

# **Small But Mighty Agency Podcast**

## **Episode 87: How to grow the leaders that move your agency forward so you don't burn out?**

### **Speakers: Audrey Joy Kwan**

#### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

How do you grow the leaders that move your agency forward so you don't burn out

I've walked the path from being an account coordinator to being an agency leader and help agency owners scale and even exit the business.

Drawing from my two decades of experience and a Master's in Communication focused on Organizational Development; I want to share our Hey Achievers Coaching Framework, which we've refined through insights from over 120 agency owners.

My Hey Achievers framework is designed to equip you with the four keys of agency leadership. Whether you're leading a small team or a large agency, tune in to grow the leaders that move your agency forward.

#### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

Welcome to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you're a marketer or consultant, or a creative on a journey of growth from solopreneur to agency owner, follow along because I pull back the curtains on the realities of growing and running a scalable, service-based business and building lean team. I'm your host, Audrey Joy Kwan, I know what it takes to build an agency, whether it's from solo to three, five or twenty. I've done it, including supporting an agency owner to sell and exit. I've coached and consulted over 120 marketers, creatives, and consultants. And I've been behind the scenes of seven figure businesses. I also have a master's degree in communications specializing in organizational development. All this to say, I know what it takes to grow lead and operate a multiple six, and seven figure small but mighty agency. And here on this podcast is where we'll dive right in.

#### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

Hey friends, welcome back to the podcast. I'm really excited for this month because we are launching a new series focused on leading. Growing means leading so we can't talk about growing a business without considering how your leadership is developing and how your organization's leadership is being nurtured.

I believe leaders are not born but developed, and a title does not make a leader. Sure, if you have direct reports, it is easy to identify as a leader, but leadership doesn't start when you get direct reports; it starts with how you show up for every role.

I was in my mid-20s (that was over two decades ago) when I was given my first role with direct reports.

I worked at a marketing agency delivering experiential campaigns and was given the opportunity to manage a team of five on a campaign across a province in Canada (or in the US that would be a state) for a client who is a Fortune 500.

I didn't know then what I know now.

The leadership examples I had up until then were the only examples — some I thought were great, and some I knew needed to be left in the dust.

I found myself leaning hard in the opposite direction of the leadership styles that didn't work for me and overemphasizing the styles that worked for me.

The challenge was that I was limited to one perspective of leadership, the one I prefer, and I was missing out on what makes leaders genuinely effective, and that is the ability to meet people where they are so I can help them grow.

Over the years, as I grew in leadership, I had to take the concept — that leadership isn't about me, it's about meeting people where they are so I can help them grow — from being a concept in my brain to becoming habitual action or habits that I had to create.

I touched on the key habits in Episode 79, and, I covered **four leadership styles** that get you out of the one-size-fits-all approach. I'll link that in the show notes below.

You can go to that episode to get the practical application of how to lead in a way that meets people where they are at

This episode is the start of a new series I'm sharing with you, on **How to grow the leaders that move your agency forward so that you don't burn-out.**

In this series, I cover the concepts to help you shorten the learning path to growing leaders in a fast-paced environment like agencies.

Leadership is lifelong, but some keys help you unlock the path faster.

I unlocked the path. I went from being an account coordinator in my 20s to becoming an agency leader who helped owners move their agencies forward, including selling and exiting.

I've been in the trenches. I've done the thing.

So how did we take what was unlocked, shorten the time frame, and share it with agency owners to help them grow agency leaders who move their businesses forward?

This might sound unconventional, but I knew I needed to help more agency owners on a one-to-one basis first.

It was the best choice I could have made.

When you work side by side with people, you see and hear how they verbalize the challenges and help them connect the dots.

In return, it helped me clarify the patterns and then create a learning pathway to shorten the time frame to build agency leaders for agency owners.

So, we were able to combine my twenty years of agency experience with practical organizational development practices (and yes, I do have a Masters in Communication focused on Organizational Development). I combined all that with on-ground learnings from over 120 agency owners to develop our Hey Achievers Coaching Framework.

Our Hey Achievers framework grows the leaders that move your agency forward faster because we don't just understand; we've lived the agency life.

We know that leading a high-performing agency team requires you to be equipped with four keys: emotional intelligence, standards, habits, and structure.

Leaders hold these keys.

You and your team can thrive faster when you know how to activate these four keys as a leader.

In this series, we'll go deeper into each of these keys.

If you want to see the Hey Achiever Framework and how these keys work together, connect with me on LinkedIn- the link is in the show notes- and check out our LinkedIn newsletter, where we've posted the Framework.

You'll see how the four keys of agency leadership overlap; these are the learning opportunities.

And one thing that is not talked about enough, and I know is integral to building leaders in a fast-paced environment, is the concept of unlearning.

Leaders are transitioning from doer to leadership. In that transition, you are unlearning because doing and leading are contrasting approaches.

Setting you up for success is helping you and your team clearly visualize the doer-to-leadership journey.

There are five contrasting approaches that every leader in transition we have worked with has to unlearn and then learn.

Our contrast method helps you understand the first five journeys in your transition.

So, before we get into the Hey Achievers Framework, I'll share the five things you and your team need to unlearn so you can learn faster.

I'll also dedicate an episode to sharing one foundation that is required in an agency to support great leaders. The foundation is called psychological safety and I'll share how to make it part of your culture.

Your organization is the incubator of leaders, whether it has one founder or a deep leadership team; psychological safety creates lively participation, making it possible to include and unleash everyone's gifts.

February is going to be a great month! I'm excited to share our series on how to grow the leaders that move your agency forward so that you don't burnout.

Before the next episode drops on this series, don't forget to listen to ep 79. 4 Leadership Styles to Get You Out of the One-Size-Fits-All Approach. The link is the show notes.

And wait before you go, I want to make sure you know that we're here to help you grow your leadership and your team's leadership, book a consult with me.

I'll see you on the next one!

### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

Hey, there. Thanks for hanging out with me at the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the follow or subscribe button in your podcast app and share it with a friend and I'll see you in the next one.