

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

[Magic Hour Podcast | Episode 12 | Josie Bell](#)

Welcome to the magic hour podcast, where we create an intentional space to let our curiosity drive a conversation with industry professionals about marketing, entrepreneurship, inclusion, and socially conscious topics. We are grateful to be hosting this podcast on the traditional ancestral and unceded territories of the coast to Salish peoples. I'm your host, Hope Mikal from Unicorn Marketing Co. Let's make some magic.

Today I'm chatting with Josie Piper from the Fickl app. Josie brings a marketer's lens to UXY design and tech as she built her own app right from scratch.

0:55 Please tell me a little bit about yourself and about your app!

- Josie is the founder of Fickl, Fickl Marketing.
- She fell in love with helping really micro enterprises. They are usually just one business owner who's doing everything and they needed a bit of help with their marketing.
- The pandemic hit and like for many people, everything changed completely. The businesses Josie worked with did not have the ability to pay or they did not even need marketing at that point because many of them closed their doors because they couldn't continue business.
- Josie had noticed a problem that a lot of small business owners just didn't really have much budget to outsource their marketing, and they were often asking for advice on how they could do it themselves.
- All Josie could recommend was the typical marketing tools that we often recommend to small businesses, but they're really built for professionals who are doing it all the time, not for a small business owner.

6:24 What is this Fickl app? Can you tell me a bit about that?

- Fickl is the marketing management app for small business owners. Helping them to plan, create, schedule, and analyze all of their marketing in one place.
- The goal is to make it a really easy multi channel marketing experience.

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7:13 I want to know what was this process like building your app? What was it like to start with this idea and then have a finished product?

- Bittersweet. It's the highest highs and the lowest lows.
- The feeling of creating something from scratch is incredible. But there are times when you feel like you're literally in swimming in the deep ocean and there's no life boat around you.
- Some competitors were really big ones like Hootsuite and Later. We're built for small business owners who aren't marketers. So it's definitely a bit different in that case, but those are really big competitors.
- Also MailChimp, because we have a big suite of email marketing tools, less so Asana, but a lot of people do plan their marketing in Asana and project management tools.
- Every time Josie would pitch it, it was really hard to explain to people why it's different.
- One of the biggest challenges really, um, in terms of building the product and the process of that was that I'm not a coder.

10:45 Did you feel a lack of confidence? Or a bit of like identity crisis about your app when in those early days, you're talking to potential customers and they're comparing you to these bigger products like later in Hootsuite?

- Interestingly at first, no.
- For the first year and a half, I was just very excited.
- Although the imposter syndrome definitely came in later.

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13:30 How was this learning curve of designing and building a tech product as a non technical founder?

- It was very difficult. Josie had no UX UI experience and didn't actually even know what UX UI was.
- Technical skills at that point, in terms of designing the app, were so limited.
- One particular book that Josie recommends to anyone who is thinking about building a product is Design Sprint by Jake Knapp.
- Recommend that anyone who's thinking about building a product, learn how to do it on paper first, because it's so much easier to make changes than when you've created a whole digital prototype first.
- You just need to understand how your customer thinks and wants to move through the app. And you have to actually trust that they know what works best for them and what's most efficient for them and what things they care about. And let that lead you in terms of what features to build.

19:38 Do you feel like your background in marketing helped or hindered your approach to product design? Did you find some ways of problem solving and getting through that moment?

- Josie's background in marketing really helped the product design.
- She can really understand the whole user journey from start to finish and continuation.

21:32 A day in your life - what does a look like for you?

- Every day is just so different, so, so different.
- Scientific research and development, economic development grants, those sorts of things can be a huge part of the job and they're quite intense. And then other days I could be doing sales demos.
- One of the things I love so much about being at this stage of the business is that I get to do so many things and I really get to create a job that I love and challenges me in so many different ways.

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23:14 Do you have a team or are you doing this by yourself?

- Right now we have one developer, but we've gone through several team configurations.
- It is a very lean, small team. It's called bootstrapping route, much smaller budget, but it just allowed me to be a lot more customer focused.

27:33 What kind of creativity did you find along the way in this process?

- I had to expand my creativity in terms of how to communicate, how to use the product.
- The creativity and learning how to tell a story of a product, of a tech product and make it sound interesting.
- At first you just want to blurt out loads of features and that's not exciting to anyone. Problems and solutions are more exciting. Things that actually have some emotion in them. What are the risks involved if this problem isn't solved.
- Once I'd done all the prototyping, the creativity that was involved in using Figma.
- Trusting your resourcefulness and, and have faith in yourself that you can figure it out as long as you persevere.
- There's always other ways to solve problems. And it's not necessarily the technology's fault, and that you just have to come back, reset, rethink, and then work your way around.

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40:07 What I'm loving about meeting you and learning more about your story is that there's so much from your marketing background, and you also now understand a designer and the tech side of things. You're like this amazing, beautiful hybrid of both industries, and I think that you're really great at taking your mindset of marketing and have a lot of empathy towards how designers work and how their brain works. And I would love to know what you think on that. Has that led to more pivots in your journey? What's it been like?

- It's quite a challenging one to answer because sometimes I don't know where the marketer starts and ends and when the designer starts and ends.
- What I've noticed, when I've worked with other UX, UI designers, is they might not always understand that this small change that they're talking about could be a really big expense.

40:19 How do you embrace this unfinished nature of a tech product? How do you battle with this pursuit of perfection? Because at some point you just have to launch the thing or you have to start talking about it and it might not be ready yet.

- It is never ready. Never ready. Never, never ready. And you always look at it and think, I wish this thing was different, I wish that was different.
- Right now we're going through a huge revamp and improvement and we're adding lots of new things that's being released this summer.
- Now, four years in, I can look back at the many, many iterations and it gives me confidence in how beautiful it will be as time goes on and be really happy with how far we've got and what we've got.
- For somebody else who's doing this, persevere through the discomfort and the potential ugliness at times and the disconnect between what you imagine in your head and what's actually there and just keep going and then at one point you'll be able to look back and see how much it's transformed and that is just a euphoric experience.

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49:56 Okay, so you're spending a lot of time on your computer and you're working all the time. I'm sure it's hard to find a divide in work life balance, but tell us some of the ways that you really de-stress. What do you love to do when you're not working?

- For the first three years, I did not really think about outside of work.
- Also for the first couple of years, I was planning my wedding in France.
- My hobbies include my wonderful doggie, Ronnie.
- We love to go camping, multi day backpacking, kayaking, having dinners with friends, going out for coffees, traveling when I can, and visiting my family wherever I can, whenever I can.
- I recently got into pottery, photography, and simply listening to podcasts.

55:18 Yay or Neighhhh

This story starts with a I'm a female graphic designer who has been in the industry for almost 10 years. She has worked with male owned businesses and has come across many condescending situations

- This story is a Neighhhh!
- Not all male owned businesses are bad places to work.
- Josie would recommend that they build up their community of people who are cheerleaders for them.

59:43 Do you have anything that you want to share with us and our audience today?

- We are about to launch this summer, the newest version of our app!
- Be added to the list of early access users by emailing Josie.

1:00:36 How can people find you? Where are you on the internet?

- Find them at www.ficklmarketing.com.

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- Email them at hello@fickl.ca.

Tune in for our next episode with Kelly Turner. She's a serial entrepreneur from Squamish, BC, who's on the cusp of launching her next big business idea. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Magic Hour podcast. Please remember to rate, review, and subscribe to the podcast to help us grow our community and to get more magical guests right here on our show.

The Magic Hour podcast is produced by Madison Allen. With editing by Kimiko Taniguchi, this show is founded by Hope Mikal. Unicorn Marketing Co is a creative marketing agency that thrives on creating custom solutions for not so average business owners. You can follow us on Instagram and Tik at [hellounicornmarketing](#) and check out our website at unicornmarketingco.com.