

A young woman with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a black baseball cap, is smiling and holding a box of SmartSweets gummy bears. She is standing in front of a white brick wall. The box is white with colorful accents and features the SmartSweets logo and images of yellow and pink gummy bears. Text on the box includes '2g ONLY 2g sugar', 'gmo free sans ogm', 'HIGH IN FIBRE', and 'SOUP'.

Small Business Spotlight: SmartSweets

As a 21-year-old entrepreneur from Vancouver, little did Tara Bosch know that within a year of launching her business she would generate over \$1 million in sales across Canada.

In 2015, Bosch started SmartSweets, a gummy bear brand that offers a healthier alternative to traditional sugar candy.

“Our products are the means to our mission, and our mission is to kick sugar, keep candy and create a movement based on smaller, smarter choices,” Bosch said.

Unlike traditional gummy bears, SmartSweets gummy bears have 2g of sugar, 24g of fiber and 5g of protein per 50g pouch. The comparable amount of regular gummy bears would have 26g of sugar – which, as she mentions, “is 104% of the ideal daily recommended sugar intake recommended by the World Health Organization.”

With no assets and limited credit history, Futurpreneur Canada was the first organization that took the leap of faith to support her financially to get the business off the ground. After spending considerable time networking with professionals in the industry, she attended a two-day “How to Launch a Food Biz” crash course, where she met her future mentors who ended up being instrumental in her early success.

The next thing she knew, she was accepted into “The Next Big Thing” accelerator program. Bosch said that it allowed her an opportunity to connect with “incredible people in the food industry, resources, and a physical space where I was surrounded by other young entrepreneurs going through the same highs and lows as me.”

With SmartSweets, Bosch wants to “become a global leader in educating consumers about sugar reduction in our daily lives and the positive impact that kicking sugar holds on our health.” Through her healthy gummy bears, she imagines customers “being able to go to their local grocery stores candy aisle, choose their favourite candy product and be able to actually feel good about enjoying it, while treating their body right.”

Bosch’s long list of awards include the BMO Celebrating Women- Growth & Expansion Award 2017, Cleanest Packaged Food Awards and the National Pitch for the Purse Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE) award.

As a strong example of a high-growth company with rapidly increasing sales, Bosch is ready to take on the next big challenge.

“In today’s world, things are moving so fast that every week there is a new tool out there that could help streamline or create efficiencies for SmartSweets in some way. For us, constantly asking ourselves ‘As a traditional food business, how can we leverage technology to scale more efficiently and reach more people quicker?’ has been incredibly powerful”.

As advice to other young entrepreneurs, Bosch said, “it’s important to own your idea and your confidence in the ability that you are capable of making it happen. I really think confidence is everything and key to growing an idea into a business, no matter if you’re a woman or man, but I think sometimes women question ourselves and our capabilities more than our male counterparts. ‘Whether you believe you can or can’t, you’re right!’ is one of my favourite quotes.”