

## Interview: How Emily Dubner is Baking Her Way to Success

under30ceo | Jun 14, 2010 | Comments Leave a Comment and 0 Reactions

Like 7 people like this.



Emily Dubner is the founder of [Baking for Good](#), a New York based startup. Baking for Good sells all natural brownies, cookies, and other treats while giving %15 of every purchase to a nonprofit of the customers choice. Emily has made great strides with Baking for Good in the past year even though she had no thoughts of starting a business while attending Harvard for college.

This year alone Baking for Good is expected to donate over \$20,000 to nonprofits across the country. Along with a recent feature in Entrepreneur Magazine Emily is on track to make a big dent in the business world but in a good way. Read the interview with Emily below...

### Where did the idea for Baking for Good come from?

I grew up baking and continued to bake through college and when I arrived in New York for my first job. I don't think I ever saw myself running my own company (I'm pretty sure the word 'entrepreneur' was not in my vocabulary), but looking back, I realize I was always

starting little businesses – selling tote bags or greeting cards or catering dinner parties for friends and family. After college, I joined a management consulting firm that was very entrepreneurial, and it showed me that it was possible to turn something I loved into a business. When my mom received a gift of cookies as a thank you last winter, it got me thinking about baked goods as an alternative to flowers, and I decided to recreate the idea of a bake sale on the web. I came up with the concept of Baking for Good: an online bake sale that supports great causes, with delicious, all-natural, gourmet treats that include a 15% donation to a cause of the customer's choice.

### You said you had a job before starting the business. What made you take the leap and quit? Was this a scary process?

I worked at a management consulting firm that gave me great opportunities right out of college. In the first couple of years, it was definitely difficult to leave, even when I had other things that I wanted to pursue, because the firm had a really compelling value proposition with great opportunities for advancement. But right around the time I began working on Baking for Good, my job started to feel less secure because of the economy. Now the risks of leaving and starting my own company seemed less scary, so I took the opportunity to pursue Baking for Good. For me, the timing was just right. In a better economy or a more secure job, I'm sure it wouldn't have been so easy to leave.

### How do you think the idea to give 15% of sales away to charity has helped the business compared to keeping all the money?

By giving 15% of every purchase to a cause the customer chooses, we help our customers feel good about the purchases they make. Not only can customers send brownies to a friend who is sick, but they can also support a cause they know their friend cares about. People want to feel connected to the brands they support, and with Baking for Good, we're connecting in a very real way by supporting causes our customers are passionate about.

### Have you turned to anyone for help while starting the business? Has there been a specific source of help that has led the way? ie. family, friends, advisors

To this point I have funded the business myself, but there are so many people – friends, family, interns – who have been a huge source of help in other ways, from reviewing website content to brainstorming marketing ideas to taste-testing the products (I don't really have to twist people's arms for the last one!).

### You mentioned the business just started in Sept. 2009 and it seems to have seen tremendous growth. On track to donate \$20,000 this year and a recent feature in Entrepreneur Mag. What hurdles have you encountered because of this fast growth and how have you over come them?

There were definitely some hurdles in getting the website and operations up and running in time to meet demand early on. In our very first week, when we really were just in soft launch for friends and family, DailyCandy picked us up and put us in their national edition. During that first week we saw upwards of 10 orders a day, and some things weren't in place yet. Some customers got free shipping simply because the products they ordered weren't hooked up to the shipping calculator yet. Fortunately, I've been lucky to have built a great team, between my web developers and my baker, to be able to roll with whatever happens, make changes as we need to, and make sure we can meet demand.

### What are the future plans for yourself and Baking for Good?

Ultimately, I see Baking for Good as the go-to online bakery and the go-to site for ordering gifts online. Currently, we're utilizing twitter and facebook to build a strong fan base, and we're starting to do live "bake sale" events and promotions to give more people the chance to sample our products. I'd also like to expand our corporate gifting program and events. We love doing customized orders for companies and people hosting events like weddings and baby showers.

### What advice would you give to a young entrepreneur just starting out?

I think it's important to test out big ideas in small-scale ways when possible. Funding Baking for Good myself meant that I had to think about every decision and every investment extremely carefully, and it helped me focus the concept into something manageable. When I first met with web developers to build Baking for Good, I had a much bigger project in mind than what we ended up creating, but I think Baking for Good is better for it. We boiled the concept down to its most essential features, and the site is very clean as a result. Since companies often change and morph in many ways as they grow, starting out with a solid, clear focus allows for much smoother growth without having to go back and "fix" aspects of the company while trying to move forward.

### Where can people find Baking for Good online?

Visit us at [www.bakingforgood.com](http://www.bakingforgood.com), and check us out on twitter ([twitter.com/bakingforgood](https://twitter.com/bakingforgood)) and facebook ([facebook.com/bakingforgood](https://facebook.com/bakingforgood)).