

The 2 skills that set successful leaders apart with Gabriel ...

📅 Sat, Feb 18, 2023 5:31PM ⌚ 32:22

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

work, positioning, agencies, people, clients, focus, leaders, cemeteries, market, important, uniqueness, nicola, urgent, automate, companies, build, question, belgium, realised, opinionated

SPEAKERS

Murielle Machiels

It takes as much time to achieve 80% to 90% of your service product, then the remaining 10 to 20%. And I encourage them to systematically launch once the product and service is ready to an 80 90% satisfaction degree. And they will help them to put aside their wish to deliver perfect work and not being able to delegate because this would make them also very poor executives. Very slow and boring. And I'm quite opinionated.

I'm Murielle, co mum and educator, I used to work really hard and sacrifice important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forward past many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. Today, I'm obsessed with helping other leaders build meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart.

I'm Gabriella Goldberg. And today, I am a mentor, coach of startup companies in scale of companies. But what gives me the legitimacy to do so it's because I set up my own agency after after having the chance to be the first employee of Google in Belgium, and my own agencies called cemeteries and cemeteries in a few years became leaders on the Belgian market. And it allowed me to recruit and develop a very talented team to work for probably the best advertisers in the market. And eventually to sell and integrate this into an international group. Omnicom Media Group, develop it integrated and and then leave to become a full time coach and mentor.

Wow, great. So in fact, you fulfilled the dream of many people starting a startup, you created it from scratch, you found investors, you grew it to become number one, and then you sold it? Well, it was really doing great. And so you created that company with Nicola debris. And we spoke about it a little bit. And I was really curious. And that's why I wanted to invite you in this podcast, because I really liked the story, you told me about your secret ingredients that led to that success. Because that

secret ingredient is something that I find so important, and that I see that so many leaders and entrepreneurs struggle with. So maybe you can share a little bit how, yeah, how you got to this success.

So one of the key points to our success is that we have been able to focus now it's easy to see, it's difficult to do, what what does that really mean? It means that we spent the right amount of time. Now, let's see what is the whole different and unique value proposition in the market, which somehow defines us as our own unique positioning. And I've always said this, within the story had similarities, and mostly shared it with employees, with colleagues, with people that I've trained over the years, is that at no point did I think that we were better or worse than anybody else, we just found our own uniqueness. And then finding your own uniqueness is also something that that is very much needed on the market. And that I that I pushed on the right buttons to build our own position, which which seems easy, but which is a very hard work. And this is a starting point in allowing us to focus. And focusing means being able to say yes to the projects that fall within this positioning, and being able to say no to projects that do not fall within this right positioning.

Yeah, and I love what you say, because you're bringing two of the biggest ingredients for me in having success. And that is knowing what you want. And you define it at as positioning. Because of course knowing what you want is yeah, it's important to define it and function of your values also of the market. So it's knowing what the customers wants because if you only look at what you want, in an empty space, you won't get anything, so it's knowing what you want. And once you know what you want, and what your exact positioning is, like you say it, it's then saying no to all the rest. And yes, things are very difficult. Yeah.

But but it's not, it's not as simple as that. Let's see if you think about the starting point, because it's an easy ingredients to share. But it's very difficult to put in place. And I, and I do understand that this will be the subject of our podcast, which will, which will allow the audience to understand some of the elements on how we got there. But the starting point is very much and at least that was the case of Nicola and myself. And that is what I hear very often with clients on the market is that people want to have an impact. They want to make a difference. And, and, and by wishing to want to have an impact are making a difference. There's, like it's, it's totally not aligned, if you start doing exactly the same, almost like as a copy paste to what already exists on the market. So if you do that, and very often you'll I asked people, okay, what is your unique selling proposition? How different are you? What is your proposition? Opposition, people will respond like vague terms like, yeah, we very human focused, or yes, we value honesty or transparency. But it's not positioning, that these are core values. And that's fine. And it's good to have this. But this is not a positioning. So the starting point, before we even positioning is wishing to have an impact in wishing to build something that is unique, that is different, that doesn't exist yet on the market.

Yeah. And that's where it's not always easy, because there is already a lot on the markets. And for me, the uniqueness is often linked to your own value. So sometimes you're bringing something on the market that others do as well. But because of your uniqueness, it makes it difference. So maybe you can give an example, then maybe you can clarify what you mean, then, by that unique positioning.

So when when Nicola and I started cemeteries our agency, we started our preparation in 2008. That's been about 15 years ago. And that time, we were working at Google. And so we looked at the agency market. And at the time, what we realised is that the agency market was extremely fragmented, the fragmentation that so is that the advertising, media agencies, they were very much considering digital as just yet another network. And, and search engine marketing, which was what we started with. They considered this to be a specialty within the speciality. And they didn't link it to any other discipline. So such as in marketing was especially weather service that was offered to clients that, but that was just another Excel line, and media planning that was offered to clients. So that was one element. The other element is it Search Engine Optimization at that time, that was very much done by by copywriters, or developments. But again, if an advertiser wanted to have these three services yet to address two different agencies, and the third one, the data related service was web analytics. This was this one was done by specialised agencies, they only did weather analytics. So our offers pragmatic ID was conjoined these three disciplines into one, okay. But then, obviously, it came with a vision. And a vision was that marketing consultancy, will be very much integrated into into one approach, and not only enjoying disciplines within the same agency, which we were the first ones in Belgium, so quite pioneers. But another thing as well, is to recruit people that have the capability to reason in in a very project manager and data driven way, which at that time, we used to call business consultants or analysts. But that was 15 years ago. And that was before the term growth hacker was kind of invented. And so in Belgium, we were the pioneers of growth hacking, bringing it into the mainstream and agencies and we built a very strong culture around.

Yeah. And if I listened to that, and if you would transpose that to order companies, how is it still possible to Find like your uniqueness in a very crowded world.

First of all, it's very possible like, not later than today, I had a call with an agency marketing agency. And we had the exact same question. And they were asking me if it's possible today versus my story of 15 years ago. And I told them that 15 years ago, when we started cemeteries, we identified about 200 agencies offering these these types of services to clients today, if I would do to count, it would have been probably around 1000 to 2000s. In the same small market, like Belgium, you cannot imagine the amount of small agencies or even one people agencies, but it doesn't matter. So it was true 15 years ago, it's true today. So how to really help you being able to put this in place is to have a very deep is a very deep introspection about what is your value with who you are, what can you bring, but also what the market needs. And in with my clients, we go through, we go through their own clients, we try to classify their old clients, and we try to understand which ones do come from which results, which ones are there to stay, and with which ones will, will you somehow develop a marketing line with your values. And indirectly, we creating a customer profile and a position.

And so now you coach, not not only agencies, but you also coach startups and entrepreneurs in that focus. And you told me, It's always, it's very often not possible, to get through them to actually focus and by focus, I mean, to say no, to many things, and to really focus on on a couple of

very difficult, it's very difficult. I realised that, that as a coach, as a mentor, I have to build a trust relationship with my clients, and discuss the relationship I've built over time. And in order to build it over time, I organised with them at quarterly, sometimes bi monthly workshops. And I have them on

specific subjects in which I take a role, okay, but, but if I come in just once, and then tell them the story, I'm telling you now, they were like, Oh, that's a nice story. It's fine. But we like to do our stuff. And I realised that we even some of our clients, they see this group disagreed ID, but a quarter later, they said, Oh, whatever that we agreed to focus on. In fact, we didn't do because they were different urgencies that came in, that came in in the meantime. And so it's a personality thing. Like I myself, I see that my clients, company founders, they, they're not always aligned with their objectives. Their objective is x y Zed, but to be honest, they're there because they, they like their jobs. And they like running from opportunity to afterwards is a question to finding the right middle ground. I recognise that at cemeteries were quite extreme about the focus point. And that was one of the key. It was one of the key ingredients to our success. But it is exceptional. I realised that I look around me. And so I'm there to share, and to inspire and even teach people how to do that in practice.

Yeah, but what you say here, it's like, it's exceptional. It's a personality type. I think, first of all, when you look at business cases around the world and successful business cases, focus is always a huge factor. And by the way, when Bill Gates father, once had, had organised a dinner with Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, he asked both of them to write down a words that really could qualify their success. And they had to do it separately without talking to each other. They said, Yeah, just say one word that is important to really define your success. And they both had written the word focus. And I think, yeah, and I think and when you look at Steve Jobs, its focus. When you look at Elon Musk, and for instance, the cars he lounged, it's very much focused. So focus is really important in my business when I in my previous business as a managing director, I stopped 70% of the brands and that's what was also a huge key of our success, because then we could really focus on the big things and have the time and the quality to really offer a great customer experience. But people can't focus and I don't really think it's a personality thing. Okay, maybe it helps you can be born with a facility, an easiness, to say no more. But I think it's more a conditioning coming from our education, where you had to do everything that was requested of you to get good grades. So you're very, very uncomfortable.

We also like to help we like a service industry, we voted hospital. But it's exactly morale because of that, that I have developed a process that I help companies focus. And the process is the following. It's in a nutshell, in a nutshell, of course, it's quite detailed. But in a nutshell, it's first, we spend time to understand what is the right positioning at the right moment. And we're not going into let's say 10 years plan in terms of vision, which is going through the positioning of the next two to three years. And in line with this positioning, we beat also a very specific customer profile. And it can be it can be a customer profile that matches, let's say, three of the different profiles, but it can go more than three different customer profiles. And an in line with is 123 customer profiles, we established as well. A qualification process that that qualifies new leads that comes in and only if they qualify, they're qualified, then they go through a sales process. And the the, the ID to qualify them is to be very transparent with prospects, saying that your positioning is x y Zed that you strongly believe in a win win situation. And that you also strongly believe that right clients need to fit with the right. Vendor supplier partner. And that for everyone's benefit, you would like to go through a series of questions, of course, it should do heavy with a series of questions to see if there is potentially a match or when, when, and what we're looking at this when when we're looking at a series of elements, we're looking at the elements including a past performance experience and motivation means and like even in the process, we've made it in such that we make it smooth, we don't talk about budget money, which which may be which which may be down points, we're talking about means a means through your ambitions, which which which which has, which makes a lot of sense for everyone. And in alignment

with this. Only then can we see if the lead is qualified in becomes an official prospect or not. So hence the suspect from the to a prospect? And if it has not, I have even developed a process in which we decline to go further in a very polite way.

Yeah. Okay, I have another question about focus, because let's come back to that there is of course positioning, but not everyone has a say on the positioning. And by the way, if there are leaders that have a say, it's very, very crucial, because I also see it over and over again, that when leaders at the top, don't focus, it creates a lot of workloads, and very bad outputs. Because if you have too many things to do, you can't do them, really in an impactful way. So that's very important. But now I just wanted to talk about the why it's so difficult to focus. So you meet leaders and entrepreneurs, you decide together with them, let's focus on this positioning or whatever. And after two months, they come back and they say to you, yeah, we didn't do what we said we were gonna do because we had a lot of urgent things. And then you say, Okay, once, two months later, again and again. And what we then see is that people are constantly jumping on opportunities or threats, and are not focusing at all that try to jump on everything. How do you

so the fact that we work together is already a positive point because it's like, it's like somebody's going to the to the psychologist you already did half of half of the job is to be open minded to question first himself. So that's already the first good news, but I will tell them two things. First, I will bring up this model you probably heard about it is the Eisenhower matrix. And it's Eisenhower matrix somehow puts together a model where it crosses whether a task is urgent or non urgent. And whether it's important or not important, probably all agree that nobody works on anything that is not urgent and not important that nobody works on. But the crucial question is, do you work on stuff that are important and urgent, systematically, like you often hear anyone, any any any executives saying that they tired of all the show shutting down fires? Of like, firefighting? Yeah, exactly. becoming a firefighter, or whether you have the privilege to work on projects, which, which is, let's say, not urgent, important elements. And, and I tell my clients, so that's the first point I tell them, then if they systematically work on urgent, let's say, urgent and important stuff in urgencies in all the urgencies, it, they won't be able to sustain this over time, and it will not make them good leaders, and they won't be able to build great teams and great companies. For me, for sure, I'm quite, I'm quite opinionated in that. And the second thing, and I can address that, too. Perfectionist, there's people that are perfectionist. And in fact, I'm very slow in delivering a perfect task, because working towards perfectionism takes time. And so I, I also, that's the old, the only the only model that I've built, it's pyramidal model, which demonstrates that it takes as much time to achieve 80% to 90% of your service product, then the remaining 10 to 20%. And I encourage them to systematically launch once the product and service is ready to an 80 90% satisfaction degree. And they will help them to put aside their wish to deliver perfect work, and not being able to delegate because this would make them also very poor executives, very slow and poor executives, and I'm quite opinionated.

Yeah, and I completely agree with you. But in my experience, and we live in a fast world, and in the fast world, it means that you have lots of changes and all these changes, they create opportunities and threats. And you need to adapt to those. So often, a problem that you face in your organisation is in fact, the need to adapt to something. And very often there can be a root cause to that problem. But if you have people that are constantly working in the urgent face, and it's, it might be an important problem, or many important problems. And so you're constantly solving these very important problems from all these customers, for instance. But I say no, you still have to stop and stop, even if

some customers will be disappointed because you take the time to stop and you don't jump immediately on solving their issues. But you stop to do something about the process to look at the origin of the problem. Maybe like you said, it's your positioning, maybe there is something wrong in the way you're working. Or maybe you can find something so that the problem doesn't arise anymore. You take that time and then you go back. And then those problems go away and you start you stop working operationally all the time. It's

when you're saying two different things to you. This is what what what what I reckon, from my experience, if that one is to automate because you because it can predict a stumped repetitive tasks that will be coming it's quite interesting, because when I joined a large American group would have very strict Administration and Finance Department every single month. They work for three four days in full urgency like Like, like working like mad. And it's like, they were like a goldfish. Like they forgot. For the next month, they will have the exact same tasks. The next month, and we we suggest Nicola and I suggested several times that we automate the process. And that for that we can, they need to invest in some, you know, machine in some, let's say, a script that help them automate large chunks and parts of their jobs, but they never want to do it. So that's, that's the first step

to busy because they're too busy. Yes.

And the second point is, is to teach yourself to stop doing certain tasks, not even automate, just stop. Well, while I was at Google, one of the one of my managers, he used to always say, so it's a guy, by the way, he became afterwards CEO of Motorola, worldwide, he was like a very senior guy. Within Google, he always used to say that you cannot Chase every single rabbit. And any always used to take a piece of paper and said, just write 555 tasks that you won't do any more, but not at all. And and that's, that's a great tip. For anyone in here. It's a tried try even with two three, you know, yes. And you will see, you will see the sky won't fall you will see that, no, no walls will start. Nobody will will insult you. And nobody will find it. You just have to you just have to live with the snowmen sudden, it will, it will free some of your time.

Yeah, I completely agree. And then we come back to that focus. Because no, and saying no to things and daring to say no. Yeah. And

another trick, I used to give too many, many agents trainings. Online with the fact that the agencies and the service providers are quite qualitative, especially ones that have the high demands that however I inbounds, didn't have lots of prospects coming in, because they have a strong reputation with strong content management, because they probably have great post podcasts the day they publish, suddenly, people realise the value add. And so I advise them to raise their prices by 20%. And I told them that I bet that less than 20% of their clients, let's say 10. Okay, would leave because it would be but you instantly gain 10% more time.

Yes. Yes, exactly. Yeah. Okay, very interesting. So, yeah, it's about saying no, it's about daring and playing with it, like you say, just try it and see what happens. And an investment and a habit.

And a very, I believe in this very strongly, it's that you have to give yourself some time, you have to also be able to go for lunch, sometimes for two or three hours, walk around the city, try to think you know, take a coffee on your own, which, which will make you more productive, and more creative. If you can't do that at least once a week. Okay? You, you may not be as qualitative in your work from a creative point of view, and from a productive point of view. And so you need to also be kind to yourself and be focused towards investing in yourself.

So that sounds is music to my ears, of course, because that's what I that's a big chunk of what I teach leaders how to slow down, and how to take that time to be creative to think to learn new things, to increase your energy because all that time will make you more impactful in the ends. And leaders that are running constantly and constantly working on urgent things, will with barely time for themselves or even to think about their business. That won't though that will never be the leaders that are very impactful.

Of course, at cemeteries. There was also a huge culture around making speeches. At every event, at every group activity. There were small and medium sized speeches and Nicola was a Mastering speeches. And one of his most memorable speeches was to give everyone in the team a metaphor, obviously, we're from Belgium, and to speak about the coal mine workers from the southern Belgian region of Charlevoix, and to explain how hard they have worked. But how, how, how much they got out of it, versus working smart. And, and getting much more out of it. And so it was not about hard work. Not work hard play out. But it's work smokes. Yes. And play.

Yes, exactly. And I, I, personally, I hate the quote, work hearts play hearts, because it sets like expectations, you know, just exhaust yourself in work. And then lets go to the pub, and do and have a drink together to forget about it or no, it's just about work smarts, and have fun, of course, and fun is not the same for everyone. Okay, well, thank you. Gabrielle. People find you

so people can find me on hackcassia.com H A. K A cia.com. There's the company that Nicola the brain myself are managing, which is our coaching and mentoring companies for for startups and scaleups. And you can easily find me on LinkedIn, Gabrielle Goldberg. I try to publish on a weekly basis some content. I speak in many cases. And so you're welcome to follow me on LinkedIn and publish everything I do.

Okay, thank you very much. Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a hearts if you want more, go to [rebel leader with a heart.com](http://rebelleaderwithaheart.com) For show notes and past episodes. If you love the show, subscribe, leave a review and share it with your friends, the more the merrier. Thanks for tuning in and have a great week you rebel leader with a hearts