

Kelly Downey Transcript

[00:00:00] **Andy Murray:** Hello Kelly and welcome to the podcast. I'd like to start with you telling us a bit about your journey and what has led you up to the point that you're doing now. Sure.

[00:00:09] **Kelly Downey:** Hi Andy. Thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here. So a bit of a long journey in the industry. Started as a sales rep at General Foods, carrying the bag as we like to say and worked at.

[00:00:21] General Foods, which became craft foods for about 21 years through a whole host of sales positions trade marketing, so running the trade budgets, but also to include running our corporate calendar and our consumer promotion department for craft foods North America. So that was a really exciting and was looking to stay a little closer to home than traveling to Chicago as often as I did.

[00:00:43] So moved over to Unilever. And spent about eight years. First running shopper marketing. We called it building brands with customers before we changed the name to shopper marketing. And then I ran the trade budget for Unilever US and ultimately went back into a field selling position running what we called strategic growth channels.

[00:01:04] So everything sorry to say this, Andy, with the exception of Walmart, that was Jim Bree, who you may know. Yeah. And and groceries. So I had all others and really there cut my teeth on e-commerce because a little customer named Amazon fell into my lap. So really good learning grounds, that is 12 or more years ago.

[00:01:23] And then moved over to Phillips north America to run digital and marketing operations. There. and finished my kind of full-time career back at Unilever running a digital transformation project. And now I consult for Oxford sm. And that's been really exciting over the past three years.

[00:01:42] Getting to use my, not only use my experience, but learn about a whole other bunch of categories, industries and approaches both from the sales and marketing side of.

[00:01:53] **Andy Murray:** Wow. Of course I would, I love your shopper marketing background, being a fellow journeyer in that space. And also I'm really excited to talk more about how you see things because of your commercial background.

[00:02:04] There are a number of podcasts out there right now covering retail media networks, and rightly given the fast evolution and big shifts in spending. But most are coming at it through a media lens or just simply covering the latest new offerings, which, to be honest, can be hard to keep up with.

[00:02:19] So today I wanted to, especially with your background, look at it through the lens of a more senior leadership level inside of cpg. Specifically, and then also through the lens of what a shopper marketer might be seeing in a commercial, more of a commercial lens, which I don't think we hear enough about what's happening in that space from an impact standpoint.

[00:02:40] I know you facilitate a number of senior level share groups for brands as part of Oxford and the things that you're doing without getting any. Company, what are some of the themes that you're consistently seeing pop up around this area of retail media networks?

[00:02:56] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, honestly it is the talk of the town.

[00:02:58] We spend an awful lot of our time talking about things like how do we measure? Of course, there's no consistency there. Where do the budget sit for this? Where do the skill sets sit And who? Strategically plans and executes it. Do we need to reorganize because of this? And it's fascinating to me in many ways, and you and I have been in many of these roles, I understand why those topics come up.

[00:03:24] But on the flip side I start of like getting concerned like, guys, it's a tactic. It isn't in and of itself a strategy b really a department, and so I think, it's like in, in a smaller sense, when e-commerce emerged and, rightfully that was very different.

[00:03:42] And, organizations began to structure around. And there were nuances to it and ways to look at it very differently. But what happens is you begin to segregate pieces of your strategy, your plan, your dollars, your people, and you start to really lose a bigger picture. I think at times and probably become pretty inefficient because you're not looking at spend.

[00:04:07] Resources in a holistic way to drive your ultimate business. It tends to be a little bit more ad hoc if you're not careful or and the thing becomes the work .

[00:04:19] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, a hundred percent. And do you think that's, because, it's such, it is so much more complexity involved. You've gotta have some mastery involved there.

[00:04:27] So it's almost let's just set it over here as a new thing. And then all of a sudden it, can grow. What happened with e-commerce, right? Where you lose the bigger picture of omni. When you start segmenting it, but I is that kind of where you see it as that people are probably looking at it through the lens of, this is a specialized competency for us to go anywhere we've gotta get there, versus saying we understand it completely and it really should sit strategically over here.

[00:04:51] **Kelly Downey:** No, I think it's very true. When you talked early in the chat here about, how does senior. Think about this and some of the watch outs and in fairness to all of us who've been in those roles, when new things come along you, you oh yeah, let's dabble in that a little bit.

[00:05:06] Who knows it? Let's empower them to some degree. Maybe they test and learn some things and that's all well and good. And I think what's happened in this case is, number one, there is a lot of specialization, which, so when you think. Retailer, search, display ads, all the different elements that kind of are popping up.

[00:05:23] This is not something you heard my background, I've been doing this a really long time. Yeah. I started before stores had scanners, in, in some ways. When Nielsen data came up, I'd be like, I'm a salesperson. What the hell do I need to know about Nielsen data? Who care. Buys it as long as we get it into the warehouse.

[00:05:39] That's right. Exactly. and that be, I remember being really offended that marketers were getting their heads wrapped around this Nielsen data and telling me things about my customers. So guess what? I had to start to learn enough. I didn't have to manipulate the data myself, but I had to learn enough.

[00:05:56] I really was a part of the conversation and not on the outside looking in. The same holds true for this, for retail meeting networks and I think what happens is you bring in specialized talent, which you do need to have. They either come from agencies or they come from the retailers or some of them obviously have third parties that they work with and they come with a skill set.

[00:06:17] So important. They don't come with a full picture of what you are trying to. As a manufacturer, a brand, a category, and so you can, if you're not

careful, you end up just buying tactics that really have nothing to do with what your end game is. So I think a senior leader, I was, talking about this kind of reverse mentoring, you owe the people who execute these things, you don't have experience with really clear brief about what your mission.

[00:06:48] What you're trying to do, what KPIs you're gonna measure, which by the way, happen to have things like sales volume, profits, not just click through rates or whatever. And on the flip side, you as a specialist, need to explain or help senior leaders understand what these tactics can and can't.

[00:07:07] **Andy Murray:** Yep. Yep. A hundred percent. And it does feel to me like we are at an inflection point very recently, I suppose I would say with the CPG world suppliers, because I do think probably the last couple years it's been just be able to execute the tactics. You've got, the covid hit and you had, massive shifts in online and just execute, was where we, where I think the industry was.

[00:07:29] But now the developmental nature is start. Pull back a bit and the bigger strategic questions are starting to come into play, like I didn't see being asked a year ago. Are you seeing that as of, now this more of an, I don't wanna call it an epiphany, but an awareness that, wait a minute, we've got to work out quite a bit of what this means, because you're talking massive shifts in money, accountability and these are all really bubbling pretty recently.

[00:07:56] Yeah.

[00:07:57] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah. I think it's a hundred percent, there. Gap that was, formed with the pandemic and everything that went on with Covid. But additionally, and you're right, people are just like, get it done, whatever it takes, blah, blah, blah, blah. And now what's happening is, to your point, so much money is going into this space.

[00:08:14] I don't think there's a client I haven't talked to that isn't struggling to hit their goals, make their p and l work for them with all the inflationary issues the slow down in consumption in certain categories. And so suddenly, it's like anything when. Things get tough. The scrutiny, just the screws just get turned and all of a sudden everything's up for debate and discussion.

[00:08:38] And I think when you pull back the curtain, people are wait a second, who's making these? Decisions of, and who's overlooking, like how this overlaps with other, oh, maybe nobody, or maybe not the right people, or, you

know what, maybe we're doing super well and we should be doing more of it, and we didn't realize it.

[00:08:57] I, and I think there's a, there when you step all the way back, I think what organizations need to get really clear. It starts at the very top and it starts with some very concise statements around what are our goals? What are we trying to achieve, and what role do these various tactics, RMNs being a big one of them, play in delivering those objectives.

[00:09:24] And then who and how are we gonna get that done? Yep. How do we measure. How frequently and understanding, I was teasing about the Nielsen data, but it isn't wrong. Over time we've had gaps in data our whole lives and it's what can we trust? What will we believe?

[00:09:40] What will we test? What are we willing to spend? And those are discussions that if that is clear with organizations, you can empower people to go and. . But when that's unclear, and that's what I'm very, I'm concerned about, is it's when Facebook came along or whatever, people ran around.

[00:09:56] We need a Facebook page. Yeah. Why? Why? Oh, because it's the new thing. All right. Who's our consumer? Is our consumer even engaging with this platform? Oh I don't know, but our competitor has a Facebook page. Do we have our own strategy ?

[00:10:11] **Andy Murray:** The interesting thing about those conversations though, is they can be contained within one.

[00:10:17] Larger areas, say marketing and media. And what's happening I think now with retail media networks is it's part marketing. It's part commercial. . And I'd love to know your thoughts on where should the leadership. Come from within the organization because it can't just be, these conversations and strategies be sorted by the media team because there's such big commercial implications and probably vice versa.

[00:10:40] Is it a partnership between the CMO and the chief sales or commercial person? Where does this start?

[00:10:46] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, no I, yeah, I think you're absolutely right. The uniqueness here is the minute you get retailers involved in the situation, you're, you're touching that sales line, right? So you're your absolute KPIs that pay the, pay, the bills.

[00:11:00] And so I do think at a senior level, there has to be. These colleagues that work together and are aligned on, and it, I guess it makes sense. Your total business objectives should, at a very senior level be, united and hopefully you're incented on the same KPIs. . And that's a big Problem for a lot of organizations where imagine when even the supply chain person's KPI is very different than the salesperson's kpi.

[00:11:23] And people think that's a healthy tension and in some cases probably there's some line items there that are, but in general, for all striving toward the same thing, I think we'll do what's right for the business overall and we keep the consumer and retailer in mind. So yes, and I think at a very senior level, there has to be this.

[00:11:40] This alignment on where people want to invest in. What channels are important to you, what customers are important to you, where you will and won't do things. But then when you get down to like really executing it, these discussions are held at buyer, desks and they're, or marketing folks within customers whose key contact tends to be the shopper marketing.

[00:12:02] Every brand and, every brand manager can't have a relationship with every customer.

[00:12:06] **Andy Murray:** That's, yeah, that's a great question. And you bring up the shopper marketing bid. It feels to me at times that there's been some nervousness of shopper marketers that, gosh, all the shopper marketing money and resources are gonna retail media networks, what's my role?

[00:12:20] How should I be looking at this? When in fact, as you just. There's probably a real opportunity for leadership from shopper marketing resources. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how do you see shopper marketing people, resources that function, if you will, being impacted by this, and what role should or could they be playing from a leadership perspective?

[00:12:41] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, I've said it to, some friends of mine in the industry that have done this a long time in shopper. It's probably an opportune time for rebranding because I think the name represents a little bit of the past and I, I think about when I first started and we did call it building brands with customers, cuz that's what it pretty much is.

[00:13:00] Or through customers. We began to establish relationships with marketing departments at customers that re that really didn't exist before. And we started with tactics that looked quite familiar to what was probably

happening in, in national spends and media. If we were doing, some Dove campaign for real beauty, we had a Walmart aspect to Dove campaign for real beauty and what have you.

[00:13:21] And we'd have events or sampling and things like that over time. Functions like consumer promotions and such, basically evaporated and shopper marketers picked up co. That's right. Coupon and contest sweepstakes, games, things that, when I was. Craft. We had a dedicated consumer promotion group in every division and I oversaw it, across all the company.

[00:13:42] So those tactics became very shopper marketing related and everything tended to be through retailers versus just the national. And a very small group did the national things. I feel like retail media's kind of headed in that same, and just because it has media in the. I get it. It doesn't mean media people, it used to be coupons.

[00:14:01] Oh, that's owned by consumer promotion. No, it's the shopper marketing people mostly do that now so this is an easy, and it is very different media. Then, tv, radio, print, outta home, whatever that tends to be in that classic agency media model. Most shopper marketing type agencies have begun to cut their teeth on the retail media networks and understand and you're literally negotiating with your retailer about, Hey, I have my dates, my rates, my trade spend, my displays my retail media investment.

[00:14:32] It's a holistic in. Profile with,

[00:14:35] **Andy Murray:** I, and I think what got us fit in

[00:14:37] **Kelly Downey:** that space, because otherwise you'll lose that negotiation power and requirements for performance.

[00:14:44] **Andy Murray:** And not only that the principles, I agree with you on the branding of shopper marketing, but some of the core principles about looking at category solutions, category growth, and then winning your brand inside the category and categories are something the retailers and the brands care about.

[00:14:58] But if you look at the evolution of retail media networks, it's more, pdp, item page, item specific, programmatic, and those roots are carrying it forward to probably not allowing us to, allowing shopper marketers to see the bigger opportunity of category and how it all fits, which is where I think it's a natural place.

[00:15:16] Like you said at the very beginning, it's a tactic, but it's a tactic at an item ish level or maybe a brand level. And here's an opportunity for this to evolve to get more. Holistically tied into the, to the total program of what you're trying to accomplish, the retailers.

[00:15:30] **Kelly Downey:** And I, it's interesting cause I do think during the pandemic I witnessed just as a shopper, some executions of things that seemed very categorical too, where brands took a lead.

[00:15:42] But there was a real consumer need. Certain items and categories and ways of thinking about using products that you might not have used in a certain way before. So I do think there's a dual, a role that these, certainly the networks could play across a portfolio with, within a a manufacturer or across a category within a retailer.

[00:16:01] And that's not wildly foreign, certainly. Sales folks or shopper marketing folks, but I that kind of seat of energy is around that commercial execution. And you don't wanna lose sight cuz it isn't, and not to say that, we'll call it top of funnel if you believe in funnels or whatever, or path to purchase.

[00:16:19] But not to say that, there isn't a role, traditional media, retailer media can play in that sort of top of funnel piece. There's always that quid pro quo I'm spending with you as a channel, as retailers or whatever, because I understand how people shop. My category, my brand, and I need to engage at this piece of the journey and that's what you're gonna help me do.

[00:16:44] And at the end of it, I need to recognize some sales growth absolutely with you, not, without.

[00:16:53] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, a hundred percent. If you go back to some of the early parts of this conversation, and we talked, started with the senior leaders and what they may need to know about retail media networks there's a lot of fog, if you put it mildly.

[00:17:06] And because of the change in rapid behavior of how this is all evolving you do get to speak to a lot of senior leaders. What works, some things that you. Think they should know that they may be holding as that's really not the way it is. What are some things that they should understand about the current reality that they may not understand?

[00:17:23] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah. I think there's a lot to be said for a bit of a step back, with an organization to say, are we prepared? Meaning do we have the

right talent? Skill sets within our organization to leverage this activity that's different than it was before. know, Again, I go back to, folks who've been doing this for a really long time and aren't really familiar with kind of how things work.

[00:17:47] Do we have enough people in the organization to a teach them? Can we upscale people? I think a lot of. People, some big organizations like to throw a reorg at something new, and boy, we're just gonna get new things faster and faster. And reorg getting is so painful, so are there ways to create more fluid roles and organizations?

[00:18:11] Maybe outsource some stuff because that's a lot easier to change than insourcing it. So thinking about how to get the work done in different ways. I think senior leaders have to think about they have to realize that measurement is a still a huge challenge. So you can't, you don't wanna be like sixth to the party.

[00:18:29] You have to play the game, particularly with important customers to you, but you don't have to spend zillions to do it. Cuz be careful because that next year they're gonna wanna repeat that anniversary, that, that investment.

[00:18:42] **Andy Murray:** That's a great, there's a couple, yeah, a couple of really good nuggets in there to pull out.

[00:18:46] I think one is that, you can't just benchmark a lot of senior leaders just benchmark what's going on with Amazon and apply that model across. And Amazon is Amazon and it's different. And so they play very different than Omni, yeah. Than Omni. And I think you gotta first understand that Omni and Amazon are two different things and not try to compare and drive those comparisons across cuz it'll lead you down some interesting roads.

[00:19:08] I think the other thing to know is that we're still in very early stages. The retailers are spending and moving as fast as they can to build capabilities and it's not gonna be fully functioning with all the metrics and things that you need and would want. But that, so we're in an evolutionary state and I think if you were to look at today as the fixed endpoint, you would probably be making a lot of different decisions then saying wait a minute.

[00:19:30] Where's this going over the next year or two? As they rapidly. Develop and do I want to be part of that conversation and involved in it that's the other thing. And I guess the last point I think that's really interesting is that a lot of people compare, what they're getting at metrics and data performance with a world that is probably not gonna look the same in 2004 with cookie list.

[00:19:50] And so you're comparing it against, a space of what I can get with cookies in that level of performance day that's not gonna be there in 2004 at some.

[00:19:57] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, compare yourself if you have European businesses is a very different world with GDPR and those sorts of things that have come.

[00:20:04] I think in the US we, We're lucky. A number of the clients I work with have businesses around the world so they can compare notes. And we've had a little bit more free reign in some ways, and yes, that's gonna change. And at the same time you make the comment, which is so true these networks coming out of even some of our biggest retailers, Walmart, target, whatever.

[00:20:23] , they're still in very early stages compared to where, an Amazon is today and they're just a, now it's not. understand how Amazon works. would tell senior leaders like, understand it because there's certainly a relationship and it will be different, but there's some truths, like having great product detail pages and things like that Yeah.

[00:20:43] Is important everywhere, I do think that, you're right and it's not, it's uncomfortable when things change or move at speeds, that and there are things we don't understand and whatever, you we've been doing this a long time. That's been, that's the constant, yeah,

[00:20:57] **Andy Murray:** no, a hundred percent in and one thing I think you said earlier that I think is so important is not to look at it as a reorg opportunity.

[00:21:04] You may need to reorg, always refresh and think about that, but to do it in a time that's not s there's still some uncertainty about, how things evolve. What, what happens? The omnichannel retailers are really able to tie into their in-store environments, which they don't really today as much, but I think that there's innovations gonna happen there eventually to get the foot traffic right.

[00:21:25] And then now we're back to more of a commercial conversation. And so

[00:21:29] **Kelly Downey:** I think, and if you let it organically play out a little bit, I just think of when we started with the newer shopper marketing organization at Unilever when I was there, and we Yep. We really. Staffed up big time, and about a year later I said, I was right.

[00:21:45] I'm like, you know what? This model isn't the right model. , we need less. What we need is people inside to just understand shopper marketing. I don't need shopper marketing marketers, I need marketers. Again, that's a tactic, but I do need people facing customers and being able to be that one point of contact across 400 brands.

[00:22:06] To Walmart, to, target to whoever and we were relaxed about it. We're like, this is what we're gonna try. And when we know something better, we will go and do that. And the organization needs to know we're being flexible and fluid. That's, yeah, it's gonna keep.

[00:22:21] **Andy Murray:** And I think that's the advantage of the shopper marketing journey, evolving at a light, slightly slower pace than what we're seeing here.

[00:22:28] Because you have time to think through things and work through things and, we discovered things like, you know what, it's probably good in a brand manager's career path to take, a year or two in a customer team, right? Or into a shopper marketing role. It just builds that and those awarenesses.

[00:22:42] We're here, we're in a disruption space that's happening so fast. A lot of those learnings haven't had a chance to percolate which I think is making people a bit crazy.

[00:22:52] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah. No, it's true. And I, I do think do rely on your agency partners to some degree sometimes just to do the work, to get through the day, but also because they work.

[00:23:03] A number of clients and platforms they can bring you, I think, some good thinking that they do day in, day out. And you typically have people that do it a part of the day, kind of thing, yeah, so I think that's important, until we get, and it's gonna take a long time to really consistent metrics and such.

[00:23:23] It is, it can be the wild

[00:23:24] **Andy Murray:** west. Yeah. And there's probably one thing that you said around anniversary, that word there, but I think if I was in a senior team or in a senior role at a cpg, I would be collecting my red lines that I wanna be really careful about setting precedent on.

[00:23:39] Because, if you make the decision that you want this conversation to be highly integrated into your jbp and see it as a trade transaction, that's very

different than saying we want the incremental spends to come from a media budget and Correct. Do you want that to be something you endeavor to spend or get committed to spend?

[00:23:56] Cause those are two different approaches yeah. And you can get locked in really quickly.

[00:24:02] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, no and that's why I think in, in, in kind of two layers, one. Thinking about spend holistically and not being so black and white and this is for this, and that's for that. Hey, here's what we wanna invest.

[00:24:13] We wanna try a little bit more on this year, and if that doesn't work out, then next year, we may double it back or whatever. But then this is where Andy, as we talked about, the big question is, who own? The budget when it has a name media in it, or is it above or below the line? How do you account for it?

[00:24:33] **Andy Murray:** Kelly, I've been in several shared groups as well. I haven't found anybody that has that sorted out yet. And maybe you have, but it's the question of the hour.

[00:24:41] **Kelly Downey:** And here's what I will say and I think anyone who's outside of the marketing function, and I've never been a traditional marketer, will hate that I'm saying this, when it, when people say Who owns the money?

[00:24:53] I'm like, where's the PN I sit? And at the end of the day, if you have brand level P and Ls, category level P and Ls, or just a company level p and l, it tends to be a marketer that owns it. . They will always own it. Your job as a supporting function and a collaborative group of people is when you go knocking on the door for dollars, you better make darn shore that they are in service to the brand objective and KPIs, and in your best.

[00:25:24] Knowledge cuz it doesn't always work out. That investment is gonna be put in a place to deliver against that. And when you work with that spirit and it's really clear for people it doesn't really matter who owns it cuz you all own it.

[00:25:37] **Andy Murray:** A hundred percent. And I feel, I think maybe you and I were in the same meeting when I heard this thought that alignment is far more important than ownership, clarity, or accountability.

[00:25:48] Because even if you've got clear accountability, but you don't have alignment across the core teams, you're in just as bad shape as not having any

accountability at all. Because you can't execute that in a joined up way if you don't have a.

[00:26:00] **Kelly Downey:** No, I agree. And I would tell you that's the, forget all the topics we've just talked about.

[00:26:04] That's the biggest problem I've found almost anywhere I work when there's lack of clarity and which drives misalignment often cuz people aren't being really transparent about or super, I can't make it clearer than this. All bets are off. Like people are off doing their functional, and I don't, most of it's not intentional or they're trying to like, kill the business.

[00:26:29] It's just lack of clarity. People it's amazing. People just go off and do their own thing and have an their own agenda.

[00:26:35] **Andy Murray:** Yep. Yep. A hundred percent. And then one more thing I wanted to talk about, which is I think this area of the gap between senior leadership and perhaps people that are hands on keyboard in terms of doing it every day.

[00:26:48] And one thing that I would recommend is that you try to pull together. Use cases, case studies of what actually you're doing if you're on the more SME and in the trenches day to day. But the good, the bad, the ugly because I, I think the best way to learn from a senior manager perspective is to, okay, so we started here.

[00:27:07] This is what we did, this is what happened, and this is what we learned. And having fast learn, fast deploy. Mindset because it's so hard to talk about this in a, in an abstract way without being able to pull up and see, oh, okay, this is what happened here and Target did it, you did this execution at Target, and it was very different results.

[00:27:26] Why is that? Oh, because there's differences in algorithms. Oh, I didn't know that.

[00:27:29] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, and I mean it, if you'll indulge me, I have thought of two really important thoughts on that. Yeah. So one is actually. We, starting shopper marketing at Unilever and taking money from trade and brands to fund it.

[00:27:46] And they, the whole like, what am I getting from my money? Story. Yeah. And what happened was we got very disciplined once a quarter going

back to our partners and saying, So here was our strategy. Remember for the year with these customers, whatever, here's what we ran. Here's what worked, here's what didn't work.

[00:28:05] Here's what we're gonna do again, here's what we're never gonna do again. Here's what, and it became like, first of all, okay, oh great, you're gonna show us. And we ended up, over time people didn't come to the meetings anymore cuz they trusted us. Fine. But I said to my team, we are never gonna stop these meetings ever.

[00:28:24] Because we're gonna constantly report on what we're doing and what we're getting and people will and ultimately we became a very trusted organization. Yeah. But the case studies, you talk about the real examples of what we're doing, what we're getting, and the honesty about what's working and what isn't working.

[00:28:40] Very important. The oth. The other thing I just wanted to bring, when you talk about the senior leaders and. Honestly the onus is on them because the more junior hands on people aren't gonna go Hey, CEO or CMO or whatever you wanna hear what I'm doing today? It's never gonna happen. I'll tell you at Phillips, it was so refreshing.

[00:28:58] Our CEO would come out to market visits and we'd do, what's happening in store? And I was new the organization, and he said to me, why don't we have them online in store? And I'm like, what do you mean a on store? And he goes, I need to know how it works. So he said, the next time I come. So we created an on store shopping, in-store, online shopping experience.

[00:29:22] It was Amazon related. Huge customer for Phillips. And we started with, We have a mom who's 35 years old who's looking for blah, blah. And we explained search to him and what happened, what came up. And we went through the, motion. And he was amazing and so great and asked all the questions in a safe spot where I don't, he's the ceo, he's not.

[00:29:44] Dumb. He's smarter than I am, but he doesn't know this. Like I don't expect him to understand the r and d stuff the way the r and d people do. And so you have to be constantly curious and inquisitive and ask, and don't be afraid. Cuz guess what? There's nothing better when the 25 year old goes, I know something I shared with the ceo.

[00:30:04] Everyone wins. Yeah, a hundred percent. Everyone wins. And I do. I think sometimes folks are, they don't wanna admit I, I don't know.

[00:30:13] **Andy Murray:** I agree with you and I love this question. You said, I need to know how this works and, show me how this really works. And I think that's probably one question that senior leaders should be asking.

[00:30:23] Of the 25 year old SSEs, whatever age they are, on the front lines of this, because I learn something new every day, it seems like about, I did. You know what, what can be done in the Amazon Marketing Cloud? What is that thing and how is that different? And those, the people that know that stuff are either the agency or they're really deep into it and it's so refreshing to hear it, but you've gotta really proactively go out and look at what's really happening.

[00:30:48] **Kelly Downey:** And you end, what happens is you build like a coalition of the willing, and then over time when something bubbles up to a high level decision maker, Why are we spending, he's I'll tell you why we're spending it on this, because I know that on the journey, and there they are defending you and they can I'm enlightened by that because I always feel I'm a life learner and.

[00:31:08] There, it changes all, all the time. It's hard to stay on top of it, but you have to make a point of it. We had a discussion with the, some of my agency colleagues yesterday, just on this reverse mentoring idea, and everyone goes, oh yeah, you know they do that p g oh yeah, we, I said, what happens?

[00:31:24] The appointments get canceled. It gets set up all the time and the CEO runs outta time and oh, you know what gets canceled? Reverse mentoring, learning, and that shouldn't be canceled. . No, not at all. That really needs to happen. Or finding ways, to do it that aren't always self-served. Just set some time aside, but really have experts.

[00:31:43] And I was blessed. I have had teams that were so skilled in these spaces and taught me more than I could ever teach them. And they know who they are. .

[00:31:54] **Andy Murray:** Excellent. Yeah. One of the things I found helpful when I was trying to bring some change to Asta in a retail environment was grabbing a more junior finance person and taking 'em on that journey with me and saying, you know what?

[00:32:06] Some of these things we don't know how to measure help us figure this out because what everyone knows is eventually it's gonna end up, can we, are we gonna finance this? What's the business case? And if finance is the last

to engage and they're not educated along the journey of how this works, you're gonna have a real challenge with the cfo.

[00:32:24] And I think, bringing in more junior, finance folks that can partner with the shopper marketers or the media people Yeah. Is such an unlock for helping build the

[00:32:34] **Kelly Downey:** case. Love that. I love that. Cuz I would tell you in particular when I was at Unilever, that the finance people were my life.

[00:32:43] And they really, if you can partner with them because honestly they know how the INS work that's right. Of the organization. And they can say, you know what if we did this way or thought about it? I'm like, wow. I think that's a great call out.

[00:32:55] **Andy Murray:** Especially with the KPIs where they are, because I don't think they've matured enough to know what effects what.

[00:33:01] And so I would get marketing dashboards that was looking at brand resiliency and cut through, and then all these other factors with it. and one metric, if you really dialed into that as a siloed. You could drive it hard but then all of a sudden, other things bad would start to happen because you were fixated on that kpi.

[00:33:20] And Roaz is a good example, right? I You can choose roaz by just by brand of keywords and such, but that doesn't mean you're gonna grow your business, right?

[00:33:28] **Kelly Downey:** People are like why aren't we selling more? And I, and people can manipulate data. Of course you can. We can come up with any story you wanna tell.

[00:33:35] And so that's why it takes a village. It. Real alignment, I think cross-functionally for people to understand all these nuances. And I will say, despite the fact I spent most of my career on the sales side and with customers most of my partners in crime that were not on that.

[00:33:54] Same playing field with me on the, with the customers, understood the impact if things didn't go well with customers. And cuz that's, the rubber does meet the road there and we're willing to be creative and find ways to really think through, try things, experiment, and that's what it take.

[00:34:12] This is a space. That you really do need to partner up. Don't try and be like, I'm just gonna do this over here, and I'll keep you posted on what happens. No that's a big mistake because I think, over time it's just gonna be kind. It's the, when you said What are people talking about? It's all people are talking about.

[00:34:29] Yeah.

[00:34:29] **Andy Murray:** And I think there's.

[00:34:31] **Kelly Downey:** Barrel isn't good,

[00:34:32] **Andy Murray:** yeah. And I think the companies that are starting to, I think, take a more strategic approach than taking a reactive or isolating pieces off or whatever, a reactive approach are starting to step back and say, okay. We need a strategic approach here on how we're gonna transition to this space and what does it mean, how we're gonna segment customers to where we invest and where to play and where to win.

[00:34:53] How

[00:34:53] are

[00:34:53] **Kelly Downey:** we gonna assess, brought that up? Cause that was, that's on my mind is when you strategically, it isn't just oh, we wanna grow 10% as a total company, whatever. It's but where? And how. And that's if you don't have a solid customer segmentation strategy, that's a. That's

[00:35:09] **Andy Murray:** right, a hundred percent.

[00:35:10] And I think you need that. There's 44 retail media networks active in the US alone. Some studies said there's 600 of 'em out there. I don't know. But I you cannot invest the same across 44 networks. You just can't master the complexity. There's no way. What kind of customer data strategy do you have?

[00:35:25] Do you need to buy insights from every single retail media network? Is that gonna be accretive and new? Are you gonna get new learnings or are you gonna start duplicating? And so I do think it's. Look, you may not be in a great place today, but at least get a plan, right? And get a plan that looks out to the future.

[00:35:41] **Kelly Downey:** And I think it, it helps in discussions with the retailers too, because you go, here's what we are about. And if they're not meeting some sort of standard that's in your vision, maybe they'll strive for it. You say, listen, we can't invest without x, Y. And they're like we don't do that. And you're like that's why I can't, and so maybe could we try X or could we, and that I think it's, it gives you a foundation to stand on and be unified as one voice back to the retailer as a man, as a manufacturer.

[00:36:10] Cause look at what's happened. We've become buyers.

[00:36:13] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, a hundred percent not . And I often don't put my defend the retailer hat on as often as I probably should. But coming from that, in the most recent corporate world think about it from a retailer's perspective, how many different brands are coming with different expectations because there's no standards on that for an either.

[00:36:29] And so you're right. Just like there's, you're right. Every retailer's different and sos every brand and I, I think we

[00:36:35] **Kelly Downey:** all can't have the Christmas ad and you all can't have, or whatever,

[00:36:39] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, exactly. And

[00:36:40] **Kelly Downey:** They, I hope in the same way, they have a bit of a segmentation strategy too, like that we're gonna grow these categories and these players are gonna be instrumental in that, and that's where we're gonna, and so that's where obviously, Jbp and all that, and we all can't be all things to everybody, I think there's enough room out there between yes, retailers, brands, platforms, whatever, that everybody can come up with a compelling enough strategy that can

[00:37:08] **Andy Murray:** work.

[00:37:09] Excellent. We've covered a lot of ground for what this very complex and broad topic. Is there anything else before we wrap up that you would wanna maybe communicate to senior leaders that are, responsible for these spaces at bigger CPG companies or mid-size?

[00:37:24] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, I've probably articulated it already, but I would say you've got to dig.

[00:37:30] And learn this yourselves because and again, not hands on keyboard, maybe sit next to somebody hands on keyboard. Yeah. And it isn't, months and months. It's, take a couple days for a couple months and, dig in, especially as you're writing your strategic plan over the next year and three to five years and when there's a section in it.

[00:37:52] No doubt. Digital investment or investment, ask questions. And you don't have to preface it, but if it makes you feel better, preface it to, I don't know this speak to me in common language. Yep. That I can understand. Because that's the worst when people kind of use and you like, wait about step back.

[00:38:11] But I do think there, I do think a lot lies with the senior leaders. And then I'd say again, cuz I can't say it enough having. And you have two Andy kids working in this space as senior leaders. Teach them the fundamentals. Yep. And how the business should work so that they can make the connection of what their hands on keyboard does to driving the overall business results.

[00:38:36] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, said. And not only to the business results, but make sure they understand what are brand objectives, marketing objectives. It just Exactly

[00:38:44] **Kelly Downey:** right. They don't come in learn. And I think we lost two good years in the pandemic to really mentor people in this space.

[00:38:52] Yes. And teach them. And you talk about, , when I first started, marketers would come out and work for six to eight weeks live in the field and work with sales people. to do resets and Yeah. Understand data planogram and go to store and call on and then people were like, oh, that's a waste of money.

[00:39:08] We don't need to do that anymore. And it doesn't happen. I think it was the best use of Oh, sure. Of money and time of those people back then, and their, and honestly, many of them are my friends and our CEOs of companies and do wonderful jobs because they had that. Same thing.

[00:39:23] I had to go to headquarters as a salesperson and learn sales planning and work with marketing teams so that I could grow in my career. And I think we're that's a gap. So if you can, if you get time to have someone teach you and you can teach them something we're all gonna

[00:39:37] **Andy Murray:** win. Yeah. Excellent.

[00:39:39] And I'd say maybe get involved in some industry share groups where you could talk to your peers and learn, because I think you'll find some enlightenment there that we're all, everyone's pretty much in the same spot.

[00:39:49] **Kelly Downey:** It may, misery loves company. It makes ,

[00:39:51] **Andy Murray:** I didn't wanna say it that way, but Yes,

[00:39:53] **Kelly Downey:** I'm teasing.

[00:39:54] But no, I think when you can talk about it and be like, oh my God, I thought that was just us, or I thought and without divulging anything. Certainly you're gonna be careful about that. But, there are things like, I didn't think of that and, that's right. We get the chance to do it, working where I work and where you work.

[00:40:07] But when you're working in a company and you're not in a share group, you don't have a lot of opportunities. So that is a really good and read everything you can and, that comes along and joins some of those lovely emails that come out and teach you new

[00:40:19] **Andy Murray:** things. And Kelly, if anybody wants to reach out to you and get ahold of you, we can put some, your links obviously in the notes.

[00:40:26] But what's the best way for them to reach you?

[00:40:28] **Kelly Downey:** Yeah, I think just an email is great. If you wanna send share that I'm pretty receptive to email . Excellent. So happy to chat further. This was really fun,

[00:40:37] **Andy Murray:** Andy. Yeah, thank you so much. It's always a pleasure to get a deep conversation with a fellow Jenner Journeyer in the shopper marketing commercial space.

[00:40:45] And so lovely to see you again today. And uh, yeah, let's keep the conversations going.

[00:40:51] **Kelly Downey:** Yes, please take care.