

# infuse

STEEP YOURSELF IN INSPIRATION, INNOVATION & DEBATE

COVER STORY:

## *Going With Your Gut – How Megan Rossi Is Building An Empire Around The Microbiome*

FEATURE  
ARTICLES INSIDE:

- + **Good Mood Food**  
– How One Dietitian Is  
Taking On The Snacking  
Industry
- + **The Art of Brand  
Partnerships** – How  
To Create Win-Win  
Relationships
- + **Straight To The  
Source** – Culinary  
Tours That Go Beyond  
The Kitchen

DECEMBER 2019

 dietitianconnection®



# Step *inside*

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***Infuse it with inspiration, innovation, creativity and, of course, your personality.***



## *infuse*

STEEP YOURSELF IN INSPIRATION,  
INNOVATION & DEBATE

Volume 3, Issue 4

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## *From the Desk*

of Maree Ferguson

Founder & Director, Dietitian Connection



***A*** ***s many of you know, I attend the Food and Nutrition Conference and Exhibition (FNCE) in the USA each year. This year I had the privilege of hearing Abby Wambach, retired US Olympic gold medal soccer player, deliver her keynote.***

Abby spoke about getting comfortable with failure. She described many imperfect moments in a soccer game as in life, and how failure can be used as a source of inspiration.

In 2015, Abby was benched at the World Cup. She felt angry and embarrassed but she had the choice about how she would respond. Instead of focusing on her ego, she chose to take it on the chin and be the best team player she could by cheering the team on from the sidelines.

Abby pointed out that we are allowed to be disappointed but be proud of how you respond – “...eliminate bedtime regret to avoid death bed regret...”. She implored us to focus more on the ‘we’ rather than ‘I’, because it will get you further in the long run. We are often led to believe that we need to compete with each other, however, Abby reminded us to have an abundance mindset and support our colleagues.

As a mainly female profession, Abby encouraged us to step into our power, believe in ourselves and demand the ball. We need to live by new rules if we want to change the game. Abby has written about the importance of finding our tribe or pack in her book *Wolfpack*.

LEARN MORE:



<http://abbywambach.com/books/wolfpack/>





Above image  
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***"...step into our  
power, believe  
in ourselves and  
demand the ball."***



# Going With Your Gut

– How Megan Rossi Is Building An Empire Around The Microbiome

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**A**ussie gut health expert Dr. Megan Rossi, is on a mission to help people take control of their health by unlocking the potential of their gut. We chatted to Megan about the release of her first book, *Eat Yourself Healthy* (an Amazon best seller), and juggling many roles including researcher, acclaimed speaker and clinician.





Image courtesy of  
Emma Croman

**This year you started *The Gut Health Clinic* in London. Can you share a little about the highly specialized clinic and experts you've pulled together?**

Gut health is revolutionizing what it means to be human and how we manage many health conditions. However, it's a new area with research emerging daily, and it can be difficult for practitioners to keep up. This is what drove me to set up *The Gut Health Clinic*. All our clinicians also work in gut health research at King's College London and are fully immersed in new findings.

**We also see you're very in demand as a guest speaker. Do you enjoy presenting and what are your top tips for finding your own style (and owning the stage)?**

I am really passionate about empowering others to take control of their health, and find that speaking opportunities provide the perfect platform to do this in an engaging way. I present the way that I like to be presented to. I try to make the science easy to digest (pardon

the pun!) for people that don't necessarily have a science background. When I'm planning a talk, I think about what will grab the audience's attention and motivate them to learn more.

**The Gut Health Doctor: Eat Yourself Healthy launched in September – what inspired you to write the book?**

Boosting gut function is one of the most effective ways to enhance our overall health and wellbeing. I have seen this first hand in clinic, as well as in my research. Frustratingly, there is so much misinformation about gut health floating around – from probiotics to restrictive diets – it's disheartening and damaging.

I wrote this book because I wanted to make an evidence-based approach accessible to everyone and to empower people with knowledge and practical advice. I want to see others realise the power and potential of their gut.

*article continues overleaf...*

***"I am really passionate about empowering others to take control of their health"***



**And we see you've got a book endorsement from our favourite Jamie Oliver (secrets out!). How'd that come about?**

I still can't believe it either! Jamie is such a genuine and generous person. He has been incredibly supportive from my early days.

**What would be 3 clinical tips from the book, you could share with our DC readers?**

- 1.** **The importance of personalising advice** for gut health. This means not just putting everyone with IBS on a low FODMAP diet. Our skills as dietitians go way beyond providing generic advice.
- 2.** **The benefit of combining diet and mindfulness strategies** for managing functional gut disorders, including functional bloating.
- 3.** **The need for a systematic approach** when assessing food intolerances, including blinded food challenges.



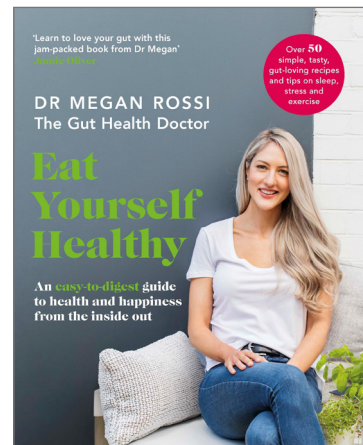
Image courtesy of Justine Stoddart

**With gut health now being “big business”, how can dietitians remain the respected voice?**

I believe, if we want to be seen as leaders, our profession needs to be involved in developing the evidence-base and contributing to research. This certainly doesn't mean we all need to become research dietitians, but get involved wherever you can, whether it be quality improvement projects or clinical audits – it all counts.



**"Our skills as dietitians go way beyond providing generic advice"**



**LEARN MORE:**

To keep updated on the latest gut health news, connect with Megan on social media, or visit her website:



[www.drmeganrossi.com](http://www.drmeganrossi.com)



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Image courtesy of  
Emma Croman

**Megan's book 'Eat Yourself Healthy' is available to purchase instore or online through major retailers. Soft copies available to download to your device.**



## Good Mood Food

– How One Dietitian Is Taking On The Snacking Industry

**D**reamed of starting a food company? Dietitian, Kara Landau, turned that dream into a reality when she launched Uplift Food in 2018. Now she's taking the US by storm with her venture-funded prebiotic snacking company, Uplift Food. Here's her story.

### Why did you decide to become a dietitian?

I decided when I was probably around 16 years old that I wanted to be a dietitian. I was very into sport. I was a netballer and I played almost seven times a week and I was actually quite overweight and I realised that I could be a lot quicker on the court if I lost a little bit of weight. I started eating healthy and I guess this organic passion





for nutrition evolved. I was always very into health and human development at school and as soon as I had to pick what course I wanted to go into, I saw nutrition and dietetics, there wasn't even a conversation. I just knew that that was what I was going to do. I thought I was going to be a sports dietitian. But that is not the route that I ended up going down.

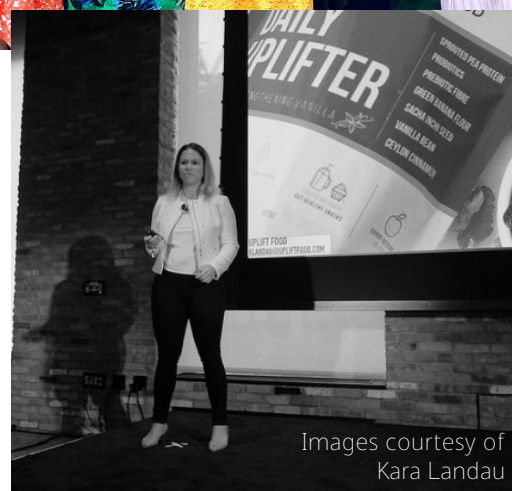
**Where did you start out when you first became a dietitian?**

I started looking at jobs and none of the jobs seemed attractive to me. And it was actually a struggle. I knew I didn't want to apply for any of the graduate positions. I ended up setting up a private practise in Acland Street in Melbourne. I housed myself inside the two medical practises that were on that street and I built up a thriving little private practise that I loved. I was also helping Nutrition Australia with their corporate wellness initiatives. Slowly my interest in business started to grow.

From there, I launched a corporate wellness company called Corporate Nutrition Melbourne. I recruited about 30 dietitians to run nutritional seminars, and cooking demos and one-on-one consultations at workplaces throughout Australia on my behalf. My passion for business continued to blossom and from there, I enrolled in a Master's degree in entrepreneurship and innovation.

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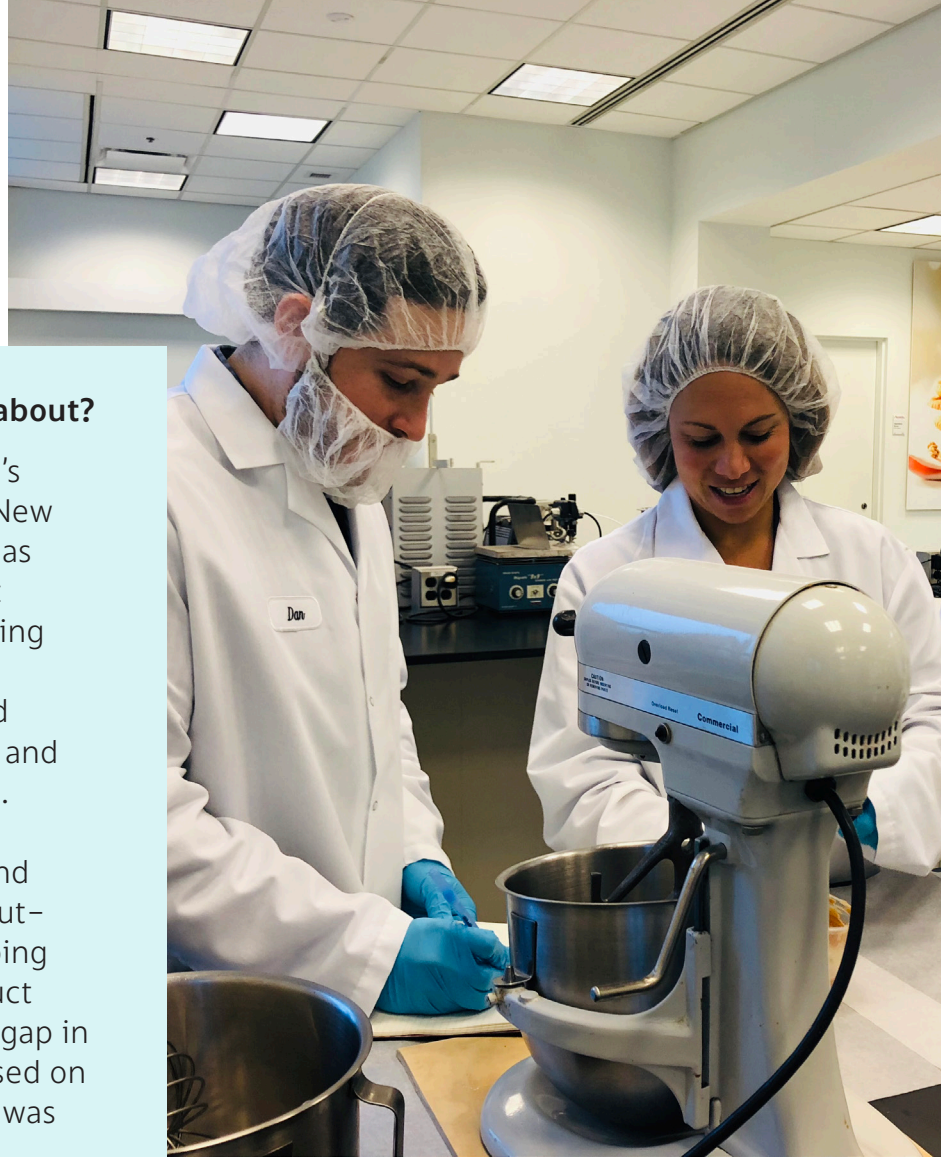
***"My passion for business continued to blossom and from there, I enrolled in a Master's degree in entrepreneurship and innovation"***



Images courtesy of Kara Landau

### How did Uplift Food come about?

After completing my Master's degree in 2012, I moved to New York, and positioned myself as a spokesperson and product developer under The Travelling Dietitian (recently renamed The Prebiotic Dietitian). I had gone through a big breakup and I was feeling pretty stressed. I started investigating the relationship between diet and mood, and discovered the gut-brain connection. After helping other companies with product development, I saw this big gap in the market for a brand focused on the gut-brain link. And that was what led me to then launch Uplift Food.



***"I started investigating the relationship between diet and mood, and discovered the gut-brain connection"***





Image courtesy of  
Kara Landau

*Kara in the test kitchens  
developing the Uplift Gut  
Happy Cookies.*

### **What's your vision for Uplift Food?**

My vision for Uplift Food is for it to be the leading prebiotic brand globally and to get Uplift Food's prebiotic-rich snacks in every airport across the globe. Ultimately, I want to help people support their gut and be their happiest self.

### **Tell us more about the early days of Uplift Food.**

Nothing has happened overnight. I've been plugging away for many years. In 2016, I moved from New York to Sydney for a year, and started creating the formulation for my first product, The Daily Uplifter. And I began exploring packaging partners, ingredients suppliers and the manufacturers, and securing the right vendors. In 2017 I actually moved back to NYC when I met my (now) husband, but still felt that Australia was the right place for me to launch the brand, so in the summer of 2018 I went back home for a few months to prepare fully, and in March 2018 I launched in Australia, and then a few months later I launched in the US. It took over a year to get my first product off the ground.

### **What are some of your takeaways from running a business?**

I think it's important to share with people that it's not all fun. I spend a lot of time on operations and finance, and product development is just a small sliver of my work. If you're thinking about doing the same, it's important to be ready for what's really involved.

Hire people that balance out your strengths. For example, if you're a creative, bring on someone operationally-focused. You need a diversity of skill sets to run a successful business.

### **Mondelez recently invested in Uplift Food. How did that come about?**

I got invited to be part of Food X, one of the top food accelerators in New York two weeks after launching in Australia. I basically jumped on a plane and started the accelerator two days later. And it was through that accelerator that I connected with the innovation team at Mondelez International. At the time they didn't have a venture arm.

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I was told to pitch to them. At the time, I was definitely not ready to pitch to anyone, but I knew that I wanted to create a functional snacking company. I introduced myself to them and I shared my vision. There was about 15 people in the room and they were all nodding and smiling. From the beginning there was good energy between us.

From there, I pushed the relationship. I was warned that they're slow moving and they'll talk to you for ages but never strike a deal. I continued to pester them, and actually created a proposal for an incubator that allowed me to serve as a nutrition resource to their R & D team in exchange for their overall product development support – they agreed! From there, they launched Snackfutures and I requested to present to their Chief Growth Officer up in Chicago. That day I told them 'I'd like to be your first investment and this is how we're going to do it.' Several months later – after extensive due diligence with their legal team – we formalised the agreement. Getting funding has been a roller coaster, but an exciting one to say the least.

One of the things that made my pitch unique was offering to work to get my foot in the door.

### **What characteristics do you need to succeed as an entrepreneur?**

I think persistence is the number one trait. I've been told that many times and I think it's true. No one knows how many times you fail behind the scenes. You have to have the mental strength to just keep going even when you're disappointed.

Self-belief is also essential. You need to believe that what you're doing is ultimately going to work and stick to it. I was pushing for years behind the scenes before Uplift Food got off the ground.

And finally, I think humility helps. If you're humble, then amazing people will gravitate towards you, and together you can really make cool things happen.

### **What is next for you and Uplift Food?**

I have been plugging away for the last eight months on a new snacking product and I have recently launched a new gut health-focused cookie range in the US. From there, the goal is to increase distribution and get on more shelves. I'm also currently acting as the media representative for the Global Prebiotic Association.

#### **LEARN MORE:**



<https://upliftfood.com.au>  
[www.upliftfood.com](http://www.upliftfood.com)  
[www.theprebioticdietitian.com](http://www.theprebioticdietitian.com)



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# GUT HAPPY COOKIES™





# *The Art of Brand Partnerships*

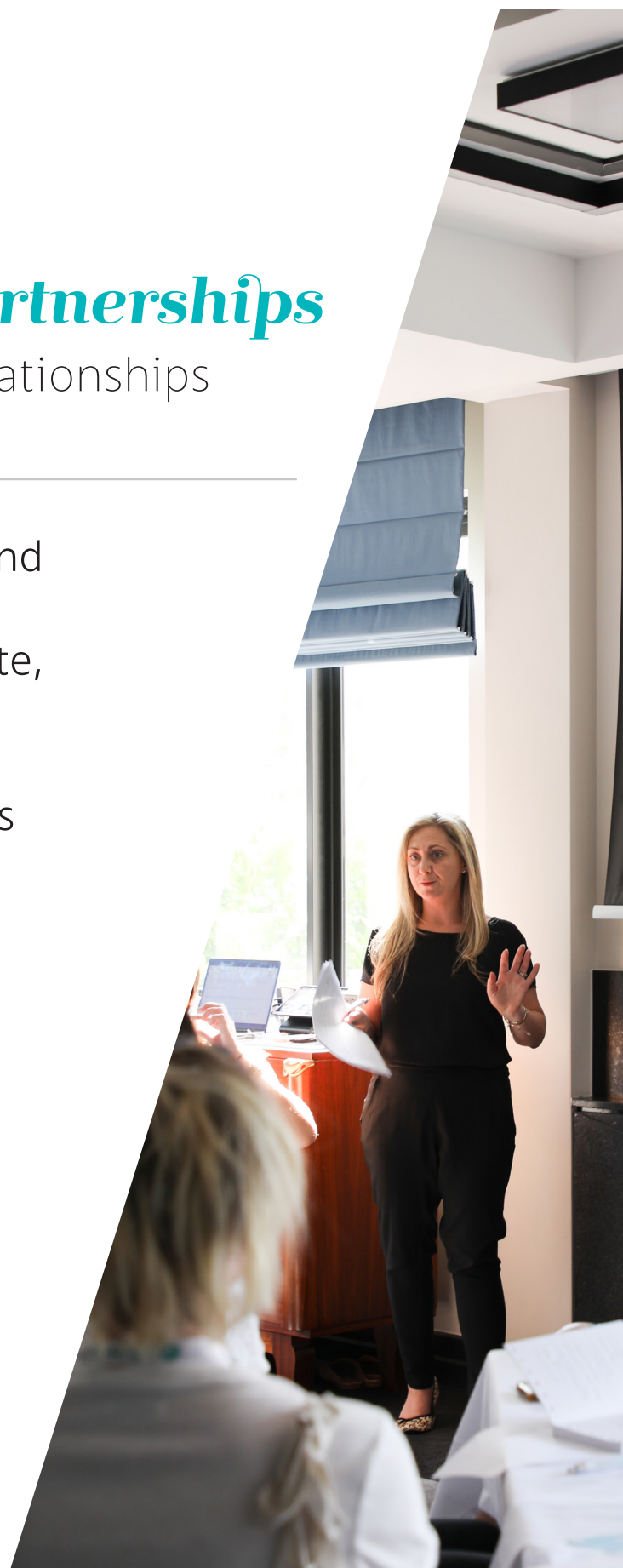
## – How To Create Win-Win Relationships

by Simone Landes, Talent Manager and Director of the Lifestyle Suite

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Simone Landes, Talent Manager and Director of The Lifestyle Suite and The Academy by The Lifestyle Suite, represents some of the biggest names in health and wellness in Australia. In this article, she shares her top tips for creating effective brand partnerships.

As an agent working primarily with health and lifestyle experts, a large part of the work we do is supporting our experts to partner with brands. In my experience even the most forward-thinking brands don't always know how to maximise their expert partnerships.





## Creating *real* Partnerships

Whether you're the expert or the brand, here are a couple of key tips for ensuring partnerships deliver value for all involved.

# 1

### Align on philosophies and values:

The last thing either group wants is to discover the other party isn't really a fit in the middle of a campaign. Experts should develop a solid understanding of the brand's offerings, values and key messages prior to signing on to work with them. The brand should be open to sharing information about their products and philosophies so that all parties are on the same page before the partnership commences.

# 2

### Understand the broader goal:

Identify what the brand is trying to achieve before planning out activities. Does the brand want to bring a new product to market or are they interested in educating consumers about a specific condition? Getting additional context can help you deliver more focused and tailored solutions.

# 3

### Identify deliverables:

With (1) and (2) established, it's time to think through how your expertise can help the brand accomplish their goals. Deliverables should focus on highlighting your expertise to drive outcomes. For example, if a brand partner has a gut health product, deliverables should incorporate gut health education in addition to the showcasing the product itself.

## I'm ready to *partner*. What kind of things should I do?

Deliverables for brand partnerships vary depending on the brand and their objectives, but usually fall into one of these categories:

- **Content creation:** Creating editorial, video or podcast content in conjunction with the brand.
- **Media outreach:** Acting as a key opinion leader (KOL) on behalf of the brand. This can include serving as an expert source for a quote or media interview.
- **Event Activities:** Attending or speaking at an event hosted by the brand or their PR agency.
- **Social amplification:** Utilising your social media presence to drive specific messages about a brand and sometimes their products.

***Remember, the key to maintaining your reputation and credibility is to make sure that your expertise is always front and centre.*** If an activity doesn't demonstrate your expertise then it's time to rethink the deliverables and if this partnership is right for you.





## They've asked me for a proposal - *how do I price myself?*

Believe it or not, coming up with the activities is often the easy part. Telling someone what you think you're worth is hard, but if you keep the following factors in mind, then you can always justify the cost of your services.

- **Deliverables:** What are the specific campaign deliverables and how much time will they take for you to complete?
- **Timeframe:** What are the timeframes for the campaign? Does it coincide with other activities you have going on? Will this work restrict you from doing something else?
- **Budget:** How large is the brand? What kind of budget do they have to work with? There's no point asking a brand for money they don't have.
- **Fit:** Why have they chosen to work with you? What is it about your expertise that makes you unique?
- **Scope of work:** How is the brand planning to engage with you? How are they planning to use your name, your image, and your credentials? Is there the scope to partner with them outside of Australia?
- **Category:** How large is the category in which this brand sits? How many competitors are there in that category? How well recognised is that brand in the category?

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- **Reach:** Do they need you to help build their brand or will the partnership help you grow yours?
- **Risk:** How is the brand regarded by your community – peer and audience? Is there a reputational risk inherent in the association? Are they well regarded by the industry in their category, or are they a brand that people aren't really sure of?
- **Work reputation:** Have any of your peers partnered with the brand previously? What kind of experience did they have? What did the engagement look like?
- **Opportunity cost:** If you do this work, what *can't* you do and what is the opportunity cost of that?

Commercial deals are not just built on dollars, but the value of the partnership. Make sure the conditions work for you as well as the brand, and that the partnership is mutually beneficial.

With a thoughtful approach, partnering with brands can be an incredibly rewarding experience for all parties involved.

Knowing only too well how hard it can be for up-and-coming experts to navigate the industry, we have recently launched **The Academy**. This program is designed for experts and professional athletes, giving them access to expert tools, mentoring and live web-based learning delivered by industry leaders and media heavyweights, where 'partnering with brands' is only one of the many topics we cover. Learn more about **The Academy** [here](#) or say **hello@thelifestylesuite.com**

#### LEARN MORE:



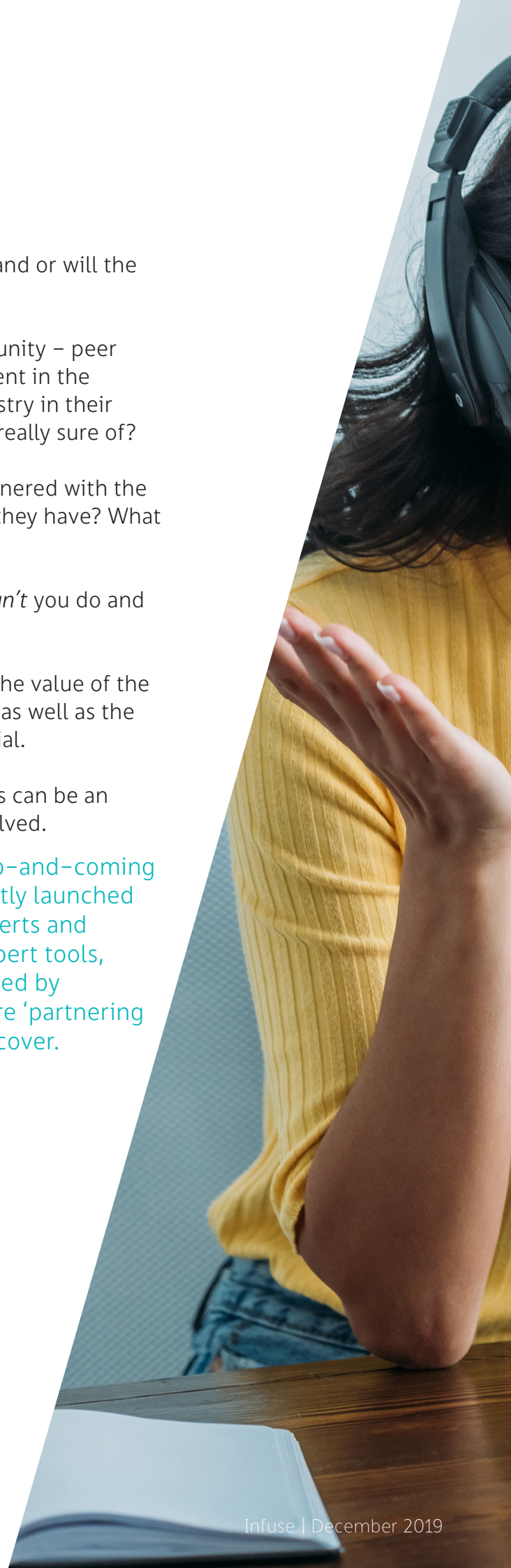
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*"With a thoughtful approach, partnering with brands can be an incredibly rewarding experience..."*





Tawnya Bahr



Lucy Allon

## ***Straight To The Source***

– Culinary Tours That Go Beyond The Kitchen

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***With over 40 years of food industry experience between them, few people know food as well as Tawnya Bahr and Lucy Allon. And they're taking their expertise beyond the kitchen with their bespoke culinary tours for food industry professionals. We chatted with Tawnya and Lucy about their company, Straight To The Source.***



## Tell us about your story. How did you come to work together at Straight to the Source?

Tawnya: I founded Straight To The Source in 2012 as a service to the hospitality industry, to provide opportunities for like-minded chefs to get out of their kitchen and experience first-hand how ingredients are grown. In 2014, Lucy and I were both studying the Masters of Gastronomic Tourism online through Le Cordon Bleu and Southern Cross University. We became study buddies and eventually, decided to meet in-person for lunch. We realised our values and business ethos were aligned. Straight To The Source by this point was having a positive influence and establishing itself as a meaningful service to the industry. I also knew that in order to grow the business further I needed to find the right business partner to work with. The more time Lucy and I spent together it became clear we would make a good team so, now a few months down the track, we went to lunch again (this time we ordered really nice wine and I made sure she had plenty!) and

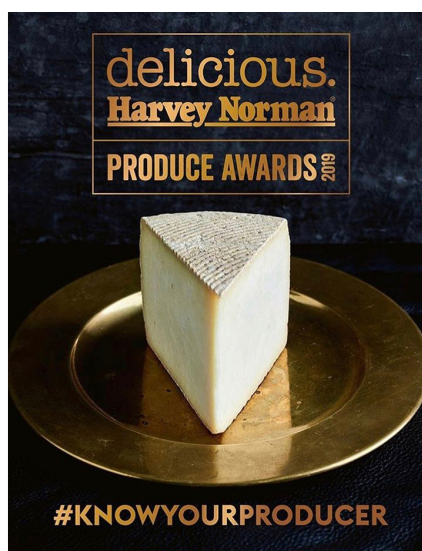
I discussed the idea of continuing Straight To The Source as a partnership. Since then, we have moved forward as a collaborative team pooling together our experience, education and passion for the industry.

## What did you do before Straight To The Source?

T: I moved to Australia from San Francisco where I worked for a software company, as an international sales and marketing manager, for almost 10 years.

I was always drawn to food provenance and cooking and fortunately I travelled extensively while in IT and used that opportunity to explore food cultures to self-educate myself. When I moved to Australia, I decided to put my business skills to work to enter the food industry by researching the condiment sector in Australia.

This was 1995 and I found a gap with mustards, pickled garlicks and American-style tomato based seafood sauce. I set up The Condiment Connoisseur and quickly became an artisan producer hand making American style seafood sauce, importing garlic and mustard products and setting up a warehouse and gourmet distribution company selling eventually nationwide to top deli's and



*article continues overleaf...*

supermarkets. From a nutritional point of view, it was important to me that all of my products were naturally preserved so that was the motivating factor for me to use my own recipe to formulate the seafood sauce. Most sauces I found that I liked the flavour of included sodium benzoate but not mine! In short, after building the business, I sold it to a larger company, started my food consulting business and took myself off to culinary school to become a chef.

Lucy: I'm from the UK originally and I came over to Australia on a working holiday visa. I'd been working in restaurants in London, and I knew that food was going to be my career focus. But I wanted to travel before I settled down in the UK.

So in 1993, I headed to Australia. I worked in restaurants in Brisbane and Melbourne before being offered the opportunity to work front of house for Neil Perry at Rockpool in Sydney. Neil's food philosophy was very produce driven and it was at Rockpool that my interest and understanding of the importance of the provenance of ingredients really started.

I had met a chef, Luke Mangan in the UK, and in 1996 John Hemmes offered us the opportunity to open Restaurant CBD for the Merivale Group, Luke as the Head



Images courtesy of @straight\_to\_the\_source

***"We never stop  
learning no  
matter our age or  
experience"***



Chef and myself, as the restaurant manager. Restaurant CBD won multiple awards and was highly acclaimed and this led to Luke and I owning and operating three award-winning restaurants in Sydney.

By 2004, we had over a 100 staff across three restaurants and we were keen to find a way to inspire and motivate our team; what started as an internal conversation around incentivising our staff quickly developed into a bigger idea and in February 2005 we launched Appetite For Excellence, a program that is now recognised as Australia's leading and most prestigious national awards program for young hospitality talent.

As part of the annual awards program, we created a produce tour for the national finalists, to educate them on Australian produce and ingredients – where they are from, who grows them and how they were produced. That was the first time anything like this had been done for young hospitality professionals and I quickly

realised that this type of experience was a great source of inspiration for both growers and chefs.

I am also the project manager for the Delicious Magazine Produce Awards, a role I have held for 10 years during which time I've witnessed the rapidly growing interest in food provenance.

### **What inspires you to do the work that you do at Straight To The Source?**

T: We never stop learning no matter our age or experience. If a chef discovers something new or comes back from one of our tours inspired, refreshed, energised and having learnt something they didn't know prior to coming along, then we've done our job. Equally, if the producer gets insight from the chefs and has a platform to share their story and educate the chefs using their ingredients, then we've done our job. These positive outcomes give us inspiration to keep creating tailored regional tours and managing the movable parts to make the experience come to life both financially and logistically.

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## *"Our goal is to get people to experience food from the farmer's perspective"*

### **What can attendees expect on one of your culinary tours?**

L: We research each tour at great length and no two experiences are ever the same. Our goal is to get people to experience food from the farmer's perspective.

We've become very disconnected from our food sources. Supermarkets are incredibly convenient, but they don't tell the story of how that produce got there. We try to get people out of their normal environments and give them a behind the scenes look at a particular ingredient or growing region.

We're very focused on collaborating with growers and allowing them to tell their story. The overall objective is to start a conversation between the people that grow the food and the people that source the food. We've found that those conversations lead to small changes in production that better suit the end user. Similarly, chefs gain a new perspective on seasonality and often adapt their buying patterns.

We really put a focus on education and professional development as opposed to gastronomic luxury experiences. In addition, we don't have any stakeholders, so we make the decisions about who we visit and why we visit.

### **What are some of the challenges that chefs face?**

L: Every chef, whether they're fine dining or high volume or a small cafe, is dealing with food costs and staff retention. And within those sorts of daily parameters, it can get very difficult to be creative. Quality ingredients aren't cheap so keeping all those costs in line and putting great food on the plate is always tricky. That's why what we do at Straight To The Source is so important—we're making a case for buying quality produce, be it for the flavour, nutritional value or both.



Images courtesy of @straight\_to\_the\_source



**Dietitians often work with chefs. Can you suggest some tips on collaborating with this group?**

L: The conversation has to go two ways. Chefs don't always have a strong understanding of nutrition and dietitians can help fill those knowledge gaps. In return, I think chefs could assist dietitians in understanding how simple and quick meals can be with fresh, seasonal food.



T: From a chefs perspective it's also TIME. Time is money and often in short supply. The chefs that come on our tours are wanting to tell that produce story through their menu, and then through the delivery from front of house as well. They're investing their valuable time to leave their workplace so it's our responsibility to make it a genuine and worthwhile experience.

**What are the next big food and culinary trends?**

L: Hyper-local, seasonal food is just starting to take off. Increasingly, people are going back to basics and looking to procure their food through farmer's markets and local purveyors, rather than big supermarkets.

We are also seeing a shift towards reducing food waste. People are going back to

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learning butchery skills, and how to prepare a whole fish, to reduce waste and be more cost efficient.

T: In addition, the use of and continued education around indigenous ingredients from a culinary and health perspective. Plant based foods and creative protein alternatives are certainly on the rise.

We're also seeing reduction or elimination of plastic and packaging which is a continuation of Lucy's comment about going back and re-learning old skills as new skills which is consistent with the growing need to be sustainable.

### **What is your favourite food experience to-date?**

T: We have had so many but for me, it was very much, one of our tours that took three years from concept to delivery. We prepared a meal with the local Indigenous community in Ceduna, South Australia, on the Eyre Peninsula.

We had a group of 20 chefs from all over Australia. This was the first time this Aboriginal community had engaged from a culinary sense with a hospitality group like ours. During our time together we built fires, worked alongside the elders to prepare a meal together using locally hunted and foraged ingredients, and explored bush medicines. Some of the local Aboriginal children baked us delicious quandong pies.

Our group of experienced chefs had an educational day they will never forget. Even patissier Christopher The, from BlackStar Pastry, learnt how to cook damper in the open fire from Auntie Sue. Afterwards, we invited the greater Aboriginal community so they could enjoy the feast; the conviviality was extraordinary, authentic, and real. It touched my soul.

L: One of my favourite memories is that Tawnya and I had the incredible opportunity to take a group of the World's 50 best chefs and food media on a regional food tour with Visit Victoria. We took them out to the Grampians region, and crammed a two- to three-day tour into a one-day tour, because their schedules were so crazy.

It was quite a simple experience in many ways, but it had so much depth to it. Sometimes it just takes experiences like this to realise how lucky we are in Australia with what we have here. It was an incredibly memorable tour, that I'll always keep close to my heart.

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Lunch on the Pink Salt lake.  
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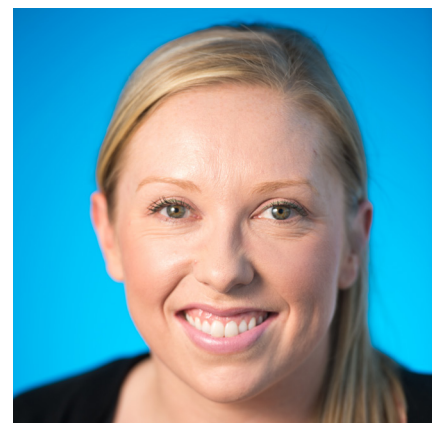


## ***Nutrition In Critical Illness:***

### Where Are We Now and What's Next?

with Emma Ridley, Senior Research Fellow and lead of the Nutrition Program at the ANZIC – RC, Monash University

Nutrition in critical illness is a hot research topic, yet there's still so much we don't know. We talked to Emma Ridley about the state of the science and why some critical illness studies don't yield favourable results for nutrition care.





Nutrition in critical care is in the spotlight at the moment. Several large randomised controlled trials have been completed recently all with one big problem –the nutrition interventions were 5–7 days.

Most of the trials have shown no differences or only small differences with questionable clinical importance between study arms. Why might this be? One explanation may be that nutrition is not important in critical care. However, that's probably not the case. A more likely explanation is that we don't fully understand when nutrition is important is most important in critical illness.

I have over 14 years experience as an academic clinical dietitian and I've always found it strange that we try so hard in the ICU, only to send our patients to the ward where they stay longer and receive less nourishment. Recently, we investigated this by following 32 patients from ICU to hospital discharge at two hospitals and assessed nutrition intake three times a week.

The majority of patients received oral nutrition alone (55% of study days) and nutrition intake varied according to how much nutrition support they received. Energy and protein provision as a proportion of estimated requirements was the lowest in patients who received oral intake with no oral nutrition supplements (median [interquartile range]: 37% [21–

66%] energy and 48% [13–63%] protein)<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, patients got closest to their energy and protein needs when they received oral nutrition combined with gastric feeding<sup>1</sup>.

Patients recovering from critical illness experience complex and multifactorial issues around appetite and taste, the way they feel about their body and eating, and physical weakness<sup>2,3</sup>. Furthermore, hospital and food service system practices such as removal of gastric tubes prior to oral intake impact a patient's ability to eat but has never been addressed in any large studies to date<sup>2–4</sup>.

To understand more about the impact of nutrition and the issues patients face in the later stages of critical illness, our team is currently running a pilot, randomised, feasibility trial with 14 hospitals around Australia and New Zealand. With a sample size of 240 patients, this trial will generate knowledge that has not existed before.

In the meantime, I encourage dietitians to advocate for patients in the ICU. Help the treatment team understand the impact of gastric tube removal and reinforce the importance of continuing nutrition care as patients transition to the ward. A little extra effort can have a meaningful impact on the recovery process.

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# The Nuts and Bolts of Weight Neutral Nutrition Counselling

with Fiona Willer AdvAPD, Accredited Practising Dietitian and academic in Nutrition and Dietetics



Weight neutral frameworks like Health at Every Size and intuitive eating are hotter than ever, with a growing number of dietitians incorporating these principles into their practice. We talked to dietitian and PhD candidate, Fiona Willer, about her research into non-diet nutrition counselling.

*'[Dietetic counselling] made me realise how unhealthy my internal dialogue around food was'*

*'I liked the way the dietitian I was seeing was discussing the relationship between food and emotions, and the goal was better eating, not necessarily losing weight'*

*'Diets do not work and eating a more balanced variety of food is more important'*

These were some of the comments that I heard from clients of dietitians when I investigated the suitability of health-centric size acceptance approaches. Traditionally dietitians have provided weight loss advice for larger-bodied people and size-accepting lifestyle advice for smaller-bodied people. However, with the rise of the Health at Every Size (HAES) and intuitive eating movements, this is changing.



The HAES approach recognises that body weight is determined by many internal and external factors and that changes to weight are not simply a matter of willpower. It acknowledges that the experience of a formerly larger-bodied person is fundamentally different (physically, metabolically and experientially) from an effortlessly smaller-bodied person, and that the behaviours required to sustain weight losses among this group often conflict with 'healthy lifestyle advice'.

Health-oriented size accepting approaches offer an alternative to hyper-focus on weight control and energy intake. They support adults to engage in health-enhancing eating habits prompted by their body cues and a desire for self-nourishment. Sometimes this comes with weight change, but often it does not, making body acceptance work a necessary part of HAES nutrition counselling.

My research found that having a health focus was superior to a weight control focus for supporting dietary variety in Australian adults, and that HAES dietitians are effective conduits for increasing body acceptance among women. In addition, we've found that dietetics clients have a preference for nutrition counselling rather than nutrition education. That is, they're seeking someone to support them through ongoing lifestyle challenges, not just a one-time visit to receive facts and advice.

***"Diets do not work and eating a more balanced variety of food is more important"***

***"[Dietetic counselling] made me realise how unhealthy my internal dialogue around food was"***

**As dietitians, we must ask ourselves 'what style of service is this client seeking?' with every new client/patient that walks into our practice. We need to have good working knowledge of both weight centric and size-accepting modalities and allow clients to choose the right path for them – even if that means referring out.**

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