WTS - Beth Heard

**Sammy Albon:** [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the what they said podcast powered by PrettyGreen, where we deep dive into everything to do with influence and marketing. We've been joined by some titans of the creator economy in the UK, but far more talented than I and have far more to say about their particular niche, whether it's an agent representing top talent, it's influencers themselves, or it's fellow marketers.

**Sammy Albon:** This week, we're joined by Beth. Welcome to the podcast, Beth.

**Beth Heard:** Hello. Thank you for having me.

**Sammy Albon:** Thanks for joining us. I've pestered you long enough and you're here.

**Beth Heard:** I'm here.

**Sammy Albon:** That's all that matters. I've got a short bio for you that I'm going to read out and if there's anything that I've forgotten, please feel free to jump in.

**Sammy Albon:** And tell me to shut up.

**Beth Heard:** I'm excited.

**Sammy Albon:** Okay. All right. I'll do what I'll do my best. Uh, so Beth is a head of talent at Sixteenth, um, talent agency that I have a lot of time and respect for. Um, I really, really appreciate the way that you work with influencers and I think it's doing great for the, for the industry.

**Sammy Albon:** And we've worked extensively together over the years. [00:01:00] Um, you are directly responsible for some of the biggest names in the UK. Um, Ellen Neal and Jack Edwards, to name just two. Um, partly because I'm biased, I think they're great. But you really do help elevate their strategy and take them to the next level.

**Sammy Albon:** So welcome. I think we've got a lot to chat through and you've seen the questions. Um, but could you share a little bit about your role, um, as a talent agent broadly? And then I would love to dive into a little bit about Sixteenth and how I think your USP is really building out. Good influence, but then also a strategy for influencers to I think more long term as well.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah. I mean, as a talent agency, we've been around for, uh, coming up to seven years. That's flown. Yeah, I know. Crazy. Right. Um, I've personally been at the agency for three years. I was in PR and marketing before that for, uh, about seven years.

**Sammy Albon:** The dark side.

**Beth Heard:** The dark side. Yes. [00:02:00] Um,

**Sammy Albon:** there's a bit of a change then.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Huge thing. Approaching influencers and talent to now treat them.

**Beth Heard:** For sure. I used to book a lot of talent. That was a big part of my role was obviously working on the influence strategy for brands like Holland and Barrett, Kellogg's, some fun stuff. And I used to book a lot of talent and, um, I realized very quickly that when I thought about going into talent management, there are a couple of agencies that I, Would definitely not go and work with based on my experiences on the agency side.

**Beth Heard:** And they're going to say no, no, no, I'm not sorry.

**Sammy Albon:** We can seduce.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, but there was a couple that I would Sixteenth being one of them. Um, and a role came up about three years ago and I, I, yeah, moved over to the top management side. I did. Um, yeah. And started looking after a lot of what would be known as like our study tube roster.

**Beth Heard:** So that is people like Jack Edwards managed him for three years. Three years on Jada Jade, Ruby Granger, Queen Ruby. Um, and yeah, so I started in, in kind [00:03:00] of pure talent management and then, uh, about a year and a half ago took on the head of talent role. Um, so yeah, I guess in terms of like talent agencies, um, Honestly, it can really differ the experiences that people have, depending on the agency, agency that they go to.

**Beth Heard:** But speaking on behalf of Sixteenth, we see our role as to bring in obviously commercial partnerships and be a commercial consultant to our creators. So that's helping them with, um, their commercial positioning. If they want to earn more, how they can do that through their content. Um, but we are very much managers as well at Sixteenth.

**Beth Heard:** So yes. Like you mentioned, we help them with their general strategy, where they want to go long term vision, blue skies, dreams, and all that stuff, helping people like, you know, taking Jack as a really good example, how we can elevate him more into the mainstream and get him working with. The BBC's and the Netflix's and the Valentino's like he's doing today, which is

**Sammy Albon:** yeah, I've seen he's been dressed by Valentino quite a few times recently.

**Beth Heard:** Yes. Yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** that feels like a real step in a very different direction. Yeah, I think

**Beth Heard:** it's really interesting. It's a bit of a trend at the moment, like high [00:04:00] fashion and the connection between literature. So Valentino, Mont Blanc. Um, yeah, there's a lot of agent, a lot of brands doing some. Stuff around the literary space which does help our chat.

**Sammy Albon:** It does. I feel like, um, for people listening, so, um, you touched on StudyTube. Yeah. And I think that's something I've followed for the longest time, so I think it's StudyTube is essentially, um, influencers and creators that were going through the throes of university themselves or college and they shared their journey, um, with their audience.

**Sammy Albon:** Whether that's essentially a live stream of them studying or revising with them, which is a new trend that I've seen, or sharing the books they're reading or just their uni journey in halls.

**Sammy Albon:** And I

**Sammy Albon:** think for me, that was a real turning moment for content online. Because that's when it started to I'd say niche down, but I think that has a lot of negative connotations around it because niche to a lot of brands Makes them think, Oh, that's small for context, you now talk about Liz Ferry creators.

**Sammy Albon:** So Jack and Ruby have really transitioned into [00:05:00] creators that are sort of owning the, the booktube book talk space.

**Beth Heard:** I mean,

**Sammy Albon:** millions of views and followers and

**Beth Heard:** the majority of our roster, you know, come from a, a space similar to that. So whether that's education or career or, you know, we do have other creators, but a lot of them come from that space.

**Beth Heard:** And I think our. Roster as a whole has a combined audience of 54 million or something. So it's like

**Sammy Albon:** if you want to reach the UK

**Beth Heard:** and if you want to also, I always think if you want to reach people who are what we would call kind of ready to move, so if that's people who want to better themselves, who want to You know, change something about their lives.

**Beth Heard:** They're the kind of people who are watching people like Jack and Ruby and Jade, and they're also the kind of people who are probably going to buy your product because they have that personal motivation to do so. So yeah, brands, if you're listening, sell YouTube.

**Sammy Albon:** I feel like, um, I can speak firsthand from working with the likes of Eleanor.

**Sammy Albon:** So Eleanor is, um, big fan. Eleanor's a true crime creator and I'd argue she's probably one of the biggest in the world.

**Beth Heard:** She's the UK's, yeah, Queen. [00:06:00] Definitely the UK's Queen of True Crime. The UK's Queen

**Sammy Albon:** of True Crime. Yeah. Um, and when we consider that True Crime is hugely popular with female audiences in the UK, uh, and that most of them are probably watching Eleanor and she's getting like 500, 000 views plus per video.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, I think her average is 850.

**Sammy Albon:** Wow, even more.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** But it just shows you the potential, um, creators like Eleanor and Jack have. And I think. I always use them as sort of a, uh, to illustrate how most audiences seem to begin on YouTube with these creators that form this really core base of followers and then follow them on cross platform.

**Sammy Albon:** And if you see TikTokers, Um, often people are quite hard pressed to name a TikToker but they can name the type of content they make.

**Beth Heard:** So true.

**Sammy Albon:** Whereas you think of a creator like Jack or a YouTube creator, you think, Eleanor, Jack.

**Beth Heard:** It's, it's the reason I just would describe Sixteenth as a YouTube first agency because we are.

**Sammy Albon:** I didn't want to put that word in your mouth.

**Beth Heard:** Well, yeah, we are 100 percent and there's a real, you know, strategic reason, reason behind that. And that is that [00:07:00] creators who can hold attention in 2024 for. You know 30, 40, yeah, you know Eleanor's videos can be two hours long and she's holding attention for that time.

**Beth Heard:** That is such a rarity, such a dying art, you know, in the endless world of just scroll, scroll, scroll, scroll, scroll, maybe never see that face again. You can hold people's attention in long form. You know, they're going to, you can do anything. And so that's why most of our guys have some form of a YouTube channel.

**Beth Heard:** We're never, um, you know, I'm seeing lots of agencies popping up at the moment, talent agencies and their, their full roster is just TikTok. And listen, it might be working in some areas, but I just think the lifespan of creators is so much shorter on a platform like TikTok. It's got so many positives when it comes to reach and reaching, you know, huge audiences and, um, But in terms of longevity, which is a huge thing for us at Sixteenth, we're all about long term strategy over short term gain.

**Beth Heard:** That's one of our values. My founder, Daniel, will be very happy that I got that in.

**Beth Heard:** [00:08:00] Um,

**Beth Heard:** yeah, I'll just drop them in. Um, and yeah, we're all, we're all about longevity and that really does, uh, we believe like if you, if you can hold people in long form, then they'll follow you to wherever you go.

**Sammy Albon:** Definitely. I think for comparison, if you look at the average watch time on TikTok and Instagram, it's like two seconds.

**Sammy Albon:** YouTube is four minutes.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Slightly longer if you remove music videos from the mix, but then you look at your talent and true for a lot of YouTube creators is that their watch time will be 13, 14, 15 minutes plus. So the view retention on YouTube is really important and definitely we see it as having more sort of potential to drive performance or community cross platform versus.

**Sammy Albon:** Maybe a tiktok first creator, that's not to say they don't, but you also often see a lot of tiktok creators and you've probably definitely seen this, they'll smash it on tiktok and suddenly they'll get an agent who are trying to get them to launch a youtube channel because it consolidates their viewership.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Um, it kind of brings me, we haven't even started my question, haven't even started my questions yet.

**Beth Heard:** Just chatting away.

**Sammy Albon:** Just [00:09:00] smacking the microphone as I do it. Um, In terms of, uh, signing new talent, there could be influencers listening to this, watching this, that are thinking, I need to get an agent.

**Sammy Albon:** Beth said all the right things, I'm looking for that strategic elevation, that counsel. Um, can you talk us through the process of signing new talent? And if, um, if someone's perhaps not at the level, how can they look out for a bad agent? agent, like what are some tropes they should be cautious of?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, I could talk about this for hours, so I'm going to try to keep it short.

**Beth Heard:** I think You can have half hour. Um, okay, my first public service announcement to any influencers listening is do not sign with the first agency that reaches out to you, because I see this happening more and more, and I get it, right? You're, again, when we go back to the idea of TikTok, it's, I don't want to say easy at all, but it is, it is easier To kind of reach that like 20, 30, 40K, um, following on TikTok.

**Beth Heard:** Right. And, and you have an [00:10:00] agency reach out and it's flattering and you're like, yeah, like I, I've had, I've also had a brand reach out and I've got no idea what that contract says. Um, so this makes sense. I'm going to sign with them. Um, And if that agency is offering you anything longer than like three months, like, do not do it.

**Beth Heard:** I just think there are so many. Um,

**Sammy Albon:** do you think three months in the first instance is a good test?

**Beth Heard:** I think at that size, I just think my, we have creators who did it on their own for an, Angela is a great example. One of our beauty creators, she done it on her own for like five years and she is one of the most incredible professionals to work with on our side because she knows.

**Beth Heard:** You know, what we look for in contracts, she understands our side of things. She really kind of understood the industry as a whole and then handed her business over. Um, CMI, you know, don't sign too early would be my advice. I appreciate it. There's no rush. No, there's no rush. And I do get that it's daunting.

**Beth Heard:** Um, but there is so much free resource online around, um, support [00:11:00] with things like rate cards, media kits, contracts to a degree, again, I appreciate that they are niche, um, Yeah, just don't sign early. Don't rush it. Do it. I always tell people to do it on their own for at least a year first, because I just think you can then go into whoever you go to, whatever management, and you know, you'll actually understand what they're saying to you and you'll understand if they're lying to you.

**Beth Heard:** You'll understand if they're giving you. BS about something that's happened because you'll be able to say, actually, no, I, I understand contracts and I understand how negotiations work and understand what brands mean when they say X, Y, and Z. Um, so yeah, my first advice is just don't rush and do it on your own for a year.

**Beth Heard:** And I guess when it comes to like what to look for, yeah, length of times, you know, our, we, we work to, um, You know, make sure you've got a probation term in there. Ours is three months, um, and then we move on to a one year rolling. So that just allows us to, you know, it does take a while to build a relationship.

**Beth Heard:** So one year is probably the standard, but don't be locking yourselves in. I've heard of people on five year [00:12:00] contracts and it's,

**Sammy Albon:** yeah,

**Beth Heard:** that's, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** I am. I'd have to get your thoughts on this. I remember when I was looking at joining. So when I was a creator previously, I've said it on every bloody podcast and I was bringing it up.

**Sammy Albon:** I think it's really interesting because I'm probably naive at the time. Um, I was approached by agents that wanted rev share of my YouTube channel as well.

**Beth Heard:** Um,

**Sammy Albon:** and my advice, the advice I got at the time was, But they're not helping you do that. So is that something that Sixteenth ever done?

**Beth Heard:** No, we don't. We, we only, we, you know, 80, um, it's the kind of typical Hollywood model.

**Beth Heard:** It hasn't changed since we launched seven years ago that in itself has pros and cons. But, um, yeah, we don't take rev shot because, uh, yeah, and, and less. Unless

**Sammy Albon:** you were putting heavy production.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, yeah. Unless it's, I, I'm conscious that there are some talent management agencies propping up, cropping up who are also production houses in [00:13:00] some degree.

**Sammy Albon:** different scenario.

**Beth Heard:** And it's a different scenario. And I think if they're really investing in putting on a series around you, then that's a Very different. But if it's just purely that they're going to earn, um, from your YouTube, what is the incentive to go out and get you brand partnerships? Because they'll just be taking 20 percent of your rev share for doing nothing.

**Beth Heard:** I could be, could be bringing you nothing. And that's crazy. Cause the reason the agency dynamic works is that we only earn if our talent earns so like, hello, I'm going to make sure my talent are earning, you know?

**Sammy Albon:** Exactly. That makes, that makes sense. I hadn't really thought about that point as well, that if they're getting the rev share, then what's the incentive for them to go and get more, more work.

**Sammy Albon:** Um, talking about, um, brand partnerships. I think it's fair to say that, uh, balancing what influencers want and what brands want, particularly for people like yourself and me, for the client and you for the talent, we're often trying to discuss points, not actually us, but like, come to that happy new round.

**Beth Heard:** We argue all the time.

**Sammy Albon:** We argue all the time. Um, it can be tricky. So if you've got any stories that you're happy to share, uh, where you've just had to say, know, uh, even if the fee was really good, [00:14:00] maybe there was some horror stories that you've got. I'm not sure if you want to go into brand names or

**Beth Heard:** I can talk about, I can talk about, um, I can talk about a brief that we had that we actually declined, um, that I, I found quite crazy and it was, I'm sure everyone saw it, the, uh, Madeleine RG Google, uh, TikTok that she did where she was, um, unboxing.

**Sammy Albon:** I did see this. Yeah. Yeah.

**Beth Heard:** So we were

**Sammy Albon:** approached.

**Beth Heard:** We were approached by that. I'm not going to say for who talent wise, but all I can say is they were the, if you could imagine the opposite of Madeline Argy in every way, like content, style, who they are as a person, just delivery. They could not be further apart.

**Beth Heard:** And the brief we received was exactly the same. Like, We'll just turn up. Um, we'll be there for like 15 minutes. Could you just like, un could he just like unbox it and then we'll leave and we declined it? 'cause I was just like, red flags written all over this. Yeah. Like, [00:15:00] you know, we scripted, it was, don't get me wrong, there were, there was big money in it, but like we said, no, this is not right.

**Beth Heard:** And then we saw that content going out and I think that for me was a real moment of like. Who's running these campaigns? Like, I don't know, I just think if you can put the same brief to two different creators in that sense that are so polar opposites.

**Sammy Albon:** It kind of misses the point of influence.

**Beth Heard:** It's like, it's like, it, it was just to me that was real madness.

**Beth Heard:** Like, um, I just think you haven't, you're just throwing money down the drain at this point. So that was a recent one. Anything else?

**Sammy Albon:** Has there ever been an instance where because of the values that you have as an agency and where you've aligned with your talent on. You know, lines in the sand of who they won't partner with.

**Sammy Albon:** Has there been an instance where a brand has, that you felt has been like an inauthentic partnership, uh, has come at you with very good fee? Yeah. And it's been tempting, but you've had to say, look, this is just not a good fit for you based on our long term strategy.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. [00:16:00] I think when I was, Kind of talent managing more day to day.

**Beth Heard:** You know, I have my own roster of, like I said, people like Jane and Ruby. I used to talk a lot about how proud I was that we had quite a high decline rate because what I used to say to brands, yeah, because it means when we say yes, it's a hell yes. So yeah. You know, if anyone knows people like Unjaded Jade or Ruby Granger, like, you know, they are so conscious, uh, you know, socially conscious and socially aware that, yeah, we were just reclining stuff all the time.

**Beth Heard:** If it didn't fit who they were as creators, you know, the, the brand, where, where the brand is, you know, Uh, yeah, where they're founded or how they source their products. You know, all of that stuff we were looking into. Yeah. All the time. Also, you know, socioeconomic situations happen. There's a war, you know, multiple wars at the moment that will impact the brands that we work with because of who they're affiliating with.

**Beth Heard:** And, you know, that's, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** This is a really interesting point to pull out and the reason I want to talk to you about it is because I think there's a misconception. I mean, it is more nuanced when you think about the platforms. I think YouTube creators can afford to [00:17:00] be more picky. They're being propped up by ad revenue.

**Sammy Albon:** But generally, I think brands think that they approach with work because often there's short timelines and they'll say, don't worry, they'll want to take this partnership on. And even if it's only a two week period to produce content, um, and I think that's unfair because they don't appreciate that actually the influencer has every right to say no to the partnership.

**Beth Heard:** For sure. But, but I also just don't know if there are that many. Many management agencies also doing the same thing, which I get it. You, like I said earlier, that you're there to make money, but that's where our real core value of longevity comes into play. And when we can, you know, You know, have conversations internally where we'll say, if we decline this or if we go ahead with this, will this limit actually what we get in next month?

**Beth Heard:** Because there's going to be a backlash or there's going to be controversy or it's not going to align and it's not going to perform well. Like it's about seeing if we say no to this, what are we saying yes to in the future? Um, so [00:18:00] I think that's why clients, I get it all the time. I'll say no. And they'll be like.

**Beth Heard:** No. What do you mean? No.

**Sammy Albon:** They do say no all the time. They're busy. Um, yeah. I think, I think that's a position of power for the influencer as well. Yeah. It's brands. We work with so many brands that are totally aware of this. Often, um, there are those out there and certainly my years of being on agency side, I've seen that so many just expect, oh, they'll be thrilled to have this partnership and actually oftentimes they're not.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. We have to, we really have to sell him what the value of the partnership would be. Yeah.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. And, and it's great that. Yeah, that, that's happening because that's the other thing is sometimes we get, you know, the brand name, the, the price and the timings and we haven't even got a brief and I'll, and I, and I'll say, well, you know, I'll take it to Jack and I've got a brief and he knows it's like being offered a job and somebody saying, oh, you're going to work at, You know, Sony, and here's the salary.

**Beth Heard:** Okay, what's the, what is the job? Oh, you don't need, yeah, you don't need to worry about it.

**Beth Heard:** It's like, would you, would you accept [00:19:00] that job? No, of course you wouldn't. Like, so yeah, I don't get that.

**Sammy Albon:** You said something a moment ago, and I wanted to put it out. Um, if there's ever backlash, so for, have there been any instances where I think brands worry about influencers causing the backlash, but vice versa.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, of course. Influencers are far too aware of the backlash they can receive by partnering with a brand. So it's definitely a two way street. Have there been an instance where you've partnered with, obviously we don't need to say brand names or talent names. What happens if there's backlash against an influencer for partnering with a brand that you were perhaps unaware of, there were any issues around that.

**Sammy Albon:** How do, how do you navigate that?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, it's a really, uh, it's a really tricky one because it obviously just really depends on what the scale of it is. We've had a couple that have been around Uh, like charitable partnerships where audiences have not understood that we, that there was no payment taken or that the payment was donated, but they've, they've kind of, yeah, [00:20:00] taken things out of context around working with charities, which is something we encourage all of our creators to do.

**Beth Heard:** It's an amazing thing to be aligned with, you know, uh, uh,

**Sammy Albon:** Hero charities.

**Beth Heard:** That, that, that really works for them. So we've had stuff around that. Sustainability is a huge one. And I think, you know, Transparently, like I, I get asked a lot, like, why don't you create content and stuff like this that I'm like, I would never do it because there is no right answer to it.

**Beth Heard:** I see the most, you know, sustainable creators still getting, Oh my God, you used. This one product and it's got a plastic head or like, so sustainability is quite a big one. And typically we'll just ask clients for FAQs. ,

**Sammy Albon:** so you do all you can to have sort of safety milestones.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. And all contracts will have something in it around, you know, who's, whose responsibility is it to respond to the client.

**Beth Heard:** comments that are negative. Um, so yeah, I think our biggest concern ultimately we represent the creators. So our biggest concern in those situations is, is the talent okay? Do they feel like they are [00:21:00] equipped with the tools to handle this? You know, what are their DMs like? What kind of messages are they getting?

**Beth Heard:** And do we need to kind of bring in a duty of care element to this. You know, we have recommended therapists at Sixteenth. That is an initiative, um, that our creators can access. So that's people who are like vetted through us and have an understanding of the, uh, entertainment industry. So

**Sammy Albon:** yeah,

**Beth Heard:** yeah, it was, it was something that actually, again, Jade brought up a couple of years ago and said, you know, she'd been seeking therapists and transparently had sat with some and they'd gone.

**Beth Heard:** What have you got to be upset about? You've got, you know, millions of pounds and all this fame and all this stuff. And, you know, yeah, it's, it was a, she struggled. So we found some people who had kind of experience working with people in the entertainment industry and the unique pressures that come with it.

**Beth Heard:** And yeah, so it might be that, you know, if there's backlash, our creators access that kind of thing, but.

**Sammy Albon:** And burnout and things like that. Yeah.

**Beth Heard:** Burnout is a huge thing, um, that they can access. That like support for, it's just also a super lonely place. Like I'm [00:22:00] sure creators say this all the time, but it's the most connected, lonely career.

**Beth Heard:** I think,

**Sammy Albon:** I think, um, from my experience, but also friends that are still, I know how isolating the experiences and which might sound crazy to say, because these people have got millions of followers or hundreds of thousands of followers and they're really connected and they get messages all the time.

**Sammy Albon:** You're alone.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. Often. 100%.

**Sammy Albon:** Talking to a camera.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** And then you're in a little echo chamber. So sometimes the decisions you make might not be the right ones to make unless you've got Council around you and I think when, and so it's good to see that you are filling that role of, of Yeah. Support mentally too.

**Beth Heard:** When you, when you see, when your whole world is online, like theirs is, their entire career is in online. When something happens like backlash. You know, it's all consuming and it's really hard to, I as the manager, can look at it and go, I'll blow over. Like, we're good.

**Sammy Albon:** Because you've got that aerial view.

**Beth Heard:** Because I've got that aerial view and it's not me on the, I was holding that phone where things are blowing [00:23:00] up. So, um, Um, yeah, it's, uh, you know, it's not, I don't mean to kind of, um, you know, there was also amazing perks and whatnot of being crazy. They also have amazing lives, but yeah, I always think it's worth just highlighting that there are tough times as well for them.

**Sammy Albon:** Um, so we've kind of spoken about the, the, the negative. Um, backlash and, uh, the horror stories that might come with that. But equally, obviously, Sixteenth is really about that purposeful partnership and, um, accountable activation. Do you have any positive stories that have come from your time being talent side?

**Sammy Albon:** Um, maybe brands have gone on a journey with you and thought about things slightly differently. Yeah. What have you found?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, let's talk about fun ones. Um, I think there's a few that come to mind. Do you know what I think? Um, and they haven't paid me to say this, but the Cluedo campaign last year with, with Elle, with Ellie, um, Ellen and Neil, like that was, that was so fun because I think there were so many.[00:24:00]

**Beth Heard:** You know, the influencer marketing buzzwords at the moment are all around like creative freedom and creative this and creative that. And then actually, you know, it's just the same old brief that we had a year ago or two years ago and actually getting that brief in and being like, for context, um, we worked together on Hasbro, Cluedo, and you had Ellen and Neil come in as along with a load of other amazing creators.

**Beth Heard:** And you work with a really amazing concept team. Photographer who, um, who effectively turned Eleanor into a Cluedo character. She looked,

**Beth Heard:** she looked

**Beth Heard:** insane. Like she looks so cool, but that is like a, you know, project. If, if there are brands listening and you want to know how to like really get creators invested in your brand, it's doing that kind of stuff.

**Beth Heard:** It's really thinking outside the box. You know, she got to use that content, post it across her channel. She got an amazing shoot day with you guys. That was so much fun and just so such a cool way to use a creator like Eleanor, And it all so

**Sammy Albon:** resonates with Cluedo Messages.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, like it was a

**Sammy Albon:** perfect partnership.

**Beth Heard:** It was such a perfect [00:25:00] partnership. And yeah, I couldn't have imagined anything better. And yeah, so stuff like that, where we can actually come in and the talent can really get creative. And then yeah, anything that also has a real world, Impact. So we had, uh, one of our gaming creators, Sophie, last week, she was live streaming for a couple of hours with a brand with Hellman's, the, the, um, condiment brand.

**Beth Heard:** Um, which seems a bit random, right? You've got like female gamer live streaming on Twitch, Hellman's mayonnaise. Um, but it works, right? And she, and they did a really nice kind of, um, uh, socioeconomic piece around, um, Again, forgive me. Yeah, if anyone is listening who's really into gaming, I'm going to mess up all of these words because it's not my forte.

**Beth Heard:** And that's why we have someone on the team doing our gaming. But it was like live streaming on Twitch and you could donate. Live donations. Live donations. And it actually went to help food banks across the UK.

**Sammy Albon:** Do you know how much she managed to raise? I don't.

**Beth Heard:** I don't know if we've got the final number.

**Beth Heard:** If we find out after this. [00:26:00] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** But I think that's so interesting that, Um, firstly, the Cluedo campaign was absolutely amazing to work on. When we were talking to you about, we'd love to get Eleanor on, I think there was a touch and go moment where she wasn't interested and then heard about the full concept.

**Sammy Albon:** She loved it. She was like, yes. And since then, I, and I'm, I kid you not, I've bumped into friends that have nothing to do with influence marketing and they've all seen that campaign and I was like, well, this is crazy. And another brand that I was talking to the other day said, Oh, did you do the Cluedo campaign?

**Sammy Albon:** I was like, how? Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Cluedo is such a household name and a household name for true crime lovers. It was just a perfect match. But, um, also on the donation point, I think we have to remember how generous audiences are, particularly to causes their creators really believe in. Um, so to see how many donations you got, it doesn't matter.

**Sammy Albon:** It's just the fact that it had some sort of impact in the real world. And we see that with the, the sort of creator first events and things like that, that Audiences care and they're motivated to do something. For

**Beth Heard:** sure. And I think particularly if [00:27:00] you were talking about, I guess, our types of creators in the sense that they are giving value online.

**Beth Heard:** So that is how I would summarize all of our creators. When we talk about what does good influence mean? It's people who are doing something positive online, but giving value for free, effectively. You know, when you think of people like Ali Abdul, right? One of our, you know, biggest YouTubers. He has spent.

**Beth Heard:** Years online, just giving out free business, financial, um, you know, team building advice. So people feel really indebted to them. Same as somebody like Jade, right? She didn't just go on YouTube and show, you know, what. cute thing she was wearing. Like, you know, there's a net, there's a space for that. But she went on YouTube and she helped people literally get into their dream universities.

**Beth Heard:** I've sat, I sat on a prep once with Jade by Tottenham Court Road and we had about five or six people come up to us in a really short space of time, probably an hour or so. And these weren't people who were going, can I have a picture? They were coming up and saying, Oh my God, thank you. You helped me pass this [00:28:00] exam.

**Beth Heard:** You helped me get into My dream university, you helped me have the confidence to go traveling by myself. So people feel really indebted to our types of creators. And so what that shows up as is this kind of idea of like force of like reciprocity, where it's like when Jade posts an ad, because they're like, Jade helped me do this incredible thing.

**Beth Heard:** They're not thinking like, yeah, they're not thinking, Oh God, another ad from Jade. They're thinking, wow, like she's succeeding. She helped me succeed. We're all succeeding together. And it shows up in high levels engagement for, you know, the creators, but also for brands, their brand partnerships. Most of our guys average engagement rates are like 10 percent plus because people don't.

**Beth Heard:** Switch off and think, Oh, you're just take, take, take. It's all about giving value. So yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** Such a true point. I feel like there's been a real shift in the culture around brand partnerships. I remember, 2013, 14, 15. It was like, Oh, you do a brand deal and you'd be like, Oh my God, what's the audience going to think, don't come for me.

**Sammy Albon:** And now it's like, get that back. We want you to, we [00:29:00] want you to do well. So I think there has been a real change around that.

**Beth Heard:** And as long as you bring your audience on the journey as well, I think somebody like Jack does that super, super well, where, you know, he's not the same kid he was four or five years ago when he vlog.

**Beth Heard:** He's a, he's a fully fledged business man walking around in Valentino, but like, He'll never make you feel like that. You know, he's, his audience are there on the journey with him and they're, they're celebrating every step of his achievements as if they are their own, which they are, you know, he's so grateful to, uh, to everyone who has followed him.

**Beth Heard:** Um, from, from day one.

**Sammy Albon:** So we're seeing, we're seeing create our own brands really at the forefront of, uh, what consumers deem as cool and trendy, which makes me feel really uncool and trendy saying that. So whether that's like Logan Paul and KSI with Prime, um, or Beast Burger by Mr. Beast. Huge brands that have really dominated in the US and obviously Prime.

**Sammy Albon:** I think most parents were queuing up to get a Prime drink at one point. What do you think is next for UK creators in that space? Um, and do you [00:30:00] think there is space in the UK for, uh, influencers to launch their own brands? Is it the same sort of,

**Beth Heard:** I think there is a huge disparity between the UK and the U. S. influencer marketing industries in general. I think there are huge differences, not just market size, but particularly like the way consumers engage with creators and the types of creators they engage with, I've always found it super interesting that we don't have the Alex Cooper, the Alex Earle, you know, equivalents here in the UK.

**Beth Heard:** And I think it's just because of who we are as, you know, the British mentality of. You know, not letting people get that high effectively and trying to bring them down before they get there. So I think there's a lot of differences in the way that consumers engage with, uh, creators in the uk. I guess when it comes to products specifically, I think, you know, we, we, we did it, you know, I'll transparently like, as a, I can be, you know, we, we had, uh, Sixteenth, we, we launched, uh, a planner [00:31:00] brand around Jack, right. When he was at university, it was a study planner brand. And, you know, when you think of the journey he's been on over those couple of years, where that brand was out, he left university. He wasn't a student anymore. And we had a student brand connected to him. He then went into books and became, you know, the biggest booktuber in the world.

**Beth Heard:** Um, And still had a student study brand connected to him. Yeah. And so I think if you're gonna do it, I think it has to be something that has that real longevity. And I think, you know, you do have to be at that side men level. Yeah. I think it is so expensive. Like I, and it's so, it's a lot of investment. So I just don't think people think about, you know, warehouses and shipping and customers.

**Beth Heard:** Customer, customer service. Right. Customer service, responding to customers. 'cause you have to have that, you know? So I think. I get it and it looks super fun. And I think there's also this like craving for creators to have something that they can like physically hold because so much of their career in their world is in the digital space.

**Beth Heard:** Right. So [00:32:00] yeah, it's this like intangible thing. So I think there's this real still craving for people to be able to hold something in a shop or out in the world and say, I made this. So I really get that. But I think I personally would always, you know, if our creators, you know, You know, there's very few creators who we would really launch something around now and it'd have to be like the perfect thing and it would be with a specialist company who do that stuff.

**Beth Heard:** Um, I think if anyone is looking for more like physical products, I think doing it in collaboration with a brand, really finding, you know, who is that brand that it already exists that I completely resonate with that I can go to and bring out and edit with or a range with. Um, And actually, you know, see how that sells first, because if it doesn't sell out within a minute or a couple of minutes, I probably wouldn't go investing into a own brand company that takes, you know, millions and millions of pounds to run.

**Sammy Albon:** Definitely. I think we've seen over the years that. The likes of Saffron Barker with Primark. [00:33:00] Um, I think Gymshark even do their own partnerships with influencers online as well, and I think there's much safer way for influencers to get into testing the market.

**Beth Heard:** Exactly. And it is that you can, um, you know, see how you sell, as I say, see how things sell.

**Beth Heard:** And if there's a consumer demand there, and I'm sure there are, you know, some, it's a shame that it is so expensive to launch these products because I'm sure there is so many creators with so many amazing ideas out there. Um, But, you know, finding the investment to launch it is, is tough, sadly.

**Sammy Albon:** Conscious of the time.

**Sammy Albon:** And I've got one big, one big question to close on. What's next in influencer marketing? Um, appreciate that is a big question, but over the last few years, we've seen influencer content become more niche. So like, StudyTube is really dominating student space, um, true crime creators, ASMR creators, um, up to them being included in media plans as a core element.

**Sammy Albon:** So we've got paid ads that. utilize influencer content as a core pillar, not just a secondary thought. [00:34:00] From your perspective, because I think it's quite an interesting one with your long term goals and your values as a business, what's hot and what's not? And what do you think the next big thing is this year, but even further afield?

**Beth Heard:** How do I whittle this down? I think, um, I think long form is, is, you know, everyone's saying it's dead. I disagree wholeheartedly. Like I was saying earlier, I think

**Sammy Albon:** TikTok's introducing longer content.

**Beth Heard:** Exactly. You're turning it now because I think they've clocked on to the lifespan of their creators is super short.

**Beth Heard:** Um, so yeah, long form for me is, is definitely still, um, gonna be Taking priority, but I, we're talking a lot internally about the idea of like FaceTime content when it comes to creative strategy. So that type of content where you feel like you're FaceTiming a friend and you're putting it on in the background and you're, you know, I never FaceTime my friends and just sit there I'll FaceTime my friends and I'll be cooking dinner or I'll be getting ready or, um, so I think in terms of like content for this year and content style, I think that will be, become bigger than ever.

**Sammy Albon:** That's a [00:35:00] really interesting take. I hadn't really thought about that. It's the same with podcasts, right?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

**Sammy Albon:** You'll, uh, you'll pop it on while you're doing something else. Yeah, exactly. Driving a car.

**Beth Heard:** 100%. Because it's like our attention spans are getting shorter, but I do think people are feeling like scroll fatigue.

**Beth Heard:** I certainly am. Like, it's just, it's just never ending. Like I, I sometimes imagine scrolling. I sometimes imagine TikTok is like this. You know, what's like underneath my phone and it's just this like endless pit of content that like terrifies me. So yeah, I think, um, I think like this choice fatigue as well, that plays into it.

**Beth Heard:** So this idea that people are having, are not wanting to choose what they watch anymore, which is again, where I think the rise of niche creators like Jack have, have worked so well because you go to Jack's channel and you can put on any video and you kind of know what you're going to get. It's like comfort, comfort food, isn't it?

**Beth Heard:** It's like going to your favorite restaurant. So I think,

**Sammy Albon:** yeah,

**Beth Heard:** exactly. And I guess when it comes to the industry generally, I think, um, kind of taking on [00:36:00] more of the like US blueprints with things like, you know, I, I obviously come at it from a management perspective, but I think, um, like specialist agencies and stuff popping up, I think we're starting to find that, so people who really specialize in audio, really special, specialize in production, um, that kind of thing I think is going to get bigger.

**Beth Heard:** And that happens a lot in the U S you know, they have, you know, Agents and they have managers and they have bigger teams. Mm-Hmm. I think generally is what I'm getting at. I think creators will start to have bigger teams.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah.

**Beth Heard:** Um, and anything else? I think , um, no, I just think, you know, it's not going anywhere.

**Beth Heard:** Is is the other thing is it's, it's

**Sammy Albon:** still still doning, but just like TV's not anywhere. I'm gonna see. The media landscape continues to diversify. For

**Beth Heard:** sure.

**Sammy Albon:** And actually Be real threads. Yeah. R. I. P.

**Beth Heard:** R. I. P. Actually, that would be the last thing. I think, um, you know, brands really understanding that YouTube and short form content is the new TV now.

**Beth Heard:** And it is the replacement of that and that people are [00:37:00] watching YouTube more than they are TV. And like you were saying, having creators through the line and across all areas of advertising, um, actually seeing creators as, um, you know, You know, the stars of your show and the stars of your brand rather than kind of something that you tag on to something else that's happening bigger over here.

**Sammy Albon:** Totally agree. We usually include Quickfire, but we've kind of run out of time. Uh, but we did go through some before we started recording. So I said to you Crocs and Socks, do you have an opinion on that?

**Beth Heard:** I love Crocs and socks. I'm also really into socks and heels at the moment. I saw a lot of that at Fashion Week and I'm feeling that.

**Sammy Albon:** So you're a serial.

**Beth Heard:** I love a sock. Bare feet. Bare feet for me. Freak. Yeah. Freak me out. Socks all the way.

**Sammy Albon:** Okay. Well, do you know what? I'll actually ask you some of the other ones.

**Beth Heard:** Okay. I think they are

**Beth Heard:** quite

**Sammy Albon:** interesting. TikTok shop? You've not bought anything.

**Beth Heard:** I have bought one thing, but I just think

**Beth Heard:** No, no, it was fine.

**Beth Heard:** But I just, I felt bad about it for like the environment for a while. I couldn't sleep that night. And I just

**Sammy Albon:** What did you buy?

**Beth Heard:** Just this little [00:38:00] keychain. Ridiculous. Um, but I was suggesting it's killing TikTok, um, personally. Oh, you really? Yeah, I think like, I went, you know, you scroll and four out of five, Five videos are either a branded ad or a TikTok shop ad, and I think, um,

**Sammy Albon:** Because you bought once and now they're Oh yeah,

**Beth Heard:** it is crazy, but I'm hearing that a lot, so yeah, no, for me.

**Sammy Albon:** Okay, okay, uh, I'm gonna go through all these questions. Facebook or X? Can we call it Twitter?

**Beth Heard:** We can call it Twitter. Facebook or Twitter? Um, I don't even have Facebook actually, so Twitter.

**Sammy Albon:** I recently deleted mine. Yeah. So much better for you.

**Beth Heard:** Yes,

**Sammy Albon:** yeah. Um, X or YouTube?

**Beth Heard:** YouTube.

**Sammy Albon:** YouTube or Instagram?

**Beth Heard:** YouTube.

**Sammy Albon:** YouTube or TikTok?

**Beth Heard:** YouTube.

**Sammy Albon:** I sense a trend. YouTube or Snapchat?

**Beth Heard:** YouTube.

**Sammy Albon:** Whatsapp or Snapchat?

**Beth Heard:** Whatsapp.

**Sammy Albon:** Gifting or paid partnerships?

**Beth Heard:** Hmm, paid partnerships.

**Sammy Albon:** Um, out of, actually quickly, in a week, how many paid, how many gifting opportunities do you think float your desk?

**Beth Heard:** Actually, [00:39:00] I'm having to look into um, inbox solutions at the moment just as well are gifting.

**Sammy Albon:** Really?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But like, don't get me wrong. They have, they, they do serve a purpose. Like I, yeah, I'm

**Sammy Albon:** like smaller brands and things like that.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. And just, just building relationships and um, yeah, but it is, it is, we have 36 talent who, uh, um,

**Sammy Albon:** so the

**Beth Heard:** inboxes are full.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Follow

**Sammy Albon:** subscribe.

**Beth Heard:** Oh, what's the difference? You mean

**Sammy Albon:** Probably YouTube or Instagram, I guess. Yeah,

**Beth Heard:** subscribe.

**Sammy Albon:** Um, agency or platforms? I think like social influencer platforms.

**Beth Heard:** Agency.

**Sammy Albon:** Right answer. And then podcasts or YouTube videos?

**Beth Heard:** I'm actually going to go podcasts on this one. Yeah. Big podcast fan.

**Sammy Albon:** Who do you listen to?

**Beth Heard:** Um, Usual disclaimer by Eleanor Neil. Uh, Voice Notes by Jordan Teresa. No, I listen to, I listen to, do you know what my [00:40:00] favorite podcast is? It's the Hamish and Andy podcast, if anyone's not heard it. I haven't. It's the biggest podcast in Australia and it's two guys who just chat. Rubbish. Rubbish and it's hilarious.

**Beth Heard:** I'm gonna check it out. So yeah, would recommend.

**Sammy Albon:** Love island.

**Sammy Albon:** Insta stories or lives?

**Beth Heard:** Stories.

**Sammy Albon:** That was it. So that was the quick five.

**Beth Heard:** What was the Crocs one? The rest, the rest were all influencer.

**Sammy Albon:** Make you feel comfortable. Okay, fine. Like Crocs or socks. I feel like

**Beth Heard:** everyone knows me better now.

**Sammy Albon:** I actually, I do wear Crocs. They're my backdoor shoes.

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Beth Heard:** Everyone needs a backdoor shoe. Everyone

**Sammy Albon:** needs a backdoor shoe. Or like a front, pop out the front shoe.

**Beth Heard:** Take the bins off. Oh yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** the bin shoe. You heard it here first. Uh, Crocs are the perfect backdoor pop out to the front shoe. Um, thank you Beth for joining us today. Thank you for

**Beth Heard:** having me. I hope

**Sammy Albon:** you enjoyed the conversation as much as I did.

**Sammy Albon:** We covered a lot of territory, um, but if people want to find out more about Sixteenth, um, or yourself, how can they find you?

**Beth Heard:** Yeah, find me on LinkedIn, [00:41:00] um, or Sixteenth, we're at Sixteenth Talent across every platform. So you can head to our TikTok and you can see my team pissing about. Or head to our Instagram and you'll see all the things our talent are working on.

**Sammy Albon:** And your website is Sixteenth.

**Beth Heard:** co. .

**Beth Heard:** Just.

**Beth Heard:** co.

**Sammy Albon:** Just. co.

**Beth Heard:** Just. co.

**Sammy Albon:** Just. co. Thank you so much for listening to today's episode. We hope you enjoyed it. Please make sure you leave it a review wherever you listened or watched. Make sure you subscribe on YouTube and please make sure you check out Sixteenth Talent at Sixteenth.

**Sammy Albon:** co and all the links that you can find in the description. And Beth, thank you so much for joining us.

**Beth Heard:** Thank you.

**Sammy Albon:** And we will speak to you again next time where we go through more influencer ics, what makes the creator economy turn in the UK, Uh, with far more talented people than I. Uh, and see you again next time.