

Business For Superheroes Podcast Transcription: Episode Forty One: Ymmas from Kalymnos!



In an industry stuffed with marketing bullshit, empty promises and shiny-suited liars, one woman's had enough. She knows what it's like to have the wrong clients, no money and no time for fun, but she also knows how to fix it, and, on the Business For Superheroes show, she promises to tell the down and dirty truth about business, sales and running away with the circus! Here's your host: Vicky Fraser...

Vicky: Hello and welcome to the Business For Superheroes Show from Kalymnos. I'm Vicky Fraser and this is my husband, Joe.

Joe: Hello!

Vicky: Hello!

Joe: Road trip. First podcast from abroad.

Vicky: It is the first podcast from abroad. It is indeed.

Joe: And as such we are entirely unprepared.

Vicky: Yeah, I was going to prepare something and then I thought, "You know what? We can just wing it." I've actually got a little notepad open with a few notes on it.

Joe: Ok, cool. So are you enjoying the holiday?

Vicky: I've had a really great holiday, yes. It's been fab. I am very much looking forward to going home because I miss my cats and my chickens, and my snake, and it's nice to go home.

Joe: It is good to go home.

Vicky: Although I'm a bit worried we're going to go home to a beach.

Joe: That sandblaster in again.

Vicky: Bit worried about that.

Joe: Hi, Chris!

Vicky: He doesn't listen to this. [Laughs] Yes, it's been ace. I've brought some stuff with me, I've done a few daily emails - as people who read my emails will know. But I haven't done one everyday, I haven't finished my freebie, newsletter-gazette, which I meant to finish.

Joe: Uh oh.

Vicky: Well, meh. I haven't really done anything except for climb, swim, play foot-catch- which we will tell you about shortly - and just generally had a great time with our friends.

Joe: It's been very nice. We've probably drunk a bit too much and eaten too much but we've been doing a lot of exercise.

Vicky: My left knee is pretty much fed up with me but it's been really cool, and it's really important to go away and switch off for a while.

Joe: I haven't read a single email for a fortnight, I'm a little bit nervous about what's going to happen tomorrow.

Vicky: It's going to be fine. I see so many business owners and entrepreneurs on Facebook etc. kind of wearing this 24/7 badge of honour.

Joe: It's a point of pride, isn't it? Never switch off, never stop.

Vicky: Yes and I think that's wrong. Well, I don't know, whatever works but when I see people saying, "I'd love to have a holiday but I couldn't possibly take the time off", then that's a sign that there's something massively wrong with your business and the way that you're running it. If you want to work 24/7 - and I do know a few people who live/breathe their businesses and that works for them, that's fine. But if you're thinking, "I desperately want some

time off and I daren't leave the business, I can't possibly, I don't know where the next client is coming from" etc. then that's not a good sign. It's not at all.

Joe: You don't want to spend the rest of your life like that.

Vicky: No. So, I've had a lovely two weeks, I feel very chilled out. Although I'm not looking forward to the journey home because Kalymnos airport is the worst place in the world.

Joe: Kos airport.

Vicky: Kos airport is the worst place in the world.

Joe: It is pretty terrible. We've had some spooky weather because normally Kalymnos is just hot and lovely and dry, and it's great, and every now and again you get a windy day. But this morning we woke up to rain.

Vicky: Pouring rain.

Joe: And storms and crazy weather.

Vicky: It was really cool.

Joe: It was great but it doesn't bode well for a day that's going to involve boat trips to different Greek islands and then flights.

Vicky: It'll be fine.

Joe: I think it might be a little bit of a lumpy day for that stuff.

Vicky: We put all our stuff out on the balcony overnight - damp towels and rinsed out clothes and stuff - and I woke up in a slight panic, it must have been about 3am. I was like, "What's that noise?" And that noise was giant raindrops. I was like, "Noo!" So I had to go and get a load of stuff in. Wet stuff. So, we're in this hotel that we didn't mean to book. We wanted to book the Apollonia, which is where we stayed last year, and it was fab. The Apollonion was Apollonia one of the nicer hotels on the island.

Joe: For sure.

Vicky: It's not massively expensive but it's a bit more expensive than the average. It's comfortable, the people who run it are friendly and the bathroom is really nice.

Joe: It's handy.

Vicky: It's really handy, yeah because it's right on the main drag but high enough up to be quiet. It's nice, anyway but we couldn't book it because it was booked out - which was quite frustrating.

Joe: Well, we never quite discovered whether it was booked out or not. We sent the guy an email saying, "Hello, Nicholas lovely to see you. We'd like to book again this year." And he said, "That's great, lovely, marvellous and because you're doing it personally rather than via some website we'll give you a discount. That's great, thanks, look forward to seeing you". Then a couple of months passed and we thought, "Let's just check that" and say hello, offer to pay a deposit or something to confirm the booking" and we got nothing back from him. Nothing. Just silence.

Vicky: Tumbleweed. So we started to panic a bit and a couple of our other friends who were also hoping to stay at the Apollonia, they got in touch with them and heard nothing, and then Rich - Hi, Rich - heard something. He managed to book a room, the filthy swing and gloated about it the entire week that he was here.

Joe: Smug, very smug.

Vicky: We didn't know whether we had a room or not and thought, "We're not sleeping on the beach" so --

Joe: We'll have to book somewhere else. Somewhere that answers their emails and will take a deposit of us, and has some kind of organisational skills.

Vicky: Yes, so we booked the Aphrodite Hotel. We arrived really late because it's a really long day when we come. You go to the airport, have a glass of champagne - or two - as is tradition, then you get on a plane and it's a four

hour flight, and you have to wait for the ferry – it's a ferry over to Kalymnos. By the time you get here, it's gone midnight.

Joe: Yeah, there's a few taxis in there as well.

Vicky: Terrifying taxis. So, we got here really late and I was really tired, and walked into the room and was like "Rahh! I'm really tired and I hate the room, it's horrible".

Joe: It's not the Apollonia .

Vicky: And I was really tired and just like, "We're looking for a different hotel tomorrow. Rarrh" Then woke up the next day after a pretty good night's sleep and obviously nothing looks as bad as when you're that tired.

Joe: It's all fine.

Vicky: And then we went downstairs and we had the warmest welcome you have ever known from Katrina, who works on the reception desk. She was lovely.

Joe: She made us coffee, she told us all about things. She was great, lovely.

Vicky: Yeah, absolutely lovely. That was like, "You know what? This room is not the Apollonia but it is clean, it is comfortable and the people here are lovely". They can't do enough for you. They gave us extra pillows because the pillows are like an inch thick. And we've been really comfortable here, haven't we?

Joe: Yeah, it's fine. And the 160 steps up from the main road to our hotel. 160 steps, people.

Vicky: 160 steps. And if we go to the beach and come straight back from the beach, it's like 200.

Joe: An extra 40 or so. It's outrageous. Buns of steel.

Vicky: Buns of steel, yeah. Well, my knee doesn't like me very much. Down steps isn't good. This hotel has actually been really lovely. We're in a different place because in Kalymnos, in Masouri, there's a one-way system, so the main street goes through and down a few metres above the beach.

Joe: The beach road.

Vicky: Then the one-way system comes up into the mountains. It's very steep, so up from here - we're looking up the mountain now - we can see Telendos and the sea and we're way above everyone else. It's very quiet and it's a lovely view. It's just lovely. And the thing that made the difference was the people who run the hotel here. I was thinking that I've had a really lovely time because they've made it lovely.

Joe: Yeah, they have. They've done a great job.

Vicky: This is the thing to remember because in your business, you can do a good job and you can do a good product and service etc. But if you can have people come away thinking, "Wow, they're a pleasure to deal with", then that will make the difference. People will accept a lesser - I don't want to tell you to be sloppy about things but people will accept lower quality if the service is amazing. It's all about value rather than price, really. This place was really good value.

Joe: Really good value.

Vicky: It was very cheap as well. But if when we first arrived, the warm welcome hadn't been forthcoming then it would still have been too expensive for me. There's a few places like that here, there's the beach bar that we go too as well which is Valerio's .

Joe: Valerio's bar, a very lovely place.

Vicky: It is a lovely place. There's loads of other bars on the beach and hotels fronting the beach, but everybody - well certainly all the climbers, all the cool people make a beeline for Valerio's because the guy who works behind the bar is really cool, isn't he?

Joe: Well, they're both cool. He's got his little brother working there now.

Vicky: Yeah, we'd not met him before. They're quite striking looking as well because they look very Greek but they have really blue eyes. You can spot them from a mile off. They've got the slackline out the front and they remember you. They remembered us last year, they remembered us the year before last and they remembered us this year, as well. That makes a big difference because they're like, "Oh how're you doing? Hello! Are you climbing this year?" They asked us to give his regards to other friends of ours who aren't out here this year. Just really good at the whole service thing, and that's what I've found, certainly people on Kalymnos are very good at. It's like the barman in the Plaza.

Joe: Yeah, couldn't be a nicer guy, could he?

Vicky: No, and we were talking to him for hours last night about his dogs because he goes hunting with his dogs and stuff. He loves his dogs, doesn't he? He hates people who are cruel to animals - which I totally understand.

Joe: He rescued some dogs.

Vicky: Rescued puppies and he's just lovely. He was talking about his job the other night, and how you shouldn't do a job like this, you shouldn't be a barman - and he takes it very seriously, doesn't he. He doesn't just work in a bar, he takes it very seriously. He's like, "If you don't care about giving people a good experience and a good drink, then you shouldn't be doing this job". He's completely right about that.

Joe: Yeah, nice guy.

Vicky: Very nice guy. And then we went for dinner last night and then we went to a terrible bar!

Joe: Ah, Jesus. So, normally after dinner - after you've had your gallon of wine and you want to carry on with the night, you go and have a couple of games of pool at a place called Nadir - it's a great bar.

Vicky: Yeah, Nadir Rock Bar, it's like a rock cafe.

Joe: But it's a ten minute walk up the road and it's great, it's lovely.

Vicky: And those guys remembered us as well.

Joe: Those guys remember us. They've got climbing ropes across the ceiling.

Vicky: And they've got really cool posters of people all over the walls, like photographs of Bob Marley and Jim Morrison.

Joe: It's a good place and they play good music, there's a nice pool table and the booze is reasonably priced. It's good, we like it very much. But last night we were all a bit tired, couldn't really be bothered, so we went to a new place which is in the middle of town. Two seconds away, new to us, and it was --

Vicky: It was full of the worst kind of Brits abroad! I sound like such an awful snob right now but I don't care. You, if you're listening, you know exactly the kind of people I'm talking about. They go to the Costa del Sol every year.

Joe: Unless they come here.

Vicky: Unless they come here.

Joe: The pool table was one of those big, squishy American ones as well. The big, fat, slow balls.

Vicky: And greasy and sticky. And the floor looked like--

Joe: The floor looked like something out of Mike Tyson's bedroom. It was weird.

Vicky: It was all sparkly.

Joe: It was like something taken out of the horrible casino at the back of Coventry or something. Not going back there.

Vicky: No, it was just ehh. And they had bloody live sport on massive screens, which is my least favourite thing to do in a pub ever. I've not forgiven Sarah for this choice of bar.

Joe: Hi, Sarah! Not forgiven you.

Vicky: We should have gone to Nadir, and I felt like I was betraying Nadir. I felt bad. Now, this is our last day and we're not getting, our flight is not until 21:15 pm, which is a bit shit.

Joe: So we have 40 minutes to check out of this hotel room and then we have hours and hours to slowly meander our way to Kos airport.

Vicky: Well I'm going to do some sketching.

Joe: I'm going to read a lot of book.

Vicky: I'm going to read a lot of book as well, and we'll probably play that pirate game that Sarah and Emily brought with them.

Joe: Yes, we need to find somewhere to be to do that kind of thing. And try not to get drunk in the process!

Vicky: Normally that would be Valerios beach bar, but there's thunderstorms forecast on and off all day today and I don't think the bar is going to be open.

Joe: Or waterproof!

Vicky: Or waterproof! We need to find a different bar but not the one from last night. So, that's it. I think I sound quite "Meh" and tired.

Joe: I'm ready for a break, I'm knackered. The way this holiday works is you get up at about 7am and you go and meet people for a cup of coffee and maybe a croissant at about 8am. You thrash your scooter to the other side of the island, or to somewhere.

Vicky: Where there's a climbing crag.

Joe: Where there's a climbing crag. And then you yonk up a hill, at about 45 degrees, dry and dusty.

Vicky: In 28 degree heat.

Joe: 28 degree heat, carrying maybe 20 kilos of stuff, and you might be doing that for anything up to 40 minutes.

Vicky: Normally it's like 10 minutes or so.

Joe: 10 - 40 minutes.

Vicky: But we had one moment when we went to Sikati cave when I genuinely thought - we hadn't taken enough water between us. There was like 10 of us and we thought we might die. Our friend Dan left early and I was genuinely worried that we were going to find his carcass.

Joe: Picked clean by goats.

Vicky: It was a hell of a walk, that was.

Joe: Brutal walk.

Vicky: We went down to the lovely Paradise beach bar a Palyanosis bay and just walking up to it - I was the first one to get there and Dan was already sitting there. Without even saying anything he just waved a bottle of water at me and I was like, "Oh my gawd!"

Joe: Everybody who sat down that day just drank gallons of water.

Vicky: It was just -- The cave was spectacular, it was well worth it.

Joe: It was amazing but we could have done with another three litres of water each.

Vicky: I thought we took loads of water. Normally it would be more than enough.

Joe: Grim.

Vicky: Yeah, grim. So that's how the holiday goes. Then we come back and we go to the beach. In previous years, before Sarah and Emily came along, it would just be chill out with a book, maybe go for a bit of a swim. But having Sarah here has been brilliant because she's my circus buddy, so we've been doing acro balance on the beach - which means we've been standing on each other, Joe has been out tower. We actually got pretty good in the water - I got good at standing on your shoulders, didn't I?

Joe: Yeah, we've got that sussed. I think if we'd got a clean dismount technique we could do it anywhere.

Vicky: I think we should practice in our garden because the grass is fairly soft at the top.

Joe: There's enough of it.

Vicky: We didn't manage to get the Dirty Dancing life - we've still not managed that. I think you need to get lower and straighten your arms.

Joe: I think you need to jump higher and you know--

Vicky: We'll keep practicing anyway and we'll be on it next year. But this year has been really fun because we've invented loads of new games, like foot-catch.

Joe: Foot-catch, that's a game.

Vicky: Joe, it was your fault. We were throwing a tennis ball between the four of us - You, me, Emily and Sarah - and Joe was just floating with his feet facing everybody. That gave us the idea for foot-catch. Basically you throw the tennis ball and you would have to catch it with your feet. I got pretty good at it yesterday.

Joe: You got pretty good at it. You could float on your back and catch the ball on your feet. That's quite a thing.

Vicky: And not drown.

Joe: That's a useful skill, people.

Vicky: There's all these people on the shore going, "What are those people doing?!"

Joe: Foot-catch. It's a thing.

Vicky: Obviously.

Joe: Vicky Fraser, Kalymnos 2016 - foot-catch champion.

Vicky: Oh yes! It was really good fun and that's what we've been doing, basically. Just faffing around, and juggling and slack-lining, and acro balance.

Joe: Drinking.

Vicky: Drinking too much beer.

Joe: Drinking too much beer.

Vicky: Because you get there after a hot day's climbing. You get to the beach and think, "I'll have a large Mythos, or a large Alpha please" and then it arrives, and then you have another one and then you're drunk. Which isn't a bad thing because you're on holiday.

Joe: And then you go out for dinner.

Vicky: And it starts again the next day. It's been fab, I love these holidays. I'm glad to be going home but I'm going to miss Kalymnos.

Joe: That's probably enough rambling.

Vicky: Yeah, I think there's been some marketing lessons in there. Give people an experience, don't be like Mike Tyson's living room.

Joe: Don't decorate your business like Mike Tyson's living room.

Vicky: Make people feel special. Remembering us makes us feel special.

Joe: Repeat customers!

Vicky: There's thousands of climbers that come through here every year. Thousands and thousands. And to be remembered is a very nice thing.

Joe: True dat.

Vicky: We'll be back to normal, normal service resuming next week - if I don't decide to blow my business up. [Laughs]

Joe: Don't do that.

Vicky: Well, we'll see! Take care. I hope you've all had a great two weeks. If you can't be good, then don't get caught.

Joe: See you in a week. Bye!

Vicky: Bye!

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