

Jody Guetter:

Innovation isn't technology as a standalone, it's rethinking the way we do things and the tools we use and the processes we put in place and the way we solve problems.

James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello. I am James Robert Lay. And welcome to the 182nd episode of the Banking on Digital Growth Podcast. Today's episode is part of the New Starts Now Series. And I'm excited to welcome back Jody Guetter to the show. Jody is the Executive Vice President of Market Innovation for Nymbus Labs, a strategic marketing and innovation unit of Nymbus.

James Robert Lay:

Welcome back to the show, Jody. It is so good to share time with you today.

Jody Guetter:

Absolutely. Wonderful to see you again. I'm looking forward to catching up.

James Robert Lay:

You and I had a great conversation going all the way back to Episode 85. And this is Episode 182, that's almost a hundred episodes to be exact.

Jody Guetter:

That's awesome. I didn't realize you were already up to that. That's phenomenal.

James Robert Lay:

Well, time flies. Time flies when you're having fun. And I love doing this podcast because of the connections and the conversations that I get to have, the people who are way smarter than me that I get to learn from, and really from just the place and the purpose of educating and empowering others. I'm a big believer that when it comes to things like we're talking about today, innovation, creativity, sometimes you're going to be the student, other times you're going to be the teacher, but there's always a lesson to be learned from within. And that's how we get better together.

James Robert Lay:

And before we get into innovation, before we get into creativity, let's talk about what's going well for you, what has been good over the last almost 100 episodes since we last chatted, what's been good personally, professionally? It's always your pick.

Jody Guetter:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, we have to talk about professionally because the last time I was on the show, I was in a different role at a different organization, a wonderful organization, Social Assurance as their CMO. So, we talked about some very different types of topics related to my role then. So since then, I've joined the Nymbus team specifically Nymbus Labs as their EVP of Market Innovation.

Jody Guetter:

And it's an organization I've been watching for a really long time, leadership team that I've admired from a really long time. And so, to be a part of that journey with them and with their clients, I'm just thrilled to be a part of that. And as you said, learning so, so much which has just been an amazing growth journey for me as well.

James Robert Lay:

Now, as you mentioned, you are the EVP of Market Innovation for Nymbus Labs and you spend a tremendous amount of time thinking about innovation for financial brands. I'm curious to get your take here as we get started. From your point of view, what do you feel is we'll say the biggest innovation opportunity that you're seeing right now for financial brands to either create or capture on their end? What's on the top of your mind right now?

Jody Guetter:

I think that there's been for quite some time now consistent themes obviously around data and leveraging data, marketing and evolution of a brand and the importance of marketing at financial institutions, and obviously the technology that resides whether that's marketing technology or your organizational technology, your core technology, your online banking, mobile banking experience technology.

Jody Guetter:

So, I know that those have been facets of innovation that have been on the top of leadership's minds for a couple of years now. But I think something that I'm really trying to educate and inform and change the way of thinking around that is it starts with a mindset and a cultural change. The technology and the process behind that can only do so much. And for that to really be impactful and sustainable, we have to start with the mindset and organizational cultural conversation first as the catalyst.

Jody Guetter:

So, I'm really trying to like, yes, let's talk about those things as innovative strategies, but let's also make sure that we're talking about the mindset and the people and how do we start there to make sure we have a foundation that's strong to be able to build along. So, that's where I'm really focused in right now in my strategic conversations.

James Robert Lay:

And I think it's so wise because from what I'm seeing since writing Banking on Digital Growth, it's like we're starting down these paths, we're moving forward, but then something happens. And if I was to put a timeframe on it, it's typically 12 to 18 months within their digital growth journey. Some call it a digital transformation journey and it is around technology.

James Robert Lay:

And I think that's where the big friction runs into play because, in essence, we've forgotten about the human element, not necessarily externally from an account holder perspective but internally from a people, from a culture, the people who are having to actually do this stuff day in and day out. And that creates a little bit of tension and friction. So, I'm right there with you about this idea of mind, the mindset. That's where really all transformation begins.

James Robert Lay:

And when you think about transformation and innovation, that word innovation, where might others be a little bit confused about innovation? Where is the word innovation within financial services we'll just say misunderstood?

Jody Guetter:

Yeah. That's a great question, James Robert. We actually internally at Nymbus had a whole conversation about this recently. And a message that I was really trying to underscore is that I think with the evolution of technology and the digitization of our lives, we've misconstrued what innovation means. And now, it

has become this really unattainable thing that only technologists can play a part in or only if you've got a degree in data science. It's this very aspirational thing.

Jody Guetter:

And I think we've really taken away the concept of it's about rethinking the way you do things. It's out identifying problems and coming up with solutions. And that can be done at all levels of an organization with all different again experiences and backgrounds. And so, I'm really trying to again think through like innovation isn't technology as a standalone, it's rethinking the way we do things and the tools we use and the processes we put in place and the way we solve problems.

James Robert Lay:

I want to dive deeper into that because you talk about rethinking the way that we do things. But I think if we're going to rethink the way that we do things, our doing is informed by our thinking. But that is actually then informed by our feelings and emotions. And so, it's this like really interesting dynamic of thought, of feeling, of emotion and then that inspires action. And those actions that get repeated become habits and cultural norms.

James Robert Lay:

So, in essence, it's almost like we have to rethink the way that we think about thinking. I know that sounds very esoteric like super high-end. And even when writing now Banking on Change, my ... I'm getting some battles with my publisher on this because he is like, "You're like really high in the sky on some of this stuff." And I'm like, "Well, we're going to start really high but then come down really low and make it super practical."

James Robert Lay:

Because I do think there's a lot of ancient wisdom for example that we can apply in today's modern world because technology is just a tool. It comes down to the habits of allowing for and I think creating that room to be creative, to be innovative. And like you said, innovation can happen in all areas of the organization. It doesn't just happen in technology or on the senior leadership team. I'm working with multiple organizations right now and facilitating these dialogues from the frontline all the way to the top and the top to the bottom.

James Robert Lay:

And there's a couple of great books on that subject. Humanocracy is one. And then another one is called Open Strategy which is I think so relevant because we talk a lot about open banking but open strategy is along these same lines that we can invite many to the table to facilitate dialogue, discussion discourse and have just solid conversations about the possibilities, but it all comes down to solving really important meaningful problems.

James Robert Lay:

In your mind, what are some of the problems that we should be thinking about within our financial brands based upon what you're seeing through the conversations that you're having?

Jody Guetter:

Yeah. I'll maybe address this in two areas because I do really want to talk about the, even as you said, the way we think and the emotional aspect of innovation. And this is something that's really important to me. But I strongly believe that there needs to be for innovation and immense amount of psychological safety. And what I mean by that is I do not believe that there can be innovation without being able to be

vulnerable. And we cannot be vulnerable and share ideas and thoughts and dreams and aspirations unless there's trust.

Jody Guetter:

And so, I really think about how we're creating that environment where we can trust each other, where we have that safety to be vulnerable to come to the table and challenge the norm, come to the table with an idea that maybe puts you at risk.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Jody Guetter:

And so, I think that that's something that's really important to me as a leader who's trying to create this culture of like, "Put your biggest, baddest idea out on the wall and let's make it happen," kind of thing. And it's just so, so important to me. And I think obviously, there's a ton of resources. And Brene Brown, everyone hears me preach about Brene all the time about vulnerability. But it's just something that I think we don't talk about enough, how do we create that environment and that space to think like that?

James Robert Lay:

Why is that? Is it inherent to what I write as the banker's brain? And what do I mean by that? It's the analytical brain, the super smart brain. It's all about the numbers. And then when you look at the emotive brain, i.e. the creative brain, I feel there's some tension and conflict just within the brain itself because bankers are driven by the analytics side of things, numbers, math. Whereas the creative brain, it's more of that softer, harder to quantify. Is there tension there just naturally working within the financial services space?

Jody Guetter:

Also add into there the risk aversion. It is in the banks and credit unions that they have to operate within these certain regulations and requirements. And when you're already feeling like you've got this box that you have to fit into, it's very hard to think outside of that box. And I think that's where again we're seeing more disruptor banks and fintechs and things like that come into the marketplace because they're moving at a much faster scale, but they're starting outside the box versus inside the box.

Jody Guetter:

And so, we need to start changing that conversation around what is our risk appetite as an organization, what risk is worth taking and what isn't. And obviously, we never want to break regulation. We never want to jeopardize the safety and security of our customers. But we don't have to be 150% compliant. We need to be 100% compliant. And there are certain risks particularly around innovation and how do we deliver a superior experience. That means that we're going to have to rethink the way we do things.

Jody Guetter:

And it means too, James Robert, that technology we talked about earlier, let's not take our people processes and just translate them to technology. Take that technology and allow it to work for us in the way it's intended where we can start opening up accounts in five minutes, we can start delivering the experiences that our clients and customers expect from us as well.

James Robert Lay:

That's a great point you make on the fintech side moving at a different speed because they're not even in the box. I also see that there might be inherent built-in OS, operational systems or operational strengths,

from those in the fintech side that come back literally to the brain from the research that we've been doing from the lens of Kolbe. And for example, initiating Quick Start is an entrepreneurial-like trait where we're seeing through our research on the traditional incumbent banking side, they initiate as a fact finder or they initiate as a high-follow through. And then there's resistant Quick Start.

James Robert Lay:

And so you're right, this idea of psychological safety is so key. What might be some roadblocks that prevent an innovative culture from taking root? Because I do believe there are naturally pockets of innovation, there's naturally pockets of creativity within every financial brand. And I think the more that we can celebrate that and bring that to the forefront and nurture those pockets, then that has the potential to become kind of cultural norm. But what are some of the roadblocks that we need to be aware of and think about that could prevent that from being the case.

Jody Guetter:

Yeah. You alluded to it as well as there's pockets. And I think most FIs admit that they operate in silos. And it hasn't necessarily been intentional. It's a byproduct of how the products are structured, about how the technologies have been structured. So, we've already got that in the four walls of the FI. And so, I think we need to be very, very intentional about how we cross-pollinate and how we start to integrate those conversations.

Jody Guetter:

Because the reality is we do need certain technology to support different business lines. But the people component and the collaboration around that and the internal view of product development, process improvement, culture, it's not a collaborative one. So, we need to be incredibly intentional about how we nurture those programs internally. We need to be incredibly intentional how we create opportunities for dialogue, how we share information and data, how we come to the table with new ideas.

Jody Guetter:

And it really is creating space. It's admitting that we have a problem. It is being intentional about how we want to overcome that problem and being very disciplined and committed in saying this is important. We need to talk about these issues. We need to be able to address these as a unit instead of these siloed business lines.

James Robert Lay:

That's a great point you make about collaboration, innovation that comes from creativity. It's a team's sport. I believe two minds are better than one. There's an exponential effect when you bring people together. Even just two people from two different areas, one plus one has the potential to equal 11. And it's not a new idea.

James Robert Lay:

Napoleon Hill has written prolifically around this perspective of what he calls the mastermind. And a lot of people think of Napoleon Hill and is Think and Grow Rich work? But he's written so much more than that. In fact, he introduced the idea of the mastermind. It was 10 years before he wrote Think and Grow Rich. It was back in I think 1930. I'm looking at my notes. He wrote the Magic Ladder of Success and he noted this about the mastermind. I want to get your take on this when it comes to collaboration.

James Robert Lay:

He said, "The process of mind blending here described as a Master Mind might be likened to the act of one who connects with many electric batteries to a single transmission wire, thereby stepping up the power

passing over that line by the amount of energy the batteries carry. Each mind, through the principle of mind chemistry, stimulates all other minds in the group. Therefore we have the exponential growth effect when we bring minds together around a common purpose."

James Robert Lay:

How can we facilitate this? Coming back to the challenge that you noted about these internal silos, let's keep peeling the layers of the onion back. Let's address the problems that are holding us back so that we can ... Once again, we have to admit we need to create some awareness that there's a problem to begin with in the first place. What can we do to help these silos maybe begin to fall to the wayside, and at the end of the day, we're all working towards the same objective here?

Jody Guetter:

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I loved ... I wrote a couple of notes then, some underscoring. When you think about that battery analogy too, that the energy that it creates and the amplification. It's taking one idea and then just exponentially growing and expanding upon that. So, I love that analogy. One specific and pretty tactical in nature but it's just top of mind for me right now. I'm teaching at ABA this year a content course. And one of the tactics that I'm talking about is personas and building out personas right now.

Jody Guetter:

And it's very tactical in nature but it's an example of how sometimes this tends to just reside in the marketing department.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Jody Guetter:

Marketing persona, marketing goes through the exercise and uses their data or their assumptions and builds out these personas. And then these personas are meant to inform business decisions, product decisions, strategy decisions. But they've been siloed within the marketing department. And so, one of my talking tracks is about even as something as simple or as perceived as simple as creating a persona.

Jody Guetter:

How can a marketing person know everything about that particular persona? How are you now creating this into a group think exercise to where yes, maybe it's a business persona where the business banker knows the lending relationship and the business side of it, but they're coming in on a daily basis and having transactions with Jody the teller who's been there for 15 years and seen their business grow.

Jody Guetter:

So, something as simple as that of identifying, what are some of the core things that we need to know about our customer? Who are the people that know these things about our customer? Leverage the data that we have, so you're leveraging your marketing team, your business analytics team. Who are the people involved in that interaction? Now, operationally, how are they interacting with the bank and who are the people and the processes that need to be involved with that?

Jody Guetter:

So, it's something very tactical, James Robert. But I think it starts to really demonstrate how that really should play out in an organization. And if we have more clarity around that audience, then marketing is more trusted now about the decisions that they make because they understood the persona that they're really marketing to. Product development can make better decision because you have a more holistic

picture. We can start to challenge maybe compliance and operations because we've now got more information around it.

Jody Guetter:

So then, the effects of just that simple exercise can start to snowball into other areas of collaboration and therefore innovation.

James Robert Lay:

I really like this example because it is very practical. It's something that shows how we can bring everyone together. But I also think what it does is when you invite others to the table simply to have a conversation, you're more likely to gain their buy-in because of their simple participation. I mean, this is stuff that goes back to the elementary schoolyard. I always talk about creativity. We need to probably go back to be more like a curious kindergartner.

Jody Guetter:

Yes.

James Robert Lay:

And look at the world through that lens of just curiosity. And I've watched my four kids go through this and they're still going through this. And I always tell them, I'm like, "The most important thing you can do is learn how to read so that you can always teach yourself something new." It's that idea of what Carol Dweck writes around growth mindset. Change is hard, particularly if it is challenging the status quo and that can make people feel uncomfortable.

James Robert Lay:

And for example, you invite people to the table for the conversation. That begins to disarm people, but then if we are changing things internally through innovation, I see a lot of people get trapped in what I call the cave of complacency. I think COVID brought a lot of awareness about how quickly things have changed, are changing and will continue to change.

James Robert Lay:

And so, how can financial brands effectively navigate the complexity of change that innovation brings, that transformation brings back to your point of Brene brown with courage and with confidence instead of just seeking the false security of the cave of complacency?

Jody Guetter:

Right. It's a massive challenge. And especially as we think about community banks and credit unions being these traditional institutions, we know that they have higher average tenure for employees. We know that particularly community banks over national regional banks have a higher average population from a demographics perspective.

Jody Guetter:

So, you've got some of these roadblocks that are there already just from a cultural perspective or a demographic perspective inside the four walls and the outside of the four walls. So, you've got that there. And again, let's recognize what we have. But I do think going back to your point around inviting people to the table and disarming them, I think that brings up another really good point of like when you bring them to the table, what is your objective? What is your intention? And are we setting them up in a way for them to share idea or share their thoughts, collaborate with you as well?

Jody Guetter:

And I think that that's something that is really important to be again, I'm using the word intentional about because I think at the pace in which we're going, we have to be incredibly intentional about our interactions and the outcomes we want out of those interactions. And as a marketer, the creativity comes much more naturally to me because I'm in that space every day. But the CEO or the CFO who are in the analytical brain or in the risk brain more regularly, we have to figure out ways to be able to nurture that.

Jody Guetter:

So, even things as we think about inviting them to the table to have those discussions and participate, but what do those interactions look like and how are we strategically orchestrating those conversations so they are collaborative in nature? So, there is clear objectives around those conversations. And then more importantly, what do we do with that input to then start driving internal communications, driving training, education, marketing, all of these other kind of internal decision-making components as well?

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. I've been thinking a lot about ideas and turning ideas and insight into action. And a lot of that comes through just facilitating good dialogue discourse back to your point previously of creating a psychologically safe place. I do a series called Inside Digital Growth. And always end that series, those episodes with the statement, "The only bad question is the question that goes unasked."

James Robert Lay:

And I think a lot of times we don't ask questions about something because it creates a bit of a vulnerable situation. If I ask a question, well, that means that I don't know. And I think the world is so broad now and banking is becoming so broad. It's impossible to know everything. But if we can bring the best ideas to the table, that's where we, once again, the mastermind, the battery, we get an exponential multiplier coming out of this. I want to get a little personal here with you. Are you cool with that? Can we go personal?

Jody Guetter:

Yes. Say the circle of trust, safe place.

James Robert Lay:

It is. It is a safe place. But I want to ask you personally for others to learn from your own experience, what are some strategies that you personally use to ensure that you don't get stuck in the cave of complacency? And you're always we'll call training the creative mind because I do believe that the creative mind is like a muscle. You either use it or you lose it. And the good news is if you've lost it, we can train that back into shape. So, what are some personal strategies that you use for this?

Jody Guetter:

Yes, absolutely. I'll get into specific strategies but the mindset that allows me to think like that, I learned very early on that I will never be the smartest person in the room. And so, I think demonstrating an immense amount of humility that you don't know it all and you'll never know it all and that's okay, but create a team and build a team that compliments that and brings unique things to the table that you can lean on as well.

Jody Guetter:

So, I'm a big believer in creating a team that has diverse strengths that comes from different backgrounds that allows for a different way of thinking. And I think as a leader, being okay with not being the smartest person in the room and accepting that fact. And I think that mindset has then allowed me to have a greater thirst for knowledge, a greater thirst for looking outside of the four walls of my previous FI, my job, my industry, the world, my community that I live in.

Jody Guetter:

And so, I'm very intentional about the content I consume whether that's reading books or e-newsletters, podcasts, things of that nature. But I'm very intentional about that type of content and making sure that I'm feeding that creative funnel from different channels, from different sources, that it's not just one source of information daily. So, that's really important to me.

Jody Guetter:

The other thing that's really important to me is to do things that you maybe don't think ... We're so consumed with the professional aspect of our job and the business outcomes related to that. And I think we forget sometimes that we need to really tap into that creative part of the brain and really understanding the brain has certain functions that do certain things. And when we're not using them to your point, it doesn't become part of our daily behaviors. It doesn't come natural. So, opening up those parts of the brains.

Jody Guetter:

And so, I'm a big one that's into music. I'm big into cooking. And some people may not think that that's really creative sitting there and listening to records until afternoon but it is. And somebody thought of something and they created something from nothing. And it's having an emotional experience or impact on somebody else. That's creativity. Food, you're taking something and making something from nothing and you're feeding your family. There's motives there.

Jody Guetter:

So, I think finding those things that are very, very creative that don't maybe feel burdensome that you have to sit down and read this 100-page white paper. But it's something that opens up that part of your brain and your heart and your soul that just makes you think differently. And that's something that's just super hard and personal, but something that's really close to my heart to be, make sure that I'm doing on a daily basis.

James Robert Lay:

I appreciate you sharing that. And I will tell you this. From my own personal experience, I would say in my "younger years" and I'm still young, I just turned 40 and the business just turned 20. So, I've got 20 years of history now of doing this. And I will say now, 20 years in, 40 years old, I'm more excited about the next we'll call it 118 years because in my mind, 158 is my number. I'm going to get to 158. That's my number.

James Robert Lay:

And I believe it's possible, but I also think it does a couple of things. It allows me to play a very long game because I do believe when you're looking for transformation or encouraging transformation, it takes time. And everyone will transform at their own pace, which another analogy that I use personally is this is like running a race. It's like running a marathon. And I'm a marathon runner although I haven't run marathons in a few years, just with the kids. And the time commitment for those long Saturday runs of three, three-and-a-half hours leading up to a race. Half marathons I think are much more doable.

James Robert Lay:

But I look at time like this. And I think what you're tapping into is what I call rest and recover. Because when you're running, you have a couple of different activities. You have pace days. And your pace days allow you to train and get prepared for your race day. And your race day is when you go all in all out, but you can't have every single day be a race day in the professional world. You will burn out and you will actually see your creative output drop like a rock.

James Robert Lay:

And that's why after race day or even sometimes pace days, you have rest and recover days. And those are days that you just step away. You turn off the professional mind. And this is so counter what we've been ... This hustle culture, that's a bunch of bull I believe. And there are now the scientific studies that are starting to back this up. If you're working more than 50 hours a week, I think the number is actually like 52, anything after that is the law of diminishing returns.

James Robert Lay:

And so, building this into the culture back to your point to create that space and time to feed other parts of the mind while it seems like that doesn't make sense, we're not getting any "output" from this person. I think if you play the long game, if you run the good race, that is the payoff over an extended amount of time, but we have to give ourselves that permission first and foremost individually.

James Robert Lay:

So, I got a question. If you could go back in your own mind thinking about your own growth journey, your own journey of innovation, knowing what you know now, what would you go back in time and tell your earlier self?

Jody Guetter:

Oh, goodness. That's a good question. I think you just addressed it, too. I think when I started my career very early on, I was living in Sydney and it was like part of your lifestyle. It was like your professional career and your working lifestyle. And it was, like you said, that hustle culture, it was normal to be working just all hours of the night constantly. And that's what you felt was like the killer lifestyle, living in the city and doing all of that kind of stuff.

Jody Guetter:

And I don't think it got me the promotions quicker. I don't think it got me the pay quicker. I don't think it accomplished more because I think now what I know and to a lot of the themes that we're talking about today with creativity and innovation, the quality of the output is what is more important. And we have to be able to create that space and time to be able to think strategically, think creatively how are we actually adding value to our interactions, how are we adding value to our clients' works, to our lives, to our peers.

Jody Guetter:

And when you're so consumed with just going, you don't have that awareness and you're not paying attention to new opportunities, new ideas. You've just got your blinders on. And I think that that really limited my growth earlier on in my career because I was just like, "Go, go, go," and I wasn't necessarily really paying attention because I was going so fast. And so, that's something right now that we're just really being intentional about, James Robert, around let's really focus in on the output and the work and the mark we want to deliver in the marketplace. And how do we want to ... What's our legacy?

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Jody Guetter:

Really focusing in on that endgame. And then, what do we need to do to be able to get there? And it is creating space to think more creatively. It is having more intentional meaningful conversations to where it's adding value to our ideas. It's adding value to our interactions. And so, really thinking through how do we create more value this year? How do we foster creativity in our interactions? And it's something we're just really, really committed to within our team too today. So, it's something that is really driving a lot of great cultural change in conversations. So, I'm really proud of that.

James Robert Lay:

Well, yeah, that's a great perspective. And in my mind, I think of the four what I call the exponential growth environments. And exponential growth I define is when you're growing personally and professionally at the same exact time. I don't think we can try to disconnect these two worlds anymore. If you're good personally, you're going to be good professionally. If you're good professionally, you're going to be good personally because there's such a blend.

James Robert Lay:

But once again, it's escaping the doing of whatever it is so that we can review what we've done, learn from those experiences, think creatively and innovatively about what we can do next to make that next round of iteration even that much better.

Jody Guetter:

One point there that just struck a chord with me if that's all right.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah, go.

Jody Guetter:

When you talk about personal and professional being blended, you're absolutely spot-on. But I think one callout as a female professional, we struggle with that a lot. It kind of ingrained into us this bias that it has to be one or the other. If we're doing good at work, we're failing as a partner or a mother. Or if we're doing good at home that there's always this sacrifice, like something always has to give.

Jody Guetter:

And so, I think that that's, as we think about breaking that bias and that culture around that, how do we as leaders in the workforce also help combat that so our female counterparts don't feel like that there's this battle that they have to struggle.

James Robert Lay:

I like that.

Jody Guetter:

So, I wanted to tap onto that because we have to stop that.

James Robert Lay:

I'm glad you addressed that because in my mind, I want to see success on both sides of the equation.

Jody Guetter:

Absolutely, so do I.

James Robert Lay:

And I even think of my wife for example, she's starting to look to go back into the family business. And I can just hear some of this conversation just some of her thinking out loud of, I'm like, "No, you can excel and exceed on both sides." And that is right there. That is the definition of exponential growth because we're growing on both sides personally and professionally. And I think it's now more possible than ever before. We have to allow for that.

Jody Guetter:

Yes.

James Robert Lay:

We have to allow ourselves as individuals. We have to allow that as teams, as leaders to create that space and time. Once again, psychological safety brings it all back together. So, thank you for addressing that because it is something that is easy to overlook but it can have extreme impact both positively and negatively.

James Robert Lay:

I want to get real practical as we wrap up here because there are so many great ideas and insights that you have shared from your own personal journey to the work that you're doing over at Nymbus Labs. What is one small action that you would recommend the dear listener take next on their own journey of growth to apply innovation within their organization, something small because all growth begins with a small simple step. What would that one small recommendation be that they could take next?

Jody Guetter:

I've got two.

James Robert Lay:

Two it is.

Jody Guetter:

I've got two. First thing, if you don't already, you need to protect your calendar. And you need to be disciplined around that. So, time block. And when I say time block, it's not a half hour for something. It's about, "I need two to three hours at minimum to work on a particular creative project, solve a particular problem. And you need to protect that calendar to ensure that you dedicate the time to flush out those types of problems and ideate over that and just come up with solutions. So, protect your calendar, give yourself that time and space and be disciplined around that.

Jody Guetter:

The second thing is super tactical but something that I've seen really effective is ask you and your team, put up a clipboard, create a channel in Slack, whatever mechanism possible, but what made your job hard today? And just ask the question to your team, get the feedback, get the information and start solving problems. Like as you said earlier on like what are the questions that we should be asking, they can start to drive some of these cultural changes.

Jody Guetter:

So, what made your job hard today? Get that information and start driving some momentum and change around that. You'll be able to get a lot of energy dialogue really, really quickly that just will start feeding into a bigger movement within your organization.

James Robert Lay:

I've got two follow-ups to that, to your two ideas and see what we're doing. I love this podcast because it's like we're literally innovating and creating together. We are, in essence, creating a mastermind in real time. Back to your time blocking example, let's connect the dot from earlier around pace, race and rest. That's a great practical way to look at your calendar. Even though I was talking about pace days, race days, rest days, you can time block your calendar to I'm pacing during this time block and I'm racing during this time block.

James Robert Lay:

And what I would call pacing, pacing is where you're doing probably more of the administrative work. You're having the calls. You're doing the email. But when you're racing, it's what Cal Newport writes as Deep Work. That's when you get into the state of flow and you're really making some progress because it is a race. But you can only race so long before you burn out and you have to come back to pace or you have to take a rest. So, pace, race rest might be a very practical way of looking at your calendar.

James Robert Lay:

The second point in regards to what made my job hard today, I love that idea. But once again, very practical is we coach financial brands to create what is called an innovation jar. And it can be physical. It can be in Slack. It can be in an internet. But just having a depository of ideas as they come to go in and make a deposit in the innovation jar. And then every 90 days come back in and let's review all of the deposits that we've made, prioritize them, and maybe we get one or two that we can begin to put some actions around going forward over the next 90 days.

James Robert Lay:

So, really great, great thinking, Jody. I love this. This is a great way to wrap up today's conversation.

Jody Guetter:

Yeah, you got them.

James Robert Lay:

If someone wants to continue the conversation with you, what is the best way for them to reach out and say hello?

Jody Guetter:

Yeah, no worries at all. I'm pretty active on LinkedIn so just hunt me down on LinkedIn, Jody Guetter, CFMP I think is my name. I should probably know that. But Jody Guetter, G-U-E-T-T-E-R. Or certainly just shoot me an email at [jguetter@nymbus.com](mailto:jguetter@nymbus.com). Happy to chat, and as you say, continue to learning from others in the community.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely. Connect with Jody. Learn from Jody. Master mind even with Jody. Jody, this has been a lot of fun, great conversation. And thank you so much for joining me on another episode of Banking on Digital Growth.

Jody Guetter:

---

You got it. Happy to be here.

James Robert Lay:

As always and until next time, be well, do good and make your bed.