

Growing is the game, entrepreneurship is the name

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Speaker 1: Tech Reimagined, redefining the relationship between people and technology. Brought to you by Endava. This is Tech Reimagined.

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Bradley Howard: Hello, and welcome back to Tech Reimagined. I'm Bradley Howard, and I'm glad to welcome you to the latest episode of our show. We're now full steam into season three, in which we explore how technology is influencing the fabric of our society, how we live, the way we work, and how we do business. Follow us on your favorite podcast platform to learn more from our visionary guests.

Speaking of visionary guests, it's such a great opportunity to be able to introduce you today to Kelly Baynes, founder of the Lemon Quarters and Nurture Network community, a dedicated and hardworking entrepreneur with a knack for refreshingly created projects that help small leaders grow their audience of business. Hello, Kelly, and welcome to the show. How are you today?

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Kelly Baynes: Hi, Bradley. Thanks so much. I'm delighted to be here. Very, very pleased to be jumping into, I think what's going to be a really interesting conversation.

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Bradley Howard: Certainly hope so. Can you introduce us to your audience, and also tell us a bit more about your projects, Lemon Quarters and Nurture Network?

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Kelly Baynes: Sure, of course. Yeah, so a little bit of a background as my pre-entrepreneur days was really at that crossroads I think between where sales and working meet, I think better known as media sales. I started real life as it were as a sales exec for Guardian Jobs, back when the online recruitment industry was really just taking off. It was a great introduction to the world of media sales, and the world of serious and maybe sometimes not so serious work.

Then from there, I moved into display advertising, so what was traditionally magazine sales, and eventually we end up looking after the commercial portfolio of a membership body for accountants and all that entails, so events, sponsorship, content advertising. That really opened me up to the importance of content, and why storytelling matters to an audience when it comes to sales, and also when it comes to marketing.

From there, that's where I met my business partner and co-founder, Mary Claire. At the time, our clients were mainly tech vendors, the SaaS tie, the accounting software, and they really focused their messaging on why their product was the best, why it was the best ever. Product demos were a king, and it was really clear from the audience side that it was just boring, boring, boring. Lemon Quarters, which is a content marketing agency work, we work really hard with our clients to help refocus their thinking on being a more about the audience, who are they as people, what's troubling them in their jobs, in their actual lives as well, and why you as a client or why you should be worthy of their time.

Lemon Quarters, we're coming up to our fifth birthday. We'll be five in May. Back in our inception, 2017, 2018, content marketing and that building an affinity or a relationship or a bond with your audience, it was still maybe a little bit more left field, particularly in B2B

marketing, but we saw there was definitely a place for that evolution to be more people led. B2B, it's becoming a little bit less stuffy, a little bit more like B2C, business to consumer.

Then there was definitely a place in the world for Lemon Quarters to help our clients, and really put their audience first when it comes to building content, and using events to get to know your prospects, and help find what we call a business voice when it comes to issues that matter to us as people, not just what businesses care about. Things like social injustices, and the wake of Black Lives Matter, diversity in all its kind, and sustainability.

Then from there, our second labor of love was born, which is Nurture Network. Nurture Network is a networking community for women across all regions and industries and job levels to come together, to really learn from, inspire each other, help each other, laugh with each other, through things like monthly round tables. We have a podcast in a newsletter. It's been really exciting and gratifying to see both Lemon Quarters and also Nurture Network grow so quickly and organically, just really inspires us to keep going.

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Bradley Howard: Does Nurture Network then feed into Lemon Quarters? Do you use those people for your content, or is it separate?

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Kelly Baynes: I think there's a natural feed in more because we operate in the same world. It's the same people are involved in both projects. From a crossover point of view, we try to keep them separate enough. I think for Nurture Network, it's really about ensuring we are helping our members connect with each other.

We use similar, I suppose, methods to promote Nurture Network as we would if we were helping our clients through Lemon Quarters. In a way, nurture Network success is based on the methods of Lemon Quarters, which is a nice little bit of symmetry.

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Bradley Howard: Definitely. Well, welcome to the show. Today, we're going to be discussing the more entrepreneurial nature of your work, and any advice that you can share with our audience. Can you start by talking to us about some of your favorite projects that you've worked on so far?

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Kelly Baynes: Yeah, of course. I think with Lemon Quarters, one of the projects that we did last year around net zero and sustainability probably stands out, from both a professional point of view and also as a personal favorite project. We worked with our client, the British Business Bank, to help small businesses really become more at ease or more familiar with the steps that we'll all need to take towards becoming more net zero, more sustainable in what we do.

It was one of the larger projects that we've worked on. I think personally, as I said, I also learned a lot about what we can be doing and what we should be doing to make ourselves and our lives a lot more sustainable. Really, what we were tasked with was looking at what are the barriers for small businesses, but also what are the opportunities for small businesses to embrace net zero? We interviewed some great businesses. Some

really put sustainability and climate change and the climate crisis at the heart of what they're doing, not just as offering services, but also just as a part of their business model.

We interviewed the C- Cores, who are sustainable printers, and they spoke, which a lot of people would think printing's probably not a very sustainable business, but that's been really at the heart of how they have differentiated themselves, and also really see sustainability issues as something that is going to matter regardless of whether they're in business or not.

We also interviewed Holly from Trash Planet. Trash Planet make sustainable trainers from recycled plastic. A really young business, only a couple of years old. Both founders are just out of university, and for them, it's taking on a really, really established industry, the likes of the Mikes and the (inaudible) of the world, and looking at their business model from the ground up, how can they have a product that is quality but also sustainable? It's really inspiring to hear how those businesses are striving and being sustainable through their businesses.

I think it's really important for them to ensure that they're not just doing good, but they're also winning new clients and customers through the sustainable journey that they're on. We ran a really interesting webinar with clients and businesses about making that change, and moving towards being more sustainable. We ran some great workshops with businesses, just to investigate, if you're in early stage business and you haven't looked at net zero before, you haven't looked at sustainability, what are the things that you can or should be doing?

Even to take Lemon Quarters as an example, we are a small remote first services business. On paper, there's probably small things that we could be doing, like not sharing PDFs, like using more online terms, like not printing paper. That will just be our small grain of sand in being more sustainable, but are things that we probably hadn't considered but will really make a difference. I think they're the things that are taken away from this project on a personal level,

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Bradley Howard: Do you find that as you help clients with their content and marketing strategy, you actually always work back towards their business plan?

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Kelly Baynes: Yes, I think you have to. I don't think they exist without each other. I think ultimately, you as a small business, as a large business, you go into to business to meet the needs of your customers. How you communicate that through your marketing, through your content, has to be based on your business plan, otherwise, you're just pulling in different directions.

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Bradley Howard: If somebody is listening to this podcast at the moment and thinking, I've thought about setting up a new business in the past, what advice would you give them in order to be brave and take that step forward?

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Kelly Baynes: The first one is, "Hey, let's just start. You got to start somewhere." I think as people, as business professionals, we often let perfection be the enemy. I think nothing's really more important than getting your ideas out there in front of the people who will be your potential customers, people who don't know you, basically, people who aren't family and genetically predisposed to be kind to you.

I think there's a tech mantra, is it fail, fail quickly, fail better. It comes from Samuel Becker quote, but reality really is that best teacher. We learn so much more from our mistakes, or the things that we don't do well, or the things we can improve on much more than any success we might have. Really, how can you improve if you don't start?

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Bradley Howard: Any other top tips?

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Kelly Baynes: I think from entrepreneurship, it's find a tribe. Find people who can push you and help you on your journey. Entrepreneurship, business ownership, it can be a really lonely place. I think finding like-minded people who are going to support you on your journey, who have been able to walk in your shoes, will give you that inspiration, that push, and that incentive to keep going when things get hard and the to-do lists gets too long to keep on top of.

I think also line to that is really that try to keep the curiosity going. Ask questions, ask for feedback, want to know how and why things are working the way that they work. When we stop being curious, when we stop wanting to know why, we get a little bit stuck in the status quo. I think lastly, if I may, one more tip is just be kind to yourself. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

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Bradley Howard: What does that mean, be kind to yourself when you're trying to start up a new business?

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Kelly Baynes: I think we live in a world, particularly of social media, where there's a lot of people in the 4:00 AM crew. They get up at 4:00 AM and they work till midnight. I don't know if that actually exists in the real world. I think it's about being able to say to yourself, "Yes, it's time to turn the laptop off. Yes, I deserve that break. Yes, go out to the park. Yes, take time," because the work will still be there. It's very much about being as kind to yourself as you would to your friends.

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Bradley Howard: Do you have any other favorite success stories of other small businesses that have taken off that you aspire to, or often quote?

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Kelly Baynes: Well, we've been really lucky with Nurture Network, that we meet, in particular in Nurture Network, we meet some fantastic businesses who are doing some really, really cutting edge and innovative things. I think of some of the businesses who've joined us in our round tables, we had Cogni Health, who are a med tech startup in Scotland. They provide digital solutions to help improve the experience of carers who are living with people who are going through dementia and Alzheimer's. They offer things like tailored support or advice on care decisions and resources.

The founders, it's a very small business, there's only a few people in it, Puja, she's been really about putting patients and also their carers at the heart of what is a tech solution, but it's also quite a lonely and underserved community, being a carer is. It's a very difficult and lonely place. Having that community through Cogni Health, it's a really rewarding business to be involved in.

Another client of ours, actually, who I've loved working with is Culture Consultancy. They are a culture consultancy, as the name might suggest, and they help larger corporates

working on how you build and foster and maintain a cohesive working culture. Through their work, they've created a leadership program, which is aimed at getting more women into senior roles. Their approach has been really refreshingly different.

We worked with them on some work through Nurture Network about how you can help build inclusive cultures where everybody can thrive, starting from the ground up, looking at what barriers might exist throughout an organization, to building an inclusive culture, and really putting the work in to create sustainable change throughout an organization, rather than it just being yet another mentoring program for women into leadership without addressing any systemic or ingrained biases within business.

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Bradley Howard: That's interesting, because when I looked at your website before this podcast, I saw them as a client. I started following them and looking up them in a bit more details. Interesting that you called that out as an example. There's clearly some financial uncertainty ahead at the moment, certainly in 2023. How do you think that's going to affect small businesses?

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Kelly Baynes: I think we're living at the maximum of the only certainty is change. So far, the 2020s haven't really been kind to us as it from change to change, but I think the resilience and the agility of particularly small business is always a wonder to behold. I think inevitably, we're going to see that there are going to be businesses who haven't been able to make sum that up. Behind every business, it's an enormous personal cost and personal loss when businesses don't make through.

There's some great help out there. The Federation of Small Businesses have been working with businesses around things like the cost of energy. They've done some surveys with their members, and I think they've identified something like 96% of small businesses are really concerned about rising energy prices. There are some very serious challenges that we are facing. I think we've also seen that there's some great adaptation and flexibility, particularly in small businesses to adapt to what increasingly is the new normals, rather than just the new normal.

British Business Bank and others have done some great content around building business resilience when it comes to things like streamlining costs, or looking at innovation or growth as ways to, if you like, weather the storm. I think it also links back to that earlier statement about being kind to ourselves. We are all going through and living through a time of change. It is important that we look after our own physical and mental health through it.

I think when you look at, there's been some great examples of pivots throughout the business world. Netflix was a DVD to order business, really pivoted to move to the giant streaming it is today. Then there's those on the reverse side, if you like, the likes of Blockbuster, who even as a huge business, just didn't quite get there. I think there is a lot of change, and it's how we adapt to, in a sense, rolling with the punches that will get us through there.

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Bradley Howard: Do you have any practical top tips for other small businesses that are looking ahead at the moment and thinking, "I'm not quite sure ..."

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Kelly Baynes: Yeah, for me, it's keep calm. We're in for a bumpy ride. I think the business world and I think the world at large, we've been given a bit of a ringside seat, haven't we, at how making decisions in haste has gone over at Twitter. It's really about focusing

on making sound business decisions, looking at the data, holding discussions with all stakeholders, and include customers and employees here.

I think a nice little anecdote is the McDonald's Happy Meal. That came from an employee. Now, three million of those are sold every day. Really reflecting and making decisions with the interest of the long term success is keeping calm and possibly not running a Twitter poll. I think I align to that it's really about staying true to the values and original aims and business plan that brought you success in the first place. There's much more than luck and hard work that gets us success in the first place. Looking back to the reasons why you got in there in the first place is very grounding.

Bradley, I think I'd be a bit remiss if speaking to you on this podcast, not to emphasize the importance of finding tech solutions to help streamline businesses, reduce long-term costs, and free up employee time for really interesting work. There's some fab tools, actually, there's a Canadian bank called DBC that have a digital maturity assessment, which is a short survey, it's about six minutes long or so, for small businesses to assess the level of digitalization.

It compares you with your peers, and identifies areas that you might wish to focus on. Those are some of the facilities I think that will help small business in particular look at weathering the coming storms.

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Bradley Howard: Definitely. If anyone is listening to this as a small business and sits there at nine o'clock at night, keying bits of information from one system to the other, or keying in their receipts or something, there was definitely a technology solution to handle that. Kelly, if we go back in time, what advice would you give your younger self?

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Kelly Baynes: I think my mantra of it's not a sprint, it is a marathon. I think we're all really, really guilty, myself included, of spectator watching success of others, that their social media profile says that they're doing this, that, or another. I think success is not an overnight achievement. To say to my younger self, you'll get there. Don't fret, and train for that marathon instead.

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Bradley Howard: Do you read business books?

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Kelly Baynes: I try to. Yeah. As part of Nurture Network, we run a monthly podcast, and as a little icebreaker, I always ask to the attendees to share a book or a podcast, or something that we wrote that they've loved and they want to share with everyone. As a result, I have a list of books that I'd love to read and have been recommended. Then I struggle to find out which one to prioritize. There's a very, very tall stack of books on my nightstand, of which I've maybe read two pages and then don't quite get picked up again.

Actually, some books that I love around business books are actually those that maybe aren't obviously business books. I recently read a book called Agent Sonya, it's by Ben McIntyre. It's the biography of Germans Jewish spy who spied for the Soviets in the thirties and forties. She went to China, she spied in Switzerland, and she spied in the UK. She was a mother of three, and she lived this really fascinating life of not so much separate lives, but very much meshed up when her spying and her life as a mother was really, really combined.

It was a really fascinating study and what drives somebody to give their everything for a cause. In particular, she was really constantly underestimated by society, because they saw her as a mother, as a woman, in a time of great upheaval during the war, during

(natyism) , and after. Yeah, that really contributed so much to her success as a spy as being underestimated.

Those are the types of things that it's not quite a business book, but it has key lessons for us, I think, to use our perceived weaknesses as our strengths.

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Bradley Howard: Wow. I wasn't expecting that answer whatsoever. Final question is that we usually release each of our episodes on a Thursday, so what does the average Thursday look like for you? I should probably make it very clear to the audience that we're actually recording this on a Friday morning. What did yesterday look like, for example, to you?

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Kelly Baynes: I don't know. Typical days in the world of entrepreneurship don't really exist. I think every Thursday's different, but I live in Madrid, but I work UK hours, so most of our clients are based in the UK. My day starts with the school run, and then a bit of podcast time for the walk home. Then typical Thursdays, in the mornings, it's a lot of client delivery work and following up with prospects, conversations. My current focus, outside of the day job, if you like, is around looking at building up our tech platform for Nurture Network.

At the moment, I'm doing a lot of research into what are the options around building a community on a tech platform, and how we future-proof the community and really ensure that there's a bit of a human touch there? For me, it really has me a little bit out of my comfort zone I love and hate at the same time. It's great, because the neurons are going, you're learning something new, but it's a slow learning curve. I want to get there fast. That's the hate element.

I think there's a lot of options out there. Sometimes, the overwhelm of options can be quite paralyzing too. Yeah, typical Thursdays don't really exist in the world of an entrepreneur.

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Bradley Howard: What time did you finish work yesterday?

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Kelly Baynes: Not too bad, actually. It was about seven.

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Bradley Howard: Right, okay. How did you end up in Madrid?

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Kelly Baynes: My husband's from here. We lived in London and then we came here actually just a week before the pandemic started, which was interesting timing, to say the least. I went to university here, so we met in a nightclub, actually. Yeah. London's great, but once you start having kids, it can be a bit of a juggle. Madrid is just a better place.

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Bradley Howard: Well, that was so insightful. Thank you so much, Kelly, for showing what it's like through the lens of an entrepreneur. If anyone wants to get in contact with you, what's the best way for them to do so?

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Kelly Baynes: LinkedIn at Kelly Baynes, or LemonQuarters.com.



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Bradley Howard: Okay. Well, thanks very much. We'll try and put that in the show notes as well. Thanks, Kelly, again. I'm Bradley Howard. Until the next week, please don't forget to share and subscribe to the latest podcast release.