Anthropologie, and Oliver Bonas. A huge focus for us has been building direct relationships with retailers, and to do this requires time and good, passionate people. We have put a lot into building a very small but mighty team of Fatsos who nurture these valuable relationships with retailers and direct/online customers to ensure we're staying connected, listening to feedback and enabling us to grow in the right way. We have also introduced two new flavours to our range since launching, and have a product pipeline you can only drool over.

## Tell us about the working culture at FATSO?

We're a small but mighty team, so it's all hands on deck! We're all super passionate about what we do, but we don't take ourselves too seriously, as is the mantra of FATSO! There's a lot of creativity flowing around, and we're always open to new ideas. It's a fun and collaborative environment, perfect for birthing crazy delicious chocolate ideas!

## How are you funded?

FATSO is self-funded. We're all about sustainable growth, and whilst sales are our main focus, profit isn't everything. We source our chocolate ethically from Colombia, where they not only have award-winning beans but also give back to the community. It wasn't easy finding partners who shared our values, but it was worth every ounce of effort. After all, delicious chocolate shouldn't come at a cost to people or the planet.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

I'd say finding time for everything as a small startup! There's so much we want to do, but only so many hours in the day and limited budgets. So sometimes it's about prioritisation, and pulling back to our key focuses: Sales & nurturing our customer relationships; building the brand; ensuring we have enough chocolate for our hungry mouths!

## How does FATSO answer an unmet need?

Dark chocolate lovers deserve more than just a boring bar! FATSO offers a fun and flavourful alternative, packed with exciting mix-ins and unexpected flavour combinations. We cater to those who crave a delicious and decadent dark chocolate experience that doesn't take itself too seriously. People love the chunky bars, the unexpected flavour combinations, and of course, the fact that we don't take ourselves too seriously. We're all about indulging your inner chocoholic - without the guilt trip.

## What's in store for the future?

World chocolate domination (but in the best way possible) is definitely on the horizon! We're constantly dreaming up new flavour combinations and are excited about expanding our product line. Ultimately, we want to be the global leader in fun and flavorful dark chocolate, all while staying true to our commitment to quality and giving back.

## What one piece of advice would you give

## other founders or future founders?

Take calculated risks, but get honest feedback on your ideas (don't be afraid of a little constructive criticism!). Research the market, but don't be afraid to carve your own niche. Sometimes you gotta take the leap and get creative. Surround yourself with a team that complements your skills, and never stop learning and growing. Building a business is a wild ride, but with the right people and a whole lot of passion, you can make it a delicious one!

## And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

I would say routine is a luxury in startup life! And more recently I've added to the freneticism, having given birth to our first child 3 weeks ago. But when we created FATSQ, we did so with a way of life, an attitude in mind: Live life more full. And that's exactly what I'm doing embracing the chaos, keeping a sense of humour and enjoying the crazy ride of being a business leader, mum and the best partner/friend/daughter/niece *et al* I can be.

Ella McKay is the cofounder of FATSQ.



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