WTS Pod - Ep.1

**Sammy Albon:** [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to the what they said podcast powered by PrettyGreen. We're really excited to be here. This podcast is dedicated to all things influencer marketing. We're going to chat creator economy, what makes influencers tick, what goes on behind the scenes, a branded partnership, and how to navigate them and a whole other host of different topics.

**Sammy Albon:** I'm really excited by the lineup of guests that we've got. They are industry titans that are far more talented than I. But before we get into that, let me introduce myself. My name's Sammy Albon. I'm the Influencer Strategy Lead at PrettyGreen, and I have eight and a half years experience of being a full time content creator myself.

**Sammy Albon:** So hopefully I can bring that experience to this, share some of my personal experience with you, chat to our wonderful guests about their experiences and really shed a light on the conversations that aren't often had and often omit influences altogether. Welcome to this week's episode where we are joined by the wonderful Jessica [00:01:00] Joseph, founder of Season 25 and head of talent.

**Sammy Albon:** I've got a bio here for you, Jess, but I thought I'd read that out and then you can blush and then we can go into it.

**Jessica Joseph:** Okay, I'll let you do the interview then.

**Sammy Albon:** Correct me if anything's wrong.

**Jessica Joseph:** I will.

**Sammy Albon:** So, Jess started her career in management in 2016. Gaining your experience as a talent manager at the first digital talent management company, Galeen Futures before moving to influencer marketing platform, Wayler, to help build out their global talent arm, Wayler Stars.

**Sammy Albon:** Since starting your venture you've been consistently passionate about levelling up sorry, leveling the playing field and ensuring that the creator economy creates equal opportunities for all talent. And off the back of this, you founded Season 25 just over four years ago as a response to the direct lack of diverse faces and voices across the UK entertainment sphere.

**Sammy Albon:** You showcase change makers within the black community, and as a team, you're inherently understanding of how to impactfully tell the stories of the talent you represent. Welcome, Jess.

**Jessica Joseph:** Thank you. Thanks, Sammy. That was a great intro. [00:02:00]

**Sammy Albon:** Did I get it all right?

**Jessica Joseph:** Ticked it all off. Good. Good. Might as well write them for me.

**Sammy Albon:** I've got spare time. I can do some bios, but I'm really proud to have you on the podcast and I've been following season 25 for a while and you do some really great stuff for the space. So I'd love to hear a little bit about. Season 25. A little bit about you and your mission. Yeah, for sure. At the agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah. Thank you for having me. And we've loved working with you. So I'm excited to be episode one as well, episode four one on honor. So give a little bit of background about, about myself. So it kind of is fitting that I'm on this podcast. That is the whole world of influencer marketing. The reason that I got into this industry is because I was initially obsessed with YouTube.

**Jessica Joseph:** You know, I was one of those people that I, I must have been about 14. I came across a video of Zoella. I can't remember what she was doing at the time, but that

**Sammy Albon:** was probably a messy bun.

**Jessica Joseph:** Probably. It was a hair tutorial. It was some kind of hair tutorial. Probably not for my hair. Yeah, so it was that like real key moment of, this is the, the kind of YouTube OG fame.

**Jessica Joseph:** When I went to uni, obviously I studied fashion [00:03:00] communication and a lot of that was kind of digital marketing and, and what was going to be the future of marketing. And yeah, when I left uni, I knew a lot about gleam. I've been following the kind of journey of all these you know, OG YouTubers.

**Jessica Joseph:** When I realized I had management, I thought, well, you know, what do they need a manager for? We

**Sammy Albon:** weren't aware of. Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** exactly. Yeah. And I was dead set. I was like, this is it. I want to work at a company and I did. I kind of went there as a talent coordinator working on emerging creators within the business.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I had the best experience there. Learned so much from the founder, from, from the talent managers, from the talent that I looked after in the roster. But I think very much knowing that also coming from Bradford very kind of working class city, very. Cultural melting pot on also we see being mixed race coming down to London and working in that industry for the first time, seeing the disparity, you know, and it was very white and middle class at that time, not just a gleam everywhere.

**Jessica Joseph:** And obviously gleam was the first of its kind, digital talent management company, but [00:04:00] more agencies were cropping up, you know, with it months and months on across the industry, it felt like that was replicated. It's a. Knowing that from the, from the beginning, it's something that I've always felt passionate about even when I was, you know, junior and probably not within rights to be suggesting new talent for the roster.

**Sammy Albon:** Big ideas.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah, exactly. But knowing that's what I really wanted to push for. So fast forward, went to whaler helped set where the stars we signed the very exciting Melissa's wardrobe at that time. She was one of the first creators that I worked with there. The cabs family who we still look after six years later.

**Jessica Joseph:** You know, dr Adonis Steinecker, who was an amazing medical doctor, women's health and yeah, so really started to, I guess, think about having a much more diverse roster of creators. And obviously the world of influencer marketing had grown. It wasn't just YouTube. It wasn't long form content. It was Instagram.

**Jessica Joseph:** It was now hosting events. Building podcasts and being, being aware that obviously within the black community, there are so many different narratives and you know, not as not [00:05:00] as non monolithic. There are so many voices out there and that's regional, it's different age groups, it's families. So yeah, that's been the mission of season 25 is to continue growing that and making sure that everybody has It's an equal opportunity to see the success of, of this crazy influencer world.

**Sammy Albon:** I think there's so much you've covered there and I feel like you've just given a whistle stop sort of history of influence marketing in the UK because essentially, I mean the time you're referring to like the OG YouTubers and for those that aren't aware, that is your Isabella's like you mentioned.

**Sammy Albon:** Really at the forerunners of, I mean, in America you had Tyler Oakley and people like that. I used to watch a

**Jessica Joseph:** girl actually called Juicy, yeah Blair, Juicystar07, that was like the first person that I think I subscribed to and she lived this whole different kind of world to me and it was that, it's that like escapism of being like, wow, such, there's such different people out there that we have no idea about and YouTube really allowed us to see that.

**Sammy Albon:** And they're sharing their lives online. Yeah. I yeah. This is tangential, but I think you might relate. I think the first creator I followed was Daily [00:06:00] Grace.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yep.

**Sammy Albon:** Grace Helbig.

**Jessica Joseph:** Of course.

**Sammy Albon:** And I was, I, I loved her content and little me sitting in my home in Essex watching this girl in New York share the fact that she's a comedian and she's doing all this stuff.

**Sammy Albon:** But you have just shared this history of like it wasn't a melting pot. It was very much dominated by white creators. I think I followed community channel, Natalie Tran, she's an Australian based Asian creator. Yeah. And then Glozel. Yeah, Glozel. One of the first black creators to really make it big, but there was a real disparity and you've touched on it rightly so that there were a lot more opportunities for white creators.

**Sammy Albon:** Absolutely. Even so much so, and you're probably aware of this, YouTube Black is YouTube's program to encourage black creators to create on platform. Most YouTube space events had a crime of 100, 000 subscribers. You had to upload three or four times a week. Yeah. All these criteria, they had to really drop that because black creators won't get the same opportunities.

**Sammy Albon:** Chances are they weren't full time creators as well. So they didn't have the income that match their white counterparts. [00:07:00] And this is not to say white creators. It was their fault, but there was a long way to go to make sure it was fair. So for even platforms to recognize that the black The opportunities weren't there,

**Jessica Joseph:** which YouTube have done amazingly.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think we've done so well on that at some point, but we've worked with the YouTube black team across most of the cohorts from, from launching in, in the UK in 2020, I think it's been going in the S a little bit longer. But we actually were in Nairobi last year for the graduation of the 2023 cohort.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yep. So I did a workshop about brand partnerships for, for talent, but seeing all of the creators. The globe like from across the globe come together in one place and YouTube not only financially supporting them but offering a strategic partner manager offering, you know, a growth plan, somebody to lean on and an event space where they, you know, people creators can meet people that they would never have had the chance to collaborate.

**Jessica Joseph:** There was a studio there for people to create content the whole week and I haven't seen that commitment to black black creators from any other platform as of yet. [00:08:00] I'm hoping that, you know, the, we will continue to grow in the right and the right spaces. But I would say that the YouTube black program manager, who's amazing, Abby has really put like set her mark and, you know, continues to do amazing things for all of our roster anyway.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. I think not just YouTube, but, but YouTube in general, we've always been so nurturing of talent versus other platforms like the tick tock creator fund is 100. Yeah. YouTube's paid, what, 40 billion to media and influencers over the past four years alone. Yeah. So it just shows you the platform. And you see that if

**Jessica Joseph:** you ever see the YouTube MD speak, their whole ethos is we need creators on the platform.

**Sammy Albon:** We pay them well.

**Jessica Joseph:** So yeah, definitely agree.

**Sammy Albon:** I mean, we've kind of covered my first question, I think since you started season 25 and even during the industry, I think in 2016, you said,

**Jessica Joseph:** yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** A lot has changed. And I feel like we still got a way to go. But generally, I think the landscape is in a better place now, certainly more mature than it was when you first started.

**Sammy Albon:** But let's be real, not all brand partnerships with influencers are [00:09:00] created equally. And I know As you probably do a lot of talent agents, a lot of agencies have horror stories of where it's gone wrong or not even the committed to a brand deal. But when the most ludicrous deal was come through and you think, how have you many times?

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, how have you thought that this was the right partnership for my talent? Do you have any horror stories? I've got,

**Jessica Joseph:** do you know what? We can bleep out names. These are two kind of like, just let me just run them because they're quite funny to just think about. Recently we got a email in about an IPL hair removal product.

**Jessica Joseph:** Okay. So looked at the products. The first thing that was on the main page of the website was not suitable for X tone of skin. So I think, you know, it had, it had the chart from like your porcelain white skin to To me, and this was like the final

**Sammy Albon:** and that was as far as we would, and I thought

**Jessica Joseph:** this, you know, one of the creators on the roster who is a dark skin.

**Jessica Joseph:** Black female and you know, I had to take a screenshot and say, this is a super easy task for you. So just to kind of have a look at [00:10:00] who the email is going out to, it's obviously apologetic. It didn't, it didn't even get down the line to negotiation, but there's been so many occasions in which we've had, you know, emails about hair brands, product launches, come to try this out in the salon and me just quickly, is this suitable for Afro hair?

**Jessica Joseph:** Is this suitable for 4C hair? Really? Sorry, no, it's not. And I think that kind of thing is, is ignorance, you know Doing talent. I understand that now doing kind of like talent outreach and research. The industry's grown to such a level. There's thousands of creators, but that is just the tiny one step to make sure that you're catering to the right audiences.

**Sammy Albon:** It's just courtesy.

**Jessica Joseph:** It's courtesy. Yeah, I

**Sammy Albon:** think we've worked with quite a few hair brands where it stops at three C. Yeah, so we're There's a lot of due diligence that needs to be done on PrettyGreen side.

**Jessica Joseph:** That's also the hair care industry. But there are so many products now for black textured, curly, kinky, coily hair.

**Jessica Joseph:** That, you know, every brand doesn't need to be suitable to every kind of hair type, but at least work out who your email, if you're the person that you're emailing [00:11:00] is going to be right for that product. More, I guess, general horror stories. Where to begin?

**Sammy Albon:** Choose your favorite. Choose my favorite.

**Jessica Joseph:** I'm going to choose the most recent.

**Jessica Joseph:** Because it's because it's in my head, so we've had actually a bit of a, I guess a situation with, we'll go through this, but we see as management, as an agent, we are there to protect talent. So we're there to protect talent. Understand the industry more than they do so they can get on with their job, creating amazing content, working with their favorite brand,

**Sammy Albon:** best interests, make sure absolutely in the right way.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah. And also, you know, when it's not going well, what can we do to make sure there's still growth and all those kind of things? But we are there as a, I guess, as a middleman to some extent taking away lots of the admin, the heavy lifting, the negotiation, the contract. And we've worked with an agency a fair amount of times.

**Jessica Joseph:** Again, they are the middleman between them and the brand. However, we also have worked with said brand on numerous occasions and not just in terms of kind of [00:12:00] social partnerships, really big moments for this specific talent. So we're going through

**Sammy Albon:** independently with this brand. We have then also through.

**Sammy Albon:** An influence marketing agency,

**Jessica Joseph:** influence marketing agency. So we've worked with this brand who have, they have many different verticals. We've worked with their PR team, we've worked on paid social, we've seen them at events, so it's a really important relationship to us. But cool. We'll work through the agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** What happened was there is a massive kind of miscommunication between The influence and marketing agency, the brand and us, you know, the creative was signed off. Our, our creators went to film this content. They have Children. They've got young Children.

**Sammy Albon:** They're bringing them along.

**Jessica Joseph:** They're bringing them along.

**Jessica Joseph:** They're giving up the weekend to shoot with an idea that's been signed off. And actually, it turns out this idea wasn't signed off by the brand. The agency had given us written confirmation. They've given us a green light to shoot the content. So when we're getting further down the line now, we're speaking about reshoots.

**Jessica Joseph:** We're speaking about doesn't follow the [00:13:00] brief. We didn't sign this off and we've had to get to a level where it's like, okay, we're now myself and the director of this agency on a call and me having to bring up the receipts. This is what the account exec said.

**Sammy Albon:** We'll have a paper chain.

**Jessica Joseph:** We all have a paper chain and in that moment they accepted responsibility.

**Jessica Joseph:** Like we've completely messed this up. You know, we shouldn't have signed this off. The client hadn't seen the creative treatment. And then

**Sammy Albon:** that puts the risk that there's a risk that the brand would then obviously never want to work with potentially you again, potentially the talent, even though they've

**Jessica Joseph:** actually happened.

**Jessica Joseph:** And that's really unfortunate situation in which had there been better communication between all parties. On that side, we could have avoided any of this happening or found a solution. But I think, you know, they've kind of tried to manage that brand relationship in internally without kind of telling us the real situation.

**Jessica Joseph:** And now this brand thinks that actually we've been difficult to work with. The talent have been difficult to work with. They've not taken instruction well, but from our perspective, we've taken everything off like perfectly. And I

**Sammy Albon:** think for me, [00:14:00] that is, Sorry to cut you off, but I think that is a key thing that is wrong here, because I think it is the agency's role in this situation to do that balancing act, not your role as in the influence marketing agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** I think it'd be useful for listeners or viewers aren't aware just to talk through the process of how a typical brand deal would go. So PrettyGreen would shortlist influencers, including season 25 talent. We'd then reach out to you and say, look, this is the job at hand. This is what we'd like you to do.

**Sammy Albon:** Here's the brief. Then you take it to a talent, have a back and forth about, is this something you want to do?

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** which I

**Jessica Joseph:** think that's a really important part to discuss as well as making sure that like it's the right brand fit and these guys do this very well. We've never had any issues working, working with with anyone from your agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think that sometimes we, we've got, yeah, the only time we've had issues is, yeah, where there's like, Maybe not that relationship between the agency, agent and talent. And I think this kind of thing, working together, making sure that it's face time with, you know, the agency that you're working with, making [00:15:00] sure even the client, the influences know who they're speaking to and building really good relationships means that we can avoid the

**Sammy Albon:** campaign is as well.

**Sammy Albon:** Absolutely. Yeah, I think often that I'm sure you can attest this. It's often not conveyed to you. Yeah, this is an awareness campaign. That is true. Or we want to drive sales. There would never be from outside anyway, there'd never be. We expect you to achieve X. There's only so much that an influence on yourself can control and there's the algorithms taken into mind.

**Sammy Albon:** But I think for me, and I'm therapizing this situation for you, it feels as though in this instance, influence marketing agency was far more likely to be you know, Safeguarding their relationship with the client over ensuring that there's a fair experience for all parties involved.

**Jessica Joseph:** That's exactly how it, how it feels slash felt.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I think that that takes me on to like a couple of other horror stories. I appreciate actually, we didn't go through the rest of that brand campaign. So yeah, we go through the brief, we send over fees, we agree the fees and then, and then usually what would happen is we would send over a rough idea of this is what we [00:16:00] feel what's best for the influencers channel in terms of content.

**Jessica Joseph:** May even do a write up the video starts X, Y and Z, then we would expect to the brand or the agency on behalf of the brand to sign that off so that we can avoid reshooting exactly. And then obviously we go through our approval stages. Cool. There might be small, minimal amends, and then the content goes live.

**Jessica Joseph:** And obviously we manage making sure that goes live on time and making sure we send insights to yourself afterwards. So, yeah, that's the kind of general process of the brand partnership.

**Sammy Albon:** Anyone listening as well, reshoots, and I cannot stress this enough, should be the absolute. Last,

**Jessica Joseph:** absolutely

**Sammy Albon:** last thing that happens that you should prioritize every other solution before it gets to reshoot partly because the influencers are busy is not the only branded partnership they're doing and your branded partnership.

**Sammy Albon:** Sorry to say brands is probably the lowest on the priority list for them ensuring their content and then usual style and theme and feed is is protected and you have to remember that your branded partnership is just a moment in the narrative. So how do you make sure that [00:17:00] you're working with them really effectively?

**Sammy Albon:** You collaborate and you make this a very collaborative experience being too prescriptive. Absolutely. Doesn't do anyone any favors.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think that was the, the other part of horror stories is this comes in, it's like this version of events that happens in many different ways is okay, we've, we've actually working with the brand direct or even agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** We've gotten to the point of sharing the content. And again, it's all in line with it's the creative treatment. We followed their description to a T and they just, they just don't like it. It's not branded enough. So they come with suggestions and you know, we're really, we're trying to make sure that the content performs as you want it to perform.

**Jessica Joseph:** So if we're going to add more brand moments and if we're going to cut the whole intro to the video, which is. That nice natural family moment and go straight to three seconds of the brand name. It's not random product. We've got your best interests at heart here, too. We want the content to perform well.

**Jessica Joseph:** So I think it's where there's that lack of understanding that you are also utilizing the channel or the, you know, influences audience that we understand their audience. We [00:18:00] know what they like, what they don't like when they switch off in terms of you know, audience viewers that. So I think that can be difficult, but

**Sammy Albon:** I think it's an education piece, right?

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, I'm sure. Particularly from your side as well and we'll get onto equal opportunities for black creators to but a lot of your role is education. Absolutely. You're educating brands, you're helping educate influencers that perhaps aren't business savvy. Yeah. So they've sort of stumbled into being influencers.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. I think all the best one has. Yeah. But yeah, I wanted to my next question was kind of tying into all we've said and there's some real meaty ones I'd love to get

**Jessica Joseph:** into

**Sammy Albon:** with you. Great. But we know that black creators have traditionally. undervalued themselves. I think that's fair to say. But PrettyGreen.

**Sammy Albon:** We have our, we call it as for all framework is our DNI framework. Make sure we challenge unconscious bias, whether that's a briefing and I haven't written it thinking, Oh, this is a parent site. It's a for a mom and it's for a white mom, you know? So we, we have different members of the team check our briefs.

**Sammy Albon:** And we, even what we pitched to clients as well, making sure that we're upholding our DNI commitments. But as part of that is for all framework is Ensuring that the campaigns are [00:19:00] inclusive, but also fair pay.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah. Making

**Sammy Albon:** sure that there's been so many instances where black creators have charged a fraction, the same level as perhaps like a white male.

**Sammy Albon:** And do you see that

**Jessica Joseph:** from your perspective? Definitely.

**Sammy Albon:** And we see that and we've said actually. This is the rate that we are going to pay you, you know, we'll up their fee and say, based on what we're paying X creator. I've

**Jessica Joseph:** never heard that from an agency. Oh, really? No, I've

**Sammy Albon:** heard other agencies say it. I don't know if maybe

**Jessica Joseph:** I've just not had the discussion with them or we've not ever come across, you know, like we've never, we maybe haven't had to have to battle for fees with them.

**Jessica Joseph:** So yeah, that's really interesting. I think

**Sammy Albon:** also when it comes to, When it comes to black talent, they will already have a fee that is lower than what their white counterparts are. Because in the first instance, we always try and meet the rate, but there's been so many instances where someone's charged a couple hundred pounds or quite a few deliverables when someone else has charged a couple of grand.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I think that the reason why I knew when launching season 25 that I felt I had the expertise, knowledge and ability to, to try and level the playing field is because I did have experience at gleam because I did work at whaler. Like I [00:20:00] had a really deep understanding of what rate cards were across such a variety of different creators, you know, especially like top tier white creators who I might see have the exact same engagement rate as a black creator.

**Jessica Joseph:** As one of the biggest black youtubers that we work with. So I can say confidently I back myself on these fees. So if you know your value, Yeah, exactly. And that's how we've continued to build a business. And I think having that experience firsthand in the beginning made, you know, made complete sense to then continue to where we are now at season 25.

**Sammy Albon:** Definitely. I think kind of my question was, Off the back of that, do you feel right now in the UK that there is fair pay for black creators?

**Jessica Joseph:** Had you asked me after right after the resurgence of the BLM movement. So if we're speaking December 2020, I would say we're in the peak moment of not just fair pay, but fair opportunity.

**Jessica Joseph:** We were in a position where we were inundated with inbound, like, [00:21:00] Amazing brand partnership opportunities and we weren't having to fight tooth and nail. But what I know was a fair fee for such campaign

**Sammy Albon:** were these brands that you'd worked with before or what had never worked. I would say,

**Jessica Joseph:** I would say 60 percent new brand partners.

**Jessica Joseph:** 40 percent we'd worked with previously. Now there were some people already doing a great job. Some agencies already doing a great job. We've worked with PNG for years and years through their influence marketing team, and we've never had to, it's just been positive from the offset, they get it, you know, they, they understand what inherently, like what it means to have diverse partnerships.

**Jessica Joseph:** We've never, you know, that's a great example of someone that we've never had to kind of educate. But yeah, 60 percent I would say from that 20 from June 2020 to December 2020, obviously I'd set up a new business. So it wasn't, I wasn't under the name of Whaler or Gleam. So yeah, maybe we'd worked with that partner a year ago at a different agency.

**Jessica Joseph:** But yeah, I would say from now, from 2020 to now, fees generally have We've increased, I would say we're in a better position [00:22:00] and also you've got to think of the fact that our creators, you know have maybe grown in size, we've managed to keep great engagement rates, we've increased their production value.

**Jessica Joseph:** So and also inflation. So we've had to keep increasing fees to make sure that they're fair with industry standard, but also we're seeing a bit less pushback in terms of working with brands who, you know, it will agree said fees. What I will say has been noticeable is the I would say trajectory and decline of the amount of work that we've done over the maybe the past 12 months.

**Jessica Joseph:** So we were 2020. It was like this huge spike and then 2021 great. We maintain that level 2022 starting to dip a little bit. And then 2023 last year was a really quiet year. Yeah. And I would say noticeably quieter and across the board. And I don't know whether you would say that working.

**Sammy Albon:** I think that, I think.

**Sammy Albon:** I'd be interested to hear the rest of your point. I think there was a lot of the cost of living involved in that and brands dialing back what they're spending on. I mean, generally the spend on influence [00:23:00] was going up, but I think a lot of brands that were really activated on influence were like, actually, by just being scrutinized, let's take a step back.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** But I wonder if it impacted yourself more than.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I also wonder, the one thing that I can say that was, has been a positive is that Absolutely. And across every single client we work with, we've increased average deal price. So even though we might be doing less campaigns, we're doing the quality, the quality and the value of them has increased.

**Jessica Joseph:** So it's been a good thing. And it means that actually what I know for myself and definitely for, for the creators who were here from the offset of season 25, the sad reality is like, we didn't know when this might, might end. So I think we were to the point of burnout. Like it was really intense for a good year or so.

**Jessica Joseph:** So it's allowed to maintain earnings for the past year, but take a little step back in terms of workload.

**Sammy Albon:** I would, I really want to talk about burnout because I think this is something that brands When influencers work [00:24:00] full time and they're putting their persona online, there's something I struggled with.

**Sammy Albon:** the reasons I stopped creating was because the person I created online and persona I crafted was really at odds with not you. It wasn't me. It wasn't who I was off, off camera. And I think burnout is a thing that certainly a lot of my friends that are creators still struggle with on the weekly basis.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** And I think it never ends. It never ends, you know? And you know, and I think an interesting point for you as well is when, Brands give feedback on content, but forget to say they liked it.

**Jessica Joseph:** Sometimes for me, I want to actually respond and be like, did you actually, I might send something and I'm like, Oh my God, I'm blown away.

**Jessica Joseph:** This is amazing. We've just signed a new creator, Pelle Newell. If you haven't followed him, go and have a look at him now. He is a motion graphic designer. And to the point of, like, receiving content yesterday, I could have jumped off my chair. I was like, this is so exciting. First partnership we've done together.

**Jessica Joseph:** Please tell

**Sammy Albon:** me the brand. And the

**Jessica Joseph:** brand just, the brand replied to something like, they didn't even say, not

**Sammy Albon:** mentioned at nought 31. And you're like,

**Jessica Joseph:** yeah. And to me [00:25:00] it could be on television. So you know, we were like, even internally on slack, I've seen this, it's so great. And I think that can be really disheartening.

**Jessica Joseph:** I sometimes want to add in when I'm sending talent feedback.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jessica Joseph:** You've done an amazing job. The client said it's the most amazing thing they've ever seen. Yeah, because I think we can. We've been maybe desensitized to the fact of what we're doing is some of these edits take people like 12 hours, 24 hours.

**Jessica Joseph:** And you know, they pull their heart and soul into trying to make this in something that they're really proud of, that you really like. They want to work with you again. And yeah, as you say, like that can be a little bit disheartening

**Sammy Albon:** because I guess if when they get a wall of feedback and it's just brand not meant to be here, logo seen at X and it's like, what did you think of the content?

**Sammy Albon:** Sometimes it's like,

**Jessica Joseph:** you know, the middle point of just adding a bit of like personality, like we don't feel this is necessary. Remove.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Can we walk this down? So it's just brand mentions, please. It's like you're missing the point.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yes. I mean, just this week we've had a similar thing to that where we thought this interview process was going to be a bit about having fun on the red carpet, a [00:26:00] little bit of the brand mentioned here and we got the final edit and we're like, where's half of the brand?

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, definitely lots of moments like that. But kind of in relation to the burnout conversation, I think a lot of it is. As you say, so now with creators who are personally personality driven. So lots of personality, different content. This person is expected to be entertaining at all times and you know, not have a day off and be consistently like improving on their content, be consistently engaging with followers and obviously creating brand content.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I think There is a lot of like outside perspective that this is an easy job. And most

**Sammy Albon:** kids leaving school want to be. Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** I've heard that

**Sammy Albon:** 70 percent 70

**Jessica Joseph:** percent of kids would love to be a youtuber. Don't quote

**Sammy Albon:** that. It might be higher than that or it might be a lot less. But and

**Jessica Joseph:** I think having obviously, you know, you've worked in this industry for the same amount of time as I have knowing now the input of effort versus what might have been eight years [00:27:00] ago.

**Jessica Joseph:** You know, I'm not saying that nobody worked hard, but there was less people doing this as a full time job. You had more opportunity to go around. Yeah, exactly. Definitely. So it's a, it's a, Hard is a hard slog, I would say, and you're always having to kind of up level on your skill set. And I think lots of creators, yeah, they might do this full time, and maybe it seems like they're earning they're owning a good living for themselves, which they are.

**Jessica Joseph:** But remembering that they're investing that into equipment, you know, potentially an editor overheads working with managers. You know, lots of it is reinvesting that back into the business to make sure that they can stay at their A game so they can continue this as a full time job.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, definitely. I think, to make burnout easier. If brands, brand managers, or anyone that is working with influencers listing. Please just give some nice feedback if you like the content say you like it or just appreciate the hours that went into making it Yeah, even if you're working with 50 influencers, just remember there's a human I

**Jessica Joseph:** think from all sides of this process the key my key takeaway would be just be nice, you know We're not working.

**Jessica Joseph:** We're not surgeons. [00:28:00] We're not it doesn't have to be super serious like build great relationships and Treat each other with respect, you know

**Sammy Albon:** I think what blows me away and you've been to plenty of we did a podcast about it Together and I think we always go to these events. I think people forget that this entire industry.

**Sammy Albon:** The fact that we have a job is literally built on the shoulders of inherently creative people.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** that perhaps aren't business savvy.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah,

**Sammy Albon:** they didn't go to business school. Yeah, exactly. Maybe they're a mom and they've started a side channel and they're suddenly a business school. Successful comedian on their Instagram.

**Sammy Albon:** I think people forget that and influencers are really omitted from this. So remember that when you are giving feedback or when we work with influencers, this is a human industry. Exactly. And we all love AI and we're all trying to automate everything we do these days. But ultimately, and this is why I don't like platforms, they're like, You sign up to as an influencer.

**Sammy Albon:** That's it. It's every 'cause It remove that human element. Every part

**Jessica Joseph:** of even consuming content is about human connection. Exactly. The reason you subscribe to someone's content is because you like them, you wanna know more about them. Mm-Hmm. And as a brand, you are, you are getting into that. Yeah. So like we're all humans.

**Jessica Joseph:** Like it has to be about being [00:29:00] nice to each other, understanding, having an element of flexibility. Like you said, you know, we're in a position where some creators are parents. You know, they might be doing this as a side hustle, baby might have been rushed to A& E. The deadline has to be moved because it's just, we're humans at the end of the day.

**Jessica Joseph:** So I think that flexibility and you know, relationship building is, is a really key part of making this just a nice place to work for everyone.

**Sammy Albon:** Okay. So I'd like to know, I'm sure your approach about this all the time. When should influencers consider management? And if they're not at that stage, what advice would you give them?

**Sammy Albon:** Black creators specifically in the UK.

**Jessica Joseph:** I would say to consider management. You must be at a point, not must be, but you should be at a point in which you have taken your brand, your channel, your partnerships to the highest level you think you can do by yourself. For me, it's about elevating and developing with a team rather than handing over because I don't want to do [00:30:00] it or And definitely not a status thing.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think some people think if I have management, it makes it will make me look more professional. But actually, you've got to think about what your current earnings are. The opportunities that you're already managing to gain by yourself. You know, your management should just be an addition of value to what you're already doing.

**Jessica Joseph:** So if you're managing value,

**Sammy Albon:** you can bring

**Jessica Joseph:** absolutely together together. And I think if you're not being kind of inundated with emails and you're able to, you know, Respond in a timely manner. You're able to build great relationships with brands. You've got your own ideas and know your

**Sammy Albon:** value. Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** you're pitching yourself.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think lean on friends in the industry and lean on, you know, maybe other managers that you know of, if you ever want to run fees by them, I'm sure they'll be there to give you a helping hand. And I would say that the right time isn't about. Following numbers. It's not about audience size. It's really about when you feel you've elevated your brand to the best it can be.

**Jessica Joseph:** What more can a more can management bring you? What

**Sammy Albon:** opportunities can it unlock and how can it take you? And I [00:31:00] suppose strategically you spoke about building podcasts and I know a lot with a lot of your talent, you're thinking more long term. Absolutely. So I guess it's that next level of formalizing what you do and having a plan in place to think about what is the next level and how do I get there?

**Jessica Joseph:** Exactly that. And I think we sometimes sit down with potential new clients. And my question for you is, what do you see for yourself? And if you expect me to be the person to tell you this is your career path, it doesn't work in that way. And I think a lot of people think, cool, I'll sign to management and then like, all my dreams will come true or they will decide for me what's best for me.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think it's not about that. It's about you having a really strong idea of what you want to achieve. And what are your dream long term goals and us saying, okay, this is how we use our network, your hard work, our hard work to get there together. Yeah. So I would say if you're in a position where you feel confident managing your own partnerships and you feel confident with you know, the fees that you're charging, the ideas that you're pitching to brands then continue doing that until you're at a point where [00:32:00] you think this is it.

**Jessica Joseph:** I've really done all I can do by myself and now I need additional support.

**Sammy Albon:** In that vein then, so say, say someone hasn't listened to your advice and they're still like, I need to get an agent. We both know there's a lot of cowboy agents out there. How do you spot a bad opportunity whether it's a brand deal or whether it's an agent that is pursuing you should they consider being on one of these massive lists where there's non exclusivities that, you know, some agents have like 50 names on there, but only two of them are like exclusively signed to them.

**Sammy Albon:** What? I like the common trope to be aware of. Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** I was gonna say that's like

**Sammy Albon:** a big question. Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** it's a big question. I would say that the first thing to be aware of, let's go agent management conversation first is every creator is very different as is every management company. For me, if I were a creator, what I want to look at is do your values as a business align with my personal values and that of the brand.

**Jessica Joseph:** So do you, you know, are you really focused on business growth and revenue? Cause you can probably go to one of the big conglomerate [00:33:00] agencies whose focus is making money and being, having a big profile and probably there's going to be less nurture in that position and more like, this is how we're going to get there.

**Jessica Joseph:** Do you like that small family feel like, do you want to be supported, you know, outside of just revenue? Are you interested in. You know, it's more about relationship and you want someone who you feel that you can trust who you can stay with for five years. And I think it's about value align, having your values aligned with that team.

**Jessica Joseph:** And the thing that you said about the non exclusive roster of hundreds of people, You know, have a look at, have a look at websites, have a look at the size of the roster, have a look at how many people work at that business and see what you feel. And what they're doing. Yeah, exactly. So what is the result of that work?

**Jessica Joseph:** There might be some one house, like one, one person powerhouses who can really successfully manage 10 graders and do a good job. And there might be these huge businesses with loads of staff who actually don't feel like they're getting any results. So [00:34:00] it's all about research. And the best thing to do is if you've got an about a management company, about an agency, I would say go and have a speak, go and have a chat to someone on their roster because that's another talent.

**Jessica Joseph:** They're going to give you the most honest feedback.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, fair. That's a very good point because I think certainly when I started in about 2013, there were a lot of around gleam. There was agencies that were formed that I signed up to that. I guess kind of ultimately then took advantage of the talent they had passing brand deals that came in from one person to go to someone else.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I think unless that's it, there's, there's, there's got to be a trance, like really transparent relationship between manager and creator. And for you to be able to back yourself to, you know, address those points as they come up. And if it feels wrong, if sometimes it's a gut feeling, if this feels wrong, then maybe it's not for me.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah,

**Jessica Joseph:** exactly.

**Sammy Albon:** I had one question that I kind of omitted and I guess we, before I get into my quick fire ones that I want to go through with you. We touched on that 2020 moment of like awakening and people realizing that there is a lot [00:35:00] more work to do. Did you think it was an authentic shift and has it felt authentic since?

**Jessica Joseph:** Oh, I will say. Maybe naive me at the beginning of 2020 thought this, this is it. Like the change is happening. I would say over time, the. inauthentic partnerships have reared their heads. You know, I can, I can see now that lots of that was based on performance, like it was performative. And you know, you, you only have to look at some of the brand trips that were called out last year.

**Jessica Joseph:** I can say it because everyone was speaking about it, you know, mango, they took 30 white. female influences on a brand trip. And, you know, actually, sorry, I think they had, they had one creator who I love Indian creator. But apart from that, there was nobody, there was nobody who was maybe bigger than a size 12.

**Jessica Joseph:** There were no black faces. And you've got to think about these things and understand that we, we were in a position where. In the [00:36:00] moment where it was key and all eyes were on you, everybody was making the right decisions to work with as many diverse creators as possible. And slowly over time as the conversation stopped and we're being loud behind the scenes, you know, obviously the conversations that we have as management are always focused around making sure that people are committed in the longterm.

**Jessica Joseph:** You know, we really want to work with brands on a longterm basis, but we want to remind them why they're working with the creators that they're working with. You know, on our roster. So I would say that, yeah, there has been inauthentic partnerships that we maybe thought to be something more than that.

**Jessica Joseph:** But lots of, lots of brands who have made those changes and agencies like yourself and stuck to them, you know, you've just spoken through your the process that you have. And I think that's great to hear. And hopefully other people listen to this. You maybe don't have those initiatives yet. Use this as, as like ammo to go and get those kind of set.

**Sammy Albon:** Definitely. I think if I was a brand considering agency or if I was a brand myself, I think one of the first things that you need to consider is Who are [00:37:00] the people that we're working with that look, live, or sound like our target audience? And that doesn't just mean like you said, the experience of mango of white creators.

**Sammy Albon:** That means age, gender, sex, race, religion areas of the UK they're from. And I think That's not followed through enough. Often a lot of brands or agencies talk the talk, but when it comes down to it, it's just the same old.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I think, you know, use smaller agencies that have a niche and a key focus as consultants come and say, you know, cool, we maybe didn't work with anyone from your roster.

**Jessica Joseph:** It might not even be talent management companies. There's so many other small agencies that work in entertainment, that work in PR, that run influence marketing campaigns. Specifically if we're looking for a creative color, that would be seven, six or vamp ourselves were always there if you want to use someone as a consultant and bring them in and bring in someone else and completely other different background and say, what are we doing wrong?

**Jessica Joseph:** How can we You know, how can we make positive changes for the elevator strategies? Absolutely. Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** Is that something you do a lot of?

**Jessica Joseph:** I would [00:38:00] like to do more of. We, we definitely offer that service if anyone's listening, but also, you know, we don't speak on behalf of everyone. And I don't, I don't claim to him.

**Jessica Joseph:** I think if you're going to take advice from us on working with black creators, you should be taking advice from how to work. We're on the same level with the LGBTQ community with disabled creators. So you know, we don't speak for everyone and you should be making sure to, to work and hear the voices of everybody who's in a marginalized community.

**Sammy Albon:** Couldn't have said it better. That's beautiful. We have some quick fire questions. Yeah. Just a bit of fun. Just wind down the to wind down the serious chat, because the quick fire questions I want to throw your way and we'll do this in every single episode. There is no right or wrong answer, but know that I will judge you if you say the wrong one or ever yeah, be nervous, be terrified.

**Sammy Albon:** So I'll go through these. You can have your opinion. You can chat for each one. You can just refuse to answer if you, if you so wish vlogs or reels,

**Jessica Joseph:** reels,

**Sammy Albon:** snap or what's up.

**Jessica Joseph:** What's up.

**Sammy Albon:** Do you snap?

**Jessica Joseph:** No.

**Sammy Albon:** I'm not [00:39:00] 14.

**Jessica Joseph:** Look, I'm trying to get back into it. Are you? It's the snaps. Yeah. We've got a lot of conversations happening.

**Jessica Joseph:** So maybe we should all re download.

**Sammy Albon:** Let's, I'll snap you if you snap me. Okay. It's a deal. Lo fi content or high production?

**Jessica Joseph:** High production. I'm a sucker.

**Sammy Albon:** You're a YouTube? Yeah. YouTube fan. LinkedIn or Pinterest?

**Jessica Joseph:** LinkedIn. Sorry, Pinterest. Only for home decoration. I've started a board. Yeah. And I don't know what do you look at it?

**Sammy Albon:** No,

**Jessica Joseph:** I do look interest, but LinkedIn is my current like thing.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, fine. Be real or threads.

**Jessica Joseph:** Threads right now. Are you

**Sammy Albon:** actually using thread?

**Jessica Joseph:** I read other people's threads because it's in my feed now. I can't help clicking. What it is is I have a short attention span and I'm easily distracted.

**Sammy Albon:** Same.

**Jessica Joseph:** And I love the meta team.

**Jessica Joseph:** Let it be head.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. Fine. Influence that or creator.

**Jessica Joseph:** Creator.

**Sammy Albon:** Why?

**Jessica Joseph:** Because, I would say that creators have influence. I like to, I like to think of our roster, they are inherently creative people.

**Sammy Albon:** Producers? With

**Jessica Joseph:** influence.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah. I like that. Vinted or [00:40:00] Depop?

**Jessica Joseph:** Vinted. I've just sold five things in a week.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah, look at you go. This is the first for me.

**Sammy Albon:** Are they all PR gifted things? No,

**Jessica Joseph:** never. We're moving and I did a clear out and I thought everybody's talking about Vinted. I made like 250 quid.

**Sammy Albon:** Nice. You did a Marie Kondo. I did. I did

**Jessica Joseph:** exactly that.

**Sammy Albon:** Reels or TikTok?

**Jessica Joseph:** Reels. I'm, I'm old school still. Are you

**Sammy Albon:** okay?

**Sammy Albon:** I'm

**Jessica Joseph:** still getting into TikTok in a personal level, yeah. Obviously for work, I'm on it. I'm on it, but I've not yet been sucked into the point of like, wow, I've been on TikTok for four hours.

**Sammy Albon:** Yeah, I've got a mate that sends me rules that are actually tiktoks that I saw. Six months. Gifting or paid opportunities.

**Sammy Albon:** Paid opportunities, . Amen. Favorite.

**Jessica Joseph:** Ooh, most recently I'm da da da da. Of course I

**Sammy Albon:** exactly what you're talking about. All you had to do was did it.

**Jessica Joseph:** I'm from Bradford. Of course I love going out for a curry that curry capital of England for five years running

**Sammy Albon:** actually. Yeah. I need to visit. Which influence are we all sleeping on?[00:41:00]

**Jessica Joseph:** Pelle and you, second shout out. Follow him now.

**Sammy Albon:** If you haven't already, now's your chance. Podcasts or YouTube videos?

**Jessica Joseph:** Podcasts. With a YouTube video that I can watch if I want to.

**Sammy Albon:** Love shopping.

**Jessica Joseph:** Live shopping. Is that an option? Or is there another?

**Sammy Albon:** No, that's it. Just like, how do you feel? Live shopping? Yes or no?

**Sammy Albon:** Not for me. Yet. Well, that was it. That was, that was the podcast. You made it through the quickfire round. I'm pleased to let you know that you scored at least one.

**Jessica Joseph:** Oh my gosh. Only one.

**Sammy Albon:** I'm joking. I didn't tally. No idea. We weren't scoring that. But thank you so much for joining me. Thank you for

**Jessica Joseph:** having me.

**Sammy Albon:** I feel like. There's so much work to be done in terms of DNI within influence marketing, specifically opportunities for black creators. So if people want to find out more about season 25, they can head to your website, which is season 25. com.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah.

**Sammy Albon:** And also check you out on LinkedIn.

**Jessica Joseph:** Yeah. Check me out on LinkedIn or drop me an email if you want to.

**Jessica Joseph:** It's Jessica at season 25. com follows on Instagram at season 25 and yeah, I've had a great time. Thank you so much for having me. You're absolutely

**Sammy Albon:** welcome. Everything will be linked to wherever you [00:42:00] found this. Thanks. Probably difficult and Apple podcast and Spotify, but on YouTube, et cetera, there'll be links to season 25 and all the amazing work they're doing and make sure you check out their brilliant talent.

**Sammy Albon:** And hopefully you can come back again at some point. I would

**Jessica Joseph:** love to. Thank you for another

**Sammy Albon:** quick fire round.

**Jessica Joseph:** A better one. I was under pressure. Bye. Perfect.

**Sammy Albon:** Thank you so much for listening to the what they said podcast for this episode. We were joined by the wonderful Jess but make sure you please review this podcast wherever you listen to it.

**Sammy Albon:** We'll Whether that's an Apple podcast, Spotify, make sure you subscribe on YouTube. So you can stay up to date with future episodes and we look forward to seeing you next time where we'll chat more rubbish about the influencer marketing economy in the UK, we'll do some quick fire questions and also learn some more influencer ics from the PrettyGreen office.

**Sammy Albon:** See you next time.