BBC TV Retail Guru Alex Polizzi Helps HECK To Sausage Success, As Part Of Her New Series Of The Fixer

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Months of hard work is paying off for family run sausage company **HECK**, since they worked with retail guru Alex Polizzi as part of her new BBC2 series The Fixer.

In addition to Tesco who gave the Yorkshire-based company their first break just over a year ago, the Keeble family behind **HECK** has also struck deals to supply Waitrose, Morrisons, Asda and Booths and is on track to hit £5m turnover in the next 12 months after receiving advice from Polizzi and her team.

The Fixer follows family run businesses that need a helping hand to take them forward. In its third series which starts on Monday 1 September (BBC2, 9m) Alex is finding fixes for the critical issues that hamper so many companies and the episode featuring **HECK** which airs on Monday 8 September looks at trading with the big supermarkets.

The Keebles are already a well-established family of farmers turned food producers who have started a business in Britain's notoriously congested food market and independently grown it into a major player with more than £3m turnover in its first year. But, like many small producers, they rely heavily on the supermarkets to sell their product to survive.

With major expansion planned for the brand, Alex was brought on board to help steer the Keebles in the right direction, and to advise them on how to survive the shelves of the supermarkets and realise their goal to become the UK's No. 1 premium sausages.

Covering everything from recipes and seasoning, pitching to the supermarkets and their use of marketing and social media, the episode also delves in to the psyche behind the layout of supermarket shelves and goes behind the scenes at Morrison's food development kitchens which reveals some interesting results.

HECK is the family's second sausage venture after parents Debbie and Andrew Keeble set up leading brand Debbie & Andrew's more than 15 years ago. Started by the husband and wife team and three of their children, Jamie, Roddy and Ellie, the family have reached a crossroads – ultimately wanting their children to take the reins but nervous about the move and whether their children were ready. As part of the exercise, Alex also worked with the next generation of Keebles to establish their roles, build their skills and arm them with the tools to take over the running of the company.

Of course The Fixer wouldn't be The Fixer without some trials and tribulations, family feuds and business crises to deal with along the way, but all comes good in the end.

Debbie Keeble said: “Our time with Alex has been really hard work and a real eye opener. We've been in the pig farming and sausage business for over 25 years but we still all learned an amazing amount from the experience and it has given us a real sense of pride in what we're doing and the confidence to work with our children to take our business to the next level.”

Whilst working with Alex, the Keebles made their first foray in the festival world with a Yorkshire Sausage & Beer Festival in association with Camp Hill. With the aim to showcase their brand and get people trying their sausages, they gave away free sandwiches to the 1,000-strong crowd, tried out new recipes, sponsored the 'best sausage' competition between local butchers and introduced the Keeble siblings as the new faces behind the brand.

The family are also about to embark on a youth mentoring programme of their own, passing on their learnings of setting up and running a successful family food business and encouraging enterprise in the sector. Focusing on their Yorkshire heartland initially, they will be going out into schools and colleges to talk about their experiences and why holding a university degree isn't always the key to business success. None of the four Keeble siblings went to university. Instead they have all decided to immerse themselves in the family business and create their own futures.

“Everyone was really pleased with the outcome,” added Andrew. “Alex was very complimentary about our business, what we've achieved so far and how hard everyone works. She also commented on our fun and 'up for anything' approach and our determination as a family to succeed.”

The Fixer returns on Monday 1 September. The episode featuring the Keebles will be shown on Monday

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8 September, BBC 2 at 9pm.

THE KEEBLE FAMILY ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE ON THE PROGRAMME AND ABOUT THEIR SCHOOL ENTERPRISE SCHEME.

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