



Capturing the Past, Inspiring the Future

Hayley Sudbury

Interviewed by

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At the

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Welcome to the Archives of Information Technology. It's the 11th of January 2019, and we are in London at WERKIN head office. I am Elisabetta Mori, an interviewer with Archives of IT.

[00:11]

Today I will be talking to Hayley Sudbury. A former Barclays executive, Hayley Sudbury is founder and CEO of WERKIN, a company which helps to create, track and activate mentoring and career development programmes, supporting workplace inclusion like professional LGBT+ communities, and BAME talents. She is an active mentor of Stemettes speaker for Founders for Schools. She is an ambassador of LB Women, a network created to inspire, inform and celebrate success of professional lesbian and bisexual women. She is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, and in 2017 and '18 Hayley was on the OUTstanding Financial Times Leading 100 LGBT+ Executives list. She was recognised as individual champion of the We Are Tech Women's Tech 50 Awards, and named by the 2018 Silicon Republic Women Invent Top 10, as a workplace advocate. She also hosts the podcast featuring diverse voices, particularly LGBT+ leaders in tech and finance. Welcome Hayley.

[01:16]

So, can you tell a little bit about where and when you were born, and what are the earliest memories in your life?

Sure, thanks for having me. I was born in a small town in North Queensland called Ayr, in Australia. And, my earliest memories. Well, I mean, that probably involved food to be honest, because I was always very sort of sensory-driven, and, had a family that really valued that as well. So, a lot of my early childhood was, really eating and having fantastic experiences out in the neighbourhood with the local kids, running around, you know, causing muck. Building things, racing bikes, catching things. And basically having a good time, and probably a good, simple life, you know, with a really loving family.

[02:09]

OK. Describe your family, your parents, what were their occupation.

Sure. So, as I was growing up, both of my parents actually worked in our local music business, which was a business that my family run, which was headed up by my

grandfather at that time. So, that's what they did, they ran the business. It sold every type of CD, which, you know, used to be a thing, through to cassettes when that was a thing, through musical instruments, to, sound equipment, and was always looking at sort of, the newest tech that was happening around music generally as well. So, yeah, instruments, and music, and everything sort of around that idea of, what it is to be musical or enjoy music. So, that was the business I grew up in. It was retail-focused, but also part of a larger buying group. So my, my role as a kid was sort of working in the shop on Saturday mornings, and then, we'd close the business around lunchtime and then the whole family would go back to my grandparents' place and we'd all have lunch together. So it was very, very business-focused but very family-oriented, and, at the end of the day, food was still kind of at the centre of that, you know, the family coming together after a, a hard day's work.

[03:24]

Can you describe your grandparents?

So, fortunately at the moment my grandparents are both alive. So, my grandfather is an extremely entrepreneurial man, has run a number of businesses over the years. Trained as a carpenter when he was a very young man, but essentially always looked to, really develop an opportunity or an idea. So it was really out of, I think, the last great recession in Australia that he saw an opportunity for musical instruments, because families were coming together and looking at ways of not just having the wireless, but you know, having the family piano for singalongs. So, that's essentially where that idea started. He also, and still actually, sells commercial real estate. He's in his late eighties now, and, he's a very active man, and I think that kind of keeps him going. He'll just, he will just work until the day he dies essentially. He won't be ever someone that retires, and I expect to be, you know, very much the same. Uniquely, in the late Eighties, early Nineties, he also raised early stage venture funding for an American silicon chip producer with individuals based in the local region. So, essentially, he was kind of a, a hybrid of a, maybe like a super angel/introducer for these, these new tech companies that were starting and starting to develop new tech hardware at the time. And for me that really, you know, kind of like, I think imprinted on my early years with kind of, the trips to America, and the excitement around what that meant. And I was very young, but I, I had a sense

around what it meant to be an entrepreneur, and also, the idea of the funding that went around new initiatives.

[05:08]

So, do you remember any particular event that shaped you during your childhood?

[pause] So, the one I was just sharing about, sort of, looking at my grandfather doing this, that absolutely shaped, more imprinted I think, on, on what I do now. But also so did my grandmother, who, you know, not only worked in the family businesses over the years, she was also the person that brought the family together. So it was her racing home to, to make the food for the family that were coming together. It was, it was her that, you know, I'd drop in and have a coffee with as I walked home from school every day, and talk about what had happened in my life. So, you know, both grandparents had played a really, and still do play, a big role in my life, and... And what really did shape my childhood, you know, I think, having grandparents that were young, I mean thinking about us now, and certainly my friends, you know, we've all, and are leaning towards having kids much later in life, but the reality is that I was born, you know, my grandparents were in their late forties. And, you know, I was hanging out with them in their early fifties, and, you know, 50 to me right now seems quite young. So they were very youthful, they were very entrepreneurial, they were very family-focused, and, and that really shaped my idea of how important family was, how important business was, how important doing different things was, but actually, you could probably make a lot of those decisions yourself and shape a destiny for you.

[06:41]

So, which classes did you most enjoy at school?

At school. For me, I loved the creativity of school, so, drama and music were two of my favourites, and, I was always playing in school bands, always performing. I played saxophone. I also then played trumpet. And I loved that, I loved the feeling of, making music with peers, and, and performance generally. I also loved economics, I loved the theory of economics, I loved learning about it. I mean it's something that I still find, you know, fascinating, particularly in kind of, where we're

at, sort of, current day and age, we're looking at, you know, the political impacts of, on economics for, for the UK at the moment as a result of, you know, what's been a very big referendum here, which is kind of a, an ongoing journey for us. But essentially economics was fascinating. And all of the creative subjects.

[07:36]

So what about university?

University. So, essentially, I was awarded a scholarship to Bond University, which was one of Australia's first private universities. It's extremely entrepreneurial. Before accepting it, I was sort of having my, probably my first mini-life decision point/crisis around what I wanted to do. And, you know, when this scholarship came through, it was, it was a, it was a clear win. It was an accelerated degree that worked really well for me, someone who wanted to get out into the world quickly. And it was focused on business, something that I loved, valued, and understood, and, you know, was keen to put some, some shape around that essentially.

[08:19]

So what happened after university?

After university, I, actually started a very small, tiny, tiny business with a friend, to, essentially build small marketing plans for small businesses, for a couple of grand, as a way to fund my lifestyle, and stay on the Gold Coast a bit longer, so that her and I could then go travelling. So, it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. I mean I had been sort of, gigging, and also tutoring students to make money whilst I was at university. Just sort of felt like a nice little natural next step to apply my business learning to, you know, other businesses that were in the region, make some money from it, live a nice life, and then get some money to actually head over to Europe and, and have, and explore. So, that's what I did.

[09:05]

Mhm. And when did you move to the UK for the first time?

Where?

When.

When? So I moved firstly to London in 1999, and, that was really exciting. I hadn't been before. I was excited about it being an opportunity, you know, to explore Europe as well. And essentially you know, move out of Australia and see something very different.

What was your life like in London, what did you do?

So, I did lots of different things. I mean I, I had come over essentially straight out of university, apart from, you know, some small business experience, and also a whole lot of experience working for my family. So I really did lots of short-term, temp jobs, everything from, project work, reception work, you name it, I probably did it. And that was pretty traditional at that time, for Australians to come over here and take those wide range of temping jobs under what is a working holiday visa. So I did that. I even did a bit of bar work, and, I generally had a, a fairly, you know, fun and crazy, rambunctious time. Kind of, living that next part of my life as an adult really.

Did you play music in London in those years?

Not really. I ended up sort of, bringing my saxophone over, and, sort of reconnected with music, but, my focus was probably more around, really absorbing the geography, living somewhere different, working in very different environments, rather than, you know, looking for bands to play with at that time.

Did you miss Australia?

I did. I did. I think, you know, your first big move in life is always surprising, because you realise, oh, the world goes on without you. And, and coming from such a close-knit family, that's always an interesting thing, to, to look back and, review really. But, I missed it, it missed it for the weather. I mean, you know, that's always a bit of a shock for the system here, you know, no one moves to London for the weather. It is absolutely, just the most amazing city, and I've loved living here so

much, but you don't move here for the weather. Even though we've just had the most amazing summer, that is a shock for the system I think when you come from a hot, humid climate, and here it's, you know, quite... Well, it's not that it's cold, it's the dampness I think that gets you, and the greyness. But there's plenty of other things that help you get over that very quickly.

[11:24]

So, after living in London for a while, what did you do? Did you do back to Australia, did you look for a proper job here, or...?

I didn't really sort of do the proper job straight out of university here. I did go back to Australia, and decided to get quite serious about my career and focus on working for some more established, larger companies. Although I did do some smaller pieces when I first landed for sort of, small start-ups. But my focus was getting some big names on my résumé, and I worked out quite quickly that, particularly after going to a few recruitment rounds, recruiters were looking for names that they could, that they knew and recognised, and that would, that would give them that confidence to kind of place you in a role. So, I, I started kind of, my journey, moving into big corporate organisations.

[12:15]

And, in 2004 you also worked for ANZ Bank in Australia.

Yes. That, that was... You know, prior to that, I had been working in energy, in a head office in Queensland, and loved that, and with a real focus on product development. But I ended up getting an opportunity to move into ANZ Bank, which, at the time it was actually Esanda, which was the asset finance arm of ANZ Bank. And, at that time it was headed up by a fabulous woman called Elizabeth Proust, who is still very active as a, more as a board member and chair of large Australian companies, and based in Australia. She was actually leading that organisation, which was a pretty powerful thing, to see this fabulously focused and results-driven woman creating something quite different with the asset finance arm, and looking at ways to do things differently. So it was almost really one of the first, sort of early stages of incubation, and, it was an innovation area where they were looking at doing things

very differently, because they were, they wanted to have some real product development process and methodologies in place, and that's what I came in to do, with all of the other initiatives they were working on. So it was a really exciting time. It was great to have that, that role model in Elizabeth around, actually, this is great, this is a, this is a senior woman leading this business. And, you know, really met some amazing people that are still, you know, still in my life, you know, not every day now because I'm based in a different country, but, it was, that was a real turning point for my career around, just the calibre of individuals, the type of work, and having all of those big plays around kind of, great, great leaders, and really great leadership being demonstrated. Elizabeth reported in to John McFarlane, who was the CEO of ANZ at the time, who was also a really fabulous role model. I mean he was doing things like, demanding his leaders had quotas for women for recruitment, and it just, it was early days, and he was spearheading a lot of that, which I think created a really amazing energy in the organisation of, this is a great place for women to work. Women excel, and the organisation is delivering great results.

[14:34]

And you eventually worked for another bank, after ANZ.

Yes. So, at that point I was actually really enjoying financial services, and I, I was keen to come back to Europe after sort of doing it for such a short time out of university, and doing it in a much more temporary way. When the opportunity came to take a larger, more senior and well paid role, compared to my early experience here in London, that was very attractive. So I moved over for a role with Barclays in the, in the commercial bank at the time, heading up what was their broad sort of service and supply area, and building that as well for them around how they really were spending money as an organisation, and the suppliers they were using to actually operate. So that was exciting, and it was great to be in a global bank. You know, Barclays was a good solid place to start. It also led to a number of other opportunities while I was there. Really being able to move through into a position that was focused on the balance sheet. So, for me, it was great to have not just sort of operations as a financial services professional, but actually be working on the money side as well, and be thinking about, how do we actually, how do we make money, essentially, not just lend money, and how do we attract the right clients. And that was really my last role

there which was the head of pricing. And that was about, essentially, you know, being able to price opportunities, to attract the right clients, so we could actually grow the balances and in turn lend. And it was a time when a lot of regulation was changing. We had had the financial crisis, and, you know, a number of restrictions were being put on banks in how they operate. So, you know, the size of your balance sheet was really important. And I was part of a, at the time, really fantastic team who was focused on growing that balance sheet so that we could be able to lend in the way that we wanted to.

[16:27]

What was your work environment at Barclays? You said it was an amazing team, but can you tell us...

Well look, I worked with a lot of smart people. And I mean I've been quite open in the way I did this, and this was a, you know, getting on, sort of, ten years ago now. After coming from ANZ, which was a very progressive, female-led environment, into an environment which was a little bit more conservative, it was noticeable the difference around things like gender balance. That's not to say it was a bad organisation; it just, it was not at the same... It didn't have the same mix of people that I had previously worked with. And so that was something that I did notice. And, I think, you know, as you move through your career, you have heightened awareness at certain points, and at the early stages you're just so excited to have a role and you do whatever it takes. You're not even thinking about that stuff as much as you are a little bit later on. And, in looking around, you know, there wasn't really at that time a lot of women that I could point to, where previously I had that experience. And I was looking above me, and it wasn't that there was that sense of, there's a great role model, and, that's where I want to be, or that's the role I want to be in. I'm really pleased to say that, actually, that organisation has changed, you know, significantly when it comes to that, and it's evolved and things, and moving at pace, and, you know, there's a real commitment to LGBT there as well. John McFarlane, who was the CEO of ANZ, is now the, the Chairman of Barclays too. So I think, there's been huge amounts of progress. For me at the time though, I really did look around and go, wow, you know, where is this version of myself? And, yes, I enjoyed the work, and achieved some things. But as I was actually on a personal journey, not just about, you

know, seeing sort of senior women, I was also looking for, you know, where are the role models of these gay women, you know? I was sort of struggling with that personally. And I was trying to reconcile what it meant to be a successful gay woman, and for me, I just didn't have those images. I was, you know, considered myself, you know, fairly focused on achieving in most areas of my life, apart from really when it came to my, you know, sexuality, and I think probably largely, I also was in an environment that were kind of celebrating that at the time. Today, in today's organisation, it is radically different and continuing to change, but at that point, I just couldn't point to it. And I think, you know, one of the most powerful quotes is, this idea of, you can't, you can't be what you can't see. Even for the most confident, extroverted individuals, that idea of being able to see yourself, is, is hugely powerful.

[18:53]

So I did make a decision at that point to leave financial services, to explore that part of me. And I don't think... That was a completely personal decision, and that was based on, wanting to go on a journey, to be really clear around, was that the path I want to go down as well. And if it was, you know, what would it look like for me at the end of that? And, and career was just part of it. And I think, in life you make these decisions to, truly work out what environments you want to be part of. And at that point I wanted to be part of a different environment to explore that. At the same time I had set up a passion project with Angela Newell, who is a fabulous Australian woman, also a very good friend of mine.

So how did you meet Angela Newell?

So, funnily enough, we met through a mutual friend, and a friend that I worked with in the energy sector in Australia. When I was in Australia, I was part of a soccer, or football team, women's football team, and it was called, it was called PG's Flying Circus. So, basically, that soccer team ended up moving to London. This other friend, Susan, started it up over here in London. And, it happened that Angela had played for the team, and when I first moved to London this friend of mine, Suze, was kind of in the process of moving back to Australia, but she hosted some summer drinks. And, essentially, I met Ange at these drinks. We became fast friends. But actually, we really bonded over the idea of, you know, food and wine. And she was

extremely passionate about cheese and wanted to make cheese, and I'm extremely passionate about wine, and, wanted to make wine. And actually one of the main interests, I was in the, the reason I was in the financial services sector is, I was very keen on buying a vineyard and sort of doing that as kind of, my next career. So, essentially we were fast friends, and fast friends that also developed a, a business, or a, you know, what was, around our passions together, and that was called the Tasting Sessions. It was really a bit of a new take on the, the wine tasting concept, and, we wanted to, essentially it was demystifying wine at the early stages, and take people on a journey of discovery. That became something much more creative over time as we continued to push boundaries. There was always like, a drink of wine or a spirit at the centre as a learning component. It always brought together really interesting people from, from different industries. And with regard to taking people on the journey, it ended up being something much more in line with experiential dining at the very early days of that trend in, in London, where we would transform 5,000 square feet warehouses into a tasting journey, and have different sets, with actors, to fully make it immersive.

[21:39]

Can you make an example?

Sure. It's been a while since I've spoken about this. So, tequila for example. Everyone's had a bad experience with tequila. So, the event was called 'Tequila: The Reconciliation'. Everyone has to reconcile, you know, the challenges that they have had, and, you know, the reality is, good tequila is amazing, you know, just, it has to be 100 per cent agave. So, we had taken over a, a warehouse space in Shoreditch at the time. We called it the Shoreditch Prison, and we were taking people prisoner for their crimes against tequila. Because everyone has done this, and they've, you know, been badly behaved when it comes to tequila. So as people walked in to the venue, they were handed their prison pack, which was a custom boiler suit, which was, because they're actually in jail, they put it on. They were encouraged to tailor it even more so. And they were also given a card around the crime that they had committed and why they had ended up in prison. And then as they went through security they then picked up a little tiny shot, which was a mini tequila sunrise, and, they, essentially it was their urine test if you like, their urine test, kind of, containers, they were all clean.

And, you would then vote around, was it a positive experience or a negative experience for you, trying this first tequila, as you, as you walked through. And then you walked into the first space, which was set up as a prison. There was prison guards hustling muscle Marys in the corner, and, inmates who were being quite interactive with all of our guests. In another corner there was a, a tattoo parlour where we'd created this viral recording where, you put it on and you could hear the sounds going around in your head of these needles putting on tattoos. However, they were stick-on, and, they were just, we were just branding them up with our own brand at the time.

[23:42]

And then, we did a masterclass with some very high end tequilas, finishing off in something that was rare and more expensive, and something that you wouldn't normally get access to, along with tasting the raw agave in its plant form, so people could get a sense around, what that, what that was actually like, and then start to identify those flavours, in what was a, a really interesting and unique tequila flight.

[24:08]

And then we actually took everyone through to a, a separate experience, which was focused around the Day of the Dead, which is obviously a very large festival, and in that room we'd worked with a lot of artists to create, you know, specific art for that event, to help kind of bring that idea of the Day of the Dead to life. And in there we'd created a feast, and we'd worked with some fantastic chefs, who are actually now based in San Francisco, to create a three-course menu which was matched to tequila-based cocktails.

[24:39]

And, you know, this whole time we always had a lot of, a lot of the actors were always interacting with the guests. But what we always found is, because we had worked so hard on getting a really interesting community of people together from different backgrounds, people not just wanted to learn about what it is they were drinking, which gave it a bit of meaning and purpose, they really wanted to connect with the other people that were there. So it created an extraordinary social experiment and experience, and we saw, you know, lots of amazing friendships, relationships, opportunities come from this group of people.

Amazing.

[laughs]

[25:19]

And, so, how did you work with Angela, what was your contribution and hers, what, how did you manage all the events?

So, essentially, Ange has always been very creative, so, she would think about kind of, the concept. I tended to be the person who would, you know, negotiate the deals with the, the drinks brands. And, we were both very hands-on, because we had to be, and we had massive art departments working for us of like, 20, 30, 40 people, who were, you know, maybe interning from Central Saint Martins, and building the sets. So, we were working with a lot of people to bring this to life. However, everything we did, once the concept was locked in, was very hands-on. And, you know, Ange always did stuff on the digital side, which played well to her skills. I always did stuff on the commercial side, which also played well to my skills. And, you know, it was really, I think, great having that experience before we moved into something more formal, because, it wasn't like I was just coming out of a big banking role. I had actually done something where, you know, you properly have to hustle just to get a, you know, a free cakes of tequila. And, it was those experiences I think that sort of made it, and kept it very real for me as I moved into building other companies. Because when you have, and when you work for a large company, you do have the halo effect. When you pick up the phone and you say, 'Hey, this Hayley from Barclays,' you know, that has a certain impact. When it's just Hayley from an unknown entity, it doesn't have the same impact. Which is why, you know, developing your personal relationships and your networks is so important, because, it is about the relationship you have, not the relationship the company you work for has. And as you go out on your own, those networks have to be, have to be strong. But I think learning that through the Tasting Sessions, as I was, you know, moving out of the corporate world, you know, it was a great, it was a great experience, and, you know, it was something we were doing after hours, and it was a huge amount of work, but I think it really formed, not just the basis of our friendship, but it was the basis of a business partnership moving on that is, that is very real. And it was, it was really physically tough as well, which was very different to kind of, a desk-based job.

[27:37]

Yes, because, with... And, and you also founded SMITH and WERKIN.

Yup.

So we are talking about SMITH, January 2011.

Mhm. Yep. So, SMITH was really our first step into starting to commercialise what we had done with the Tasting Sessions. We knew that we had a unique ability to bring together extraordinary people. We knew that doing that, just in live environments, just in one city, wasn't scalable, particularly if it was going to be the thing that became our life. And we saw a huge opportunity in using technology to better connect the community, because the feedback had really been around, yes, these events are extraordinary, but the people that I'm meeting are, you know, fabulous, and I want to stay connected with them. So, we essentially built a technology platform which would allow a community to connect, and to do it in a way that wasn't mainstream or mass-market, but actually, you know, did better match people around the types of things that they were interested in, or challenged by, to create interesting conversations and an interesting energy around a particular event. So SMITH started to take more shape around this idea of connecting, you know, thought leaders and changers, but actually connecting them around a social experience, and doing that with technology. So we ended up running an extremely large private b2, both in the UK and the US, which was a hell of a lot of fun, and, and really kind of, our first foray into going, well actually, how do we want to grow scale? This tech company, you know, what do we think the endgame looks like, and where do we think, you know, the commercial opportunities really are? And, after doing that for, really, it was really just under two years, you know, it was definitely tough, it was definitely a tough one to commercialise, but we had learnt a lot about connection, we had built our first early-day products, which were fantastic. I mean Ange is a, a user experience architect, so she was really leading on, on the charge of what that looks like. And we'd had some really great feedback.

[29:45]

But it wasn't until we got approached by a large corporate who said, 'Actually, look, we'd like to use your technology for one of our programmes,' that we started to think, well actually, maybe the commercial opportunity is doing something differently for business, and bringing that consumer approach to business. And that was a little bit of a break between that, you know, first two years, and then actually getting that corporate approach. But it kicked us into kind of a, a different way of thinking, and a lot of entrepreneurs referred to it as a pivot. Pivots can be quite painful as well. But essentially, we did start to pivot the ideas around, the business around, could we be a B2B offering? And if we are going to be business-to-business, what is it that we want to do? Because, both of us hadn't left the corporate world to necessarily build a B2B company, that wasn't, that wasn't the intention. I think, you know, the reality is, Tasting Sessions, it was early days, but, you know, it was exciting, it was new, it was different. I was meeting people from all different backgrounds, and, because of also the personal journey I was going on around my sexuality, I really valued that, and I loved that. It wasn't just people in suits; it really was a range of people, doing and living their lives in different ways. And it was very diverse, and it was more diverse than the environment that I had stepped out of. So that was, that was really interesting.

[31:09]

So as we looked to kind of, what we would do with the business, we got very clear around the what is it we care about, and thinking about the journey we'd been on with the Tasting Sessions, and then SMITH, thinking about the lessons, the feelings, the experiences we had both had in our professional lives. And really, what we boiled it down to was, we had to change the mix of who was running our global organisations if it was going to change. And, we felt that starting with women was a really good place to start. But to do that, we had to change the experience that women were having in their careers, to actually help them accelerate through. So, not that this, all of this data existed at the time, but we know for example, you know, gender pay gaps exist because, women don't progress at the same rate as men. And, we also know they're not leaving just to have babies. So, we looked at ways in which we could change their experience, and, we decided to focus in on mentoring, purely because, and this was kind of the, the early birth of WERKIN, moving from SMITH to WERKIN, we focused on mentoring because we wanted a pretty simple concept that people could wrap their heads around. We didn't want to be too esoteric, we didn't

want it to feel like, hey, we can change the world, all this. It was like, you know what a mentoring is; you probably already have a mentor; you probably already have mentoring programmes in your organisation. But it's now time to look at doing them differently. So, you know, the fundamental belief is, if you do the same thing, you get the same results. So, we really talked to organisations to encourage them to do their programmes in a different way, to get different results. Because unless we have different results, we are not going to fundamentally address the gender pay gap. We're not going to change somebody's career.

[33:08]

So, WERKIN is also an app.

Yes.

So how does the app work?

How does it work? So, really what we built was a technology platform which is delivered via an app, and we did that with an iPhone app at first, because we believed that a native experience would be a good experience, and, you know, we were purists when we started this journey; that has now changed. Just as we look at multi-device, multi-channel. But essentially our starting point...

You became inclusive in technology as well.

We... Well, yeah, I mean, and being inclusive in the techie view, sometimes is about having cost constraints, not around, you know, you want to open, but it's, it's the resource you had at that time. But also wanting to build something that works. So, the app has a very simple purpose, which is what the whole company has as purpose. Ultimately what it aims to do is help change who senior leaders and managers see, and then, what they do. So it's nudging and prompting and action. And action that they may not ordinarily have done for that individual. Now the thinking behind all of this is, is pretty scientific. We were also looking at a lot of the research around unconscious bias training for example not necessarily being effective. And this usually boils down to the fact that, you know, with training, yes, it's

important for awareness, but awareness doesn't necessarily drive behaviour change. So for us, we've always been looking at ways to drive behaviour change, because we know that is what makes the difference, not just learning about it. That's not to say that learning isn't important, and it's usually like, the first wave of kind of, an open door for a company to start thinking about doing this stuff. But when we thought about unconscious bias, we thought about ways in which we could nudge and prompt an action from a senior leader or manager which would change their relationship to that person from that underrepresented group. So essentially, getting them to then do that action could start to positively reinforce their neural pathways. And it really is that idea of doing which is quite radically different to just learning and trying to make meaning from learning when you haven't actually done something for an individual or your relationship to that data hasn't changed. So that is probably the most simple way to describe it. And also, just making it really easy to turn this idea of intention. I mean every company is espousing great, you know, diversity goals in marketing campaigns, but really, what we focused on is, how do you turn this intention into real action? Because people, most are well-meaning, and they want to get around to doing this stuff, but just, life doesn't allow you to sometimes, or you get busy. So with the tech, if you're nudging and prompting an action which *is* going to specifically help someone from one of these groups, it's then kind of manageable, measurable and scalable. We've got the data to say, actually this is happening, or it isn't happening.

[36:06]

Mhm. What do you think about the issue of being open versus hiding?

Mhm.

And, what about privacy? So, why should I share with my colleagues, my sexual orientation?

Mhm.

And, one thing is hiding, and another thing, I was like, I want to keep my life private. So...

Yeah.

What do you think?

I mean look, I think this is an individual choice. For me, I had always considered myself this, you know, fantastically open person, which I think allowed me to, you know, build great teams, and, I get fantastic outcomes, and, have a great energy around what we were creating in businesses. However, this position of open but private, for me that actually was, you know, a conflict. And I think, I, I struggled with it for a while. And I think also because, at the time I was working through this, I didn't feel like this idea of, women who identified as LGBT, I didn't feel like that was celebrated. My idea of success was not linked to it. I couldn't sort of, see it. So a lot of these issues are always your own.

[37:20]

A lot of things have changed over the years of course.

And they have. Yeah. And they have, and they really have. For me, when I actually worked through it, by the time we had launched WERKIN I was very clear that I wanted to be open and out in the world. Also because actually, if you aren't... I think it's a fine balance, but if you aren't, or if you are covering, you are hiding, people get a sense of that, and they, they might get a sense that you're hiding something that isn't actually your sexuality; it could be about, oh you're looking for a job, or something else is going on. And, they just get a sense that something's not right, which I don't think creates a great working environment. And, I mean I had always truly believed that, you should bring your whole self to, to work. You know, the reality is for me, it took me a little bit longer to get that last piece right, but in building kind of, my own company, it's been kind of at the heart of what we do, and being open and honest about that has been really liberating. And I feel really clear about who I am, why we're doing what we're doing, and, and the impact we want to create. And actually, being a person from one of the communities that we want to help change, you know, it obviously makes sense. I mean looking at it now, it's like, oh my God, that's a no-brainer. I just think my, my journey wasn't completely starting with WERKIN. And... But now, I feel, yeah, complete freedom, you know.

[38:58]

Yes, also because the situation for many LGBT+ workers in the main[?][inaud] tech industry can be trying, a lot of bullying is happening still nowadays. And, like, there's a report, like, from 2017 by the [inaud] Centre for Social Impact [inaud], 24 per cent of LGBT+ people had experienced public humiliation or embarrassment, and 64 per cent of LGBT employees who were bullied said the experience contribute to their decision to leave the field.

Mhm.

So I think tech in particular is quite, like, white, male, has been for a long time.

Yes. And straight.

So, this is also why it's important to fill this gap, which is not like just, salary gap.

No.

But it's really like, to think about work environments in a different way.

Yeah, and I think, look, too, the reality is, what that stems from is just, firstly you don't have a diverse mix, which, you know, people don't feel as included if they can't see versions of themselves in an organisation.

And if you don't feel included, you abandon the field. [laughs]

Yeah.

It's like a rocky road.

It is. And like, behaviour doesn't change. You know, so essentially, the tech industry is under huge scrutiny right now, and I think companies are having honest looks at what's really happening. And, and I don't think this is necessarily all about

harassment either. It's actually about building, you know, an optimum place for your people to come to work and deliver great results and feel really good. So it's not, it's not necessarily, you know, yes there's been, really, negativity around the bullying, and, and harassment, and all those cases are very well-documented; it's essentially just, people feeling comfortable in an environment as well, which, which takes a mix of individuals to get that right.

[40:58]

What do you think is the first step that a business should take to achieve this inclusiveness?

Well, from a staff perspective, you really have to be thinking about it in the very early days, because, even if you're small, say you're in that five to ten range, that is the, the core of the business that's going to create the ongoing culture. So, you need to be thinking about it from day one. And I think a really smart way to think about it is, well actually, you're probably building a product for a range of customers, and if you want to be able to connect with a range of customers, you probably should be able to have a range of people from your team who are able to input and help you create that. And, and when I say that too, I don't just mean the developers, I mean, every role plays to that.

[41:44]

Can you make us an example of like, some strategies that you put into practice at work?

At work and... Well look, we are a smaller company, and, I guess for us we've done a mix of things. So we've, we've tried recruiters, we've tried headhunters, but our biggest and most successful strategy, in attracting and retaining a fabulous diverse mix of individuals who are well suited and well skilled, has really been about, proactively being out in the world, talking about what we care about, and why are we doing what we do. And I think it's that authenticity that connects with other people who care about that. So we are very values-led, and, by the simple fact that's been more public for us in the last couple of years, we're now attracting the right candidates through to us, and sort of, running a very different approach to how we,

how we recruit. We don't, we're not advertising in traditional places; we're advertising on Instagram for example. And, that's striking a chord. But it's striking a chord because, people are looking for that. I had a fantastic quote the other day, not that I'm massively into quotes, because it's also revealing, it's, the quote says, you know, 'The thing that you are looking for is also looking for you.' And I think that actually is really powerful, because, if, if you can be open about what it is you are, and, you know, what your company's about, and that's sending a really powerful message to market, that will connect with individuals to come and help you create change. So we're, we are, and have been, building from the ground up, so, we always need those change makers working with us. But I think any company can learn from that, because that's about, congruency, essentially, and, it is the most powerful tool. And I learnt that, this idea of congruency, very early on in my career, that when you actually properly are mission-led, the congruency piece is so important, you know. I think for us, people can't just be on the journey to make money. They're got to believe that we're doing this to create fundamental change.

[43:58]

And, WERKIN is expanding, because, last year, in 2018, you opened up an office in Hong Kong. So what's coming next?

So, for us in 2019 the focus is really on North American growth. So, yes, Asia is, is interesting. It's pretty early days for us there. But, the client opportunities for us are really coming out of North America. So for us it's about, further establishing our presence in both New York and San Francisco, sharing with the market what we've been doing with clients there, and that will take up...

You already work there with...?

We do. Yeah.

So, right, you have some kind of base.

So we had a good, we had a good network, and that's then about converting that networking to opportunities of both networks and also large companies who are using

WERKIN technology. So that is the focus. Also for me personally, I'll be spending a lot of time between two countries, which is, you know, founder life, to help make a little bit more of an impact.

[45:04]

And you also have a podcast called WERKIN with...

Yes.

So, where did the idea come from?

So, I, in 2017 I did a TED talk on how to hack the workplace, and, I obviously, talking to a lot of leaders all the time, and also, like yourself probably, constantly reading, you know, what's happening in the market. But I wanted to do a set of interviews to really check a number of my theories on what was happening, and how to best create change. And so that, that essentially is why I started the podcast series. The content was really good, and, we decided to shape that into an ongoing podcast series which is the WERKIN with... series. So it's, you know, WERKIN with... Brenda Trenowden, who's the chair of the 30% Club, WERKIN with..., whoever. Really because actually we wanted to share these insights with, with everyone. And, you know, we are in the business of marketing, and, marketing mentoring. So, it was about getting those mentoring, learnings out to a broader population. So, you mightn't be able to access one of those C-levels normally, but you can hear in their own words what their journey's been like. And then hopefully, anyone can take something from those, those interviews and apply it to their life.

[46:27]

And how do you chose your interviewees?

Well it's usually a mix of people who are demonstrating that they're doing something different. So it may be a big traditional company, but they're known for doing something a little bit differently, and we want to unpick that. It's also people at the beginning of their career journey as well, who are maybe looking at a new industry segment. I spoke to a fantastic woman this week actually who is looking at a new

economic model around cannabis, and also looking at, how do they plough cannabis profits back into the communities who have been affected by it, now that it's legalised in America? And I think, sharing those stories and thinking about new models and new ways of doing things is exciting, whatever the industry is. So, we look for difference, but we also look for kind of, some of the big names too, because people know what, know who the organisation is, and we look to kind of, put a person to it essentially as well.

[47:31]

OK. So, quoting you a typical question in your podcast. [both laugh] What is your superpower?

Oh. And, I just need to think about this a little bit. I mean I think, I think probably the biggest one is, I am extremely tenacious, and, and high energy, and driven by, our focus at WERKIN. And, because I care so deeply about this, it's what gets me out of bed, and, the mission and myself, I can't, it's one and the same, and, this idea of, you know, changing the mix of who's running our organisations and our global organisations, the reason why it's so important to me is, I fundamentally believe that if we can do that, it will impact on political, economic and social change. And that is key. I mean so much is driven through business. I, I've grown up with it, I know the importance of it. I don't think it's the enemy. I think we can help shape it, and shape it to be a better version of itself. And being a naturally kind of highly motivated, optimistic person, I mean I guess that, that keeps kind of, the hope component quite fuelled, and, I have sort of, this underlying tenaciousness that kind of just drives me through at, at kind of, all costs. And, yeah, I'd say that's probably what it is.

[49:01]

Thank you. So you are an ambassador of LB Women. Can you tell us a little bit more about your activity with LB Women?

Sure. LB Women's a relatively new concept, started in the last two years. And really the idea there was about actually, raising up the profile of LB women, lesbian, bisexual women, and also now trans, to celebrate it, and to recognise it. And I think the reason why it resonated with me is, particularly after my own journey and not

being able to point to it or find where this was, it's just so important to have those clear role models. They don't have to be your friends. They don't have to be people you see every day. But you've got to know it's possible, and you've got to see it can happen in any industry, whether you are in something non-corporate or not, and that people are living successful lives doing it. So that, that really is kind of, at the heart of it. And then there's some live events as well.

So how does it really work? Like, you are asked by someone to be helped, or...?

Yes. So, there's a bit of that. So essentially, the component moment is being sort of, around visibility first. So there's an area where women can go and actually, put their profile there, and saying, 'Hey, I'm an LB woman. Give me a shout if you need something.' So, my name is on there, and it links through to your LinkedIn profile. So all of a sudden, you know, there's a group of women there where, someone from the media or the press, or just someone at the beginning of their journey, could actually look at that and go, wow, actually, someone in my organisation is actually open and out about this. I'd love to have a conversation. Or, just feel comfort in knowing that they're not the only one. So, the first part has really been around, kind of, better visibility, essentially, and doing it in a way that doesn't mean you just have to rock up to a, an event, and network, but just be more visible using technologies more smartly. We... So at WERKIN we actually also provide the mentoring programme for LB Women as well, so that was something that was quite important to me to connect, support and develop women. So we do that with a focus on, with a UK focus, but we've also got a cohort run out New York as well. So we've done some work in America. And my role as an ambassador is just, I think being open and out in the world, however it probably works a little bit more like a, like a, a sort of, a board member or a steer co-member, to help drive it. It's essentially, really aimed at being a little bit more of a movement than sort of, a business per se, and, and really looking at that better visibility, and celebrating the success of these fabulous women who happen to be LGBT. So, that's really the premise, doing more of that stuff, and, you know, doing some awesome live things as well where you can connect these people, but it's not necessarily just about having to turn up to an event; it's about being something a little bit broader.

[52:05]

So, 2017 and 2018 were two years full of prizes for you, nominations. So what is the biggest acknowledgement that you have received?

Look, I think we've had, we've had a good, a good few years, and that is not just because of me; that's also the business, and that's the work Ange has been leading on the product. And it's really ranged from everything from being, you know, a disruptor through to being seen as a, you know, champion for women. And I think, probably getting the, the champion award for the TechWomen awards was, was kind of key as kind of, being seen as a real leader in that space, and has led to a lot of other great opportunities. As was being really properly acknowledged by industry publications as a thought leader in this space for, you know, being a workplace advocate and creating real change. I mean, in what we do, we don't just want to be theory-based; we want to have the results to say, actually, this is how we make an impact. But, sometimes all of this stuff is, horse and cart too. So, being acknowledged as the thought leader or the leaders in diversity tech for the UK, I mean, all of that stuff is really important, so that we can create change, and companies do want to continue to work with us, and new companies want to come on board, because they feel confident that we can, we can actually deliver what they need.

[53:34]

So... Another issue about, like, new technologies, is like, AI.

Mhm.

Because, there is a real need for women to be designing, developing themselves, because, we, we have seen that AI can be very biased.

Yes.

So can you tell us more about this?

So, yes, we absolutely agree, we're very aware of the issues with inherent bias built into any, any AI. This is a new area that we are moving into. We tend to think more

about the idea of augmented intelligence versus artificial intelligence, purely because, artificial intelligence is about replacing human behaviour, or the human task. With augmented intelligence, we're about helping that task change, and get a different outcome, which why everything we do leans more towards that anyway. With regard to the inherent bias, at any point we are making sure there's a gender mix at least involved in anything that is dealing with those components. And a lot of our product too was always designed with things like gender in mind, and then, we've moved into other areas essentially of, of diversity, purely because we knew there were differences in how people did things, based on who they were, or the time that they had available, and how they wanted to connect. So, that thinking has always been at the forefront of our business, and our product design.

[55:12]

So what do you think are the biggest challenges and issues related to IT for the next five years?

Five years. Well I mean I think this stuff is all going to move pretty fast. If anything, it's actually, we're in an interesting sort of, almost power struggle right now around how we can use technology with, basically regulations that are coming in around data. The race to become, you know, the AI hubs around the world, which, I'm not truly sure who's winning at the moment. There's been a lot of investment, and there's a lot of thinking, and there's a lot of academic work; there's been purchases that are made of some innovative companies. But also, what's interesting is, a lot of these newer companies have been acquired. So a lot of talent has already rolled back into the big behemoths. So, I think it's, it's interesting around making sure that we are continuing to push new ideas here, and that's probably not going to come out of just kind of, the largest technology companies; it's the, it's the, it's the academics, it's the upstarts. But if they've all been acquired, we've got a bit of a talent issue as well around, where do we tap into that, and how do we get some different thinking around what it is we want to do, what's the problem we want to solve, rather than the biggest commercial opportunity. And I think, the opportunities are around using technology now, and to like, to deal with things like climate change. You know, there are some pretty horrific, you know, statistics out there around how much time we've actually got left, and that is going to require a fundamental shift in consciousness, but also in a

commitment and a, and a want to do something differently. I think the technology is there; we have to refocus on where we invest as governments, and, the problems we want to solve as, as entrepreneurs.

[57:13]

How do you think IT will impact society in the next years?

Well, the good side of it is, you know, better automation, essentially taking a lot of admin away. Changing and simplifying the way we interact with governments. You know, all of that stuff should be better, faster, easier. It won't even necessarily be mobile first. It'll, it'll actually be so organic to our, to our life and how we do things. So I think that is, that is coming quickly. Because with that data and that data transparency, you can be smarter and save money as well. So there's, you know, there's some other challenges that, that exist around that. But essentially I think we'll get streamlined as a society. I hope what that then allows us to do is, free up our intellect to focus on some of the really big things that are affecting our future. So, I've already spoken about climate change, but just, how we want to be as a society.

[58:17]

Do you think there will be also negatives?

Oh, look, I think, with this stuff there's always negative. You know, with data transparency comes fairness and equality. So, you know, it's hard to predict all of that, but it's also, as people get a sense around, you know, what is going to be done with that data. So for example, if you know everything about me and my, what my predicament might be at a later point from a health perspective. If I'm, if I've got genetic markers around particular diseases, am I then actually at risk of being discriminated against with insurance policies? So I think, that's, that's where it's going, and they're the big risks. And, I think from a pure human rights, equality standpoint, they will be the things that will probably be challenging around the next level of discrimination, compared to, say, identification. It's like, well I do have identification, but I've also got these markers which make me who I am. And now I'm being discriminated against. So, I think, because of that, that whole diversity conversation will probably change, because they're a marker that you would have,

and diversity is being put on to you, not necessarily by choice, they're things that you can't change. So, I think, movements around that will be, I think they will naturally happen. Because companies need to make money. And that's, you know, that's how business essentially works. But, that will be the pushback from a human rights perspective on making sure things are there, equal, and transparent. But with transparency hopefully we can be at the forefront of that as well.

Maybe there will be a different society too.

Maybe, yeah, maybe it'll be completely different, you know. The economic structure will change. It's changed before. And, you know, do we go back to just caring about humans creating the family environment, each other, you know, survival, sharing, rather than winning?

[1:00:18]

So finally, can I ask you what advice you would give to someone entering the tech business today?

So, I think depending on how you're entering, are you entering as a founder or are you entering as a, an employee, or an early stage employee. The reality is, we need everyone involved in tech. And every company is a tech company now anyway. So I would say to anyone, you don't have to be a developer to be moving into tech; you could be moving into a range of areas within the business of technology. So, firstly, nothing's off the table. Secondly, it is worth developing sometime an understanding of coding, for sure, without a doubt. You don't need to be a coder, but understanding how it works, knowing what the languages are, knowing what they're used for. Giving you just a bit of a sense around how the space works, is helpful. It's not the end of the world if you don't, but if you have time and capacity, it's worthwhile developing that skill, just your understanding and your learning. And thirdly, if you do want to be a founder, have a go. I mean, it's not easy. It's an epic ride. You need to make sure you have an ecosystem that can support you. But you also need to be not distracted by any ecosystem and really focused on the thing that you want to do. And it's OK if it's not for you as well. I mean I think there's been a, there's been a lot of hype around being a founder, with start-up labs and various things. And that's

great, and that support is fabulous, but, it truly isn't for everyone. You might be the best sort of person who can be a 2IC to a founder, because it's, you know, there's different pressures. It's a, it's a different, it's a different gig. But, if you really want to do it, I would encourage you to do it. And it's really OK if it's not for you to step away. And I think in life, it's always about owning your journey, and some things you get right, some things aren't a fit, and changing your situation is in your control. You don't have to wait till it, you know, changes you. And if you feel that that environment is not right for you, it's fine to step out, however that looks. And that's where I think there's real power in, kind of fulfilment essentially.

[1:02:44]

Would you like to give special advice to women?

[laughs] It's not even special advice. I think, it's exactly the same, and, with, with one small change. What we know, and still what I've continued to see between men and women who have even worked with us, is, there's a tendency to wait to do something until it, there's, I don't know, there's a sense of actually, it's perfect, or I've done this thing and I can tick every box. I think you need to throw that out. And you just need to have a go at it. Whatever it is. Because no one really ever knows 100 per cent of what they're doing. You know, everyone is winging it in some way, or... You know, even the way we think about hiring, it's, it's about, aptitude and attitude. And that's not about having twenty skills. So, you should never feel that actually... And even just because I said that thing before about having some understanding of coding, even if you have no understanding, that doesn't mean you shouldn't go for something. Because you will learn stuff on the job. But don't wait till it's perfect, or don't wait till you can tick all these boxes. Just, get in there and have a go. And, and see where it goes from there. And be confident in what you're bringing to the table anyway, because, I mean I truly believe all skills are translatable, and that's why attitude and aptitude are so important.

[1:04:05]

And, special advice to LGBT+?

Well, I think, I think there's power in being open about that. Because you can also be a role model to other people in the organisation, or just part of the community and feel like there's a sense of support. So, you know, with LGBT+ too, it's not always something that's visible in how someone presents. But actually, if other even early stage LGBT employees know that you are also there with them, there's that sense of support and community inside the organisation. So, I always encourage openness. I think it's actually been a, a fundamental change in my life. It's only brought happiness. It's only been a good thing for the business that I am building, and, I'd encourage everyone to live their truth.

[1:04:54]

And finally, what advice would you give to BAME?

BAME? I mean look, I think it's the same as all, all groups where, we're doing a lot of stuff in this space as well, but, all of the advice I've just shared is the same. And, and it's the same with the role model piece, it's extremely important for BAME, for individuals to see people of colour in the organisation, and feel that that's a good thing, and also that it's celebrated, to feel like there is support in place for them to progress. And also, just change the conversation around what opportunities look like. And, again, it's, go for it. It doesn't have to be perfect. It's about stepping out in the world, it's about knowing you can do very different things. And I, it's the same advice for all groups, and, we need you here, you're, you know, powerful consumers, you have a seat at the table to be able to share your advice, your thoughts, to better connect with consumers that are, you know, similar to you. And that's hugely valuable to an organisation. So, lead with the value, the value you can bring, because there is always value you can bring, and difference actually results in innovation and in turn profit, which companies love.

Thank you Hayley. It's been a real pleasure talking to you today.

Thank you very much.

[End of Interview]