



SEASON 4

EPISODE 09

[INTRO]

[0:00:05.8] ANNOUNCER: Welcome back to Happy Porch Radio, the digital agency podcast for progressive agency owners and web professionals.

Season Four is an exploration of diversity in our industry, especially gender diversity. This season, your host, Barry O’Kane is joined by some wonderful co hosts for conversations with agency leaders and diversity and inclusion experts.

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:32.2] BOK: Welcome back to Happy Porch Radio. I am delighted to be joined by a wonderful new cohost. Kate is cofounder of Fat Free Media, a Nottingham based video and animated content agency. We’ll learn more about Kate and her agency later in the series. In this episode, Kate and I speak to Asad Dhunna who is the inspirational founder of The Unmistakables, which is an independent consultancy made up of minorities that work with brands to create companies and campaigns that better represent the changing world we live in.

In a side hustle, he is director of communications for Pride in London. Asad was named one of PR week’s 30 under 30 rising stars in 2017 and a year later was named an influential LGBT plus icon and trail blazer by the dots. Let’s meet Asad.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:01:27.8] AD: My name is Asad Dhunna and I run The Unmistakables. We’re a consultancy that is made up of minorities and we help companies understand people who aren’t necessarily considered the mainstream.



[0:01:39.3] BOK: Awesome. Now, I would really like to start, find out a little bit more about what was the journey that led you to the point where you started this agency, where you started doing this work?

[0:01:48.7] AD: I guess it's a long positive history. Many years ago, I was considering what should I do with my career and where should I work and I ended up getting a job offer from Bentley Moses and something was just saying to me that I wanted to stay in London and moving to Crew wouldn't make me that happy even though having maybe a company car would.

I ended up in a small integrated agency called Incredible, which is now been bought by tech 100 and when I was there, I had a great time and I love just being in London and working for a really creative small shop. Just as the years went on –I thought I should get a bit more experience and went to a larger agency called Fleishman Hilliard and then went to a travel startup called Trip Tease and then eventually to Weber Shandwick, which is where I was before.

All the way along, I think, I was thinking, "Well how do I create environments where I feel like I want to work" and Incredible was great for that. How do I do the work that really pushes me, which Fleishman was great for and how do I build something from scratch, which was trip tease and then while I was at Weber, I really thought, "I've got to start my own agency. I've got to give it a go" and I was having more and more clients come to me saying, "How do we understand minorities?"

"How do we understand LGBT people or how do we understand Indian people or British Indian people and how do we really create campaigns that are better at all at seeing them or create products\ that are specifically for those audiences?" That's how it came about really. I just realized that where I was, I wasn't necessarily able to answer that demand and the big "D" word of diversity just kept coming up again and again and when it came to the beginning of this year, I made the New Year's resolution that's got to do it and secured some funding and off I went.

It's been a couple of months now, definitely don't regret it and I'm learning a huge amount along the way.

[0:03:49.0] BOK: Yeah, interesting you say you definitely don't regret it. I'm sure it's not an easy process, I always remember starting up is hard work.



[0:03:54.3] AD: Yeah, it's hard work. I think working at Trip Tease was great for me because I learned how to be in a soft up environment, how to scale a business, we went from something like eight to 60 people in 18 months and the founder, Charlie and his brother and also Alex, they were fantastic to learn from and I took a great deal amount from that but when it's your own time and it's your own money and your own idea, it's very different and so it's been really eye opening in the process.

[0:04:24.0] BOK: When you say people are coming, or started this sort of journey of the people coming along to you and starting to ask for this kind of work or this kind of input. I find that really interesting because sometimes I think like there's a kind of interest or will to do it but not sort of getting brands or agencies to step beyond actually doing that.

Kate and I were just chatting before we started recording about how sometimes, you know, you have brands can sometimes be needing that work but maybe not aware of it or not doing it, Kate, I don't know if I'm paraphrasing slightly what we were saying.

[0:04:54.3] KV: Yes, I think particularly when it comes to recruitment, they need to be representative of the organization they would like to be, even if that's not representative of the organization they are now. I see that there's a really great need for someone to help navigate this with clients and have the difficult conversations.

What do you think about that Asad? Do you think, where's the bulk of the work that's coming to you, coming from. Is it people that are particularly marketing a diverse audience type or is it brands wanting to be more responsible generally?

[0:05:27.3] AD: It's both, I would say, it's actually a fairly even split. On the one hand, you've got brands on the inside saying, How do we reflect society on the inside? How do we create an environment that looks more like what the world looks like, how do we break down barriers in the three areas of HR so recruitment retention and promotion, how do you make them work for minorities and work for different people" and then you've got the bit on the outside, which I'm personally fascinated by and where this journey started, which is, "How do you create campaigns and businesses from the outside that look like they represent society.:



I think what we're seeing in the process is there are a lot of DNI consultants who work in the HR space and will do a lot of the internal work. Actually, where it's all a lot more powerful is where you put that together with marketing with coms, with PR. All of that together, plus the HR bit is where we see real firepower and I think that's the bit that brands are slowly waking up to and you're absolutely right in that there's a lot of talk about it, people saying, "We need to solve our diversity problem."

I know we've got a diversity problem, we've got an LGBT network and isn't that how movement in the right place, we got a BAME network and isn't that a step in the right movement. That's part of the challenge actually, which is everyone agrees that morally, diversity is the right thing to do and is you know, who doesn't want a more diverse business in the same way as 10 years ago, people said, "No, who doesn't want a more digital business."

But actually, it's when you get leaders to sit together and actually have really challenging conversations about the decisions they make, the makeup of that workforce, the types of products they create, the intrinsic biases that sit in the organization. That's where we find for me anyway, the most enjoyable work because that's where the biggest change is going to happen.

I hope that answers it in that it's a little bit 50/50 on the inside HR piece but also 50 on the marketing comp's piece.

[0:07:34.9] BOK: Yeah, one thing that was interesting to me with the comparison you make to sort of fear that everybody was saying, "Hey, we need digital" and there was something and is there a real grounds, is that kind of what's what you're saying and people saying, "We need to be actually doing and working in this area a bit more actively?"

[0:07:51.7] AD: In part, there are people saying, "We need to do it," the main thing that's coming along is legislation change. If you look at the gender pay gap and what that did, it was a very blunt tool to get people to talk about gender pay issues, equality in the workplace and the change that needs to happen and setting out the stores to address that.

Next year we're going to have the ethnic pay gap come around and ethnic pay gap reporting is on the horizon. As much as it is people saying, "Yes, we need to do something about it," there's also a legislation changes that come in because I think in the context of Brexit, there's a bit of

introspection to say, “Have we created a fair and equal society and how are we pushing that forward and how is business proactively pushing that forward.” I’ll give you an example.

I always find that I walk in to a Sainsbury’s or a Tesco or any other supermarket and it feels very diverse and inversely commerce. The people who work in the shops are from ethnic backgrounds and I’m speaking very broad brush and you are going to head the HQ and it’s not like that. That for me is the signifier that there is something that is broken.

It doesn’t look and feel like it’s one cohesive company. I think this legislation coming around the corner that are making business leaders sit up and say, “We got to do something about this because our updaters and the reporting that we’re going to need to do in the new year mandates us to take action early.”

[0:09:24.0] KV: Forgive my naiveté in this area but what’s the research out there in terms of the ethnic pay gap. It’s not as well known to me as that is for obviously the gender pay gap. What am I missing there?

[0:09:36.3] AD: The ethnic pay gap has been around for the last 12 months or so but not very widely reported and there’s a couple of reasons why. It’s hard to track the data, it’s hard for people to say what their ethnicity is because you have to self-report. How do I identify, do I identify as a British Indian, do I identify as British, do I identify as British non-whites?

See, gathering that data is very difficult but there are a number of firms right now for example, ITM who have reported voluntarily their ethnicity pay gap and they have said that we are seeing a difference in people of different ethnicities in terms of how much they’re paid and very much the same way as the gender pay gap word.

The sad thing is it’s not being reported in the same way because there aren’t that many journalist who are from an ethnic backgrounds who are able to push that up to the editorial table and that’s one of the reasons. The other is race is already difficult thing for British people to talk about.

In putting that into the paper, you’re challenging quite a difficult conversation whereas for gender, it’s slightly easier because you’ve got more journalist who are able to pick and carry the



story but also, it's in the easier thing for society I believe to talk about. Yeah, it is there, it's coming, there are firms that have reported that ethnicity pick up and there was something called The Race At Work Charter that was championed by the government and Karen Blacket for media companies, I think the race equality champion for the government who is pushing this agenda and forcing companies to talk about gender and race on equal terms.

[0:11:14.7] BOK: Is that sort of I guess the press issue there, like the getting things out into the world and an appetite for the conversation. Is that something that in your own work within new agencies that you find challenging or is that kind of, you know, is that the opportunity that you're working in?

[0:11:30.1] AD: In part, it is challenging when we're out there trying to push those kinds of stories, they aren't as easy to land because A, they're new and B, like I said, they're more difficult to talk about. I think the other thing that I'm really learning within building this, we want to be made up of minorities is finding the right talent and there's a huge number of ethnic minorities who want to get into this industry.

But find it extremely difficult to find the right opportunities to find the right places to look for them and vice versa, you've got a number of leaders and agencies who are struggling to find diverse talent. I think that's probably an even bigger challenge that we're seeing, which is how do you find the right people to come and work for your agency when you want to create culture.

It is different and it's very easy to take recommendations or referrals from people you know because you want to move at speed and it's an agency you want to scale and grow quickly. But at the same time, being a bit more measured about it, takes a bit more thought and kind of two steps where it might take one step if you weren't thinking through a diversity lens.

[0:12:38.3] BOK: that's a very good question and something that's quite close to my own experience as well. Do you have any thoughts about or have you experienced or answering that question, "How do I get, how do I as I grow an agency or grow a team, how do I make sure that I'm not falling into those traps with some intrinsic bias or just focusing on the short term too much."



Is that a sort of thing that you are, when you say you're asking that question, is that the sort of project or work that you're working on or is that something that you see broader in the industry as well?

[0:13:07.9] AD: It's something that I would like to address within broader industry. I think the biggest benefit to me will be to have my own house in order and be the proof to show you how we're doing it. But there are diversity task force that are setup I think Grey London set one up, there are lots of initiatives out there that we are trying to push and champion and almost lift the tide.

I do, if we can do it and show how we're doing it then we can become a case study to help others do that and you know, I've got – I have two interviews this morning, I would love to hire both of them but it's the reality of running a business. Possibly think, "Okay, well how do I find a place for whoever doesn't get it and how can I make sure that they get a step into the industry because success for me in five to 10 years time will be that the mistake was also a talent pipeline for other agencies looking for great diverse talent."

[0:14:00.2] BOK: Yeah, that was going to be one of my questions is where, if you have a vision for where you want to take The Unmistakables, I guess you've kind of answered that a little bit already.

[0:14:06.5] AD: I mean, it's funny, if I talk to my investor, it's a different answer but if I think deep down why I went about setting this up is because I almost feel like in 15 or 20 years, we don't need to exist because there isn't a "diversity" problem in the industry.

The sad thing is, I don't think that will be the case in 15 or 20 years because this is going to be a long slow change. My vision really is we're able to lift the tide and have difficult conversations with people in the industry who wants to talk a lot about diversity and yeah, it's super easy to talk about that. Actually say, "Look, you know, I left a really good job, a really great agency to set something up from the ground up to show you that actually, this is what DNI or this is what difference could look like and it shouldn't be that difficult."

It is difficult because it is a new venture. In anything, it's difficult but that's kind of my vision for it, we can be proof of what the agency world and industry needs.



[0:15:09.2] BOK: I think that's really inspiring and I mean, the fact that you've clearly, you're able to clearly articulate and that's obviously really personally connected mission. Sometimes when you ask that question, you get this very vague answer. I think that's brilliant and thanks for sharing that, that's really quite an inspiring answer.

I'm also interested in finding out a little bit more about how the actual work that you're doing is, is it a case where maybe you're working alongside other agencies or with a specific angle or something, is there something, or does it work in a different way?

[0:15:36.3] AD: What I found so fascinating about the industry is everyone wants to label themselves into a discipline. PR agencies are now becoming ad agencies. Ad agencies are becoming PR agency, media agency is becoming – every agency is trying to become another type of agency by discipline and actually, when you strip all of that back and you sit down with a client from the beginning and you say, “Blank piece of paper, this is what we do, we are an agency made up of minorities.”

We help you to understand people who want the mainstream. The level of creativity that that starts from is quite unshackling because you can say, “Well, how are we going to find the right people, where are we going to find them, what do we need to do that, does it need to be a PR campaign, does it need to be out of home, does it need to be digital? Does it?”

Then once we start with that grounding thought, we say, “Well why don't we find the right partners who can help us do that and build that.” I'll give you an example, we currently are working with a co-working space and they said, well, we need to find and fill desks but we also want to make sure we get the right types of people.

We The Unmistakables have done a partnership with an agency called Brand Advance that does media buying and out of home creation and also does video production. They're very much aligned to the same ethos. Rather than me try to hire and bring in designers and videographers, I partner with them and bring them in and we go in together. That for me is a lot more fulfilling, that may change in however many years but right now, that feels like the right thing and actually, what the client needs at the core.



I know that having been a client both at Trip Tease but also in my spare time, I volunteer for Pride in London, which is London's third biggest annual event and biggest LGBT event in the UK. When you're the client, you just want to meet your business objectives and do the right thing by your company or your organization and all the agency politics that comes with it is not really your interest.

I try to bring that ethos into how we operate as well as an agency, which is again, new challenging but it feels like it works.

[0:17:39.4] KV: I think you totally are, I think my experiences in agencies are very much that the kind of the disciplines are getting stripped away because you can, those skills are quite freely available and actually, what it boils down to is ideas and this kind of strategic oversight.

When it comes to partnering with agencies, they are within the disciplines that can help you realize those ideas along with the client, how would you go about quantifying the right kind of agency feeds to work with from a diversity perspective?

[0:18:08.9] AD: That's a really good question. One of the best things that I learned working in a tech startup was a principle that someone who helped Dell setup their reseller market and I think it's a really good model, the agency's come up with. Other agencies and also work for clients. It was people, processes and products.

Do your people align, I do get on because you see yourself working with them, do your processes work, is your speed of business the same and is how you get business done aligned and products, are your products complementary. I think to your point of, if they operated in the same environment, you know, if they worked in inadvertently – let's say they worked in PR or labeled themselves a PR agency, would we work with them? Likely yes, as long as what they were doing was complimentary to what we're doing as supposed to competing and I think agencies can often get to a place where they try to collaborate but actually a competing and it just makes horrible environment for everyone involved.

But those three P's for me have always been a good way of benchmarking and assessing if the partnership feels right.



[0:19:22.9] KV: If that workforce and the partner agency wasn't particularly diverse, would that change of views whether you work with them or not?

[0:19:31.1] AD: I think it would and I think I'd have to have a really careful conversation around that. For me, I think if I think about where the world is going and what I'm seeing within the client world, I've seen more and more conversation around supply chain diversity and procurement diversity. If I'm not applying that same principle to how I'm working and bringing in the right kind of suppliers, then I feel like I'm not standing on steady ground when I go to clients and say, "This is what you should be thinking".

So it would be a difficult conversation when I've been in the client's side. It's been a lot easier to say, "Well can you show me the team chart and can you show me the statistics about who you've got and actually where you are bringing diversity thought into your team". When it is a partner agency it is a little bit trickier and I haven't luckily touched with how to have too many of those conversations but I definitely, it would be part of my consideration in partnerships.

[0:20:25.3] KV: That's really interesting, it is something that we've never been challenged on. That is something that I would look at to work out how we can measure up and what we could do to do a better job on those things as well.

[0:20:39.1] BOK: On that question Asad, when we talk about diversity obviously there is so many different ways or it is such a broad word, is there something that or the way you describe your work and The Unmistakables, is there a particular focus or angle or does it vary depending on the project or the work?

[0:20:57.1] AD: I would say it varies and diversity is a loaded word and I really don't enjoy using it. I prefer to talk about things like representation and belonging because I think what diversity does is get you into a pigeon hole and also turns people off because we've heard so much about it and what I tried to say is ground everything in statistics. So if we look at the fact that forecast show that by 2051, 20% of the UK population will be a netting minority all categorized in netting minority.

That means 50 million people, therefore there are 50 million potential consumers that you don't understand who think differently or operate differently to what you might be thinking about in



your processes or your creative ideation, wouldn't it be nice if you could get one pound for each of them? That is the starting point as oppose to saying, "Did you know that you're not diverse enough?" no one wants to hear that and I think if you really strip it back.

Often, diversity for some people short cuts into everyone who is not and I am using quite blunt language, everyone who is not a cyst gendered, born with – lives in the gender that they are born with, "I am a straight man" that is diversity to everyone else and if you look at some of the backlash that is happening around agencies like JWT, you are seeing that people are feeling alienated by the way people are talking about it and actually, I think we need to strip it all back and just talk about business and talk about the way the world looks and how businesses looks because agencies aren't keeping up and that is why we set up.

[0:22:30.9] BOK: Do you have any interesting or success stories or even just interesting stories that you can share with us that you can share with us from the work you have been doing over the last few months or year?

[0:22:40.1] AD: Yeah sure, so we worked with Dishoom, which is an Indian Restaurant chain across the country and we got in touch with and said actually homosexuality has just become decriminalized in India and that has knock of effect for LGBT Indians in the UK on conversations of what they're having back home that are happening back home, sorry, are shifting and they are become less conservative when it comes to sexuality.

So how could we mark that occasion? So we teamed up with Dishoom nations, which is an umbrella group of LGBT south Asian charities and put on an event at the end of September so three weeks after the law was crapped and we brought together the LGBT community and the Indian community sponsored by Dishoom, hosted by gaysians. to really mark the occasion and create a space that was different and it was covered by the BBC.

We have done some really nice video content out of it. We really created some changed and allowed people to have discussions that they wouldn't have otherwise had. Now if you apply that to traditional agency disciplines that covered PR, event management, maybe strategy and creative, partnerships that really we just went from a point of what is a good idea, how do we do it and who can help do it and that was for us really eye opening and a really great place to start and a really first case study I suppose.

[0:24:09.2] BOK: Yeah, brilliant and sort of a celebration as well because as what you say is parts, it is taking part in something. What would you describe as the ideal work, the things that you would love to be involved in, is that a good example for that? Is there any big goals you have in that way?

[0:24:25.0] AD: I think big goals would be to look at creating product lines and new product development that really starts from a leader or say I want to create something for people who are different. I don't just want to repurpose or go to a PR job. I actually want to look at what do people who are different need and how do I develop that. So you can apply that to things like health services. So what are the different health problems that people of minorities, the salvation community for example have.

And how do I create the right product around that, that for me would be the ideal. I think coming from a PR background, I have been conditioned to think how do you create the story and the headline. It's more of the transformational product work and actually genuine change that starts with thinking about products and the way you can create things that are real value creation.

[0:25:17.7] BOK: Yeah and I have the same very much passion and interest or connection to what you are saying there about genuine real change and seeing the change rather the risk going the other side is falling into just window dressing.

[0:25:29.9] AD: Yes, a lot of the time I have people say to me, "Well how do we look more diverse? Maybe we should put a person of color and then that's a job done". When you look at the statistics, yes there has been increase representation of BAME people for example in our verse that came out from Lloyd Bank, Lloyd's Bank a couple of weeks ago but actually it does become a bit ton deaf because unless the company can vibe that feeling than people can scratch behind the PR campaign.

And say, "Well that is not really what it's like to work there" or "Did you know that that company actually treats migrants in this way and that's where I think I can become hugely cynical but really it's about – like you said Barry, the genuine change.



[0:26:13.9] BOK: Do you every get involved at conversations or can you imagine yourself getting involved in conversations where somebody is saying like that exact thing, “How do we look?” or it is all about image to shift the conversation towards, “Well actually let’s make real change”?

[0:26:29.6] AD: I think it is a really difficult one because if someone says, “Well how do we look to be more diverse?” Do you turn that business away or do you turn that down? I think it is finding the right stakeholders in the business and the right senior leaders to have that conversation. Often if it is a brief that comes out of a coms or PR team, it takes a little bit more scratching to say, “Well how do we prove this and can we actually say it and can we actually do it?” and that applies to the LGBT community.

More than anywhere, there is a lot of accusations of pink washing of brands that say, “Well if we just slap a pride logo on it, it will be fine” and then when you dig behind it you see that maybe that merchandise is created in anti-LGBT countries and you always realize that the truth does come out and I think that is actually where having a PR grounding is really helpful because you just know what a journalist is going to look for or what they’re going to ask.

And then you got to make sure that your mark seen is squeaky clean because we live in an age where it is really easy to find out what the facts are and form your own opinion and no brand wants to be part of the Twitter storm.

[0:27:42.0] BOK: So just to switch topics slightly, you mentioned that you do some volunteer work. I think it was volunteer work. I am always intrigued by how many agency leaders I speak to who have other things volunteers of side projects and so on and so can you tell me a little bit about that?

[0:27:57.5] AD: Yeah, sure. So I got involved with Pride in London, which is a community interest group back in 2016 and now I joined the marketing team and helped activate some of their campaigns through sponsors and through that as the years went on, they invited me to apply and interview for the board and became the director of commerce at the beginning of 2018, end of ’17 to 2018 and through that I’ve learned a hell of a lot. I think when you are a volunteer, you really have to go into yourself.



So ask yourself why you're doing things when you haven't got the paycheck for it when you bring in so much time but also it is a cause that I am hugely passionate about. I think equality and LGBT rights are really important. A lot of people say, "Well I think it is fine now, there is equal marriage and it's job done" but actually if you look at levels of homophobia or bigotry they're not dropping and I guess from a professional standpoint, it has taught me a great deal about being on a board.

About getting a broader overview of lots of different functions, about leading a team and also about being a client. We've had some great agencies work with us over the years. So I do it because it fuels my soul and also provides me with something to think about in my professional life.

[0:29:16.7] BOK: And like I say that is something that I see similarities with. A lot of people that I speak to, we speak to in this show we've connected or something they believe within them running an agency or bleeding an agency and giving up a lot of the spare time for some related projects, really interesting.

[0:29:31.4] AD: Why do you think that is Barry? Do you see any trends in where that comes from?

[0:29:36.0] BOK: That is a good question and I think it's because of a type of a personality thing like somebody who what I heard from what you are describing is that you're started Unmistakables not just because you wanted to run a business or run an agency but because you had this real mission or belief or purpose or whatever the right word is and so people who are like that I think are drawn towards being involved in that in many aspects of their life.

And to me that is interesting because it may be points towards something about the type of person who wants to lead an agency or lead a business and how important having something more than just I want to make some money.

[0:30:11.9] AD: Yeah, you know I have been through a lot of introspection in doing this and I feel like for me personally I got to a place in my late 20's where I thought my life can even go one way or another and it can go one way, which would be the study for it and wouldn't it be great if... etcetera, etcetera but actually the action of scratch or setting something up and



starting something from scratch and building it just wouldn't have gone away and I feel like sometimes that's really hard to explain to people who don't have that itch or are very happy in their day job.

I think part for me, it's been that I've always strived to be good at what I do and it's more recently where people have said, "I bought some of this diversity word" where actually I am different so how does that fit and how does that all work together and maybe what agency founders at least the ones I've met or spoken to have said that actually it has given them an outlet.

That a traditional working environment couldn't give them or perhaps stifled, which is certainly true to me.

[0:31:21.9] BOK: Yeah, an outlet part is really important in being able to almost express yourself as really important in a way that you often don't get or if you have less input or less control.

[0:31:32.4] AD: Yep, that's right.

[0:31:33.9] BOK: A whole other topic of conversation. So just as we start to run out a little bit of time, I said I would be interested in final thoughts or for anybody who is listening who is leading or involved in leading an agency who is interested in both this type of work and also looking internally, what are the sort of things you would leave, want them to take away from the conversation?

[0:31:53.9] AD: I think I would challenge agency leaders to think about internally. So have a look at your staff page on your website, have a look at the group that stands up and wins the awards on the industry blogs and websites. Have a look at them and think am I seeing the same sorts of people and if yes, am I happy with that and if no, how am I going to change it. That for me has been a huge driving force. I still look at agency "about us" pages and think, "Wow there's no women" for example.

There is no people of color or there is no one who lists that they have a disability or there is no one who talks about their sexuality and I would take that thinking and say, "Okay well now if I



look into the world and think about the way the world is going and the way people identify and the way they talk online and the way the media is going, am I happy that the people I have can fit the world that we're in?" that would be my question.

And then one thing I want to leave people with is just, "Are you happy with where things are right now and if not, how are you going to change them?"

[0:33:03.9] KV: That's lovely. That is really nice, can I ask another question if that's alright? Agencies work with clients and for some clients, diversity is part of their DNA and it comes very naturally to bring those things into the mix. For clients that might not be a natural position, what can we as agencies do to help guide them in the right direction?

[0:33:28.2] AD: That is a very good question. It depends on the type of client but if it is a consumer basing client, I think it would be to start with the case, the spending power case. So for example, if you want to talk about the LGBT community, you could talk about how spending power and spending patterns on different amongst the LGBT community therefore Mr. Client or Mrs. Client or Miss Client, how are you going to unlock some of that and is that important to you as an additional incremental revenue line. That would be a starting point and try to go at it through numbers rather than through morals.

[0:34:06.3] KV: What about when it comes to representation? I know we talked about that a little bit earlier. It is not enough to put some of them of BOAME background in their advertising campaign and tick that box and that be your efforts when it comes to diversity but what else should clients be doing for that?

[0:34:26.0] AD: I think that is also an excellent question. It is not enough to say you are doing it, you have to over index on it and so if you want to talk about the things that you are doing and let me think about this because there is a way to do it. It is not just that hard, it is not easy to articulate. The way you have to do it, so let's talk about representation through recruiting. It is easy to say, "Right, we are going to go out there and try and find more diverse people".

You proactively got to ask people from different backgrounds to apply for the role. You must give them permission to do it because that's I think a cultural layer that people often don't understand. So I am talking very broadly but the way I see or the way I understand white British



people to operate it to say, “Well I am going to go for that and I am going to do it because I believe I deserve it” whereas if you talk to certain other minorities, they might say:

“Well actually I need to wait to be asked to do that and do I have permission to do it” and it’s knowing those cultural undertones and then using them in a way to say, “Okay, I am going to push diversity harder. So I have often had let’s say someone from an Asian background say, “Well you know I don’t know if I am actually right for that role and I know that if they were perhaps a white British man, they wouldn’t have even questioned it” and that’s where I think leaders need to be a lot more proactively involved in the management of the business to make that shift.

[0:35:57.8] KV: Yeah, that is a really good point. It really does make you think about your own efforts as it relates to your own and how you come to the table with these things and I know that everyone is always a work in progress but even as I think there’s so much more that we could be doing to do better in the space.

[0:36:14.4] AD: I guess I am always interested to talk to agency owners. How would you assess what good looks like?

[0:36:20.8] KV: It’s been something that I have been thinking about as I have been listening to this season in preparation for joining Barry as a host. To be completely honest, it is not something that we have given a huge amount of thought to before and that shocks me, my own ignorance of this I think is quite shocking. I don’t know what good looks like and I wouldn’t want to think that if I had to take boxes for certain quotas that that would be enough because for me, it has to run through your culture.

And I do feel we have an inclusive culture in a small team. We are only a team of eight or nine of us. There is not a massive work force here but that’s why I was asking the question in terms of working with partners. Would we fit the bill, you know? Would you look at us and go well that’s not a diverse agency. I wouldn’t touch those guys with a botch pill. So I don’t know is the really honest answer to that and that is why this season is so interesting to me.

Because it gives me an opportunity to ask myself some of the slightly uncomfortable questions I have never really thought about.



[0:37:25.4] AD: I feel like it is the same process because I also don't know what good looks like. It is impossible to say because how do you know what a good equal and fair society looks like. I think as an agency owner, my biggest advice and what I am trying to take heed off of myself is to look at some of the stats and say, "Am I contributing to that inequality or am I practically doing something to oppose it" so in hiring, hiring is my main one.

What am I doing, who am I finding, how am I being that change?" so then it creates future talent that can go on and leap as it sizzles start up their own agencies or feel like they can. I know for me, having an LGBT investor has been really eye opening for me and really great because we understand a similar culture and it just makes it easier to talk about certain things that I might not have had and if I hadn't had that could I have gone off and done it in the same way I hope in 10 years' time.

I can invest in someone's business who is doing what they want to do and it might be from a different background. You are right no one is perfect, it is not varying piece of work.

[0:38:37.1] BOK: And like you said Kate, that's asking ourselves those difficult questions that is something that every - I think I have done, I had some great conversations. Every time I had another one, it expands my own to turn their eyes and quite a lot. So as we're running out of time, I really wanted to say thanks Asad and Kate for joining me. It was a really interesting conversation. Just finally Asad, if anybody is listening who wants to find out more about you and about The Unmistakables, where should they go?

[0:38:37.1] AD: Yeah, very good question Barry. So if you want to find out more go to theunmistakables.com. There is no E in the middle. The number of mistakes people write with the word unmistakable has been eye opening or it is @_unmistakables on Instagram and Twitter.

[0:39:20.6] BOK: Awesome and as usual, we will put the links to that and everything else we mentioned at happyporchradio.com. Thank you again Asad, thank you Kate.

[0:39:27.7] AD: Great, thank you. Thanks, bye.



[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:39:35.5] BOK: You can get all the links and notes from this episode on happyporchradio.com where you can also find out how to send us questions, feedback and get involved in the conversation about this series.

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