

75 Podcast Conversation with Lisa Morton

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SPEAKERS

Murielle Machiels



Murielle Machiels

Hi. I'm Murielle co mom, an educator, I used to work really hard and sacrifice the important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forward Fast, many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. Today, I'm obsessed with helping other leaders builds meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organization. This is rebel leader with a hearts Hi, Lisa, welcome in webull. Leader with a hearts how are you?



I'm great. Thank you. Thank you so much for inviting me on today. You're welcome.



Murielle Machiels

Maybe you can tell us who you are a little bit before we dive into the subject of values.



Absolutely. So I am founder and CEO of a communications agency called Roland Dransfield. And we're based in Manchester in the UK. And we've got a team in London. And we have a partnership with an agency in LA. And what we do is we help brands and businesses and individuals tell their story and really use their platforms for a purpose. So we help them do that. It's about building relationships between those organizations. And we use tools such as media relations, we'll use social media, lobbying, influencer marketing, so the whole kind of range of tools, but at the heart of it is about creating those purposeful relationships, grades,



Murielle Machiels

and you specialize in values. Also, why did you decide to specialize in values? Or what's the link between communication and values?



Yeah, well, it. The reason we went this happened, it was like it was quite a kind of a, it was an epiphany as an organization, in actual fact, and we now offer a service and support to clients in terms of them really finding their values and communicate those values. And if they aren't clear on the values, then helping them to understand what's important to them, and helping them to build that into the DNA of their organization. But it came as most kind of revolutionary things do come from, from a moment in which I suppose I was struggling with some boundaries personally in my life. And that translated into possibly the culture that was in our business at the time. So the company then had about 40, people were an SME. And because it wants to go through some quite quick, quick growth, we've taken a number of people who had lateral hires are fairly senior people who joined from different businesses and agencies. And they all had very good credible track record. But what I noticed over a period of time was, after that honeymoon period was over, I really felt that the ethos of what we stood for as a business, and this is a business at that point that was probably 21 years old, we're now 25 years old, it was really making me feel uncomfortable in lots of different ways. And that wasn't about the client delivery side. I mean, that was still very, very good. It was more about the human side of the business, how we showed up as a team, how we treated each other, the things that were non negotiable. And it went from sitting a little bit, so I felt a little bit out of kilter. Because, again, I also wants to empower people in the team to be able to make their own decisions rather than having a kind of hierarchical way of running the business. But it just got to the point when I was like not really wanting to go into the office, even though the business is doing very well. And we had an office move, and I happened to be away on holiday and we couldn't change the dates. And when I came back, and I switched my phone on. And all hell broke loose. And at that point, I thought we have to do something about this. So I came back into the office, and we sat everybody around the table. And I said, I want to talk to you about values. And long story short, that was the beginning of our journey as an organization, which absolutely changed who we were. It changed who we were with, it changed who worked with us. And it was a piece of work that we did with a consultant that I'd known a while back, which literally changed the face of how we show up as an organization and individuals. So as a result of that piece of work, we've been able to really help clients go down the same routes. And what has been overwhelming to kind of understand is that how few organizations no matter how small or how large they are, they don't know what the values are. Mm hmm. If you have any, if you have any values are quite often stuck in a drawer somewhere.



Murielle Machiels

And they're on the walls or on the wall posters,



absolutely. But but nobody could recite them, nobody could tell you what they are. And the piece of work that we've done means that it's impossible for us not to ask clients their values and understand and really see those clients, you know, walk the talk, it's done so much for us, it's been liberating for us individually. And for me personally, because once you have set your

company values, and we can sort later how we actually make sure that they are lived every day, it means that if there's a set of behaviors that as a leader you're not comfortable with within your organization. Is not that teacher, pupil cetera situation where you have to say no, that's not okay. For me. It's not okay, for your organization and for your colleagues, because it's on the wall. It's not just on the wall, it's in your language, isn't everything you do. It's the type of people you work with. It's about the clients you work with. So it's a liberating and safe environment for everybody to work with him.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah, no, I really find values very important. And this is now a trend that has evolved in the last years, or values are becoming more and more important in organizations and not simply, we need like a value purpose mission, a check the box list, but really about Who are we because a lot of people had or a lot of organizations had to reinvent themselves with the pandemic and things see how are we going to adapt to what is happening. And so I see a lot of work being done on those values, and really being left, at least at the top, and then they try, of course, to let it sink in within the whole organization.



Very much. So yeah. And I think it's really important that you bring that your team has to be organized, it has to your team has to be involved in that process. And again, I think no matter how big your organization is, obviously, it's easy for us to do that piece of work, because we could all sit around a table and we could thrash those things out. But there needs to be in bigger organizations that we work with, there needs to be working groups. So that it feels lived, it feels that everybody's been involved in Cologne, those values. I also think in an SME, you know, in a small, a smaller enterprise. Those values have got to resonate with you as a leader. So, you know, for me, there was no way and we did have you know, we we've got a new office now which so we've moved recently, but in our old office, we had all the values on the world is beautiful. I mean, but it wasn't just some or you know, everybody was involved in those values. Each week, we take a value, and one of the team will choose a value. And we do that now. And then at the end of the week, we talk about how we've shown up against that value. And were there any points within what we did that week where we were, maybe found it difficult or weren't aligned. So it's a working, it's a working language for us. And it was interesting, you mentioned there in the pandemic. We had a press conference in the UK with the Prime Minister, and we were huddled around one laptop in March last year, two years ago. And we were all so you know, we didn't know what was going to happen, we have no clue as to you know, what we're going to get back in the office. And on that day, when we were going to work at home the next day to try it all out. Everyone left the office and I stood in front of that wall. And I looked at all the values and I've read every one of them. And I thought that we may not come back in the office this week. And we may not come back in for a very long time. But when we do come back in, even though the business may be very different, the values will stay the same. And we didn't come back in for for significant amounts of time. But the values are the things that kept us together. The bit they were our brand, that is how we show up. So that's what made when you're sitting in a remotely as a kitchen table. You're part of that that business because those those values are so important to you as a team player as a team member. Yeah,



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Murielle Machiels

no, I agree. I agree. But then I have a question because I'm very, very values driven. I started my business thinking about the values and the purpose. And I don't find it always easy to translate those values from a one to one conversation that's quite easy. It transpires quite easily to a one to many. So when you're doing your social media posts, I find it more challenging to, to really be authentic in those values in everything you do in the one to many. So do you have any strategies or tips for that. So I



think it has to be, has to be part of the organization's language. So for example, one of our values and my favorite value is plant trees, you'll never see. So that's leave a legacy out of respect for those who follow. And, as a business, we do that every day, we were aware of our legacy. And we're aware of our platform, and the need to use our resources to create more resources. So, so I know every single team member, because that's the language you speak, that is the type of things that we will share on social media, people doing great stuff in their communities. It's absolutely one through us all. So it's, it's not, I don't have to remind people that that's what our value is, the way that we choose to work with clients, we wouldn't choose to work with a client unless we could see that they were also planting trees, or that they wanted us to help them to do that. So it's, it becomes just part of the whole fabric of your organization. So I think you have to involve your organizing people within your organization have to be involved in activities and language, and services, which reflect your values. They can't just be just something that you know, there's just on the website, and then you carry on with your day job. And I feel so much now, certainly over the past few years. But it has been changing certainly over the years, probably since the last recession, I'd say that in 2008, nine people aren't interested in what how well brands are doing, or how well organizations, we don't care how well you're doing. I mean, it's a biggest turnoff, and it's very much changed, say, in social media and online media or prints even that, you know, when a company publishes its financial results, those kinds of stories that just, you know, you switch off, we're not interested, what what people want to know is of those resources you've that you've created. How are you using those to put more back in how as an organization? Are you? Are you putting more than you take out? You know, what good are you doing? So that's subconsciously, I think the community is expect to be community to understand the values of organization is not what the bottom line is this year. Yeah,



Murielle Machiels

definitely. But and also the struggles, I think, we don't want to hear only the good stories, we like to hear also the struggles and how you went through the struggles, because that's how you relate to people



completely. And it's Yeah, so there's a lot more authenticity around business leaders, and we encourage the leaders that we work with, to be honest about their battles, and to be honest about where they've they've struggled and their learnings, because that's how you create more leaders and the world needs more leaders. So we shouldn't have that as a, as an entitled,

position. Let's let's create as many as we can. And I definitely think there's a shift over the past few years where, you know, ordinarily very, very strong businesses suddenly had the rug from pulled underneath them. It was something that we've never been able to prepare for, for lots of different business sectors. So that those leaders who came forward and said, I can only tell you what I know now. And this is what I know now, there was so much more respect, their stock went up. So you know, in a great way, compared to the ones that resolutely Stokes the way they've always done stuff. And that humane leadership, wasn't it. I mean, we saw the businesses and the brands and the pandemic who came forward with big hearts, and another of our values is walk a mile in another shoes. And that was so important to us and to our clients that we the pandemic wasn't the same for everybody. You couldn't expect people to respond or deal with it in the same way. So it was about kind leadership.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah, no, I agree. And so what you're talking about this authenticity, it's also about the vulnerability so we have to be able to be vulnerable and show ourselves as vulnerable like, I don't know, or I made a mistake or here I need to invent myself and I need help. And that's when people also feel useful when because when you're perfect, you know it all you're successful. you alienate people that when you well, when people look up to you, but you still say I need help, or I don't know here, that's when we want to help. And we want to support you when we have this this emotional connection.



Absolutely. And, yeah, we have a value again, as leaders create leaders, and we believe that everybody can be a leader to somebody. And it doesn't matter how much gray hair you have, or how much experience or wealth or resources but we can all we can all lead. And what I really felt in the pandemic, when we're working from home was that some of the really young people within the team, when you took away that very formula, it's not we had a great office that time, but I don't mean that but you know, there's a certain kind of hierarchy, there are job roles, when you're in the working environment, take all that away, you had some of the most incredible demonstration of leadership from young people who were so supportive, you know, we check in with our team every day. But I had some of the really younger people checking in with me actually calling me up to ask me if I was okay. And I think where it differed this time was because we felt so sad, like a 360 degree support from from everybody. We didn't, I didn't need to have all the answers this time. And we were very, very clear every day, we don't know the answers. But let's just say this, let's talk about what we know, today, we might not know what's gonna come tomorrow. And as you say, that vulnerability means that people can come on that journey with you. They don't feel intimidated that they've got to know all the answers, because you're not saying you have them either. And that's a much safer way too big to learn to be a leader, because otherwise, why would you want to be a leader? If you think you've got to have the answer to everything, which is impossible. That's just so off putting for so many people. So, you know, everybody loses.



Murielle Machiels

Yep, completely agree. But that's, I see, that's a big shift for a lot of people. Because feeling vulnerable, can sometimes also make you feel weak, it isn't, I believe, I truly believe in my

experience, that when you show your vulnerability, it requires a lot of strength. And people see you as strong, also. But you can feel weak, because it's not part of our society and our culture yet.



No. And I think, I think certainly, where I learned my leadership role, the role models I had for leadership in a business environment, when I started my career was, you know, a straight white wealthy man. That's, that's who was leading. So that's, that's who you took your cues from. And I remember my dad, I got upset about something and I was sent off in tears. And, you know, he said to me, that's just ridiculous. It's it was a weakness, you know, this. And he said to me, at the time, we had fell out with him for a very long time. You know, this is you know why women are no good in business, because they can't, they can't disconnect their emotions. Now, that was a long time ago, he said that. But I do think that was very prevalent in terms of how you were supposed to show up in an organization. And there's been a long time and we're still got an awful long way to go. In terms of our diversity leadership. We're working currently in Greater Manchester with our mare. And there's a is a piece of work called Operation black votes. And it's to help encourage a different style of leadership and to encourage people from BAME leaders that that wouldn't necessarily believe that they had a voice and from an early age and working with some kind of socially deprived communities where there was so much ability, but so the view is that we don't fit the normal leadership criteria. And that's a great you know, it's a great disservice to the kind of leadership we could have currently. So I think we have got a long way to go. But you know, we do is better in terms of the fact that vulnerability piece I think it's so much more encouraged now in organizations than it ever was.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah. On on. On one side, I, I agree with you, and we talk about it. We have role models and Brene Brown with research from Harvard's and and that's wonderful birds. What I've seen in the last two years, is moments of vulnerability, but also a lot of people putting their emotion in the little box to continue functioning,



really,



Murielle Machiels

yeah, because we've now a lot of us are working from home and hybrid mode the whole day behind a computer. So even less human life connections, a lot of work to do. And so a lot of people put their emotions just in a little box that there is less meaningful connections, less vulnerability. Well, there are still moments and it's accepted, but it's, I don't know, I see now this. So I don't know if you see it also with your customers.



I think it's different for us to some degree, because the businesses that we work with, and our organization, we have that we had a, we had a three month lockdown, and then assumed it was okay, you know, it was still advised to work work from home. But we all went back into the offices. And that was for a number of reasons. And one of them was to, you know, we've got an ecosystem in cities, and some of those really important small operators were just not able to operate and their businesses were affected. So we know, we wanted to encourage people to come back in a safe way. But also, you know, working from home for if you're in a lovely house in a leafy suburb, and you've got, you know, two great incomes coming in. And that is a very different lockdown, to a young person who, whose family might not have Wi Fi or they might not have, you know, they're sharing a laptop, or they're in a little apartment where their working life is an inch from where they sleep in a flat somewhere. So so i Our experience has been very much that that human interaction has has not been too badly damaged. But then I was actually getting off the tram the other day, and I heard some two people chatting, and they've not even seen each other for two years in person, but the only lips six miles away from each other in a working environment. And they were the you know, this is an issue with big professional services firms like the lawyers, the accountants, banks, they seem to be certainly from our experience the last organizations to come back. And and then you know, going back to your brand new values, if your values aren't intact, and your culture isn't really strong. If you're operating with people on a screen, you could be working for any organization, and there are stories of colleagues and who just have lost sight of who they actually work with. And it doesn't really matter because one organization's the same when you just interact with people on a screen. And you don't get that human connection that you just been talking about.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah, yeah, no, it's true. And in the last weeks I've been given, I've given a lot of workshops to teams that hadn't seen each other for two years, workshops or keynotes, and, and just talking about emotions and vulnerability and how you feel and being able to share how they deeply feel with each other, changed a lot of them, because a lot of people just continued functioning and work became very transactional and less human.



Yes, I can see that. And I have and people have said that, which is why we have really worked on a hybrid model. But mostly we're we're in the office pretty much every day seeing clients, and it's made such a massive difference to us. I don't I couldn't have coped with it any other way. But then I think it's then again, you know, is how do you create that culture those values when you have people that are working in a hybrid way? And his expectation of, you know, where's the purpose in an organization? You know, when everyone was together, there could be like a charity Friday or you have you know, you have a fundraiser or a, you know, bake sale, you have those things where you can feel that purpose. But when you're not together, that's much more difficult, isn't it to kind of hold together? I think, No, and



Murielle Machiels

it's Yeah, but you still can have that purpose. And that's what a lot of people forgot. Yes. Like, in the last two years, we focused on the essentials, and we forgot the human side a little bit. We forgot the purpose. Why are we doing this? And instead of just being focused on the to do's

we forgot the purpose. Why are we doing this? And instead of just being focused on the to do's and the tasks that needed to be delivered? Yeah. Yeah. How do you see values evolving with your customers?



I think it's a piece of work. That's there's just getting more and more importance. We have a lot of businesses who are returning into physical working environments, and they have realized that they have those values are in a drawer, and that they didn't communicate them in that period of time. And so they need to relook at those and make and relevant for today. I am amazed at how many generic values there are that have the it doesn't, it could be one of, you know, a dozen organizations with the same very generic values, and they're meaningless. They won't, they won't make any difference. We're seeing a real shift in terms of p values first. So when an organization's values are, are their brands, so it's, you know, I'm having to walk the talk. So unless consumers or business communities see an organization, showing us around those that value piece, what is their purpose? What are they here to do beyond the work that they have in front of them? You know, as I said, when people aren't interested now, and how well an organization's doing, but what else are you doing besides your, your stock in trade is really important. But then also it from an recruitment point of view, particularly with a younger generation, now, we find that it's just not enough to have a business which does something which isn't a certain sector, there's an expectation from your colleagues, you know, how if I if I join you, how am I going to help to make the community a better place? Yeah, how can I how what what trees can I plant here with you? Can I have volunteering days, you know, what we're going to do as a team that's going to make me fulfilled when I when I when I show up? So that is absolutely at the top of the conversation piece that most organizations need to have. And I think it's as important as having bank holidays or private health, I think it's it's that what journey are we on? Are we on together? That I'm going to look back and feel that my legacy piece has been done with this organization, this brand is so important.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah. And we see in the statistics now, that is why people are massively resigning, because they are reviewing their priorities. And they want this sense of purpose in their career. So yes, they still want the salary and the holidays, but they also want to contribute to something bigger for their community. And, yeah, that that's what organizations don't always understand in the talent management. And there is no also a war for talent. It's not easy to recruit talent. But it's not just about doing some marketing, it's about really changing your DNA, who you are, as an organization, so that you can attract people that want to work there and feel connected to your organization,



very much. So we give them volunteering days to our team. We do a lot of work we do pro bono work at the team. We are trustees on on different kind of charitable organizations we mentor. So every single person, no matter how much experience, or what age, they are all very much involved in something which is outside, that, you know, the work that they've got to do on the desk on a on a daily basis. And it's woven in to what we do. And and as a result, I think we talk about profits with purpose. It's really is attractive businesses to us who have got great

values, and they come to us because they feel aligned. But we're now doing lots more work in like not not for profits and third sector, or really successfully working with private companies or PLCs, and helping to join them together with organizations that needs support. So we're creating those partnerships, where it's a win win, got a very strong corporate who's supporting a charitable foundation. And that's, that's when you really feel like what you're doing is got some magic attached to it. And that's my, and that's what the team really loves doing. So yeah, it's when you go home at night, you know that you've you've moved the needle in some positive way.



Murielle Machiels

Yeah, exactly, exactly. And so I hope our listeners will be will relate to that. And the leaders that are out there will pay much more attention to that, because that's when the profit follows. I really believe that profit follows purpose and not the other way around. And in the last two years, we've been a little bit too much focused on the tasks to do the, because we were in a crisis mode, which is understandable. But still, we need to think about how we're going to move that needle for a better world.



Definitely. And now is the time and I believe totally that, you know, we say we've been through crisis, but if we now don't use as opportunities to learn and if we we go and put those jigsaw pieces back in the same place, you know, we're missing a really important time in history to make a shift and, and really get organizations to show up in a different way and use that platform that they have. And that's to me the most important thing



Murielle Machiels

Yeah, yeah, completely agree. Well, thank you, you seem to be doing great work with your organization and with your customers. So maybe you can tell us also, where can people find you?



Absolutely. So you can find us on Twitter at rd PR tweets, and Instagram is at Roland Dransfield. And our website is r dpr.co.uk. And then we also have a podcast called we built this city. And although it's about Greater Manchester, it's also about the leaders who helped to create Greater Manchester. And so there are some amazing conversations in there about legacy of values and purpose. So it's a great lesson for leaders who wants to kind of understand how, what people have been doing over the past 25 years in Manchester.



Murielle Machiels

Great, we'll put the links in the show notes of the life.



Thank you so much. I've really enjoyed it. Yeah, me



Murielle Machiels

too. It was nice having you here. It's it's nice to see that. Communication agencies are also worried about authenticity and, and vulnerability and values because to be honest, I started my career in marketing. So I worked with quite some agencies and what bothered me all the time was the superficial sides from the agencies that I didn't always like and and then the fact that they were more interested in winning prices than really translating your message. So it's nice to see this evolution, at least in your agency. So congratulation for that.



Thank you so much. Thank you. Okay,



Murielle Machiels

bye, Lisa.



Bye. Murielle Thank you. Yeah, you



Murielle Machiels

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