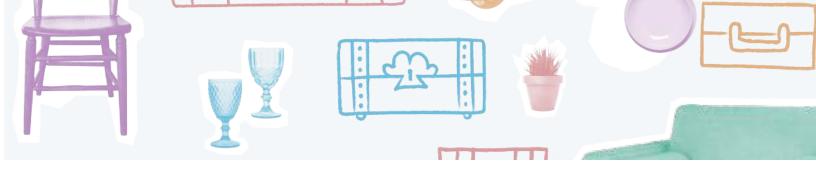


SEASON 3 EPISODE 5



"CREATIVELY CONSISTENT WITH ENGLAND'S VENUE STYLIST OF THE YEAR" HOLLY AND CHARLIE FOUNDERS OF LOCATE TO CREATE



WELCOME TO THE TRUNK SHOW,

hosted by Allison Howell and brought to you by RW Elephant. Episode **5 features Holly and Charlie, founders of** Locate to Create in England.

Holly and Charlie are owner/operators of Locate to Create. Their mission is to "Locate" items to "Create" bespoke events and experiences. They use props, furniture and styling to tell people's stories with an underlying theme of sustainability. Their diverse portfolio features an eclectic array of items and furniture pieces curated to cater to various personalities and styles.



What's in this Episode:

How Holly got started right out of Uni with the help of mentors Charlie joins the business and roles are defined Using Instagram and styled shoots to increase social media reach Winning Venue Stylist of the Year Award and leveraging it for growth Sourcing inspiration and finding creative options for storage Can you believe this is our job?



QUOTES:

"We would get money, we would pour it back in. We would get money, we would pour it back in. We were very passionate about not going into some crazy debt for this business where we couldn't walk away. So we would load, unload the trucks. We were everything. We were marketing. We were labor. We did that as a company." – Holly

"One of the benefits and beauties of working with your partner, business partner, romantic partner. She's at one end of the desk. I'm at the other one. It's not a particularly difficult task for me to say, "Oh, Holly, I think she might want styling." – Charlie

"We know now that actually seeing couples on our Instagram page, for example, real couples is fantastic, but actually styled shoot couples like models doesn't work as well. People just want to really see our products. So we don't post that much of our couples as much as we love them. But it's the products that we're trying to sell and the service." – **Holly**

"Sometimes when we get an award or we achieve something in our business, we say, okay, check that off onto the next thing. But it can be so valuable for us to say, okay, I got this thing, or I achieved this thing or I have this thing in front of me, how can I squeeze more out of it so that I can get all of the benefit or value out of this thing that I already have before I move on to the next marketing opportunity or before I move on to the next thing or before I invest in the next phase, right?" – Allison Howell

"We never want to be the sort of company where we're doing thousands of events every year. So it's very important to us to identify very strategic venues to try and penetrate into a high proportion of their yearly total events. And as you say, having that leverage to get in there and actually capture those for us, that's a far more valuable way of doing business and expanding business." – **Charlie**

Episode Transcription

Intro: Hello and welcome to the Trunk Show. I'm your host, Allison Howell, here to talk with leading professionals about their event rental businesses, hard-earned wisdom, and ongoing adventures in the industry.

The show is brought to you by RW Elephant, mighty inventory management software designed to help you conquer the chaos in your event rental business and reclaim your creativity, because the world needs more of the beautiful events and environments you create!

In this episode, you'll hear my conversation with Holly and Charlie, owneroperators of Locate to Create, the 2024 National Venue Stylist of the Year awardwinning company. Their design expertise is complimented by an eclectic portfolio of timeless pieces powered by a model of reclaiming and reuse.

Holly and Charlie are partners in business and partners in life! You'll hear about the dynamics of building a successful business and a whole bunch of interesting insight from our friends across the pond. Alright, let's dive right in!

Holly: Yeah, so we are Charlie and Holly and we run and own Locate to Create, which is a prop hire, furniture hire, and event styling business.

We do specialize in vintage, rustic, boho items, but we also like to introduce more modern items so that we can mix items from all eras, creating timeless looks for our clients.

Allison Howell: Wonderful. And where are you located and what area do you serve?

Charlie: So we're located in the southeast of England, but unlike the US, England's relatively small.

So we do travel quite far. I mean, predominantly, we do sort of cover Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, London, mainly. And that's a pretty big sort of industry and market, the sort of target. So there's plenty of local opportunities. It's not like we're being spread far and wide.



And we do travel further afield. We have been to Manchester and down to Devon, that sort of location. It's just dependent on clients, budget, and time of year, and bandwidth, and capacity.

Allison Howell: So Holly, you originally started Locate to Create while you were in your final year at university, right? Tell us about that experience. How did it all come about?

Holly: Yeah, so I started it back, I think it was 2017, during my final year of university. I was studying Event and Marketing at university, and as part of that degree, I had to do a one year placement. So I was doing a one year event placement, for creative corporate events in London.

Which I was absolutely loving, but I just thought there was something missing within it. So they were all talking to massive companies, which if they didn't have what you were looking for on their inventory, then you weren't going to get it. Basically you had to just keep looking. And at the same time, my mum had a vintage interior shop and, basically I was at the event's company and we were trying to source items, which I knew my mum could get very easily, or she already had.

Charlie: I think she already had them. It was sort of 10 vintage gold picture frames. And they were saying, you know, "We need to get these hired in somewhere." And Holly said, "Well my mum can sell them to you. So do you want to buy them off her?" And they said, "Well we'll pay her the purchase price. Just, she's got to get them there and get them back. And then she can retain the asset at the end."

So then it was a bit like, hang on a moment. We're selling 10 picture frames and then we keep the assets at the end of it. And we can keep rinsing and repeating that sort of model.

Holly: That's kind of how the idea came about. And then I went to do my final year at uni and I just thought, do I want to go back into that corporate quick nonstop working so many hours for someone else? Or do I want to just try and take the leap now and work for myself? And I just felt like the timing, although a bit scary at uni, but you don't have massive financial commitments as you would potentially 10 years down the line.



So I just felt like the timing was right. And yeah, I had an amazing mentor who I used to work with and she was really encouraging, which is so nice. I reckon if she wasn't there and loads of other people around me weren't encouraging me to do it, there's no way I would have done it.

Charlie: I was going down the more vanilla graduate scheme. I did a placement for an IT consultancy firm, relatively enjoyed that was then offered a graduate scheme. So finished off my degree, as did both of us. You went and started your own company, right? And I just went into the sort of grad scheme at an IT consultancy firm, which was hideously boring, not at all what I really wanted to do.

Allison Howell: And all the while you were envious of Holly and her work.

Holly: Yeah, we got into the wonderful world of events eventually.

Charlie: The company grew over the years, didn't it? And, I was starting to help out more and more.

Obviously I'd work a nine to five midweek, you would be at home working and then it would get to the weekend and then off Holly would go. She would then be working Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and whatever else. The time we had together was diminishing quite quickly.

So it was sort of a logical step for me to join sooner rather than later, there's all the time with COVID.

Allison Howell: At this point, you've started the business, you're out of university, did it feel like a big risk as you were, you've finished your, you've finished university and you've started this business. Did it feel like, okay, you're jumping in with two feet, or did you have a side job to pay your bills, or was this like, you were totally all in? Help me understand, what was your mentality at that point?

Holly: Yeah, so pretty much because I started it during my final year of university. So I was still studying. So I didn't have the pressure of having to get a job at that point. So I was working alongside my degree. And that meant that when I first finished uni, I would have the basics of a website, the basics of a business name, the business plan, and had started my social media and trying to grow and doing a few wedding fairs and just the initial things you do to start.



And then I really did just jump straight in. And I was very fortunate. I was living at home. I took that opportunity whilst I had it. The time was right. And if I had waited five years or three years, then I would have been in a job, would have been used to a salary, and would have not wanted to risk that.

Whereas because I didn't have a salary, I was really building it up. So I wasn't used to spending the money at the time. So yeah, it was very much like a jump in, but it felt quite gradual as well, in the nicest of ways.

Charlie: I joined November 19 obviously of which it was, I suppose right in infancy, given it being COVID-19, right?

I was learning how to do things once in a while, and I was beginning to be given tasks by yourself when we're sectioning up the workload. And then before you know it, spring 2020, my job was pretty much to handle all the postponements and cancellations and thank the Lord, the majority of them were postponements of which did lead to a very frantic 2021.

But there still were cancellations of which, your heart goes out to all those clients. But there are so many small businesses that were just, businesses in general that were decimated during that period.

Holly: Although it was bad timing with Charlie joining then, quite likely that I wouldn't have continued just because having someone there at that moment to deal with all these sad emails, to deal with all these cancellations, to deal with these postponements.

If I hadn't had someone there, I just don't think I would have thought there's any way out of it. But because we were both there just trying to keep positive, trying to get through it and we did.

Charlie: And to compound that further, plug here for RW Elephant. We weren't on RW Elephant.

Holly: Oh my gosh.

Charlie: And it was an absolute logistics nightmare.

Holly: It was paperwork everywhere, getting each date out, looking at all the events you've got. Double-checking oh do they have that? No. Can I change that



now that I've postponed? Or can I postpone to this date? Well looking at that-oh my gosh. It was an absolute nightmare. If I had been on RW then, it would have saved us so much time.

Charlie: So much of my time was wasted on cross-checking and ensuring we could do things. But with a calendar view and obviously the stock checking and everything, it's just made it a million times easier.

Holly: Yeah. I can't imagine it now without it.

Allison Howell: Tell me a little bit about how your relationship and your business relate to one another. Do you feel like the business has brought you closer? Has your relationship grown as the business has grown? Tell me about that.

Holly: I think at the start, it was very much oh, we weren't sure in our roles in the company. And I was like trying to do everything, trying to teach him at the same time, trying to get through the pandemic.

So it was a lot all at once, but now that we've got our roles completely sorted within the business, we know what each of us does. It just works really well.

Allison Howell: Yeah. Okay. Any stories of tricky situations you've had at the warehouse that you've had to leave at the warehouse before you go home?

Or things you've had to leave at home before you enter the warehouse? Do you have a separation there?

Holly: I work quite closely with especially at the start, my mum and dad were very supportive and helped for free at all these events that I did have. And what I really liked and what I always say to my mum is we can be completely honest, so we'd be styling an event and she'd do something.

I'd be like, "Oh, I don't like that." Whereas when you have that, like with a colleague or we've got a team of stylists now, it has to be more politely said than that. Whereas with Charlie, I could just say, "No, that's a bad idea." We're quite honest.

Charlie: Which really hurts my feelings.



Holly: (Laughs) But no, normally we're all good kind of trying to leave work at work.

Charlie: I'd say we're pretty good like that. We don't have many big riffs or arguments, but likewise, when I pack the van. Every events person will appreciate that maybe their eyes are bigger than the van potentially, especially, and then I see Holly, how she's packing it and it's making me wince, I will tell her that she's not doing particularly well. Likewise, when it comes to styling, if I ever helped with that, I let your creative license reign over mine. That's fine. Roles and responsibilities.

Allison Howell: Okay. Tell me about your role separations. Who does what and how do you define.. where's the water's edge there?

Holly: Yeah. So basically Charlie, as you said, does a lot of the logistics plans for how the events are going to happen basically. And does a lot of the finance, but he also deals with all the inquiries that come in.

So any of our dry hire. So I probably should have explained at the beginning, we either offer a dry hire service where clients collect, or we deliver items and then it's down to the clients to get creative with, and then we'll collect them at the prearranged time.

Charlie: It's very simple.

Holly: Or we've got our full styling packages or on the day styling packages.So we've got the styling side of the business, which I take full responsibility of and take care of all the clients for that side. And then on the other side, the dry hire side, Charlie also deals with all the inquiries that initially come in and does them through RW. And that's usually a quicker process than the styling anyway.

Charlie: But it's a higher turnover. Obviously we have a lot more dry hire inquiries coming in and jobs throughout the entire year. Naturally that fills up more of my time and then you've got a more concentrated list of styling clients for the year of which you then have a lot of correspondence with over the day.

Holly: A lot of mood board time.



Charlie: I outnumber it ten to one in terms of workload in terms of if you look at individual clients, but the amount of emails you send compared to me would probably be a lot more.

Allison Howell: And do those people self identify?

Charlie: So it's quite a distinct process. When a client comes to us, they're either inquiring for styling, of which they'll go straight to Holly, or they're simply wanting items. And if they did switch from X to A to B or whatever, Then it's quite an easy process.

Again, one of the benefits and beauties of working with your partner, business partner, romantic partner, she's at one end of the desk. I'm at the other one. It's not a particularly difficult task for me to say, "Oh, Holly, I think she might want styling." Or likewise, you have a styling call, introduction call, and there's, you know, you might say, "No, they're just going to want the items put in the correct areas." And that's that.

So yeah, there's quite a sort of a natural partition. And then there's a few jobs in between, you are definitely the creative, the driving force behind the company. And it will always be that way. But, often I need to build things or get stuff made or things like that. You're constantly trying to change with the times and whatever the taste and fashion are and then you know, I'm the sort of I suppose pragmatist.

Holly: Yeah, I'm like, "I've got an idea. Please, can we make it happen?" And Charlie's like right.

Charlie: That's gonna be difficult.

Allison Howell: Tell me a little bit about how the company has grown. What do you think has driven your growth over the years?

Holly: Styled shoots and getting the content because once we've got the content to put it out on Instagram and TikTok that for us is key. We get a lot of our business through Instagram, so that really helps the growth and just making sure that we've got the content that we want to share and we want to be proud to share.



I would scroll back to the start of my Instagram and really cringe, but that's probably been a massive part of our growth, like with our Instagram page.

Allison Howell: Break that down for me. Like when you say we get the content. So say you do a styled shoot, do you have a goal of, okay, I want ten photos from a styled shoot and I'm going to post them in a carousel?

Or do you think I want a hundred photos from a styled shoot and I want this to be something I'm posting over two weeks?

Holly: We know now that actually seeing couples on our Instagram page, for example, real couples is fantastic, but actually modeled, styled shoot couples like models doesn't work as well. Whereas people just want to really see our products. So we don't post that much of our couples as much as we love them. But it's the products that we're trying to sell and the service.

So we found from the styled shoots we've organized, we've not always had models going around the styled shoot. So the pictures that we end up getting are very much product based and the design based, which we find works really well. And what we've also worked out and it's only taken so many styled shoots for us to realize that we're not getting what we need out of them. But now if we're providing items for someone else who's organizing a styled shoot, we give them a list and basically say we need pictures with and without models.

And we're just a bit more picky in the nicest of ways, but just so that we get something out of it as well. We get a lot through word of mouth, which is lovely because it means we're doing something right. And it's not just us having to pay for Instagram ads and all of that jazz.

Charlie: We did actually win Venue Stylist Of The Year 2024, which I was going to come on to in a moment, but we've been to so many events where you sit down on the chairs they have and then you're moving around a bit and the amount of slop and play in the chairs is like ginormous.

Allison Howell: What have been some of your most successful investments that you've made in your collection over the years?



Charlie: Oh my gosh. Well, there's one example of which was Holly and I were actually taking a break into the Isle of Wight, weren't we? Holly's mum was out buying for us and she found a pink sofa set.

It's our Rachel and Rosie sofa set, "Pretty In Pink" on our website. And she took a photo, didn't she? I think she was in the car. I don't think she was in the van.

Holly: She was leaving.

Charlie: She was leaving and she said, "Oh, I've just seen the sofa set. Someone literally wants to get rid of it." I think it was for like ± 20 or something.

Holly: Something crazy.

Charlie: So then you were like, you need to go back. You need to get that. That is amazing. It looks beautiful. She ended up going back to get it. And now that's probably been out like 50 or times probably as a package, $\pounds 200$ a package. So return on investment for $\pounds 20$ pound investment, 50 times $\pounds 200$ isn't too bad.

Holly: If only they were all like that, but that is probably our best product buy.

Another funny story is probably about our Maria: Double Peacock Chair. I was searching-this was very much at the start of the company and I was searching high and low for an original double peacock chair. I could not find it anywhere and it was literally months of searching. I finally found one online.

And she was like, "Sorry, someone might come collect it, but I'll let you know if they don't." And I said, "Oh, I will buy everything," because they were selling like a collection of stuff. I was like, "I'll buy everything if I could have that chair." She sold it to us and I had to then go collect all the other stuff that she was selling that I had no idea that I wanted.

Allison Howell: Yeah, sometimes you've got to take the good with the bad in order to get that diamond in the rough, right?

Charlie: That is it. No, that is literally it. And we took a lot of bad.

Holly: Yeah, we did take the bad.



Allison Howell: Wow. Well, so in addition to offering hire items, you also offer styling services. Tell us a little bit about what that entails, because that's a whole separate entity, right? It's the same business, but it's really a separate service in and of itself.

Holly: We send our couples a questionnaire for our full gold styling package and we really try and identify what seasonal personality they are, so that way we can really create an intentional design for them. So it's not just, oh, look at Pinterest, find some pictures and make a one page mood board. We go into so much depth and it's just trying to explain to our couples how much depth and how intentional our mood boards are for them as a couple and how personalized we try to make it.

Charlie: And it's very much led from the client towards us. As Holly said, it's an interview process. You've got the questionnaire, you're trying to identify what makes them tick essentially.

Holly: And the process that I follow is more like an interior process–interior design process rather than a wedding process.

But actually we found that kind of makes us stand out from the crowd a bit because we're not just looking at it from trends. We're trying to work out what brands they like, what textures they like. And kind of go into way more detail that they probably think, why does this girl need to know this?

But actually it really helps create a super intentional design for the couple. And has helped us become Venue Stylist Of The Year.

Allison Howell: Yeah tell me about that award. You won that award this year, National Venue Stylist Of The Year for 2024. Tell us about getting that award. Was that a surprise?

Was that something you've been longing for years? Was this a goal you were going after or how did it come about?

Charlie: It was a bit like, yes, you're shocked to get the award at the end of it, but at the same time you put in so much effort, we speak to our clients pre, during and post events and they're all absolutely over the moon.



So it's when people say, are you really shocked? And we were really shocked to win, but at the same time, we know we offer a good service, and the clients are extremely happy. So yeah, to break down how the process works, you need to enter into the competition, don't you?

A lot of it is client feedback based. So we say how many events we've done, those clients, they need to populate and provide feedback on our services.

Holly: We submitted some videos and pictures and the regional ones, they were very good fun, but it's more that you know who's around, so you know the competitors you're against.

So it's a bit more awkward. We were like, we really want to win this kind of thing. But when we went to the national one, like we were already over the moon that we'd won regional South East Wedding Stylist of the Year. So for us to go to the national one, we had no idea really who we were against because yes, they're competitors, but because of the radius they're not really that local to us. So it was just a lovely surprise. The lovely thing is that you get all the client feedback as well. So everyone that's voted, gives you all the feedback and yeah, it's really, really nice. So even if you didn't win, you still get all this lovely feedback, which is really nice.

Allison Howell: So what has the recognition done for the business? Do you feel like it's helped grow the brand?

Holly: Yeah, so it's definitely helped grow the brand. What I would say is it's not like we haven't got hundreds and hundreds of new clients from winning National Venue Stylist Of The Year, but what we have done is it's definitely given us something to be able to contact new venues with.

So some venues are very strict with who they add on their venue supplier list, not too keen on adding new people, even though they'd, they just don't do the research. And I think some venues get stuck in their way. Same supplier list. So you're trying to contact venues and they're like, no, sorry, we've got our supplier list or we're not doing it until next year.

And there seems to always be a battle. Whereas because we've won Venue Stylist Of The Year, it just seems to be a really nice openness for us to contact new venues. For us to say, "Look, this is the recognition we've got. Please, can we



come and do some weddings with you?" So yeah, it's just given us a really good leverage to contact venues and within the wedding industry itself, it's been so lovely. Everyone has congratulated us.

Charlie: Fellow suppliers have been impressed and supportive.

Holly: Yeah, it's been so lovely. And not only has it been great for business in terms of getting onto these lists and meeting new people, but it's just been really nice for us to finally get some recognition. And for us to say we are award winning. It's just definitely helped mentally as well as helped the business grow.

Allison Howell: And I think it's really impressive that you use that leverage to build more business. I think it goes back to what you were saying about styled shoots. You've recognized, okay, in order to get the most bang for our buck out of styled shoots, what we have to do is really think about what we are trying to get here.

What kind of shots? What kind of directives do we need to have in order to get what we want out of the styled shoot? And then how do we use these photos in a way that's going to actually benefit our business, right? You're doing the same thing with this award, right? Not just saying, hey, we won an award, but now I'm going, okay, how can I get more out of this opportunity?

Okay. I'm going to go to these venues who haven't given me the time of day before. And I'm going to say hey, these other people recognized us, can I get my foot in the door now?

Sometimes when we get an award or we achieve something in our business, we say, okay, check that off onto the next thing, but it can be so valuable for us to say, okay, I got this thing, or I achieved this thing or I have this thing in front of me, how can I squeeze more out of it so that I can get all of the benefit or value out of this thing that I already have before I move on to the next marketing opportunity or before I move on to the next thing or before I invest in the next phase, right?

Because if I can get more out of this thing that I've already done before I go and spend more money or more time or invest in the next thing, man, that's going to get me farther.



Charlie: I totally agree with that. And that was something we've learned over the years. It's being quite strategic with what venues we contact and what venues we would like to work at.

We never want to be the sort of company where we're doing thousands of events every year. So it's very important to us to identify very strategic venues to try and penetrate into a high proportion of their yearly total events. And as you say, having that leverage to get in there and actually capture those for us, that's a far more valuable way of doing business and expanding business.

It obviously is great to have lots more inquiries for styling nationwide. But If somebody wants it in Aberdeen, a styling job, there's a very small chance we can do it in Aberdeen. Whereas if we contact, and get our foot in the door with venues within an hour of us, that creates really, really good operational efficiencies.

Allison Howell: To shift gears just a little bit whether on the styling side or when it comes to adding to your collection, where do you look for creative inspiration?

Charlie: I mean this is totally... not my question, Allison. I don't want to shock you.

Holly: I try my best not to take too much of our inspiration from weddings themselves.

Pinterest is an amazing tool, and I say this to all our clients, but it really is a rabbit hole, and you can end up just trying to copy pictures and that is not what we want to do. We want to stay original. I really try and even from looking at shop windows, take inspiration from that.

Looking at fashion, looking at home interior designs. Interior design is definitely one of my passions. And going to antique fairs and taking the time to, say I might not need anything specific that I can get at this antique fair, but me going really helps inspire me to come up with new ideas and looking at a vintage item thinking how else could we use that? And so that is where I take a lot of inspiration.

Charlie: We've got things like an old fashioned bike that we've turned into a bar. Actually we bought that, didn't we? Just quirky, semi industrial farm based. products that can be reconditioned and slightly tweaked and altered to become an actual functional item within the wedding day. Drinks reception is a great idea



or great opportunity for that. And we've got some lovely suppliers and caterers that we work with quite closely. And they're always saying "Oh, we need new creative ways to display all of our lovely treats during the sort of drinks reception," or whatever.

Holly: Everyone's going to have drinks and food at that drinks reception. How can we take that and display it creatively? Or come up with a prop that is useful for that, but also looks great and it creates a photo opportunity. And then all the guests are taking pictures and that is what couples love.

Practical and pretty, I always say, and that's we really try and focus on that as a company coming up with those ideas like confetti. A lot of people are going to have that confetti for their ceremony. It's coming up with different ways in which confetti can be thrown or shown or displayed.

Allison Howell: Okay, I'm going to ask you a question about each other now. Holly, think of Charlie. Charlie, you're going to tell us about Holly. I want you to tell us one characteristic or skill that your partner has really grown in since the beginning of this business.

Charlie: I would say for Holly, an area that she's definitely improved on is, not to beat the same drum again, but it's functionality and hireability of products that she's definitely become a bit more aware of.

Often she would go to antiques fairs, buy things in the auction to bring it back to the unit. And maybe this time I'll be working at my IT job or whatever, and then she would show it to me and say, oh, it needs a bit of work or whatever else. And you would look at it and it would be like a 60-year-old ladder, for example, and all of the wooden sort of mortise and tenon joints have totally like rotted out.

And so we can just fill it with filler. Well, that's not going to be as good as just buying, spending twice as much and having a product that's going to last much longer. And you've definitely become a little bit more savvy to that, where it's not just what's the bottom, what's the cheapest products in this category we can get that'll do.

It's more so what's the most, reliable, sturdy, obviously still has to look beautiful, whatever else. There's that hireability and, the ability to hire it several times is definitely something you've got a lot better at, I would say.



Holly: Yeah, I would agree with that. And I think for Charlie, motivation, would be his thing. Like at the start, it was almost as if, well at the start, it was my baby, the business. So, it was almost like I was just trying to push him to be motivated and it just didn't happen. Whereas he's really just as the company's grown as he's grown within the company and really being as on board as I am, his motivation to grow it and his commitment and dedication to do it has a hundred percent increased and improved.

Charlie: I'm going to caveat that, Allison because, when I'm not very motivated at the start, obviously I did join on slightly unprecedented grounds. It wasn't particularly planned at all, hands up, my fault entirely, but to the same extent, you'd give me tasks to do, of which you would have this sort of wacky system in your mind of how to do a task of which you had very little explanation or time to explain it.

And then you'd be surprised that I would not arrive at the same outcome that you would. And then it would be like hang on a moment. Let's just break down what you do. Again, some of that was massively streamlined. A lot of the process that you were doing, when we looked at it and sat down together, it was a bit like, we're wasting so much time.

There's so many duplications of information input and whatever else. Again, another plug for RW Elephant, massively streamlined the company. That was something that you weren't particularly good at explaining to me.

Holly: No, I think it's a good thing. You're very motivated now and very dedicated to the business which has definitely grown. So yeah that's the,

Charlie: And obviously I do a lot of the delivery. So a massive chunk of my time is, dedicated behind the wheel, which isn't particularly fun or, whatever else, but, it's the way it goes.

Allison Howell: Who are leaders that you've learned from as you've grown your business? I know, Holly, you mentioned that both your parents have been pretty involved and your mom has owned her own business. I assume they've been pretty influential for you.



Holly: Yeah, a hundred percent. They have been. I wouldn't have probably started this. I couldn't have done it because I couldn't have lived at home. So they have a hundred percent been massively influential on the growth of it.

Good question! I think there's just so many people, even suppliers within the industry, although they've not known our whole journey, the fact that they've been there and they've been supportive has been like, massive.

Charlie: Because we're together all the time, a lot of that encouragement comes from each other which sounds a bit cheesy.

Allison Howell: No, there's some real camaraderie in this industry and people. Just the fact that people refer you is such a boost, right? I mean, we could never do it alone. And then the fact that people refer you over and over. I mean, it's fun to get to work with your friends, right?

But also there's this confidence that you gain from knowing that other people believe in you and continue to refer you. Well, tell us about some of the milestones or moments in your business that you've truly celebrated. What are you most proud of?

Charlie: I think one of the big ones early on is the units, obviously like massive milestones going from unit to unit to unit.

And as Holly said, the price, if you were going to go to a general industrial estate you're going to be paying a particularly high premium to get the sort of square footage that you want. So we are always looking for slightly more interesting sort of setups in terms of storage, whether it be on a farm or something related to a family friend or something like that. So when we found storage units that fit the bill over the years.

Holly: Oh, it felt so good.

Allison Howell: You feel like you beat the system.

Charlie: There was one that I took you to, didn't I? We were really up against it in terms of, I think we were coming into the season or something was about to happen and we were buying more chairs or something.



We had to find a bigger premises and we were across two or three containers amongst garages, wasn't it? It was our first main unit and I found it via a loose family friend. And I remember we just walked into it and looking back at it, it wasn't a particularly nice unit at all. But, they told us the rate of it and then we walked inside and it wasn't even that large.

Holly: It wasn't. But I was like, "Where can I sign? Sign me up, please." We were like, this is nuts. Yeah.

Allison Howell: You heard a chorus of angels singing.

Holly: Yeah. The next warehouse that I found, and it had a shutter door and I was like, oh my gosh.

And those kinds of accomplishments were really big and we definitely celebrated those moments because as a hire business, storage is one of the biggest issues and headaches. So every time we got a new unit, we really celebrated that. And when we moved into one in October, obviously we were extremely pleased with that, obviously with the award.

Charlie: That's a big one.

Holly: That was a massive time that we really made sure that we stepped back and realized what had happened and just celebrated it.

Charlie: And it's probably individual events like um...

Holly: Oh, like that Indian wedding for me. I just felt so good after it. I was like, we've worked hours and it's come together and it's been amazing and the high you get from it.

Charlie: I was going to say that the grander of some of the venues we go to, so the Tower of London, for example, I remember going to that for the first time.

Holly: Winning the award as well for us was a massive moment where we felt incredibly proud and we just sat back and enjoyed the moment and celebrated it as a full team.

Another moment where we've really felt like we've achieved something is when you work with massive brands that we never, ever dreamed that we would ever



work with because we don't only do weddings. We do corporate events as well. And when you get an inquiry from this brand that you've been using or listening to, or I've been seeing for years and just think they're massive. And then they inquire to use your props.

Allison Howell: Yeah, that's wonderful. Okay, so what brings you joy right now in your business?

Charlie: The new warehouse is so much more efficient.

Holly: Yeah.

Charlie: We used to do midnight collections and turnarounds where we would arrive at the unit and we'd have to get through several gates manually.

Whereas now, electronic gates straight up to the shutter. Electric shutter.

Allison Howell: The electric shutter brings you joy right now.

Charlie: It does, so much joy. Straight into location, straight into the racking, and it's oh, we're just so much more efficient. But if you want a quick answer, electric shutter.

Allison Howell: What about you, Holly?

Holly: Even things like our trolleys, we've named them because they bring us so much joy, because they help us out so much. So every event, and now we're in our peak wedding season, right? So we are constantly in vans unloading, loading. So anything like that, that can help us speed up our delivery process or make it less stressful on your back, like it's the smallest things make us happy.

Allison Howell: When you started this, you thought, man, I'm going to be able to create beautiful events. And now, you really just run a glorified moving company, right?

Charlie: No, you are absolutely right. People contact us saying, "Oh, we want to work for you. We want to create all these amazing events, we can do X and Y."



And then they'll say at the end of it, "I could only work between these hours. Can't lift heavy boxes. Can't drive large vehicles. You know what I mean? And not willing to work for X."

Holly: I don't think we're the right fit, really.

Allison Howell: Oh yeah. Sometimes what it is very different than what you imagined it would be.

Charlie: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Allison Howell: Okay. We're going to go into our lightning round here. So I'm going to ask you questions and these are real quick fire questions. What piece in your collection would you most like to take home today?

Holly: Cleo Seating Area.

Allison Howell: Okay. Charlie, think of your best team member and describe them to me in three words or less.

Charlie: It would be Linda, which is Holly's mother. Yup. She's going to be up there. The three words would be dependable, resourceful, and caring.

Allison Howell: Oh, lovely. Activity you do to spark creativity when you're worn out?

Holly: Go for a nice walk, a dog walk.

Allison Howell: A business book you'd recommend?

Holly: I listen to a lot of podcasts rather than books.

Charlie: You listen to the Karren Brady one.

Holly: Karren Brady's book, I loved it. I read that so quickly. So yeah, that's probably my answer.

Allison Howell: Okay, what's the book called?

Holly: Strong Woman, The Truth About Getting To The Top.



Allison Howell: How many square feet in your warehouse?

Charlie: We don't know exactly, which is awful. I know it's quickfire. I'd say roughly 3,000 square feet.

Allison Howell: Okay, final question, and I want each of you to answer this. What do you enjoy most about your hire adventure?

Holly: The places it takes us and the things that it allows us to do. So in January, we don't do any events. And for us mentally I think this really spurs us on all year, but in January, we don't do any events.

And we try to go skiing because we are just working on admin and we can take our laptops anywhere. We try to take that month. This year we're trying to take it and go skiing for the month, which sounds very glamorous, but it's our way of motivating us to get through the year. And it's just our way of celebrating.

Charlie: I think for me, it would be self sufficiency in terms of income. The idea that something that Holly and I do together, generates a revenue and an income of which we can live by, quite comfortably, we're not multi millionaires by any means, but we're living by, quite comfortably.

I still can't quite wrap my head around it, thinking from as a child, I wanted to work up in London, like every sort of kid at school gets channeled towards which you're working for a huge corporation and you've got very little control over the decisions that could be made.

Whereas now it's like we're in charge of everything and we make the money and then that money, eventually minus costs and taxes or whatever else and up in our back pocket, which is just a very surreal and satisfying idea.

Allison Howell: Can you believe this is our job?

Charlie: I know, Allison. I love that. I'm going to get that tattooed on me one day. I really am.

Allison Howell: Oh, well it was wonderful to chat with you. Thank you so much for sharing about your adventures and your journey. It is really great to connect with you.



Charlie: Oh and thank you so much for the opportunity as well. You've been a massive part of our journey. Again, efficiency wise, RW Elephant's been a massive component in us being able to scale further and just lessen the time on the laptop, really. The sort of busy times in summer when you're working all weekend and midweek.

Allison Howell: Yeah. And apparently now you can run your business from the slopes.

Holly: Yeah! Yeah.

Allison Howell: Okay. Have a great rest of your day and hopefully we'll talk again soon.

Outro: A big thank you to Holly and Charlie, of Locate to Create. You can find all their info in the show notes.

And a big thank YOU for listening to The Trunk Show brought to you by RW Elephant, mighty inventory management software designed to help you conquer the chaos in your event rental business and reclaim your creativity, because the world needs more of the beautiful events and environments you create.

We hope you enjoyed the show! We're releasing episodes every other week, so be sure to follow us on your favorite podcast app. As always, I'm your host, Allison Howell. Happy renting!



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