

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

Podcast | Ep 10 | Miranda Sam

Hi, welcome to the magic hour today. I'm joined with Miranda Sam from Shortlisted. We're really excited to talk all about body inclusivity and how the media is talking about plus size, but you know what was not being heard of a lot - is height inclusivity. Miranda is the 5'1" founder of Shortlisted, a clothing brand for short women who are short on time.

And her mission is all about elevating the playing field for petites by reducing their mental load. For example, to limit spending extra time and money on alterations and online returns because brands just don't have that same inseam length, they're not producing with dry clean only fabrics, and so much more.

1:16 I know that you started your journey during the pandemic. And I would love to hear about your own background and a little bit about Shortlisted. Give us a brief overview.

- How Miranda has been obsessed with clothes and shopping since she was a kid and how it kind of came from like an unhealthy place.
- Miranda always wanted to have her own brand and she worked in fashion for about 10 to 15 years in various roles like fashion marketing and freelance journalism.
- She has written for the Georgia Strait, Monte Cristo, Daily Hive, and has been in and out of the industry for a while.
- The pandemic was the catalyst to get her to start seriously thinking about this creating her own brand.
- When she thought about it, there was no one focusing on short women.
- It was the idea always that "if you're not skinny, you don't look good". And for me, it was "if you're not tall, you don't look good".
- 50 percent of Canadians, Americans, and British women. are 5'4 and under if not 5'3 and under. So it's a huge market out there.

4:34 How is this process of building shortlisted? I know you're currently in the close-to-launch phase. And so what is it like bringing all of this to life?

- It takes time to start your own brand
- Miranda had to figure out what the brand was about Body inclusivity? Is it trying to help women reduce their mental load?

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

- Miranda's mentors told her to just go hire a pattern maker, just go hire a sample sewer, or draw something.
- Miranda doesn't work with her hands as much as she loves working with ideas and concepts. So learning how to sew was a big thing.

10:06 How did you come up with the name shortlisted?

- Miranda likes to idea dump when she is brainstorming names.
- A friend and her discussed it over a bottle of wine.

13:00 Can you dive more into height inclusivity. This context and how and why society is not talking about it?

- There's still a stigma with height, there's this like power dynamic.
- No one's coming out and saying like, "Hey, I'm short, and I'm awesome".
- There's enough that we already have to do as people who identify as female.
- If you don't put words to it, you don't really think it's a problem.
- There is a height tax that short women have to face which is getting things altered.
- There's a lot that needs to be changed and want to encourage more petite brands to speak out.
- Why do you think that companies aren't talking about it? Is it just because again, it's going back to the stigma? Because it's hard to break into that space and have these conversations.

22:22 Can you share a little bit more on why sustainability is so important in the fashion industry?

- We've seen all those stats about poor labour practices, more pollution, how the fashion industry is more polluting than oil and gas.
- There's a lot of brands that would take this from different points of view. Some do slow fashion, so they don't produce as much, but the price point is a lot higher. And then you have people who will bank on one aspect of fabrication.
- Miranda takes it from how things have survived in her closet. It has to be easy to wear, easy to maintain.
- Miranda's definition of sustainability is longevity.
- When the three R's of recycling you think about, it's reduce, reuse, and recycle. Recycle comes last. Reduce is the first one.

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

- If it's easy to wear and it doesn't require a lot of maintenance, you will get so much more use out of it than something that's like plastic.

26:10 As you're building your company, as you're starting to define your collections, where are you finding inspiration for these new designs?

- Miranda likes to see what's worked in her closet, but also follow macro trends.
- SHORTLISTED is not about following trends season by season.
- Miranda's philosophy her whole life has been like to try to get the biggest bang for your buck.

28:00 You're coming into a whole new world, you're learning all of these new things, you're training yourself, you're jumping into the idea of being an entrepreneur. How has that affected this journey as a marketing brain? What are you seeing as you've jumped into the business side?

- It's been quite a struggle because just doing marketing was so easy to be like, "Oh, I don't know why people don't care about marketing so much".
- In marketing you are in your own bubble, but not when you are a business owner and you have to wear all of the hats.
- Marketing is still at the heart of everything that Miranda does. She always asks questions like, "is this going to be media-friendly? How am I going to launch with enough validation?"
- Marketing is at the heart of all her thought processes.
- That's why it's really important for business owners to know what they're good at and then outsource.
- It's really important as marketers to at least get a sense of what other departments are facing and to have empathy
- Then you can communicate on a way different level, and it's just seeing people and the difficulties they face and being human about it.

31:02 We were learning more about your background, have you had this pull to work in fashion and design at the same time?

- When Miranda started her journey, the first marketing job she had was as a fashion marketer at a local Vancouver clothing brand.

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

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- Miranda started to feel a little jaded because she felt like companies didn't really care about their customers at the end of the day.
- She would just sketch on the side of her desk, anytime she had a moment or ideas, of things I wanted.
- Lots of people during the pandemic changed their career, and Miranda wanted to try her hand at entrepreneurship.

33:22 Marketing is at the heart of everything that you're doing. In all of your different major business choices, how did you go about the process of branding your company and focus on being more brand-centric?

- Miranda realized that there's different ways to approach being brand-centric.
- Traditionally, fashion brands have been design lens. Or they are sale driven, so the sales team led all the choices.
- The brand is the most important thing because if you have a strong brand, you can branch into different categories and you can take those brand values and create different things.
- The hard part for a brand-centric company is how well can you communicate that brand to everyone to help you get the look, feel, and experience that you want.
- It's totally fine to work with other people on your branding, but being very involved in that process is so important.
- The biggest ones out there are the ones that are aligned with their values and are deeply rooted in intention.

39:28 What are some of the other important aspects of marketing that you've noticed as you're building shortlisted?

- Being on different social media channels. Then you can lead them through the sales funnel.
- You don't get what you don't ask for.
- The traditional ways of marketing are starting to come back.
- Media is super important. Of course you can have a very large community on social media, and gain traction on your website with retargeting ads. However, when you're directly talking to them in email, you're creating a connection.

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

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- When you provide incentive, when you talk about the benefits, when you can create a community of people who want to be interested in learning more about you, it can go a long way.

45:50 You're a mom of two, you have a very busy life, and you're starting a business. Of course, this journey has been going for a little while, but you've had four years of handling the balance. Is it a balance? How are you doing?

- The idea of having perfectly-balanced-spinning-five-different-plates-at-once idea is really not possible.
- Speaking with a renowned career coach, she said "it does suck now, but long term they're gonna see that you did these things and you went after what you wanted".
- The more you stand for something, the more it means you have to say that you don't stand for other things. So you've got to like be values aligned.

50:05 Do you have any hobbies? What do you love to do when you're not working? Or not, hopefully, turning off your brain a little bit.

- "If you had asked me before I had kids, I'd say that "I love to go downtown, I love to go window shopping, I love to work out. Nope, not happening anymore. The time is really spent with kids."

51:10 Do you have any other advice that you would give to somebody who doesn't feel like they are being represented in stores?

- With social media, it becomes a lot easier to be vocal, to ask for things, to call people out.
- Have face-to-face touch point with customers, it goes really far.
- You can take charge and show the world that things can be different.
- "Once I got aligned with what I want to do, the change that I want to see in the world, all of that, melted away".

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

55:18 There's lots of exciting things coming up for you. Do you want to share any news with us?

- A launch is coming in spring. It's called the Unstoppable Jump Set.
- The biggest pain point with jumpsuits is “Oh my god, I can't go to the washroom properly. I don't want to be naked. I don't want the jumpsuit to drag on the ground”.
- Miranda broke up the design into two pieces, so it's actually very versatile. It is high-waist wide-leg pants with a cropped tank top that completely hides the waistband so it looks like a one-piece outfit.
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