



How These Founders Created a Meal Kit Company for Babies, Toddlers & Children

By: **Marie Reynolds**



Finding your niche in the food industry can be difficult, but for the founders of Nurture Life Organic Food Delivery, Jennifer and Steve knew there would be a demand for the product – because they are the consumers after all – catering to time-pressed parents. Parents of children ranging from six months to 18 years-old can order a week's worth of meals straight to their customer's doorstep with Nurture Life. Recipes developed by a chef and pediatric dietitian – prove to be a huge selling point for consumers, and what is setting the company apart from others. Being that Nurture Life is the first and only subscription meal delivery service focused specifically on children, the founders had to blaze the trail for the ready-to-eat market when it came to business models and benchmarks as a company.



Steve Minisini's role at Nurture Life focuses on operations, customer experience, customer acquisition and human resources. Minisini is an accomplished executive with 30 years of operating experience in the technology industry. Jennifer Chow's work at Nurture Life is focused on marketing, customer experience, and business development. Before Nurture Life, Chow spent 17 years in the tech industry.

The duo and their team have been covered by major news media outlets including Forbes, BuzzFeed, New York Post, Vogue amongst countless parenting magazines and websites. Since launching nationally in November of 2016, Nurture Life has established partnerships with companies across the country that uphold their values as an organic company, among them are Bionaturae Organic Pasta, Coleman Natural Foods and EeSutras Organics.

We connected with Nurture Life on the ins and outs of bringing a meal delivery business to life – from the logistics to self-funding and advice for those interested in the meal kit space.

1 First, how did you come up with the idea for Nurture Life?

We came up with the idea for Nurture Life through our son James, who is now six years old. When he started eating solids, we were living and working in San Francisco in the technology industry, had very demanding jobs and wanted to feed him fresh, wholesome food. When we looked around at the available options that were convenient, we could not find a good solution other than making it ourselves, so we started making all of his food from scratch, often spending 2+ hours, 4-5 nights a week cooking for him. As he grew older, we found we were dedicating more and more time to making his meals, and we were continually researching new recipes

to make, ingredients to include, spices to try. After a year, we thought, there has to be a better way – and the idea for Nurture Life was born. Through Nurture Life, we want to provide families with freshly made, nutritious, ready-to-eat meals for their babies, toddlers and kids, conveniently and reliably.

2 What business surprises popped up while launching this type of business?

The biggest surprise that popped up while launching this type of business was the realization that we were at the dawn of a revolution in the traditional food industry with the advent of direct-to-consumer food.

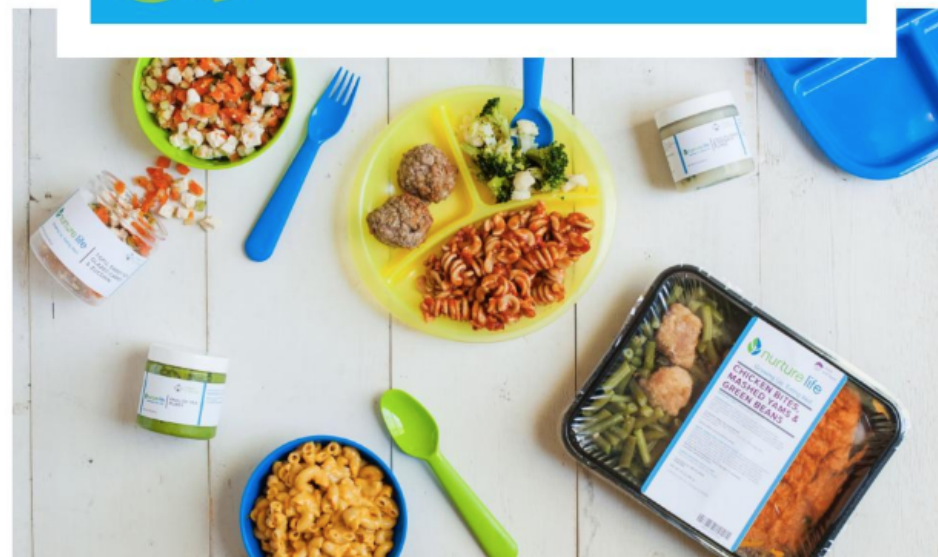
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What were the critical steps for bringing the meal delivery business to life?

My co-founder Steve and I have extensive experience in start-ups and operations and felt very strongly about creating a solid foundation for Nurture Life prior to launching the business. The critical steps we took early on were recruiting a head of culinary operations to manage our culinary production and a registered pediatric dietitian to guide our menu and recipe development and nutrition guidelines for all of our meals. With these two individuals on board, we started to develop our

product offering. At the same time, we spoke to many families to better understand their needs when it came to feeding and mealtime so that we could develop a service that would address their critical pain points, which we found to be the desire for freshly made, nutritious, ready-to-eat meals that their kids would love, that they could get conveniently and reliably. Prior to our launch, we also built out our own production facility to ensure we could meet our safety, quality and consistency standards. We also created all of our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all aspects of the business from culinary operations to customer experience to shipping and logistics. We took these critical steps to ensure that when we brought our business to life, we could provide a phenomenal experience to our customers and their children.

We got our first round of customers through word-of-mouth and local events.





4

Was this initially self-funded or were their investors?

We initially self-funded Nuture Life. We chose this direction because we had a very clear vision for Nuture Life – we still do – and wanted to ensure we could bring the business to life staying true to this vision.

5

How did you get your first round of customers?

We got our first round of customers through word-of-mouth and local events. Once families started using Nuture Life and realized how much the service helped their family, they started spreading the word to their friends, through Facebook, in parenting groups, at schools, etc.



We are strong proponents of using technology to automate and integrate processes.

6

What was the initial marketing and advertising strategy and how did it play out?

Our initial marketing strategy was to spread the word about Nuture Life through pediatricians, pediatric dietitians and others who talk to families every day about their children's eating and nutrition. We also hosted and participated in a variety of events focused on families and children. Through these early marketing strategies, we were able to acquire our initial customers and start building the Nuture Life brand.

7

What has given the best return from marketing and advertising standpoint?

We have seen the best return from creating a strong brand, service and product offering that fulfills a critical need for families. From an advertising standpoint, we have seen the best return from social media, search engine marketing, and referral programs.

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What does the backend of the business entail?

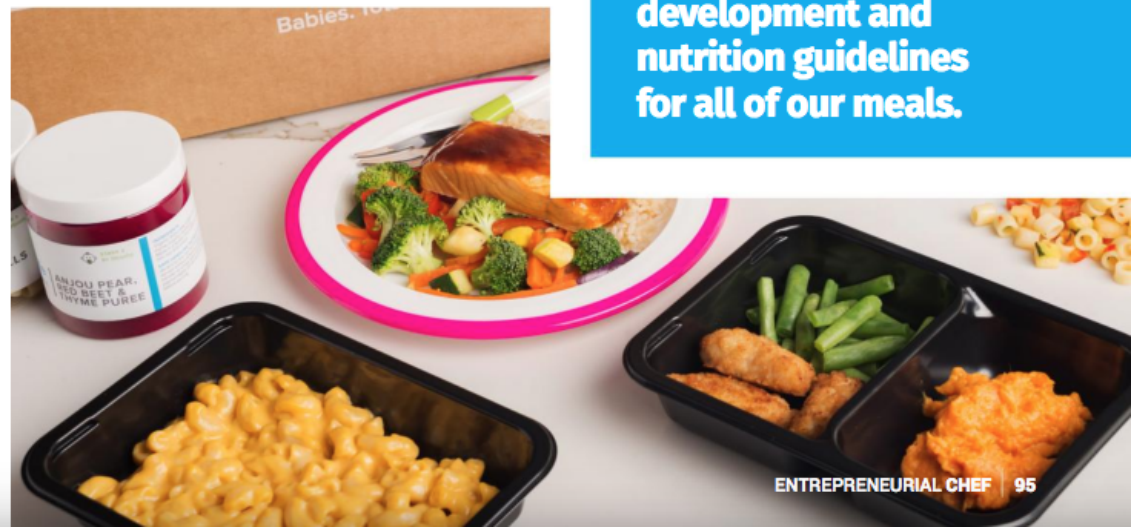
We are strong proponents of using technology to automate and integrate processes. We use different technologies for different aspects of our business including e-commerce, culinary operations, shipping and logistics, warehouse and fulfillment, customer experience and marketing automation. We also use extensive dashboards and reports for visibility into different aspects of our business.

9

What is the hardest part about running this type of business?

One of the hardest parts about running this type of business is that we are one of the pioneers in the direct-to-consumer, ready-to-eat market, and as a result, there are very few examples to model or benchmark our business.

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10 What's your advice for food entrepreneurs wanting to start a meal delivery business?

Starting a meal delivery business is hard and fraught with challenges, but this market is just getting started, as consumers increasingly demand quality and convenience. If you are passionate about what you're doing and believe you are solving a critical need for consumers, believe in yourself and don't give up. Focus on making progress and moving forward every day.

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