WHAT THEY SAID EP 7 - Vicky

**Sammy Albon:** [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to the What They Say podcast the influencer marketing podcast powered by Pretty Green that gives you all the inside goss and intel that you could possibly need around the creator economy. We're going from everything to do with influencers themselves and their day in, day out to brands and agencies navigating the space.

**Sammy Albon:** And today I'm thrilled to have with us,

**Vicky McGee:** Thanks for having me.

**Sammy Albon:** Welcome to the podcast. I've got a bio and I always read it out in front of the guests. So feel free to blush, but also correct me if I'm really wrong. But you've got a huge range of experience over the past five years, working in a variety of roles from talent management yourself to campaign management, to also being somewhat of an influencer, I would say on, on the side.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** But we really want to deep dive into all those different areas because I think you've got some really great, valuable insight into each of them. And we also want to focus on content houses.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** We'll get onto that in a moment. We'll get onto that. We'll get onto that in a moment. But how are you?

**Vicky McGee:** Yes, good, thank you.

**Sammy Albon:** [00:01:00] Good, good. Did you have far to come?

**Vicky McGee:** No, not far at all. Well, it's an hour for me. Not that bad. Commuter, you know, over here.

**Sammy Albon:** Seasoned Vicky, obviously you've done so much in this space, that we really wanted to delve into the different sort of facets of that. So you've gone agency side, you've gone brand side, You've created content yourself and you've also worked with influencers in the form of a content house.

**Sammy Albon:** Mm. Could you sort of tell us a bit about your experience over the years and get into each of those?

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah. So I kind of started in this space and it was. Quite a new space, I would say we had like kind of the Instagram, YouTube influencers, and I was at uni and I basically was interested in the space and just kind of started my own profile myself on Instagram.

**Vicky McGee:** And whenever people ask me, like, kind of, how did you get into the space? That's pretty much how I did it. So it was being on Instagram that I then built friendships through Instagram and through like influencers I [00:02:00] knew. And then one day I was literally like, At a girl's brunch with loads of influencers.

**Vicky McGee:** And someone said to me, like, does Anyone know anyone that wants to get into influencer marketing? And I was like, I do. And it kind of started from there. And then I just was the only person that kind of interfered for that job at the time. I worked as an influencer marketing exec at an agency and then just kind of built my career from there.

**Vicky McGee:** Jumped from different agencies at the start and then went in house because it seemed like a really interesting opportunity.

**Sammy Albon:** Is that very different if you've worked in agencies? Yes. Yeah. What's that like? Because obviously from an agency side you're looking after a variety of different brands. Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Probably multiple different hats doing different things, but when your brand side, how's that?

**Vicky McGee:** I think you're still doing multiple different hats, but it's more within the sense of I think influencer marketing has kind of grown so much. So we've got like content creators for social, we've got influencers, we've got affiliates, we've got UGC creators, like.

**Vicky McGee:** There still [00:03:00] is a lot of hats that you do in house at a brand, but I think you have a lot more, I know agencies, we also feel like we have a lot to do and we have a lot that we're scrutinized for, but I think in house you've also got that. So a lot of in house, especially if you're looking at like kind of scale up, start up companies, they're really hitting on that kind of ROI.

**Vicky McGee:** And where is my ROI in influence marketing? If not, I'm cutting back the budget. So that can be quite hard to navigate and to. Also sell into some brands, just brand awareness through influencer marketing, not just affiliate or not just ROI, you know, or conversion driven content or paid media. They don't really understand sometimes that brand awareness will also drive some conversions for you as well, but yeah, you need to have like an overall kind of influencer marketing strategy.

**Vicky McGee:** And I think. It's ever growing now and there's so many different sections to influencer marketing, but you have to have all of them almost [00:04:00] to really make sure your brand is out there and, and in people's faces and communicating the right message you want to communicate. So I, I mean, I wouldn't say for me, there wasn't a lot of difference because I still felt like I was just doing as much workload and there was just as much kind of.

**Vicky McGee:** scrutiny on my head and like looking at what I was doing on a day to day basis, but obviously an agency, you get to experience multiple different brands, which is amazing. You get to be across beauty.

**Sammy Albon:** It's exciting for the variety of things.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah, exactly. And you get to see like, okay, what are new or even find new brands and new products that you love in your personal life just because you've been working on campaigns with them, which I think is so nice.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. It feels like in. Whichever role you're doing, there's often been a lot of educating brands or other teams on the value of influencer. So some of them, of your roles have been creator facing others, influencer facing.

**Sammy Albon:** And I've seen you discuss this on LinkedIn. What is the [00:05:00] difference for you between influencer and content creator?

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah, I think we've got to a position now where there is a lot more of a defined difference. So for example, influencers, they're creating content for their audience. So it's very much geared to their audience. They know what they're talking about. They know what will work on their platform and they'll know how to work it for their audience.

**Vicky McGee:** And so they're creating it for their audience.

**Sammy Albon:** So I've seen you on LinkedIn, Talk about the difference between content creators and influencers. And I think this is for some of our other guests have also discussed this. And it feels like we've reached a space where there is a lot of more nuance in the creator economy where we have content creators who are people that are Have high production value and they really care about the quality of the content they're putting out there that perhaps sticks to a particular niche.

**Sammy Albon:** Whereas you have in my mind, and I'm happy for you to forgive me wrong, influencers are people that are in my mind, far more akin to people that perhaps have stumbled into content creation as a [00:06:00] result of reality TV or making content specifically that is. Slightly more self gratuitous or it's, it's more it's less topic driven and more just about them in person.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. So I feel like we are getting there. Mm. A client or, or brand has said we want creators, then we want influencers to do this. And I struggle with it because when not, I used to be a creator for about eight and a half years, and I would never have heard myself as an influencer because I think it makes you feel as though it felt a bit icky.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** At that time. Yeah. Now I think it's more like common language. But I think when you start talking about it at that level, in my mind brands are thinking UGC creators, because Even if you get down to platform level, I'd argue that anyone on YouTube is probably a content creator because of the higher quality production or the length of time it takes to make.

**Sammy Albon:** Would that therefore mean that people on snap are just influencers? Probably not because actually there's still content on there that is quite highly produced. So it's really complicated. Yeah,

**Vicky McGee:** it [00:07:00] is. And there's so many crossovers as well. Like, as I'm saying, I would say like, you know, you've got the likes of like, let's take GK Barry, for example.

**Vicky McGee:** Great. It also. content creation and great at influencing. So where do we kind of draw the line? Yeah, where do we draw the line? And also how do we communicate that to brands? Yeah. And how do we make them understand that there's all these different things going on and they can do both? And I think also you're getting that crossover with the UGC and influencers as well.

**Vicky McGee:** Quite a few influencers are moving to UGC and I think this is because of TikTok. Yeah. They're realizing actually if I'm more raw, I'm more authentic, it's gonna do better on a TikTok platform and on the algorithm. So I think there's so many different things, but all these influencers, all these content creators, UGC creators, they're all mixing and they're doing multiple different hats as well at the same time.

**Sammy Albon:** And it's like celebrities. Who tread that [00:08:00] influencer line, are less inclined to be more content creators, but more like traditional influencers, because it's who they are.

**Vicky McGee:** Well, I was speaking to quite a big talent recently who I would say is a celebrity, but. Classifies himself as an influencer and says to me, like, I would be really, really worried about like the industry, where the industry is going and whether one day my following just goes.

**Vicky McGee:** And I said, but you're so much more than that. You've got hosting experience, you know, this person's come from, I'm a celeb, like, you know, so that, but they all still put themselves in this bracket of like, I'm a influencer, but. You're so much more than that. Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Significance of their name. Yeah.

**Vicky McGee:** And I think, you know, us as brands as well, we can do a job to bring them out of just influencer marketing as well.

**Vicky McGee:** Like how can we push their boundaries?

**Sammy Albon:** To bring them into mainstream. Yeah.

**Vicky McGee:** How can we put them into PR opportunities? I think brands are doing this a lot more as well, especially in the entertainment space. How do [00:09:00] we Get influencers into press junkets, for example, and we can push the boundaries of influencer marketing by doing that.

**Vicky McGee:** And we can also push the influencers out of their comfort zone by doing that. And that means that in the long run, they're going to have a lot more to do. And they're going to have a lot more to fall back on if anything happens.

**Sammy Albon:** Even then I'm thinking, well, actually for a content creator in a junket, because an influencer probably wouldn't be media trained or.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah,

**Vicky McGee:** but I've, I've put a lot of influencers but what I would classify as influencers into junkets and do you know what? They are a breath of fresh air for these talent because these

**Sammy Albon:** casts up the format. Yeah. It's the same old. Question and answer. It's more of a, can we do a challenge together? Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Can we do a game together? Yes. And

**Vicky McGee:** they come in and they come in with such high energy and they just build the cast up and the cast are like, great. And then there was a kind of one press junket that I did. And in between everyone coming in and out, in and out, the guy was like, Oh, who are these influences?

**Vicky McGee:** I need to look them up. And had never seen them before in [00:10:00] his life, which is, That's acceptable. But we're so interested in what we were doing. I had

**Sammy Albon:** a memorable experience. Yeah. Influencer. Yeah, exactly. That was a normal journalist interview. I feel like we could talk about influencer versus content creator versus what the hell are we calling this industry now?

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** But we did start talking about creator houses. So FaZe Clan, Hype House, Team 10. You've probably heard all of these names. Byte House, Wave House.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Probably heard all these names over the past. I'd say probably five years, five, six years. I think Team 10 was probably in its heyday. When Jake and Logan Paul was still part of it.

**Sammy Albon:** What are they? What is a content house? It's such

**Vicky McGee:** a good question. I don't think I'm the, like, I don't think anyone can explain this because it's very complicated. But from my experience, a content creator house is basically putting creators into a house. They live there. Depending on, you know, what you decide to do, it could be different.

**Vicky McGee:** They live there for three months or they live there until they're told to leave [00:11:00] or they do five days a week But it's very much wake up create content help each other out with content film their own content Post that on social channels and eat go to sleep repeat basically and it's like us.

**Sammy Albon:** It's like big brother

**Vicky McGee:** It is, it is basically Rig Brother, that's a good kind of analogy, except we're not recording them the whole time, even though we kind of are, but it's very structured in the day, but it's very much just a space to build a community, build a team, a bit like, let's take the Beta Squad for example, when they all live together build that real kind of Team, what I try to say, yeah, and yeah, and you build a good community from it as well because, you know, if we look at the likes of, let's say, take friends, for example, on the TV, everybody has their favorite character, right?

**Vicky McGee:** And they're all a group of friends, and we're obsessed with watching their life as it is. That's the same for a creator house, [00:12:00] you're putting a group of friends into a house, and you may have your own favorite creator or your own favorite influencer in there. And. You're just obsessed with watching their life.

**Vicky McGee:** And I think that's what it kind of is. It's taking that element of, let's say like, Gossip Girl, Friends, but making it in the social digital era.

**Sammy Albon:** It feels, so, and we were talking about this before we started recording. Obviously the whole principle of influence marketing is that it feels authentic.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Did, so, so, You worked behind the scenes on Wave House.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** And that was around 2021?

**Vicky McGee:** 2020 actually, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Peak lockdown. Yes. People were looking for new ways to be entertained. Yes. Did it land as well in the UK market versus, because in the US I think they're far more accustomed to it. We're talking about collab channels on YouTube, eight years ago, where they, they shared houses and they made content.

**Sammy Albon:** Did it land as well in the

**Vicky McGee:** UK

**Sammy Albon:** versus what they like in the US?

**Vicky McGee:** And I think for the UK market, it landed well less in the US markets, [00:13:00] for example, not so much, but the longevity of it did not work. And maybe that's because we trialed it in the UK market or we tried it too early because I think, you know, we were.

**Vicky McGee:** We did the wave house when it was about September time, 2020. I would say TikTok fully blew up as a platform in March, 2020. So brands were not spending. The only real people that were spending on the platform were apps and music clients. And. Then that means that you can't monetize this channel because even the whole TikTok creator fund wasn't a thing until like two months we were into the wave house.

**Vicky McGee:** So. I think it was too early for its time, but also it was working in the US. So why couldn't we do it in the UK? So it was a very questionable thing. I don't think the UK was [00:14:00] as ready for it as we expected. And I don't think the UK brands were spending on it as we expected. And that's why it didn't work kind of long term.

**Vicky McGee:** And it only kind of ran for six months. So. I think for the uk the audience loved it, but the brand side and the monetization of it didn't work. Not so

**Sammy Albon:** much. So can you talk us through what was your role? Yeah. There and like what, what was the day to day like?

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** And you said some of 'em lived there permanently.

**Sammy Albon:** Some of there for like five days a week. Were there contracts in place? Like, can we just get into the detail of that? I find it so alien. I'm really interested in it.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah. So I, so going back to the start, I was approached by my manager at the time and said creators have come to us and they've come with this concept of A house.

**Vicky McGee:** It's been done in the U. S. They're all friends. They've come to us and said, we want to do this. So my manager said to me, do you want to take it on? And I was 23 at the time. I was like, I will do [00:15:00] anything. I will throw myself into anything. I will take any challenge on. So I was like, yes, sure. I'll do it. Not knowing that we were going to be living there full time.

**Vicky McGee:** And when I say we, I was living there as well. So three months of my life, I lived with six creators in that house. We were originally going to live there fully. It got to the point where it was very hard to differentiate work and life. So we decided to go home at weekends just to differentiate that. Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** You live there. With these creators, and your role was in charge of helping them ideate content and shoot it.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes, so ideation, production, I was behind all the iPhone clips, they were teaching me the transitions, I have them, like, literally in the back, my back pocket now, I'm great at doing transitions I would, Well, I would do their food shopping.

**Vicky McGee:** I would do organize their PT. I would organize their chef coming I would organize every single [00:16:00] prop that came to the house and I when I say props I mean we had roller coasters in the background. I saw the Mario Kart.

I was like, this is next level. We

**Vicky McGee:** had Mario Kart. We had snakes coming to the house. We had an ice rink in the back garden We had roller coasters there like it was crazy and I had never done production before and I was doing a production job on a very low salary at the time And I was just finding my way.

**Vicky McGee:** I had no help There was the influencers and they were turning up they were doing their job. They were being in the content They were coming up with ideas with me as well But I was by myself doing all the fishing of how do I find a roller coaster? In the middle of nowhere where this house is

**Sammy Albon:** All of this is just So crazy.

**Sammy Albon:** I didn't expect it. Okay. So you lived in the house. Yeah. You are essentially a PA to them all.

**Vicky McGee:** Basically a mom. Production

**Sammy Albon:** manager. And then also creative strategy as well.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes. [00:17:00] How did you

**Sammy Albon:** feel?

**Vicky McGee:** At the time I just thought it was my job and I thought it was normal. Looking back on it now, it was not normal.

**Vicky McGee:** I was getting up at seven o'clock in the morning, working before the influencers got up and I was working until 10 o'clock at night. There was one night I waited up until two o'clock in the morning because a massive Christmas tree was being put up and the guys were late and they were taking forever to put it up and it was just I was just going to bed stressing.

**Vicky McGee:** I was dreaming about all the different videos we were doing and dreaming about if I was going to execute them because I hadn't got a reindeer for Christmas. But that is not normal and I think that's where, you know, when you're 23 years old and you're new, quite new to an industry at that time, you do what you've got to do and you're passionate about your job, but you don't realize where you're being overutilized and where you're kind of [00:18:00] being taken advantage of.

**Sammy Albon:** I feel like it would be useful explaining that the, the house was run by an agency.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes, it was run by an agency. But you were

**Sammy Albon:** approached by a group of friends. Yes. Who were influencers.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, so we.

**Vicky McGee:** No, so we managed two of the influencers already. So we had a talent management side of the agency and then they came to us with their friends and said, we've got this idea.

**Vicky McGee:** Would you be able to help us execute it? It was so new. We didn't know what we were doing, but. The point was that we wanted to then get brand deals out of that and therefore they would get a share of that money. So that was the point. So we footed all the money for everything. The house the production, everything like that.

**Sammy Albon:** Were there brand deals? There

**Vicky McGee:** were brand deals, but there weren't a lot.

**Sammy Albon:** Do you know how much was put into this house, this whole project?

**Vicky McGee:** I couldn't tell you exactly, [00:19:00] but I could tell you it was probably six figures.

**Sammy Albon:** Wow. So it's a big investment.

**Vicky McGee:** So if you look at the house itself, it was massive. It

**Sammy Albon:** was a mansion.

**Sammy Albon:** Yes. It was enormous.

**Vicky McGee:** We had acres of land. We. Like, we utilized that acres of land, but there was a swimming pool, there was a sauna, there was a gym, there was, obviously there was a PT and a chef coming, like, there was a lot of money invested into this And I, yeah, I just think it was too soon.

**Sammy Albon:** Crazy. This is actually crazy to me. I feel like in that time, so if we're looking at 2020, 2021, because it's the tail end of 2020, you said that's when TikTok had really democratised who could be an influencer. And the reason it was succeeding is because anyone could pick up a phone and make content.

**Sammy Albon:** Yes. So for me as a viewer, and I guess it's not something that would appeal to me, I'm struggling to contend with the idea of something so cultivated and like produced on platform where you normally have, I think the appeal of content creators for me is [00:20:00] that They're like me, they're like you. And so to see this experience is fascinating.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, and I did see some of the sentiment on the comments was not so positive. So how did you navigate that? And what was the impact on the influencers? Because obviously that's quite a lot of that's quite a lot to take on.

**Vicky McGee:** I think, you know, There was a massive impact on the influencers, but there was a massive impact on us as a group, and I think, you know, the influencers, they fronted it, they were the faces of it, but I think a lot of people don't realize I was there as well, and I was experiencing So much behind the

scenes.

Yeah,

**Vicky McGee:** I was experiencing everything they were experiencing. I think the major thing for us was We were getting millions of views. So

**Sammy Albon:** all organic or was there any paid?

**Vicky McGee:** All organic. So our first big video was 60 million views. It hit. And after that, it was like, how are we going to continue this? And how are we going to top it?

**Vicky McGee:** And we were from like [00:21:00] my managers and from the agency, we were getting pressure to be like, when is the next a million, if you don't hit a million, At least, then it's a bad video. A million is amazing to be guessing. A million views is amazing. But you find

**Sammy Albon:** a count that's under three months old.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes, so it was always, how are we going to top it?

**Vicky McGee:** How are we going to get better? And we felt like we needed that high production value to get better. It did take us whole on that one. Every single person in that house and I tried to do my best to think about how we could, you know, go against those things and how we could really stabilize their mental health.

**Vicky McGee:** We took on meditation at the time. I know like people might be saying, oh, meditation, but, you know, it was a time for us to take a break. And we did that once a week to take a break, all of us at the same time, and just kind of try not to think about anything. It still just got to the point, I mean, we had multiple breakdowns.

**Vicky McGee:** I had three mental breakdowns in three months. It was a [00:22:00] real testing time for all of us. And I think we all learned a lot about ourselves personally from that experience. But I personally would never put myself in that situation again.

**Sammy Albon:** I think that's most of the people we've spoken to so far on the impact of influencer being an influencer rather.

**Sammy Albon:** I've spoken about, you know, creative burnout is a

real,

**Sammy Albon:** Is a real thing that people face. Yeah. So you, you've definitely touched on that. It was interesting to see how The following on TikTok did not translate to YouTube

and Instagram in

**Sammy Albon:** the same way. I feel like that experience probably taught you a lot about cross platform strategies and building those channels out.

**Sammy Albon:** What do you think the reason, what was the content you were putting on the other channels distinctly different? Or was it the same content just being repurposed?

**Vicky McGee:** So it was different. Like on Instagram what we would put is we would put more kind of behind the scenes photos on the feed and we weren't really utilizing reels that much.

**Vicky McGee:** So we weren't like reposting the content onto reels. Just because I don't think [00:23:00] it would translate on Instagram I think. As you said, what we were doing was so high production value and it seemed very, like, unattainable at the time for, like, the audience to watch. I don't think it would have worked to put it on Instagram.

**Vicky McGee:** And we were trying to make Instagram more of a, like, behind the scenes content. YouTube, we were Trying to make more of a documentary of like talking about the things like mental health and how it's impacted the influences and what goes into everything we're doing. And it's not just a video that gets put out on TikTok.

**Vicky McGee:** There's so much more behind it. And we were trying to tell that story. But I think we were really coming from a TikTok space. The agency I was at was a TikTok agency. I'd learned a lot about TikTok in my time I had been there. And the creators. Some of them were more YouTube and some were TikTok, but the real kind of people that had the impact on the content were TikTok first.

**Vicky McGee:** So I think we all just had these TikTok minds and we [00:24:00] didn't know how to translate that. We had a production company come to us to help us try and grow the YouTube side of things and really utilize like the BTS and how, what goes into everything or gamify it a little bit. Like Beta squad or sidemen try and do more challenges like that, but it just wasn't translating as well.

**Sammy Albon:** Interesting.

**Vicky McGee:** And I can't, I honestly, I can't tell you why I know you asked me why, but I can't, I can't tell you why. And I think it's because we did have these TikTok heads. We were all just thinking TikTok, TikTok, TikTok. And that's where content houses really worked at the time was TikTok.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. I feel like it's kind of, my next question was around, I think TikTok itself but also content houses are often associated with short term success.

**Sammy Albon:** Are those influencers that were in the content wave house, are they still creating content? Are you still in touch? What's their situation now?

**Vicky McGee:** They are creating content. They're all doing really well. I can't [00:25:00] say any of them, you know, have dipped off. They're all amazing. And they've all built their own personal brands.

**Vicky McGee:** The Wave House was completely separate to their personal brands. And I think that's why they've still maintained their careers their way they have. And they've done it really, really well. I see their content and they're doing amazingly. You know, they've even doubled in different markets, like music or not just influencer marketing.

**Vicky McGee:** So it's really nice to see. I don't talk to any of them. I do see some of them at events and always, we don't have any bad blood, but I think we went through so much together that sometimes you need to separate yourself from the people that you go through so much with because it might bring back triggers or trauma.

**Vicky McGee:** You don't know what's going to happen, but there was a, there was a, For me personally, it was more like you need to step away just to find yourself, take a breath and realize what you actually personally want in life and in your career.

**Sammy Albon:** That makes sense. I feel like the next best question is, do you think we'll see more content houses?

**Vicky McGee:** [00:26:00] So I think we're, there's some brands that are taking aspects of content houses and doing it really, really well. So.

**Sammy Albon:** That's squad mentality. I think. Yes. Yeah. Super important. Yeah. Beta squad. Yeah. So many other groups of influencers where I think that's what audiences look to them for. Yeah. And I feel part of that.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Certainly when we've worked with, with creators like that. Yeah. It's more about how can we feel part of this squad? Yeah. So I feel like you're right. I think the, I guess what the content house did, and correct me if I'm wrong, I feel like what it did is put it all under a microscope and really intensify it.

**Sammy Albon:** And actually the winning things there are squad mentality, camaraderie, coming together as friends and having a fun time. But unfortunately, because you condensed it all, not you, but I mean the situation condensed it down into a three month period. God, that's intense. So it loses that the appeal. And I guess to my point earlier around authenticity, I do not doubt that the talent.

**Sammy Albon:** And the influencers had fun making content with one another.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Which was authentic. And that joy was authentic. [00:27:00]

**Vicky McGee:** But

**Sammy Albon:** I guess what was missing for me in a content house is always that narrative, or like, how do we get to point B

of the journey?

**Sammy Albon:** So I feel like they probably, like yourself, and they all learn from that experience.

**Sammy Albon:** They actually, there was a bigger story to tell here. And we can take those winning tropes and winning themes and lace it through what we do anyway.

**Vicky McGee:** And they all, they all create content like as a squad and as a friendship group anyway, like they still, yeah, they still go like on holidays and stuff together.

**Vicky McGee:** So they've still got that squad mentality. But I think it just, as you say, it's, it's, Quite high intensity when you're in that situation. So that's why it didn't work. But I think I've seen like brands, like let's take Jack Wills, for example, and they're taking the idea of a content house, but they're doing it in little, little kind of bust.

**Vicky McGee:** So they do like their ski trips away and they do all of this, which is great for them to get the content they want to get, build that kind of squad mentality. Quite a few of [00:28:00] those influences they utilize quite a lot, but they're not making it. Really intense because it's not three months, it's a week, and it's a nice time away with your friends, and you're creating a few TikToks in between.

**Sammy Albon:** Kind of thinking like Foot Asylum Lockdown. Yes, yeah, yeah. So it takes that whole, let's hit the mic, it takes that whole creating content together, but puts a nice spin, well, a fun spin on it. Yeah. And then, and it makes it work. I feel like content houses probably in America definitely here to stay. I wonder if we'll see any more in the UK.

**Sammy Albon:** But I think what we definitely love is the, like I like watching influencers who are friends or always watching content creators that are friends. And you know, sometimes they make content together, sometimes they don't.

**Vicky McGee:** And you can always have that discussion with your mates, like, if you watch, for example, the Beta Squad, if you watch them, I'll have conversations with me, like, well, who's your favorite Beta Squad member, or who do you feel like you relate to most, and that's the thing I think is quite nice about squads, is you can be like, oh, in my friendship group, I'm like the chunks or whatever, whereas you're like the A.

**Vicky McGee:** [00:29:00] J. Shabil, like, it's, I Quite nice to look at a squad, look at your friendship group and be like, yeah. And be like, Oh, we're like that. Or that's quite normal to be pissing about together. Do you know what I mean?

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, no, I agree. My final question before we go into some quick fire questions, just to get your thoughts, what's next in influencer marketing this year?

**Vicky McGee:** I think we're seeing a lot of podcasts, but I think we're also seeing, I think we're going to see a boom in influencers creating their own brands. So we've got like. Prime, we've got Grace Beverly, we've got Pixie

**Sammy Albon:** by Michelle Phan, we've got so many.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah, we've got so many, but I think it's going to boom this year.

**Vicky McGee:** Podcast is really booming but I also feel overwhelmed by podcast as a listener because I'm, I look at it and I think, what influencer podcast do I want to listen to? And then I just stick to one because I'm so overwhelmed by how much there is in the platform from an influencer perspective.

**Sammy Albon:** Do you think [00:30:00] it's the same as, I think, in 2020?

**Sammy Albon:** 14, 15, we saw loads of influencers releasing books. Yes. And then it got quite saturated. Yes. Do you think we're going to start whittling out, like you just said, I look at the landscape now and there's so many podcasts to listen to, like this one. And it's hard to make that decision of what to get. Yeah. I guess the high quality ones will, Live on.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. And then we'll whittle out the, the ones that we're not so interested in.

**Vicky McGee:** And I think I've, you know, I speak spoken to podcast studios. I speak to a lot of podcast productions as well in the influencer space. And I think it's becoming more visual in the podcast space as well. So a lot of the audience or.

**Vicky McGee:** Gen Z generation to millennial generation, they want to watch it. They want to watch it on their TV on YouTube and watch people having a discussion, which is

background. Yeah, which

**Vicky McGee:** is great. I mean, I personally listened to it in the gym, which apparently makes me a millennial that I found out the other day when I'm actually a Gen Z.

**Vicky McGee:** But I'm a

**Sammy Albon:** millennial. Actually, I feel like I'm [00:31:00] mean,

**Vicky McGee:** I don't know. But yeah, it's it's definitely oversaturated, but I think it's going more visual now in the podcast space. But then, yeah, I'm going to think we're going to see a lot more influencers coming out with their own brands and promoting them that way.

**Vicky McGee:** Anything else? I think UGC is becoming maybe a bit too scripted and we're going to see, yeah, and we're going to see a lot more customer generated content that was where UGC started.

**Sammy Albon:** That's an interesting one. I, I, I agree with you on that point. So I think UGC also doesn't really, UGC creators don't really seem to exist outside of TikTok as well.

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Because it's so catered for like fart boosting.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah, but then I, you know, we utilize them quite a lot on Instagram paid ads as well. So, but I don't see it on people's Instagram feeds. But I think that's becoming way too structured now and it's becoming quite influencer marketing and the customers are not relating to it again.

**Vicky McGee:** So I think we're going to go back to that. Customer generated content again. I

**Sammy Albon:** like [00:32:00] that. Thank you for taking us through content house news. It's kind of blown my mind. Would I live with a group of influencers for three months? Absolutely not. Yeah. But you did it and I don't have to. But thank you for sharing that because I think it was a really interesting story for people to listen to.

**Sammy Albon:** Particularly when the focus on Influencer, like I'm sure you've done for the past several years since, since leaving that role is focusing on like, what is that authenticity piece, Influencer versus Creator.

**Vicky McGee:** Oh, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** We have got some quickfire questions.

**Vicky McGee:** Okay.

**Sammy Albon:** These are about Influencer, but also not. So feel free to just answer as we go.

**Sammy Albon:** Duets or Stitch?

**Vicky McGee:** Oh, that's really hard. Stitch.

**Sammy Albon:** Viral challenges or original content?

**Vicky McGee:** Original content.

**Sammy Albon:** Day in the life vlogs or themed content days.

**Vicky McGee:** Themed content days.

**Sammy Albon:** Collaborate with other influencers or solo vids.

**Vicky McGee:** Collaborate with other influencers.

**Sammy Albon:** What's your favorite collaboration that you've seen?

**Vicky McGee:** Oh, you're really putting me on

**Sammy Albon:** the

**Vicky McGee:** spot. I, I've said this so much, but I am a beta squad girly. Oh yeah. I, [00:33:00] I, as we've said, I love the squad vibe and I love seeing those friendships. You know, Shits and gigs, for example. BTS podcast, I love them. They're very up and coming. Like, I love the friendship group dynamics.

**Vicky McGee:** And that's really what I love. Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Filters or natural beauty?

**Vicky McGee:** Natural.

**Sammy Albon:** Favorite TikTok trend you've taken part in?

**Vicky McGee:** Do I take part in any TikTok trends?

**Sammy Albon:** Have you ever done one with mates? Oh,

**Vicky McGee:** I do. I, I have an account for my dog. I'm one of those people.

**Sammy Albon:** What dog do you have?

**Vicky McGee:** It's a little toy poodle.

**Vicky McGee:** Oh,

**Sammy Albon:** adorable. Yeah, yeah.

**Vicky McGee:** So I do like a lot of trending videos for her. So she has a little boyfriend, and so I do trending videos with her and her boyfriend. Does she have

**Sammy Albon:** loads of followers?

**Vicky McGee:** No.

**Sammy Albon:** Oh. Still time.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Google search or TikTok search?

**Vicky McGee:** TikTok search. 100%. search

**Sammy Albon:** anything? No.

**Vicky McGee:** Really? Anything I want to find, I can find on TikTok.

**Vicky McGee:** You're a gen Z. Yeah. So if I want like restaurant in Soho, TikTok. If I want to know where to [00:34:00] go on a girl's night out, TikTok. Really? If I want a cheap brunch, TikTok.

**Sammy Albon:** Wow. Yeah. I couldn't.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** I have done, but I won't.

**Vicky McGee:** It's so easy. I can find everything on there.

**Sammy Albon:** Comedy sketches or heartfelt content?

**Vicky McGee:** Heart film.

**Sammy Albon:** TikTok shop?

**Vicky McGee:** Yes, love it.

**Sammy Albon:** Do you? Yes. Have you bought a lot on TikTok shop?

**Vicky McGee:** I've bought a lot on TikTok shop and I've made money on TikTok shop.

**Sammy Albon:** Interesting. Yes. You make content as well? Yeah,

**Vicky McGee:** yeah. No, it's actually really good. It's a really good side hustle. Would recommend for anyone to 100

**Sammy Albon:** MyProtein on

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah, they're on there a lot.

**Sammy Albon:** The protein powders. Yeah. All the time.

**Vicky McGee:** And free solar on there a lot. Rosemary

**Sammy Albon:** oil.

**Vicky McGee:** Rosemary. I just got a rosemary oil because I've got these little baby hairs that I need growing out. So yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Report back in light. Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Favorite TikTok feature, green screen or voice effects?

**Vicky McGee:** Voice effects because I hate my voice.

**Sammy Albon:** Same. I don't know why I'm doing a podcast. Reaction videos. Yes or no?

**Vicky McGee:** Yes.

**Sammy Albon:** Guilty pleasure trend.

**Vicky McGee:** Oh, the rug cleaning. [00:35:00]

**Sammy Albon:** Oh, I love that. I love when they do cow hooves.

**Vicky McGee:** Yeah. Oh, really? Have you seen that? No!

**Sammy Albon:** Farriers, and they clean horseshoes or cow hooves. Oh! One TikTok feature you wish existed.

**Vicky McGee:** That's hard because I said I hate my voice and I like the voice effect thing. Oh, I tried to post photos the other day replying to a comment from my video and they don't do that. So you can't post videos. It makes it into a video. You can't post photos. It makes it into a video. So that's what they need to add.

**Sammy Albon:** If anyone from TikTok is listening. Get your act together. Yeah. Vicky has an idea. Please, please incorporate it. You

**Vicky McGee:** can call me anytime.

**Sammy Albon:** That's all the questions. Thank you for joining us for the podcast today. I feel like we've gone on a whistle stop tour of not only your experience, but also how things have really changed in years, particularly with a focus on TikTok.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. As you said, you are very Gen Z but I'm really interested to see where we see more content houses. Thanks guys. When we probably not [00:36:00] in the UK, I don't think, but you're wrong, but you're right. Like beta squad are really dominating and the sidemen are really dominating that squad mentality space on YouTube, on tick tock perhaps we'll see you on YouTube sometime soon if you move over from tick tock.

**Vicky McGee:** Oh, I don't think so. I told you I hate my voice. I can't do those daily vlogs. I'm not, it's not going to work for me.

**Sammy Albon:** No, no.

**Vicky McGee:** Okay. No

**Sammy Albon:** podcast from Vicky. Thank you so much for watching this episode of the What They Said podcast powered by Pretty Green. We've had a great time with Vicky diving into all things TikTok, content houses, which has truly blown my mind, and the rise of squad mentality and how audiences love to feel a part of.

**Sammy Albon:** a friendship group with that beta squad or the side men join us next week where we'll talk even more about the greater economy and all the questions you didn't ask. And please make sure you give this podcast a like or follow wherever you're watching along, please comment down below any themes you'd like us to chat through.

**Sammy Albon:** And you can find Vicky on anywhere on the screen at the moment, if you're watching along, but also we'll link Vicky's [00:37:00] LinkedIn below. Thanks again. And we'll see you next week.