

Long Story Short Podcast; The Future of Experience with Robyn Duda

JEFF

hello and welcome back to another episode of long story short the podcast about storytelling and connection where we interview marketers and entrepreneurs about the stories they tell about their brands i'm Jeff

SOPHIA

and i'm Sophia this is a podcast by humans for humans who also happen to be marketers on this week's show our guest is Robyn Duda

JEFF

and Robyn is the CEO of RDC a bespoke agency focused on custom growth plans for multi-million dollar events centered around data insights design thinking and sustainable business practices she is also co-founder of the Change the Stage initiative which looks to make the world of events more inclusive and sustainable over the last 15 years Robyn has held positions within every facet of the event world including sales marketing operations and content development she has worked with some of the most recognized brands in the world including Coca-Cola Spotify and IBM along with leading teams at some of the event largest event holding companies including UBM and Informa

SOPHIA

we had a great conversation with Robyn where we covered a variety of topics around the event industry and got answers to some of our most pressing questions we answered what are the five major keys to the anatomy of experience and how do we incorporate those into everything we do not sure how to bring initiatives like sustainability and diversity to the forefront of your action we got to hear what Robyn is doing to influence and change that and lastly if 2020 was the year of forgiveness what expectations are going to come with 2021

JEFF

it was great to talk to Robyn about her vision for reinventing the future of experience and excited to share that with you so without further ado please enjoy our conversation with Robyn Duda hello Robyn thank you for being on long story short

ROBYN

it's great to be here Jeff and Sophia thank you for having me

JEFF

absolutely it's our pleasure so before we get into all the things around RDC we wanted to take a step back and and can you tell us uh your personal story that really led you here

ROBYN

oh man i feel like it's like been my whole life leading up to like what i do and morphing and changing i was the kid who had events events is my life events are my life experiences connecting people i truly believe that that's my purpose um one way or another and i i think i live that through everything that i do um but it like started at a very young age where i was really overly enthusiastic about my birthday parties um so i gave really good birthday party back in the day like my mom and i were actually talking yesterday about this one she was bringing she brought it up she was just like you remember back in the days when that's when that was like the biggest worry we had was like are we going to tie dye this year or they created a scavenger hunt where she actually sprayed gold rock or rocks gold like they were um gold nuggets you had to find and the scavenger hunt around our house so we had to get really creative because we didn't it wasn't like we had these lavish crazy birthday parties with a ton a huge budget um and of course that kind of led me through just loving connecting people um through to college essentially where i went to play basketball um quit uh before i even poured muhlenberg college in allentown pennsylvania i was the first recruit and i quit like like two months after i got there before i even stepped on the court um because i was like well there's so many other things to do in life one of which was a student-run production at muhlenberg called the henry awards which doesn't exist anymore but they essentially gave you know i i joined in my freshman year and then ran it the subsequent years and they gave like a 15 to 20 000 budget for us to put on a gala that could that united the entire school not just the student body but the faculty the staff everyone even like the folks who worked in the the dining hall um and it was a people's choice award thing and i just i fell in love with the idea that a team of people behind the scenes orchestrates um through being creative and understanding the pulse of what's trying what you're trying to accomplish um that you can orchestrate happiness and emotion um in different ways and i again that's where i fell in love with it and i vowed at that moment like i actually heard a speaker while i was there who said figure out what it is you'd love to do and find someone to pay you to do it and it really rung true for me uh and i i said that uh i made that statement i was like when the dean of academics asked me what do you want to do what are you going to do after graduation robin she didn't love me at the time um i wouldn't say that like i focused that hard on my studies outside of focusing on the budget um for the event and she uh i said i want to really want to be in events and she said that's not a real job that's not a real career um i'm like i'm pretty sure it is uh and and that's when i i said that i you know i i i even if it's just revenge this is what i will do uh and i became a uh i that happens sometimes and i uh i got a job the week before graduation uh with a big time or a very well known at the time wedding planner in manhattan and i was from a small town in pennsylvania uh near the wolfsburg granton area so to go to manhattan to plan a million dollar wedding this was a like not even a an idea that crossed your mind when i was painting rocks gold in my garage and and here i was the day after graduation um running to manhattan and and while i um struggled with my first job um just because you're and you're working seven days a week and weddings are very difficult there's a lot of personality i like to bring emotion out in people because of what i design not dealing with emotional people and designing like this before for them there's a big difference there um but it is what got me to new york it got me to be in events and it really sparked a lot of my career and i ended up spending 10 years in tech b2b tech media planning events all over the world um for the likes of microsoft intel dell etc smaller scale conferences and very boutique events where i got to be creative um we said we were what are you trying to accomplish for the questions we

asked and they you know was then designing something that was was cool around them so i got to plan dinners where wolfgang puck came and spoke and la bernadette and um you know eric repair um signed cookbooks for people and it was really the beginning of that i i like to believe that i had an influence on um and then moved into trade shows and strategy work which is where i actually really fell in love with i can still connect emotion but i can figure out what makes businesses and industries tick and then on an even bigger scale and figure out how the puzzle pieces of how do you grow how do you make money from that and to me that was really really cool um and that sparked where i'm at now i started doing that i was at a company called ubm um doesn't no longer exist they got bought by a larger company and i got to do that for industries all over the world and i eventually said i'm traveling 65 of the year working on this and i love this but i could do this on my own and on my own time and i could probably make a little bit bigger influence outside of one company as i can um so that led me about about a little over three years ago to to start my own business i went off on my own um around three years ago and i never looked back really um and and then you know we'll talk a lot about change the stage and kind of where my business in just three years has morphed um but i think that's the fun part about business is what you think you're doing what you think you're going to do isn't always what you end up being really good at or thinking that you should do or what you um what you should do so and what your clients want i should say so yeah so so i'm here now with rdc and change the stage and we're building and we're growing and um hopefully um really figuring out what the future because it's it's uh no one saw COVID coming right and uh the event world while there's a lot of other industries that have been it highlighted um as taking really hard hits because of COVID um the event industry um has obviously been decimated we can't meet um but there are people who are thriving um and uh it's it's changing before our eyes and i think that's a really exciting place for an industry to be that was right for change

JEFF

so so tell me because we've talked about this um as well but tell me a little bit about because you mentioned covid so what is your sort of general sense in terms of where the event industry was prior to covid uh and some of the things that you know maybe covid i i think we know some of the immediate short-term impacts but what are some of the things that you know longer term and kind of what this maybe allows for the event industry

ROBYN

yeah i mean you know again i've been working intimately in deep p l deep experience strategy for the last you know several years and i should preface that i uh focus heavily on b2b um trade shows large conferences um and smaller events um but it's primarily b2b um you know i'm not necessarily always talking when i talk about events when i talk about the change that needs to happen although there is massive change across the industry um the experiential side of things lends itself a little bit differently to innovation the b2b media b2b tech side of the house um i mean it's it's been focused on short-term profits for for a really long time versus what is the right thing to do for for the long-term strategy and we're designing around that instead of designing for or have been designing for the consumers um and everything that we do is content um you know i i want to make that clear because i'm probably going to mention that um throughout this

this podcast content is anything that happens um at an event it's anything written as we know in the form of content that we know today but but event content is a part of that but also you're the connections that you make it's all part of shaping what content looks like and i think the industry hasn't done enough to understand their customer um or their consumer um we know where what people want to pay for um where sponsorship dollars come from it doesn't mean we're giving them the right thing uh we're giving them what they ask for but i think when we talk about our consumers um we don't know them enough we haven't done enough work or research on them and that has led to take the money now uh take this sponsors money now just put this you know put this session together let them pay for the session put the panel together pay for this you know meter board in in the hallway and i i'm not i know um that it hasn't it has been doing a disservice um to because now um the way people consumer the way people consume content is is different now and covid in general has completely changed the way we do that what you used to pay a premium for to see a michelle obama on a keynote stage which was a big driver what people would dangle the shiny object um we can see michelle obama all day long for free um i could also see tons of content in lots of different industries that's pretty amazing um i mean i've been on free webinar or free um virtual events with maria sharapova and you know um you know um mark cuban and folks and i didn't have to pay a dime for it so like why would i now the the tactics that the industry used to use to drive engagement and attendance has now been been given out for free so i think we really need to think about where the value comes from um and how we're serving these communities in the future and it's not linear it's not just looking at an event one way and a piece of content another it's how does the whole experience that you're touching them from a brand standpoint what how does everything link together so in keeping our consumers in mind and designing for them

SOPHIA

how do you suggest that event producers do that you know what are some some foundational steps that they can keep in mind um how do we put these principles into practice

ROBYN

yeah um i you know i i firmly believe that there are five major keys to the anatomy of experience if you will and i think they resonate outside of the events but i'm using them for the purposes of events um and you know the first is um relevance i think without relevance um which sounds very obvious um but it's why is this you know does this content pertain to to me um is this relevant to my needs um how does this how is this serving me and like i said well it sounds very basic of course we're creating content and we want it for our people um i think when you don't understand your audience um it might be stale old content um that used to be something that served them uh but now it doesn't um but there's this level of which is i think really difficult this formula what do they know they want and what don't they know they want yet that you can give them and that's where the magic to me kind of um kind of takes place is the figuring out what they what they don't know they need and want yeah yeah and there has to be a small percentage of that that goes into i think the relevance piece um personalization um when we talked about how is it relevant to me i need to know why by me not going to this or me going to this is it going to help my job my career the company i work for in the future um so i think that

from a marketing standpoint you know marketers and event marketers are getting better at that um but it is really hard to to hone in on that and that's when you have to know your audience you have to make sure that you have pieces workshops inspiration learning that actually ties back to each one of your personas um so i think that exercise and then making sure that you message it properly um and and while i think some people do one or the other really well doing both of them really well um is difficult um connection obviously when it comes to experience and that's the hard part that's to replicate right now in a virtual world but people you know part of why people want to experience things is because they want to connect whether it's on an emotional level on a physical like a swap card level shaka hopefully we could shake hands again but i'm not sure it's going to be for for quite some time

JEFF

tbd

ROBYN

yeah tbd it's how am i connecting to what i do and i think that's really special um events that could remind me why i love what i do hold a special place in my heart too um so i think that reminder of of um sense of of purpose um can be a part of that um the engagement factor um getting people to actually engage with your content 365 days versus just three days um that it's over we've been talking about that being over for a really long time you don't just go someplace and after three days it ends and i'm not sure a ton of brands have gotten really good at how you tie 365 um and how the event fits into that because events um while very special they are a huge money maker for companies um the margins that some events throw are massive they're upwards of over 70 um it's like you know there's a you know once you hit a certain production cost everything above that is is kind of uh is profit so um it's hard to want to dilute that and spread that over 365 days into other content there's a risk there however i think that we have no choice but to change and what that and how an event actually fits in the in the scheme of 365 days like i mentioned um earlier this integrated experience um is what we're looking at everything that they touch within your brand is an integrated experience and an event is just one part of that it should not be siloed and i think a lot of businesses miss because it's silent the last is navigation you could have the most relevant awesome content connections people personalization etc and if no one knows how to get to it um from a ux standpoint it don't matter so um i think more more and more i've been on you know there are some people that are doing some some good work when it comes to virtual events however the platforms that they're using fail um tech fails in general but um these systems speaking to each other seamless single sign-on instances with different brands i mean it gets a little really messy behind the scenes and the event world needs to uh get a hold of that really quickly um because it is so easy to just click the box closed right now and then yeah i'll go watch it later once they get their act together i'll go watch it later um and that could that that really kind of hurts things so i think navigation is a big one sorry that was no no this is a great donation

JEFF

no so so i wanna i wanna go on one engagement specifically that you talked about and so obviously during this time where we can't be together in person how would you say companies

have adapted or how well have they done or what have they tried to do that's to to kind of keep that level of engagement when we can't have these sort of in-person events the way we have in the past

ROBYN

i think everyone's figuring that out right now so i can't say i think you know i can't say that i've seen a ton of really amazing examples i think everyone is in a planning it strategy mode for for a lot of that um and like what i keep saying is that um will be the year of demanding better um and in 2022 um if you haven't changed or out um so you know what i think from an integrated experience standpoint to answer your question Jeff um i mean it's really it's creating tentpole moments um throughout the year um that happen um every year i think consistency is something that is really important now to to consumers of certain brands and knowing that if i'm going to devote my time to something that it is worthwhile but i know what i to expect um you know we the event world went into surprise and delight for a really long time and that was what was the like i wonder what they're gonna do this year and this is really cool and just you know i think that that is necessary to a certain standpoint but like ted is very successful because i know every time i put on a ted talk i know exactly how it's going to go i know what i'm going to extract from it and i know that it's been curated to a place that it's really good um and i know i'm not gonna waste my time and i think brands need to and the brands that are doing that um are the ones that are really successful right now um as they're mapping out what these tentpole moments are making sure they're consistent making sure there's something new that they're saying throughout them um and that i know how to engage next with you i think that's a big part of um carrying on the in the thought the idea of an integrated experience is something that um a uh one of our business one of my business partners says quite quite frequently is there's no dead ends this content with no dead ends so i know um after i consume this this is what i should do next um or this is where it should go and i think that's a big piece of what makes netflix really successful and amazon i know what to buy next i know what to watch next um so companies who are doing that even on a an unsophisticated uh not have doesn't have to be quite as you know sophisticated as a as an amazon or a netflix i i do think the companies that are preparing like um you know that pre-drawing and post content if you will on like a very basic level like i know where to i know how to consume and what's the funnel to solve my problem yep i think i think it's a great point and we you know a lot of the marketers we work with specifically end up in the same situation where it's it's about the journey right and curating content along sort of the buyer's journey and where they are

JEFF

and to your point one of the other things that i really like that you called out is that call to action right i think that's something that um you know marketers oftentimes they may see content as kind of like this finite thing but to your point it needs to have the connections and i really like the the no dead ends idea of it

ROBYN

one of the things that you know i started doing a couple years ago when we're designing you know the theory of you know here we have here's what we do right now yeah here's just give

me a part of the processes of discovery is just like what are all the things that you do great breaks break it all down and then we build it back up in a way that makes the most sense so that the content or whatever the point you're trying to make or the problem you're trying to solve is highlighted in the best medium possible it's not about forcing it into a keynote or forcing it into an infographic it's where is that content best lie and that's how you really plot your journey we plot the journey we plot the the actual integrated experience um but one of the things that um from an event content standpoint i think is really important is making sure um that you're hitting three things you're hitting the fact that you inspire people i i do think that that's important to a certain extent people want to know something they didn't know they want to feel i mean i go for the goosebump factor i say that like that's my litmus test it's like oh gosh that was that was wow that story was inspiring which is great because now i'm bought into the theory of it okay what do i learn so what is my lesson that i'm getting from this how do i solve my problem how do i you know how do i do what they did on my for my industry and then the thing that i think events fail on a lot is the okay give me something now how do i take this back to my daily life and how do i do it what's the takeaway what's the toolkit what's my learning what's the workshop we're doing and i think we do this in a very scattered way right now where there's a work but we do it we do there's a workshop over here and we inspired somebody over here we did this over here and what i love getting my clients to do is think about give me one concept and let's follow through the whole thing it's much more meaningful when i understand the journey to get to like okay i bought in great give me this toolkit i'm gonna go and do it i i'm finding that there's more success in the output and the outcome from the consumers of people who are listening to this um when they're a complete it's like a complete thought and a complete mini journey within the larger journey um so i wanted to bring that up because i just i think it's really important um because most events hit on each one of those in different ways but it's this block scheduling of it that i think it creates something pretty magical and we did that for coca-cola a couple years ago um for a project that they did and and honestly we went from a place where they had hundred over 100 sessions over two days to where we had two days of maybe 15 sessions um and all keynotes no breakouts and man it was impactful

JEFF

that's great so we talked a little bit a little earlier about uh the profit margins and we've talked about budgets and some of the financials so just curious in terms of where do you see budgets both from sort of an event perspective now and maybe what they may look like you know sort of going into the future

ROBYN

you mean event budgets from a producer's standpoint or how people are going to spend on events

JEFF

all of the above you know frankly i mean i'm just curious about sort of obviously sort of during this time right now where covid has dramatically sort of changed a lot of the things that we you know grew to know is sort of the normal part of our our lives and how sort of the entire financial system of this will potentially be rebuilt

ROBYN

um i'll go first with because i think it's always first to think about our the consumers of of content first um there's actually three three points i'm gonna make one is your consumer the folks who buy the tickets um their spending is gonna change um i'm not sure i think i'm not sure their budgets again i think we're all everyone's in the first budgeting the coven budgeting cycle so i definitely will have more information in a couple weeks of how this is going i think that people still need to connect with people that still need information um they still are going to have an appetite to attend things i think the way they choose them is going to be very different i know the way i'm valuing not just money in general it's how i'm spending um is different i want to know who i'm giving my money to what they do as an organization what's their board look like what do what's their mission um i also i don't think there's a room for me going to five or six events a year anymore i think i'm gonna pick in in my industry i'm gonna pick one maybe two and i that's me saying that um and i've had conversations and we've done a little bit of research um where we know you know i know um through our research that other people are thinking this way too um the decision making tree is i i got the same content that you used to do at your event online and i survived and my business didn't completely fall off the cliff why would i now pay you you know a couple grand to go and consume the same thing when i can do that at my desk so the challenge for the event industry is to how do you combat that through design i'm sure we'll get into that i think the second thing is the spend of um your sponsors so like what i would call your customer um that is your sponsors your um booth spay your exhibitors etc i think their spending is gonna be drastically different um i think that they've done business without having to buy a 10 by 10. um when it comes to expo again i have some very strong feelings it was declining before that whether you like to believe it or not you you may have been increasing in revenue but i would put money that your retention rate is down um year over year and um why would i why would i set up a shop in a mall when i could set up my shop online and get way more attraction and understand who's coming to me plus the cost that goes around that plus the environmental impact which we're not going to get into so i think their spending um is going to be different um and they're going to be valuing the integrated experience on how not just if i'm going to do an event how does that fit into my how does that fit into your tentpole moments like we talked about what is the package that i can purchase that will get me to have the initial conversation to them learning about me to them actually consuming my thing so i think it's going to be a more thought out event is a part of a larger puzzle however i also have a prediction that there are going to be mandates from large companies that they um uh only work with people who are showing the uh movement toward um sustainable business practices which is a pillar of of our business and we firmly believe um that we all need to do better and i think that there we will start to see large um large organizations set the trend um when it comes to events we've seen it in other areas and other industries um so i think anyone on the producer organizer side of the house really needs to watch out for that i think it's going to sneak up and it's going to sneak up fast and people need to be prepared with their messaging around how they're how are they handling diversity how are they handling environmental impact um how are they designing for the future audiences that care about that and then three there's your organizer and your your producer um side of the house and i think that you know events for them um when it comes to budgets i think their budgets are always tight on the b2b side of the house uh i i actually hope to see reinvestment in

and i'm starting to see it um in innovation um understanding that like the world is different and maybe it's not here's a bigger budget for you to do the same thing bigger it's zero-based zero-based budget breaking break it down tell me what is absolutely necessary and where would you put this money and where would you reinvest it in order to build a more sustainable business growth model for the future um and i want to believe um i have we have clients and those are the clients who work with us who are doing that um and i want to believe that that will be a larger trend um but i do think that there are going to be some some folks who really hope that things go back to the way they used to be and i i know because we've done the research that that's not happening right

SOPHIA

so you mentioned earlier um one of the most pivotal moments for you getting into the events industry was the quote that you heard in college so one of my really notable quotes from college was uh figure out what makes you the most mad and then go out and change it so you were saying you know you are seeing the trends of people are putting their money where their values are right and that's not only what you as a consumer are doing but also seemingly as a business hoping to help other businesses align so i guess my question then is what makes you mad and what are you going out to do like what is your personal why that gets you going and then how has that been incorporated into your career in things like change the stage that you've already discussed

ROBYN

oh gosh yeah i just you know i it's funny you know i i played this game i'm gonna get very transparent and personal for a second you know i played this game in my 20s through the early part of my career like part of like my rest of my life was like what do people think i like what do i think people think i should do um and i had some pivotal moments or what do people like what am i supposed to believe like that's you know um [Music] not pushing the boundaries um i'm taking risks or really speaking up about my voice um and it wasn't until like way later in life that i care to admit that i i had some pivotal personal things happened in my life and i just said like i don't give a [__] anymore what people think of me um i'm gonna say what's on my mind and that's actually when my career flourished um that is when i started saying i think that's i think you're wrong and i think this is the way that we should do it um and uh the reason i mentioned that is that's when i started to reevaluate my entire value system um and what really motivates me and what makes me mad and uh part of that why i went off on my own from a business standpoint i just have a really hard time not putting what i think the best product can be together when i know that there's a better and this isn't a better way because my way is smarter or that my process is more efficient it's that if i know we're not truly serving the the industries um that we work on because of um short-term profit gains when i know that if we just did a little edit or a little more work or just took a half a percent or one percent of a budget to put toward innovation and change a system that we can be serving an entire industry better who within those industries provide valuable not just services i mean we talk about you know industries like you know healthcare and technology i mean they they provide a great benefit um to the world when i think that we're not being the best that we can be that makes me mad and that's a big part of why i went off on my own i vowed to work with people who wanted to truly create awesome

products um so i think that's one piece of that which leads me to you know life isn't linear or stagnant and it changes and it morphs and i've you know we've in the industry have been saying that we need more diversity on our stages we need to be greener but like there was never like a have to there was never like we have to do this right now it was like yeah it's nice to know like let's put this let's do a brainstorm about that like and then we'll talk about it and maybe we'll work with the charity which is which is a great start and i'm not criticizing that i think that everyone has to start somewhere however it is 2020 almost 2021 and the event industry has such an obligation and responsibility um we put voices places what we what we put on our stages truly shapes um what people learn and see and um i mean it is a multi-billion multi multi-billion dollar um industry um that serves billions of people you know around the world you know our views around the world each year of what happens on our stages and it is no longer acceptable to just be like it's a brainstorm and we we had a brainstorm we talked about it and maybe we threw up a statement on our website people actually have to start doing this now and from assistant from an um environmental standpoint as well but it makes me mad that we can be doing better um and part of the mission of change the stage is we're going to force it i mean i'm not you know i don't want to say we're calling people out because it's not the point of this it's that i don't believe i think everyone knows it needs to happen i just i don't believe that there's tools i don't believe the proper tool kits or that they're available or that companies are willing to invest in paying for a toolkit um from people and organizations that have them um and my job is to make sure they understand that it is not just good for the world it is also actually really good for business um and it should be it has to be a part of your five-year strategy um so that makes me mad very mad Sophia that we can be we can be better and just for a personal and now i just i feel like i kind of go hard when i when i decide to go down a path and i it's forced me to reevaluate from a personal standpoint where do i buy from um what do i you know what do i where's my money going so it's not just where companies that we're working with and you know we've created a value system of places vendors that we would like to recommend and they have to go through a filter but also clients that have to go through a filter and me personally the stuff that i spend my money on and where i invest my time it goes through a filter now too and i i think it's really important

SOPHIA

so you mentioned being your best is something that you always strive to do um and on that same realm then what does success and being your best actually mean uh what does that look like

ROBYN

yeah i want to make a very distinct um point um because it's important for people to hear being it's something i struggled with for a really long time about being your best and being perfect um they are two very different things um it is not possible to be perfect um so that's one but being your best you have to define what that is and i didn't know that until like probably a year ago so like i want to be the best but it's a really difficult life trying to be the best when you have no idea what the best actually means um and i think it's important and when i talk about like a you know what success looks like um i didn't i don't know if i knew for a really long time what success was supposed to look like because it was just i'm supposed to be the best and that's what part of my

upbringing was you're the best well you don't know like you don't know what that actually is it's a very hard life to live um so to me success um right now in a place i could say revenue you know i could say all these things from a business standpoint and i just i think that it's important um but to me it's making sure that i'm always living my values um is very easy um when you start to be get better at things and get more business you can easily get distracted and get greedy um and forget what the why of why i do this and and my why is to like i said earlier it's it's connecting people it's part of it's making people feel something get something from doing something um that maybe they wouldn't have normally done connecting other businesses innovation to funders i mean there it goes on and on so you know my values to me like the getting making sure that i'm always doing that and and that my scope of decision making is always around what my my values are and i've sold out before i'll admit it um you know i am i proud of it no it's part of figuring it's part of got me to this place of where you know i just i have i have a lens of the type of people that i would like to do business with and to me success means that i am constantly living my values um and i think that comes in part by a fourth generation business owner um that's what i think gave me the confidence to go out was that it kind of runs in my veins and my father set a really amazing example of what business integrity is supposed to to be um and i i i know when i think about it even just recently but through my entire childhood him making decisions around um like if they're a good also a good person um are they somebody you'd want to do business with is it worth it for me how does that affect my personal life and us as a family um and i just i admire that he's walked away from things um because of that um and i just i want to make sure that the business that i build and it it might stay small forever and i'm okay with that as long as we're always doing the right thing um for not just each other um but for for the world so i think that um yeah i owe my father a lot of what success means to me today because it uh definitely used to be like it's a title achievement and i want to be on this list and i want to win this award and um it's just it's just not about that anymore it's about truly you know doing good business with good people um and um uh yeah

SOPHIA

well and i think to to your point like there's how everyone else is defining success and what they make you think success should be and then like is that actually what's going to make me feel successful and like i'm doing my best or is it something else and to your point in your case it seems that is

ROBYN

and you know i remember when i was in my mid-20s being like i want to be a vp other time i'm 30. like at the end of the day no one's saying wow Robyn accomplished this great goal no they're going to say she you know she did something she helped us with our business she provided a service that was great she helped educate people around a really sensitive difficult topic and pushed the envelope of an industry that you know should care more than they do about things and to me that that is more important than any title or page has ever been to be honest that's that's a great lesson i can't say that enough

JEFF

um this has been you know great Robyn um you know really to hear about kind of where the event industry has been and what the future of experience looks like so in terms of uh what what type of organization should be reaching out to you uh from an rdc perspective

ROBYN

yeah i mean we focus like i said i mean we are we help people of all shapes and sizes that have events i'll be honest um the people who i feel like benefit most are you know mid-sized um enterprise companies you know mid-sized organizations um that have portfolios of events like lots of different stuff and don't know how they all fit together um they have one large event that might be a huge part of their revenue model and mix or companies who are looking to achieve how do we actually now in this new world how do we integrate experience or how do we integrate events into it and i'm saying specifically events but it's really when we look at it it's we're looking at the entire business um and what everything touches um and we know i know there's ux departments and those people who handle specific types of content but i think in order to create a truly um unique experience you have to have a handle on the whole business so companies i would say like i said mid-size companies who have those types of portfolios however we have a bunch of association clients they tend to have um the a lot of their model is built off of an annual conference and it's very scary for them to redefine what value for their members mean and we're so we're having a really good time working with them on um because they the industries are intended to create a lot of change too um and a lot of good in the world so it's been really interesting helping them on how to redefine what experience could mean um and creating new ways of doing it for them so i would say i think those are the sweet spots

JEFF

and then what what resources specifically you know that have helped you personally professionally what would you is there anything you'd recommend to our audience

ROBYN

i mean i have the thing what was that i said

SOPHIA

besides your dad

ROBYN

we're gonna hit him on a podcast uh there's the stuff that inspires me and that i learned from so i think you know from a recommended i absolutely love and every time i listen to guy roz on how i built this i always tell everyone i just i get that it's a super popular i just there's something about hearing innovators makers stories any way i can consume that fuels it reminds me it's that like i talked about an event remind me why i love what i do every time i listen to a story of a founder someone who started something in their story like it gets me back to why i love what i do so i can't recommend and just in general there are amazing stories and he's a he's a great host um i'm a big fan of anything written by cal newport um a therapist of mine many moons ago um of someone who has some mild uh manageable adhd um uh got me into cal newport and when

you're running a business or you are managing an event business that has i don't think people understand how complicated the event world really is you have to be a jack of all trades um and you have to know a little bit about everything and manage so many moving parts um through you know p& I discussions through what kind of food i mean and no matter what level you're at like if you're i think if you're good at your job but you kind of know what's happening on all levels um and that's just the world that it is so cal newport is really fantastic a book of his the first book i read has was deep work um it was all about how you actually um are able to get into a place to think deeply and do the work and that moving forward in our society the the people who are able to be strategic are the ones who will survive um so i recommend that highly uh for folks um also it's great at how do you organize your day there's some some actual tangible tactics there and then i'm again as someone who has to be very mindful organizing their brain and their thoughts um they're like sitting right here i'm big on like again it's not a to-do thing but the productivity plan was actually some science behind the productivity planner um and then the idea of breaking down your week versus your day um that kind of stuff is very very uh helpful to me um and i cheesy enough on a personal standpoint i have a gratitude journal that i write in every morning and every night and i think that's what keeps me very happy um and very thankful for what i have so i recommend anyone uh meditation and gratitude i'm practicing gratitude

JEFF

that's great and then uh where can people find you rdc change the stage where do they find you

ROBYN

social media do you think they have do you think people have access to the internet anyone who has the internet just to know um you can our websites this is rdc.com um we are on linkedin i am all over instagram uh and linkedin but this is rdc is the site that breaks down the agency versus our initiative change the stage which is where we invest some of our profits into what i talked about moving toward inclusion um and sustainable business practices for the entire industry and making that accessible um and um i'm a big texter so if you get my number go ahead and text me

JEFF

um maybe that'll be on the bottom of the screen right now

ROBYN

i think it's like a thing like i know it's a thing it's like feel free to text me and it's like you know like barack obama

JEFF

well Robyn uh we love storytellers and and we loved hearing yours so thank you very much for for being on the show uh and we hope to have you back on again soon

ROBYN

yeah i would love to bring my dad next time

JEFF

perfect thanks Robyn

JEFF

i want to thank Sirkin research for being the sponsor of our show Sirkin research fuels demand for b2b marketers looking to gain a competitive advantage we leverage original research and data-driven content to supercharge your growth you can find out more on our website at Sirkinresearch.com