All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now, HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell, and they break down why these pitches were winners or losers, and each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find Another Bite on whatever podcast app you listen to, like Apple or Spotify, or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

I feel like I can rule the world, I know I could be what I want to, I put my all in it like no days off on a road, let's travel, never looking back, right?

Okay, so Cat Cole is here.

She's the president of many brands, including my favorite brand of all time, Cinnabon.

Did I get that correct?

Is that true?

Or am I just getting excited about it?

That's right.

Okay.

And yes, to give people kind of like, I don't know, like the two-minute summary, like who are you, why should people be excited to listen to this?

I like to let people sell themselves because A, you'll do it better than me, and B, most people are really afraid of bragging.

And I'm like, no, no, no, this is the time to brag.

For two minutes, just brag and then we'll be humble the rest of the time.

But for two minutes, tell people why they should care.

Flex it up.

Yeah, flex.

Exactly.

So I run a company as president and COO called Focus Brands, four to five billion in global consumer product sales, just under 7,000 units, 60 countries, seven food brands that people know and love, Cinnabon, Anteans, Carvelle, Jamba Juice, Moe's Southwest Grill, McAllister's and Schlatzke's, the business grows by acquisition.

So we're constantly looking for new brands that are big enough to make sense in our portfolio but have enough upside potential in multi-channel retail franchise CPG growth to bring them in and apply all of our strengths to those brands to build them over time.

So two questions.

Okay.

Three.

Do you guys like Cinnabon?

Let's start with that.

I love the Cinnabon mini-bond.

It's not mini because the classic is giant.

So it's just like, it's more normal size to the normal bond.

You won't hate yourself later, Bond.

That's right.

Okay.

So second, do you guys have, so I see all the food brands, do you guys do non-food brands or are you specifically focused in the food category?

All food

All food and franchising as the core legacy business and then even better if it's extendible into other licensed formats and grocery products and even better if it can port around the world.

Gotcha.

And are you guys public or there's a private company?

Private equity.

Oh.

Private equity.

Okay.

Gotcha.

Okay.

So you're a baller.

That's amazing.

How did you get here?

Are you kind of like, I worked my way up from mail clerk for, you know, 20 years and now I'm the president COO or did you have some other career and you kind of sidestepped into this?

How did you get where you are?

I'm like the great poet Drake started at the bottom, now I'm here.

I am one of those stories.

So I started out as a hostess and a waitress when I was 17, 18 years old at Hooters restaurants, putting myself through college, first person in my family to get into college, grew up the child of a single parent alcoholic father, helped raise my sisters.

And so I just had to, you know, work to pay for school and I was the first person to get into school.

I thought he was really excited and then something really crazy happened, Hooters happened to be growing around the world at the time that I was a waitress.

And I was asked to be a part of the training team that would go launch the franchise on different continents around the world.

And so I said, yes, I started doing that Australia, then Central America, South America, Asia. I did that so much.

I was traveling.

I had to be in these countries for 20 to 40 days to launch the franchise.

I very quickly moved from being on the team to leading the teams.

And by the time I was 20, I had opened up the franchise on most continents and was failing college because I was never there.

So I dropped out of school before I got my two year degree.

Luckily since the company was growing, there were many corporate job opportunities for people with my experience in the company.

And so I moved to Atlanta from Jacksonville and took my first corporate gig with a paycheck instead of cash and dips and found my way into the professional world.

And again, as the company grew, I grew, I was vice president of that company.

When I was 26, while they were doing 7 to 800 million in revenue, stayed with that executive team, all kinds of really interesting things during that executive tenure that we could double click on later, started my humanitarian work in Eastern Africa, did a lot of nonprofit leadership that gave me some really cool parallel leadership experiences that allowed me to be just a better leader at a younger age than many people because I was leading my like my day gig, my nonprofit on the side, humanitarian work.

And eventually when I was 31, well, before that went back to school, I have my master's without having a bachelor's.

So I went through an MBA program nights and weekends, it is allowed, it is rare, but possible. And that's the story of my life, rare, but possible.

And then became the president of Cinnabon and helped turn that around out of the recession. And again, as that company grew, I grew every three years, I've had a different and larger gig and now oversee all the business.

Okay, that's amazing.

So we I did tell you when you came on, I was like, we're going to talk ideas.

Yeah.

Because I try to warn everyone because whenever some legit guest comes on, they're just like, cool, you're just going to ask me about me.

And then I already know that story.

So I don't need to prep and I just go on the show for sure.

And they show up and I'm like, and I'm like, Hey, you know, what are, you know, what are some cool things you're seeing?

Tell me about the future.

Not your past.

And they're like, wait, what the hell is this?

So I gave you the idea, but I gotta, I gotta ask you some questions about your past because that was okay.

But I want to get to the ideas because I know we were excited about them.

I'm actually going to look at the clock right now.

I'm going to make sure that I stopped myself at some point, but I have two questions for you.

So the first one is you come from such a non-traditional background.

You get into these leadership roles.

One thing a lot of people feel is what they call like imposter syndrome where you're like,

okay, they gave me the keys to this car.

Do I know how to drive?

And like, you know, do I really know what the hell I'm doing?

And like some people, I've met two different types of people, people who felt that and then they sort of, you know, danced with it and overcame it in some way.

And I found other people who I've met other people who are like, I, you know what, I understand that, but I've literally, I never felt that way.

I'm just curious when you were like, okay, it sounds like you dropped out of a two-year college, right?

So you dropped out of a community college and now you're, you know, 25, 26 years old, your VP of, you know, a multi-hundred million dollar brand.

Did you have those feelings or was that not something that registered for you? Kind of a mixed bag.

I love that you've talked to people that have both responses.

For me, the way a version of that showed up, when people talk about imposter syndrome,

I've found that some are talking about slightly nuanced, different experiences.

Like one is just this, this self-talk, I don't deserve to be here.

You know, do they, do they think I don't deserve to be here?

Is everybody looking at me like, what is she doing here?

Right?

So there's that worry, that internal talk, but then there's another version that was more what I experienced.

So that first version, I haven't experienced, but the version that I've experienced is an over-indexing on humility and curiosity at times when I really needed to pull forward more courage and confidence.

And I would ask myself in my head, because I respected the people I was now a peer of so much, who in the early days, they had been in business longer than I'd been alive.

Literally, I was a 26-year-old executive and they were in their fifties and sixties.

They had worked for 30 years.

And so there was something in my head.