

7. Building Leadership Credibility with Melissa Park

Michelle Harris: [00:00:00] From Bosstrack, it's Her HypeSquad, a show about amazing women who've made incredible strides as leaders in their industry. They're here to support you and your leadership growth to encourage you and hype you up as part of your hype squad.

Hello and welcome back to another episode of Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack. I'm your host, Michelle Harris. Today I'm talking with Melissa Park, an award-winning global event, producer and founder of Melissa Park Events and the Mel Factor method. Melissa and I talk about building leadership credibility, using your network for success, the importance of asking questions.

And the time she met Sir Richard Branson. Before we get into our conversation, let me tell you about Melissa. [00:01:00] Melissa Park, also known as Mel, is an award-winning global event producer who has utilized her engaging personality and ending energy and attention to logistical and design details to build a business that is recognized across the US and Australia.

After producing high profile business and consumer events, Melissa broke out on her own and launched her first event management company in Australia at the age of 26. She produced events like HSBC Banks', Chinese New Year Gala Dinner Tour, and more than 20 outdoor festivals attracting 20,000 to 100,000 attendees.

She also served as a stage manager for notal notable events like the Sydney Olympic Games 10 year anniversary ceremony, Sydney International FIFA Fan Fest, and the Major League Baseball opening series in 2014, Melissa moved to the US in 2014 where she began working internally for two years at Hortonworks, and two years later stepped back.

Out on her own with Melissa Park events [00:02:00] specializing in elevating brands, amplifying corporate messages, and transforming struggling events into extraordinary must attend experiences. She's made a name for herself in the technology space for her seamlessly executed. Large scale user conferences, strategic sponsorships, and innovative brand activations.

Her client list has grown from one continent to another based on referrals, recognition from attendees on site, and clients who return year after year for her

to produce their events. She currently splits her time between New York and Sydney when she's not traveling to produce her nearly 30 annual events.

Her events have been featured on many TV and radio program programs in Australia, and she's the creator of the Mel Factor Method Masterclass, a contributing writer to numerous publications and a sought after keynote speaker and panelist. I'm so excited to bring you my conversation with Melissa Park. Hi, Melissa.

Um, so thank you so much for joining us here on Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack. Really appreciate you joining us and sharing [00:03:00] some of your leadership experience with our audience.

Melissa Park: Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Um, I, we provided a intro, uh, before we got started, but I'd love for them to hear in your own words a little bit about who you are and, and what you, what you do.

Melissa Park: Yeah, sure. So my name's Melissa. I'm a global event producer. I've been doing it for 21 years now, which is a little insane to think about. Um, I just turned the big 4.0 in June, so, um, you know, now 40 and fabulous. Uh, I currently live in Sydney, um, but spend a lot of my time in the us. I was living in the US from 2014 to 2020 and then moved home during Covid.

Um, now that events are back, I, I think the first half of the year spent like 16 weeks out of the first half of the year in the us so we'll see if, um, I move on back over. But um, besides that, let me see. Most of my time honestly is spent working, [00:04:00] um, which I love, and I get to travel all over the world doing that, which is one of my biggest hobbies.

Um, and when I'm not working, I love spending time with my family, uh, catching up with friends and going to shows and concerts and doing all those fun things. So that's kind of me in a nutshell.

Michelle Harris: Oh, great. Yeah. I was wondering if you were in Australia or if you were still in New York, so, That explains that.

Melissa Park: Yes. Go between, between, you could get me in one week in Sydney and, and then, you know, the next, I could be in any city in the us so.

Michelle Harris: Oh, wow. That's exciting. That's very exciting. Um, so I know you're, you're in event planning, so I'm wondering how you got interested in event planning. So,

Melissa Park: So I kind of fell into it somewhat, but I was born for it.

Um, I'm convinced of that. So when I was at school, um, event planning wasn't really kind of a thing. Um, you know, obviously it was happening. I just, I didn't know about it. Uh, so I went the marketing business route coming out of school because that [00:05:00] was the blend of kind of the business side and the creative, um, which is what I was after.

Uh, and then I was, um, working at kind of, An admin role and was told about a position at a, um, division of General Practice that was, uh, managing or marketing and organizing their events. So it was all about doctors, um, education and went for that role. Um, and got it. Uh, and then, yeah, I knew instantly the minute I started coordinating their events and I'm like, oh my God, this, this is epic.

I love this. Um, so that's kind of, kind of fell into it that, that way. Um, and then went and, um, You know, got my diploma from TAFE after that for event planning. I'd already been kind of done the, the higher education on, on marketing and business, but I always liked to have the piece of paper to go with the experience.

So kind of, yeah. Fell into it. But, um, you know, I was writing run sheets. This is like a fun fact. Um, but I was writing run sheets when I was in kindergarten. Obviously didn't know what they were. This could be my ocd, but I [00:06:00] had a little notepad that was next to my bed and I would write every night the same thing, like seven o'clock wake up, 7 0 2 brush teeth.

7 0 5 make sandwiches and it would kind of guide me for the the morning plan before going to school when I was like, Five or six. So, um, you know, I've been writing run sheets since then, so I think I was kinda kinda born for this.

Michelle Harris: I love that. I had never heard that term run sheets. Um, but I understand what you're, it's so interesting.

It sounds a little bit like you were doing time blocking in kindergarten. Uh, yeah.

Melissa Park: Speaks volumes. Who I am.

Michelle Harris: And, um, so I know you're out, you are out on your own now. Um, what, what led you to start Melissa Park events?

Melissa Park: so I think I'd al, I've always been entrepreneurial, so I think it was a given that I would go out and, you know, start a business at some point in my life.

Um, what actually kind of led me at the exact [00:07:00] point in time that I did it, which was in 2008, when I was 26, I was working for a company, um, and. I was there, what the title was, long like Events New Business and Marketing Director. Um, and I was, I'd secured them like quite a few really good gigs to, to perform at.

Um, and the, the company was based around one person that was the main product. It was a performance based company. Um, and I'd secured these gigs and the performer, the main performer, um, just. Kept messing up. Like, and in the fact like he just didn't care. Like I would secure a really cool corporate event and he just wouldn't show cuz he didn't feel like it or, you know, I'd secured something that would have, that should have, um, Kind of got them so much corporate business throughout the year, and they just messed around when they got there.

And the performance was terrible. It was cringe-worthy to watch. Um, and I just kind of thought like, I'm working so hard and if I'm killing myself or [00:08:00] anyone, it's gonna be me after watching that. And I'm just like, I'm done with this. So, uh, When I returned from that particular trip, I resigned that day and I was just like, I can't do this anymore.

I'm working, you know, around the clock for your business and I'm putting everything into it and securing the most incredible opportunities and they're just not being taken advantage of. Um, so yeah, so at that point I was just like, I'm gonna go and work this hard on something for me and see what happens.

And luckily it worked out pretty well.

Michelle Harris: Great. So did you already have clients, uh, lined up in your, in your mind, uh, that you were gonna have business coming in? Or did you launch without having any knowledge of who your customer is gonna be? Um,

Melissa Park: Yeah, I launched with no knowledge. Um, what I did know was I had a great network, um, built up in Australia.

So I basically, the way in which I did it was send an email out to everyone that I had worked with in the past, um, and just said like, Hey, I'm going out on my own. If you happen to hear of any, anyone, um, any organizational person that needs an [00:09:00] event producer or needs to outsource any aspect of, of event management, um, I would love it if you could refer me and that one email.

Did the trick and then like the referrals started coming in and, and request to do work. Um, and then it kind of built from there. Often if I am on site doing an event, I will have people come up to us and say like, Hey, you know, this is awesome. We want, we wanna book you for hours. Can we jump on the phone next week?

So it kind of built organically through that. But the first thing was just through a network and I think, you know, it comes down to, um, Very thankful that my parents, um, instilled a really good work ethic in myself and my brother. Um, and, you know, I've been able to build a very like, successful company in Australia.

And then when I moved to the US I did the exact same thing, um, with my, the network. You know, I moved with no contacts at all. Um, and then, you know, Got an in-house role, um, and then kind of, you know, sh showcased what I could do and then did the exact same thing when I went out on my own over in the US as well.

So, [00:10:00] um, you know, it's a formula that works, but I've worked hard to, to get to where I am and, you know, being a position where it can be a referral based business and we can be extremely busy.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, so I love that. Very brave, but, um, very confident in, uh, starting, starting a business like that. Um, so I understand you do a lot of, um, tech, uh, or events for the tech field, but before when you were in, um, in organization not working for yourself, you're working with big companies like FIFA and Sydney Olympics, like what made you decide to go to tech?

Melissa Park: So, um, I didn't go to tech straight away. So I guess there's two Melissa, two versions of Melissa Park events. So the Australian one, um, which was 2008 till 2015. Um, for that we were very, I was. Very, um, intentional about not pigeon, pigeon holing myself into one type or type of event or type of client. Um, so for when I [00:11:00] had the, the Australian business, we would do everything from like conferences, gala dinners, a ton of cultural festivals and outdoor events.

It was, it was a very broad portfolio and that was for, um, corporate government and community clients. So that was very broad, so, When I moved to the US, um, I happened to take an in ho in-house role first, which was for a tech company. Mm-hmm. So for them, I was their director of global events. Um, and I produced their global conferences around the world for two years in-house.

And then after that I kind of got to the point where I wanted to go back out on my own. So it just so happened that. With that in-house role. My entire network then was, you know, all of my kind of former colleagues that had now moved on to other organizations. So as I mentioned before, I kind of just put the word out to all of them that had attended my events or worked with me very closely and just said like, Hey, I'm going out on my own.

Um, if, you know, if your new workplaces need anything, or you, or if you hear, if you hear of anyone needing any, um, any. To outsource any [00:12:00] portion of their events. You know, I'd love it if you could like, you know, recommend me or share, share my, my contact details. Um, so it just kind of like so happened because of my network over in the us.

Michelle Harris: Mm. Okay. Yeah, networking is, is so important. Just, um, I mean, starting a business, but also when you're in just corporate, the corporate world, just trying to make your way.

Melissa Park: It really is, and I, like I say that I was just, It was so crazy of me when I, like, I decided in the August of 2014 after having a little in internal war with myself for three years that I was gonna go to the US and try and try and make it over in that market.

And as I, I've mentioned earlier, like I knew no one over there, so, so I booked a one-way ticket and I was like, if it works, it works. If it doesn't, it doesn't. And I spent, I would say like the first five months. My full-time job was applying for jobs cause I knew no one. And then randomly I met a girl on a hike and she's like, oh, what's your story?

What are you doing? And I told her, and I'm just [00:13:00] like, I just can't find anything. I'm applying via all these sites all day, every day. Um, and she's like, my workplace has two roles. Like, why don't you send me a cv? Oh, wow. And instantly, like the next day I had a phone call from the company and it's just like, oh my gosh.

So now my advice to anyone is, you know, if you're thinking of making a crazy, you know, a crazy move. Build your network first because it is gonna open all

the doors. Um, mine was a slightly different experience, but hey, it's character building. Yes,

Michelle Harris: definitely. I love it. I love it. And, um, the Mel factor, I'd love to hear about that.

I, I know it's something highlighted on your, uh, website. Um, I can you, can you tell us a little bit about that?

Melissa Park: Yeah, so this is a funny one cause I always feel very self-promotion doing it and I'm like, ah. But I would kinda say, um, well the way I would describe it, and then I'll give you an example. So, you know, like when you're watching one of those shows, uh, like the talent shows like X Factor or America's Got Talent or any of those ones, [00:14:00] um, American Idol, whatever it may be.

And you see something, someone on stage and you don't, you can't quite point like pinpoint what it is, but there's something special. Um, and so I started with saying like, it's like that. And then I would get text messages from people that were at one of my like ex like former colleagues that, and they were at one of my, an event that they didn't know I was producing.

And they're just like, Hey. Are you producing this event? I'm here and it has the factor. Um, and like they would. I guess identify something within an event. I'm like, so then I said to 'em, what do you mean by that? And they, they always said to me, which is something that I, I know is a selling point for me.

Most people either have, they're either really good at logistics or really good at the creative. And I blend the both. And I, I am really good at both. Um, so it's kind of that cross section of where it meets and it's a kind of seamless, very attendee focused experience, but super fun and creative. But at the essence of it, it always meets [00:15:00] my client's objectives.

And that's kind of how I plan an event. So for my clients, I'll be like, what do you wanna get out of it? Um, you know, what, what are you hoping to achieve? And then I kind of like really get into the head of the target audience and work out how I can creatively speak to them, um, and give them, you know, an experience they will never forget while still achieving.

You know, the client objectives. So I, I don't know if I answered the question. Yeah. But that's kinda what, what the Mel factor is.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. And then you, it looks like you've bundled into a program and you teach other people The Mel Factor. I'm curious, like who ends up being your, who is your target audience for that and who ends up taking it?

Melissa Park: Yeah, so, um, really the, the Mel Factor method came out of, you know, for years I was working with clients and they would struggle to drive attendance to their events. So often they would hire me for the event producer side, and then I would just watch them struggle with the marketing side. And I'm just like, oh my gosh.

Like just the simplest mistakes, like over and over [00:16:00] and over again. And I would just watch and cringe and then I would end up being like, can I help? Please, can I help? Send me this, send me that. Send me the emails. Like let me, let me help you with this. Um, and like every single client was just struggling with it and I'm like, oh my gosh, like, what's happening?

And I would just find myself like just delving into that area. So what I did was, during Covid, when live events obviously were. Gone for a period of time, I thought like, okay, well what can I do? I wasn't really into virtual events. Um, so I was like, well, I don't wanna dive, like this time period is hard enough.

I don't wanna dive into something that I'm not passionate about. So instead, I sat and created a course and kind of. Put into words, um, and into, you know, videos and things like that, kind of everything that I typically walk a client through to help them fix their marketing. Um, and just kind of created that.

So that was my, my Covid project. Um, and really it's for everyone they, like, within the course is all of my templates as checklists. There's like all the things that, that they [00:17:00] get in each module, and it literally walks them through the steps that, and I say often it's like one of those bow and arrows like.

So often with events, the client will be like, oh, I wanna do this part and jump into the fun stuff. But they've gotta do the boring stuff first to give it a strong foundation. So you've got to sit down and you know, what is your mission statement? And you know, I've got examples there of, you know, how to write a good one, what needs to be included, you know, what are the goals and objectives, like you need to do all that stuff that, you know, it is somewhat boring.

Um, it's, it's a beige task, but you've gotta do all of that to like, I pull them back, to propel them forward. That's kind of how I explain it.

Michelle Harris: I'm definitely gonna have to follow up with you after this, uh, at some point because we started in-person events with Bosstrack and um, I, I think the first one went pretty well, but I think it was maybe a little bit by luck and not necessarily because we had a great, great plan in place.

So I'll have to figure out what that method is.[]

Melissa Park: 00:18:00] Reach out. I can definitely help.

Michelle Harris: Great, thank you. Um, so a lot of people are gonna be listening. Um, and even for those that are watching us, uh, on video, they can't necessarily see how petite you are. Um, and from what I understand, the uh, event industry, event planning industry is pretty male dominated. Some wondering how do you get beyond your being petite?

Um, and get everybody to do what you need them to do.

Melissa Park: Uh, so it's funny you ask that, and it's something I honestly feel like I've never really struggled with, which is odd because like in this day and age, like there's so many stories where people have, I think, um, you know, I'm, I'm. I'm very good at what I do.

I know that, um, not to say like I, and I also don't wanna sound like I'm, I'm stuck up or whatever, because in addition to that, I also know that I can't know everything and I [00:19:00] don't know everything. So for me, um, I will, you know, I, I know what I bring to the table and I bring a lot of creative ideas and, you know, a lot of seamless processes that I know work.

Um, and then I will always ask questions and surround myself with, you know, the very best of vendors. And I'll say to them like, Hey, here's a vision. You know, it's not my area. It's a vision, but it's not my area of expertise. Like how can, how can we bring this to life? And I just know that, you know, it's always bigger than me, but I'm confident in what I'm suggesting cuz I've been, you know, I've been doing it for 21 years.

I know what works and what doesn't. Um, and if people wanna, you know, listen to it and, and take advantage of that, great. Um, you know, if they don't, then that's fine too. Essentially, their event is not gonna go as well, and I know that. Um, I think I'm also very lucky in that, you know, I've built the two businesses based on referrals, so people know what they're getting and they, they seek me out, um, to help.

Solve their problems. So I think that also makes a difference as well, in that they [00:20:00] know something's not working in their event or there's an issue or they need to transform it or whatever the case may be. Um, and they're coming to me because they know I, I can help them do that. Yeah. Um, so yeah, it's just something, and you know what the other thing is?

Like if I sent someone's like, dominating or whatever, or, you know, speaking down to me or whatever, whatever the case may be, like I, I'll call them out. Like, I'm not afraid to just be like, Hey, like not on. You wanna work on this with me, then that's fine. But you know, whatever you just said that when, that's not gonna roll here.

Yeah. Um, so I'm not afraid when I need to, to call someone out. And I think that, you know, very quickly once you do that, they know like, oh, we can't, we can't push this one over. Um, yeah. So I don't know. I don't know whether it's that, I don't know. Yeah. I'm not sure what it is, but it's something. And maybe I've just overlooked it.

That could quite possibly be the, be the case as well. But it's something that I don't personally feel like I've ever really [00:21:00] struggled with.

Michelle Harris: That's great. I, I'm actually a petite person myself. Um, I'm only five one, and so, oh, we're the same. Um, but it has, like, I've definitely noticed as I was coming up, uh, as a leader, um, I, I don't think I always ignored it, although I could ignore it, but I was always looked very young for my age too.

So, um, that, that I think was more of the challenge than being short, or I'm sure it was the combination of it. So yeah, you really do have to kind of develop a strategy. Um, I can, I can understand like when you're going in, they're asking for you and they know what you can do. Like, but when you're, I guess, In a corporate environment, and I'm sure you remember when you were there and you didn't necessarily have that.

When you're meeting new people, you, you know, you have that initial, um, until you start speaking, they have, you know, you can see the look of doubt.

Melissa Park: Yeah, yeah. That's true. Yeah, no, I, I'm, think about it now, [00:22:00] and I think it's also like what environments you put yourself in, right? Like, if, if that, if I walk into a meeting and I'm feeling uneasy or I'm feeling like that, then they're probably not the right client or, you know, organization for me to work with.

Yeah. Um, cause they're probably not gonna be receptive to my ideas and all the things that, that I would bring to the table, um, to transform their event or, you know, what, whatever I've been hired to do. Um, but I think for the most part, I. Maybe it's that they also see that I'm kind of a sponge and I'll ask all the questions and they, they might like that side of things.

Um, or just this, you know, the suggestions that I might bring up in, in the space. Um, maybe if there were any doubts there quickly, you know. Quickly, not an issue anymore. Yeah, no. Um, you know, I, I did have the same thing in that I do look, I do look young as well for my age. Um, so yeah, I'm [00:23:00] just, I'm, I'm just trying to think or put myself in their shoes.

Um, kind of on the spot here. Um, thinking about it and I just, yeah, I'm not sure. Maybe like, my first role was at a company called Reed Exhibitions and the coordinators were all kinda young, so I think, but then the management there was, um, Very encouraging and mentoring, and they really let us own our shows.

Um, so, you know, if that was my, that was my first experience, like big experience in events or I would say like the, the first big role after, um, the division of general practice that I worked at. Um, so it was a really, um, really nice environment to learn in. Um, and then I guess I've just kind of like taken it from there.

And then I built my own co like self-confidence and then now that's what I kind of bring to the table.

Michelle Harris: What would you, um, like a lot, a lot of the women listening to us are maybe more corporate leaders. Um, they're younger, they're, they might maybe starting out as, as a leader [00:24:00] and they really want to position themselves to be heard.

Are there any recommendations that you would give to them to, to have their voices be heard when they're in a meeting or talking to, um, an authority figure?

Melissa Park: Yeah, I. Saying less is best, I think for sure. Um, and then, you know, picking where you'll inject yourself so you, you have the most impact in the shortest amount of time.

Um, and then knowing that, you know, I, I was probably. I probably didn't do such a good job of this when I, when I was younger, but as you get older, you learn like everyone's different. So you know, what I do with, or how I interact

with one client will be different or, you know, the in-house lead will be very different to how I'll interact with another.

So kind of like really observing behaviors and working out, like what's the best way to resonate with someone individually? Um, I think. Goes a long way. Um, and I've, I've certainly learned that more and more over [00:25:00] the past few years, uh, and now like I love studying behaviors and working out like how, how to interact with each person to get, you know, the most outta them.

Um, but, you know, yeah, less is best. I think you, and I've rambled to answer this, but No, thank you. I think, you know, really educate yourself and really ask a gazillion questions to the point where you're annoying to all of your vendors to learn as much as you can, because that's where you can really contribute the most.

Um, and then always, like, if you don't know something, like, don't be afraid to put your hand up and just be like, hang on. Can you repeat that or can you explain that a different way? I don't get it. Um, and, you know, I do all of those things and you know, I, I like to think I'm, I'm respected in the industry and, you know, asking a question doesn't make you dumb.

It educates you so,

Michelle Harris: Yeah, I do. I agree with that. And um, so if I kind of translate that to somebody that's not necessarily working with vendors, but if they're in an environment where they're in taking over a leadership role, [00:26:00] it's still important to ask all the questions. I mean, I, I agree. No question is a stupid one.

It's if you continually ask the same question over and over, then that might be a problem. But, um, but yeah, I agree. Definitely great advice, um, to, to do that. Yeah.

Melissa Park: And then also because you, you would hope that you are hiring like experts in each space, right? Mm-hmm. So, you know, you'll always hire, or hopefully always hire for your weaknesses.

So they're going to know more about that specific little portion of the role you are managing or overseeing, or the department you're overseeing. So, you know, they can be a source or they should be a source of, um, education for you to go and have those brainstorming sessions and really like, you know, solve whatever problems you've got.

Um, And you know, I always go back to you can't be an expert on everything. You can't be.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, true. Very true. So I'm wondering, I'm curious with, um, you, you have to secure the headline events and um, it [00:27:00] has to be some, there has to be some interesting stories there. I know you mentioned there were times when you would schedule headline events and they wouldn't show up.

Do you have any interesting or fun stories you could share with the audience about that experience? So I have two.

Melissa Park: One's a good one and one's a bad one. Um, so I would, um, A keynote speaker that I, um, secured and there's kind of stories behind both. So there's a keynote speaker I secured, I had always wanted to have, Sir Richard Branson, um, at one of my events, and I always wanted to meet him.

He was just like, to me, he was like top of my list. Um, and then I was working for a, a tech client in the us uh, producing their user conference for them. And just so happened that, um, the CEOs met like, I guess mentor from afar was Sir Richard Branson. So I'm like, oh my gosh, wow. This is, this is when it's gonna happen.

Um, so I had my budget for the event and [00:28:00] I was working with, uh, uh, the, I guess the, like the client or the in-house over overall manager of the event really trusted me with it. So he was just like, here's the budget, you know, this is what we wanna do now, run with it. Um, so. I, I'm not sure if you know how like securing headline entertainment works, but I didn't wanna tell them what I was doing cause I didn't wanna get anyone's hopes up.

Mm-hmm. So I worked with the speakers bureau and you have to like, submit this whole big thing. It's not just like book someone and it's that easy. When they're of that caliber, they wanna make sure that it's a right fit for them as well. So put this whole big thing together and you have to sign on the dotted line that if they accept it, Your, like you're contracted straight away.

So it was like a \$450,000 fee at the time. Um, and I was just like, oh my gosh. I think this is the right thing to do, but I'm gonna, this, it is a risk worth, worth taking. So it didn't tell a soul filled in this thing. And then I was going back and forth with the speaker bureau. I [00:29:00] knew it fit within the budget, but like it was a huge portion of the budget.

Right, right. Um, so filled in this thing, submitted it, and then we got him and then I'm like, oh my God. Now I have to tell the client that I've secured, I'm like, I'm either gonna be the best, the, the best producer in the world, or. They're gonna fire me one, two ways here. Fortunately, it, it was the first, so they were like over the moon, happy.

And then he was everything I dreamed of and more at the event. Great. So it all worked out well, but you know, that was a. Very big risk that I took on that one to secure there.

Michelle Harris: did you get a chance to talk to him directly? Yes. Yes

Melissa Park: I did. I was in my element, you know, we did like photo opportunity and Yeah.

Got to speak to him. And he's like the loveliest man, um, of like, you know, he didn't need to like, who am I at the end of the day, but he didn't need to remember, but at the end he was like, thank you so much, Melissa. This has been amazing. And like, he remembered my name. Yeah. And maybe people whispered on the way, I don't know, but it was like, [00:30:00] So nice and so like he did not have to do that, and he just made me feel valued and I'm just like, this is Sir Richard Branson, but it's probably.

The exact reason why he's made it to where he is. Um, so yeah, so that was incredible. And then there was another, this is my, a horror story. Um, I was planning a different tech conference in, um, the Bay, San Francisco Bay area. Uh, and it was like four, four to 5,000 person, you know, multi-day conference. Um, again in the tech space.

And I wanted an opening act that was just completely different and would like, you know, Knocked them off, off their, off their seat. So I'd arranged, um, or booked this electric violinist group and I had them, um, performing to like ACDC and kind of like just the complete contradiction. Um, so I had hired them and they came and I hired them off a YouTube video.

So I saw them perform and then reached out to their agent. And what happened [00:31:00] was the people that were performing in the video were not who they sent. Oh, no. Yeah. Right. So this is a thing, and I didn't realize this, so, uh, when they came for rehearsals, I very quickly realized this was not the same caliber of that.

And I'm like, absolutely not. And there was actually, I actually. Removed one of the performers off and just said like, you need to go and practice and then come back and show me what you can do because you

was. Awful to watch. Um, it was just beyond. Um, so she went, they went and practiced and then came back. Um, and yeah, essentially we, we went to show with, um, one less performer that came, but what actually happened was they refused to let my tech team manage their AV. So they sent a, an AV tech that was managing everything off his iPad.

So during rehearsal, he had got all of his levels right and everything. And this was a, this was an expensive, [00:32:00] this was not kind of like just someone I picked up the street. This was an expensive professional proper act. Right? Um, and this guy, um, rebooted he's iPad just before they went on stage, which meant he lost everything, all of the, the, the levels that he had got.

Perfect. During, during the rehearsal, so what the performers got in their ear was squealing the whole show. And what the audience got was squealing. What I got was a heart attack. Um, And the thing was, we just kind of had to watch it play out because my AV team wasn't controlling the audio, so they couldn't fix it.

So, so many lessons in that, number one. Or I always now say, I want these performers, or you send me a video of the performers I'm getting before I sign a contract. Number two, I will, I don't care who they are, I will never let an axe. Tech run the audio always my tech's going to. And then I think now if I were to play that back in [00:33:00] my, cuz there were two segments of the performance, but literally we were just watching in horror.

And I probably would have like somehow tried to like get it off and get the mc back on. But it was all happening and we were watching and I'm just like, this is, this is a train wreck. Like this could not have gone worse. Um, so yeah, horror story and great story, but that, that's. The two ends of the spectrum of, um, booking headline entertainment.

Michelle Harris: I can't even imagine just standing there watching it happen and not being able to do anything.

Melissa Park: It was the worst. I, it'll never happen again, but, but yeah, it was so bad.

Michelle Harris: Um, so I like to switch over a little bit in terms of like your, um, any kind of mentors. Do, do you have any, anybody that you. Uh, value their advice as you were coming up in the event industry that you consider to be a mentor?

Melissa Park: Yeah.

So, um, I guess, and I, I'm, I'm [00:34:00] pausing. It's a little scary to say who it was because of cancel culture now. Um, and now I'm like, oh God, do I still use this name? I'm not sure. Um, but in the spirit of honesty, because I'm very honest and transparent, for me for years and years, it was a person called Rachel Hollis.

Now, I'm not sure if you're familiar with her. Um, and you know, the last few years there's been some things go down. Um, but. True story. When I, when it was two, 2007, um, and I was, you know, in my parents' garage, you know, trying to launch my, or, you know, planning to launch my first company. I searched for American.

Event producers, uh, you know, someone that had done it before, female American female event producers, and I discovered Rachel, who at that point was like a lifestyle blogger. Mm-hmm. Um, and just something about her just grabbed me and she was always like a couple of steps ahead and was just doing like, incredible things and [00:35:00] kind of was like the vision of what I wanted to be or where I wanted to go.

Um, and it's very weird that as time has passed, We've somewhat evolved. She's always a few steps ahead, but we've somewhat evolved in the same way in that my end goal is to produce my own personal development conferences. Now, when my business took off, I somewhat not stopped following, but kind of was too busy to kind of follow, you know, every minute of her day.

And then when I was so years later, I think, so it would've been. 2016 or 17 when I was in the US and I was thinking like, I think I'm gonna go back out on my own. And I was like, I pulled out my old notes that I took from Australia to the US with me, with all that people to watch and all those things. And um, and.

I kind of looked her up, I'm like, I wonder what she's doing now. And she had her own personal development conference. She's written six books. She's done all, she'd done all these things. And I actually went to, um, a conference of hers in LA I think in 2017 and met her. And it was just phenomenal that like

[00:36:00] I, I'd watched her and kind of like, you know, she's always a few steps ahead, but you know, just someone to watch.

Um, you know, of late. Yes, there's been a few. Not so wonderful things, but back in the day, she was the person that I kind of, I, I really looked up to, um, in terms of like business and what she'd done and the brand that she'd built.

Michelle Harris: I appreciate you sharing that. And you, you mentioned you wanted to start personal development conferences.

Do you do your own conferences?

Melissa Park: Um, I do not. That's my kind of, that's end goal. Yeah, so I, I, you know, I, I've, right now I'm just doing conferences for all of my clients, but, um, I'm very much into personal development. I love it. I eat it up. Um, and, you know, my end goal is to produce my own conference. I think I know what I want it to look like, and I know it's gonna take me a minute to get there, which is probably why I haven't done it.

Yeah. Cause all my time goes on my client events. Um, but yeah, that, that is something that I definitely wanna do. And then writing a book, um, [00:37:00] In, in the same space is something that, you know, is on my list as well. Oh, great.

Michelle Harris: So we're getting a little preview of what's to come here.

Melissa Park: Yeah, exactly.

Michelle Harris: And then, um, leadership, what leadership advice, um, have you received that you consider the best, best advice you've ever received?

Melissa Park: Um, I would say pick your battles. Um, and then when you pick one, go all in. So, um, back in the, I've always been very, very passionate about what I do. Um, and then back, way back when I think this was like, Maybe like 2006 or something. Um, I was working with, um, I was working as a contractor in a, um, special events company and, um, my client had said we were working on their, one of their clients' events, and my client said to me like, you care too much.

And I was just like, what are you talking about? I care too much. Is that, that's not even a thing. Like you should be thanking me. And he said, no. He goes, you care much more than the client and [00:38:00] you need to work out what

to care about. And that was like, it was eyeopening to me, but something that now, like it always, that comment always sticks with me and I understand it now.

Cause I was probably causing more pain than good because I like would see something not be done the way, I guess, the way I would do it. But in, in. My younger mind, it was like, the proper way or like, do it properly. Um, and so I would just be like, no, we need, like, it's, that's not the best way. Like we should do this, this, this, this, this.

And yes, it might have been better, but at the end of the day, what we delivered was also great. Um, and, you know, ticked the boxes and served the purpose. So, um, I think that that there is key as well for like teamwork, like, You know, sometimes, you know, you hire someone in or you know, a vendor's got their own way of doing things and it might not necessarily be the way that you do it, but it still gets the job done.

And it's, I guess being, learning to let go a little bit. Um, which is hard when it's like, you know, [00:39:00] Melissa Park events, it's my name, I'm there, you know, they're hired for me. Um, but let, letting go a little bit and then picking your battles. Um, I think. Big, big things that, that I've certainly learned. And I would say I'm good at it now, but it took a long time to get there.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Yeah, I can see that. And that, that is great advice. Um, and it's even, I mean, it's great advice if you're part of a team just working in an office and you're not, Doing, you know, putting on events. Um, cuz I've seen, I've seen it happen where somebody just gets so focused on something that of course it's not right, but it's really not important.

Yeah. And then, you know, their, their time is better spent on things that are more productive and taking Yeah, that's, I I love that advice. Yeah. Um, so I'd love to move over to, um, mental wellbeing. Uh, with, with Bosstrack, we really like to, Consider the whole [00:40:00] leader. And it's not just about you being a leader, it's about you taking care of yourself so you can be the best leader you can be.

So, um, I'd love that if you could provide some insight into any routines that you have, uh, morning routines, evening routines, uh, that, that you attribute your wellbeing, um, to.

Melissa Park: Yeah. So, um, I have suffered with burnout twice. Um, and that's probably honestly an episode in its own. So I won't delve too much deeper into that cause I could go on forever.

Um, but what I learned from that was boundaries. Uh, the biggest and most important thing. Ever. Um, for me, checklists kind of keep me sane, um, and exercise. And as for like, I'm not, uh, you know, I, I'm constantly all over the world, so I'm not like a 5:00 AM club person. That just doesn't work for what I do. Um, so often my wake up time is based on my [00:41:00] first meeting.

So like it'll, you know, they may be at 2:00 AM they may be at 5:00 AM it might be. You know, midnight that I'm on calls. Mm-hmm. Um, it just depends on, you know, the client's time zone that we're working with. Um, so I wouldn't say that I have so much of a morning routine, but getting my exercise in at some point toward the earlier part of the day, um, is super important to me.

And really just kind of like, clears my mind, gets the stress out, um, and enables me to kind of like, think clearly, um, and really just dive into work when I get back. So I would say yeah, boundaries are the biggest thing. Um, and I am very firm with them. Um, and then, yeah, exercise and, and checklist. I think are a big thing.

I, I love to highlight something off a list.

Michelle Harris: Yes. Makes you feel so good. It's like this, you know, hit of, uh, do dopamine. Um, exactly. So, wow. With all those, uh, different hours where you're getting up, uh, this, this question might be even more [00:42:00] relevant, but, um, are there any songs that you really enjoy that really get you pumped up when you need to feel boost of energy or confidence?

Melissa Park: Um, I've got, I've got a playlist of songs that kind of, you know, do the trick. But I would say, um, and this is like a weird one and it's not like a who Run the World or you know, any of those things, but Working Class Man by Jimmy Barnes, um, you may not have even, it's like a rock classic. You may not have even heard of it, but when I was younger, um, like.

In my, maybe early teens even, I was dancing at a football grand final. Um, and because I'm so short, um, I led, you know, the, the hundreds of dancers out. So I led us out of the tunnel, um, onto the field, and it was very likely because of Jimmy Barnes performing that the crowd erupted. But it just so happened that it was when we came out too, so I kind of felt like, oh, you know, it's for us.

Um, and then, you know, I danced my heart out on that, you know, that football field for [00:43:00] that song. Um, and it kind of just brings me back to the feeling of, you know, 80,000 people in an arena screaming for you. Well, it wasn't for me, let's be real. But, you know, it felt like it. Um, and you know, just going out and performing with the biggest smile on my face and doing my thing and the confidence that I had doing that.

So that song kind of takes me back to a moment that embodies who I wanna be each day. Um, so that, that kind of like, if, if I need that hit. That's the song I go to. Um, but if I just need like a pop song, then you know, I have a playlist full of them that I can just like click through to the one that hits in the moment.

I'll, I'll send you the link.

Michelle Harris: And then, um, you mentioned personal, um, personal development, that's a passion of yours. Uh, and maybe this fits in with, um, books or podcasts. Like do you have any books or podcasts you would recommend to, or listeners, something maybe you've [00:44:00] recently listened to or read that was, uh, extra special for you?

Melissa Park: Um, I've had a lot going on this year, so I honestly haven't really read many books. I'm, I'm halfway through. Um, Bethany Frankel's Business is Personal. Yeah. Um, but I haven't finished that, so I probably wouldn't talk about that one yet. Um, I recommend anything. I would recommend a number of books by Lisa Messenger, and I know she's.

Just, she's an Australian entrepreneur and she's just, uh, launching into the US right now actually. Um, so she's been doing a ton of like, book fairs and things over there. But, um, she wrote Risk and Resilience, another one called Daring and Disruptive, and another one called Purpose. And I read each of those books in one day cover to cover.

Um, they were incredible. It just something about the way in which she writes just really connects and she's really. Raw and honest, and she'll take you on the journey of her entrepreneurship or whatever she's talking about in the book. And it's just so real and you can just relate, um, uh, to that. So yeah, [00:45:00] the three of her, you know, she's got many books, but those three in particular, um, were really resonated with me.

So I, I would recommend them for sure to anybody you know, and it doesn't matter what, um, stage in business you are at, you can. You'll resonate with something in the book. Okay,

Michelle Harris: thank you. I appreciate that because I haven't read those and um, I need to, even the Bethany Frankl, I have it on my list, but I haven't started it yet, so that's cool.

Yeah,

Melissa Park: it's. Yeah. I mean, there's always golden nuggets in everything, right? Yeah. Right. To, to be down. Um, I wouldn't say it's completely groundbreaking, but there are things where I'm like, Ooh, that's good. Um, so, you know, if you take a couple of nuggets from each book, I think they're worthwhile. Yeah,

Michelle Harris: I agree.

I agree. I have so many highlights from, from books I read. Right. Um, Well, I, I can't, the time has flown by so fast and I just wanna say I appreciate you being on the podcast and I really enjoy your high [00:46:00] energy and enthusiasm and, uh, I hope it comes through to the audience listening. And, um, if it's okay, if you're okay with the audience reaching out to you for any reason, could you provide, like, how, what would be the best way to kind of contact you with questions they might have or just.

Melissa Park: Yeah, absolutely. Um, so Instagram, I'm probably on most, so that's Melissa Park events. Um, LinkedIn, I'm there as well. Melissa Park, uh, reach, like, don't hesitate to reach out directly via email. So that's melissa@melissapark.co. Um, I'm on Facebook as well, but honestly not much. So you're better off to reach, reach me via LinkedIn in.

Instagram or just, you know, shoot me an email. I, you know, love building my network, meeting new people. Um, so yeah, don't, absolutely don't hesitate if there's, you know, any questions coming out of this podcast, I'd love to hear from you.

Michelle Harris: Oh, amazing. Well, again, thank you. I appreciate you being on and, um, I hope you enjoy.

I don't, is it evening or morning there for you? Morning.

Melissa Park: Yeah, we're just starting the next day.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Oh wow. [00:47:00] Well, enjoy. I hope you enjoy your day and thank you again for coming on. I've enjoyed it.

Melissa Park: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. Alright, bye-
Bye.

Michelle Harris: Bye. Hi everyone. This is Michelle again. Just one more thing before you take off.

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