

Laura (00:00):

This is the Multi-Million Dollar Brands Podcast, episode number 36: playing to your strengths with Ed Howie.

(00:11):

Welcome to Multi-Million Dollar Brands, a podcast where we dive deep into the mindset and strategies of scaling your company to the multi-million dollar mark and beyond. Each week, we follow the journeys of innovators, disruptors, experts, and leaders, sharing their stories and behind the scenes of their most challenging moments and greatest lessons learned. So get ready to catapult your business to the next level of revenue and learn how to multiply your income impact and influence by growing your next multi-million dollar brand.

(00:47):

Hey everybody, I'm just so excited to share Ed Howie with you. He is a joy. And when we met what we realized is that joy as a fundamental value for both of us and not only having that in common, but we're both brand strategists and marketing experts who were assigned to the same client at the same time and found a really nice relationship in collaborating on the success of that client. Moving on, we kept in touch and I really observed how he was handling many of the challenges that have come our way and the way of our clients in this weird year, that is 2020. Ed has some really cool perspectives that I'm excited to share with you. And in the beginning of this episode, it's a very funny story of how we actually met and connected. So up next is Ed Howie of BTYcreative sharing his own perspective on how we should all be playing to our strengths in this time of uncertainty.

(01:47):

Hey everybody and welcome back to the podcast. I want to introduce you to somebody who I have been honored to call a friend and a collaborator on some projects, Ed Howie. He is an experienced business branding strategist and the CEO and Founder of BTYcreative. Thank you so much for joining us.

Ed (02:04):

Thank you for having me. We can chat and record at the same time.

Laura (02:08):

I know it's so, so good. And what was really cool, I have to tell you why. I think you're so cool. There's a lot of reasons why I think you're so cool, but I want to start with one.

Ed (02:16):

Let me take some notes.

Laura (02:19):

And what we can do is we determined affirmations, put them on your mirror every morning and, and you can just, you know, take it as a gift for being on the podcast. But when I was working with a friend of mine, Shane Evans on her brand Massage Heights, and you are already part of the organization, you were, you were very much embedded. And she brought me in as a brand strategist to work alongside of you to come up with some fresh ideas. I would say that most people would be like, what's she doing here? And you were like, awesome. Like you were like, cool, more ideas, more brains. Let's do this. And I was like from day one, I was like, this guy is awesome. Like what's his story? So that's the first reason why you're awesome. Second reason why you're awesome is because I realized at the end of this time together where we were workshoping, that my flight was about to leave in like 15 minutes, everyone in the room was like, what are you going to do?

(03:17):

By the time they were like, what, how are you going to handle this, Laura? Your flight's about to leave. You had my suitcase in the back of your very nice car and, and very clean. I was like, he definitely does not have little kids at home. And like, you are going 80 miles an hour bringing me to the airport. So I was like, what's his story? I have to know him. I have to get to know this guy. And as we were developing our relationship, I was just blown away by your background. So those are two things that the audience now knows about you, but what they don't know is about all of these amazing brands that you've helped with their brand strategy. So take us back. Like, how did you get started before BTYcreative?

Ed (03:55):

Wow. Okay. So before BTYcreative, I started off as you know in a Chick-fil-A. I started off working as a 15 year old in North Carolina in let's say the early eighties and I basically was ready to get a job. I was 15 years old and Chick-fil-A was the first place in the mall that would hire a 15 year old for three hours a day, three days a week, whatever the limitations were, but I was like, I'm in. And I just loved everything about it. I love the fact that got to work hard. You got to enjoy the people who you were with. It was fun taking care of customers. I remember being taught how to suggest to sell. And I'm like, Oh wow, that's right down my alley. You know, everybody needs fries.

Laura (04:35):

Especially those fries.

Ed (04:40):

Now I started, I'm aging myself, but I started before waffle fries. It was back when we just had French fries. I mean, it was early. The Chick-fil-A has started working in was the 46 Chick-fil-A to open. And now there's like, I think 23-24 hundred. So I was working at Chick-fil-A and ended up going to that was in Durham North Carolina went to school at Chapel Hill, proud Tar Hill worked all the way through college and the summer before my senior year in college, I got offered an opportunity to go out and run a Chick-fil-A for

two and a half months as a 20 year old in Norman, Oklahoma, and got to see firsthand, had the collegiate learning about business. But then I had the firsthand, like two and a half PNLs under my belt and realized that while I enjoy operations, I enjoy helping people more than running something. And so for 10 years, I was on corporate staff with Chick-fil-A as an operations consultant. Actually, even though I'm a marketer, my job was to work with individual Chick-fil-A operators and help them sell more chicken and make more money. And the reality was that when you sell more and you make more money, it typically makes it much easier for all your other visions to occur.

Laura (05:51):

Right, right. Because who doesn't want to sell more chicken and make more money.

Ed (05:55):

That's why you're in business, no matter how cool, clever and, and passion is, you have to, you know, just inflation alone. You have to sell more next year than you did this year. If you're going to have the same return or stewardship. So I'll learned firsthand as a 20 year old, telling people making three, four, five times as much money as I was, how to make more money. And I loved it, kind of got bored with it because I'd been there 10 years and, and I love the company, but I realized through getting my executive MBA during that time, that as much as I love day-to-day I really love being six months out. I love the strategy side, but I've got the operations background of how to make strategy happen. I think we've talked about strengths funders before. Yeah. Yeah. So I think you're a huge fan as well. So my five core strengths are ideation, strategic, winning others over connectedness and positivity. And so what I realized is that kind of conflict I had at Chick-fil-A was that I was doing the strategic, but I wasn't necessarily doing as much as the ideation and like doing both.

Laura (07:00):

Yeah. It was interesting. Cause you said to me one time, I remember asking you, well, gosh, you have such a great company and great client base and people who have been with you for a very long time, how did you know this is what you wanted to start was a branding and consulting company and a marketing agency. And you said, well, I pretty much just put together my strengths and hoped that people wanted to pay for it. And they actually did. And that was such a really good piece of advice. I think many people who are listening are probably wondering if they're operating their strengths. They're probably wondering how do I know if I can soar? How do I know if my gifts are actually something that people want to buy, want to want to pay for? And what was that like? So you, you were, I know going through some really great brands and decide to go off on your own and like, what was that process?

Ed (07:48):

Yeah. So it's interesting. It, it really in a bizarre, well, I believe a spiritual way, providential way. It came back to exactly what you just said. And the shorter version is that after Chick-fil-A, and then I was the first director of marketing at a company called Atlanta Bread Company, which is similar to Panera bread. That category back late

nineties, I was recruited to be director of food, service marketing at HEB grocery here in San Antonio. HEB grocery now is like a \$29 billion family owned grocery store chain Texans know it, some industry people know it. A lot of people don't know about it, but just incredibly family owned company been around a hundred years. I was responsible for really bringing a restaurant mindset to retail back before it was quite as welcomed as it is today, both on the consumer, as well as the industry side.

(08:37):

And, and so I was recruited to be director of marketing. And there were so many things I loved about it, but there were so many things I didn't love about it. And what I didn't love about it is that while I had the responsibility for the vision and new products, and we had some huge success, my team on some stuff, I was also responsible for the day-to-day operations. And I had a conflict because I was working against my strengths because I'm capable of running operations, but it's not my strength. It's not, it doesn't drive my passion. It actually depletes my energy. So I don't know if I even shared this with you. So 2003, my wife looks to me, we're driving back from North Carolina, where I'm from to Texas, where we're living and still live two kids in the car. She looks at me and says, are you happy. And I'm like, with you?

Laura (09:28):

Can we get more specific here because I want to know if I'm going to end up in the doghouse.

Ed (09:32):

Yeah, exactly. She's a West Texan and she goes I better know the answer to that question. She said are you happy at HEB? And I'm dead silent for five minutes and you and I are similar personality. Silence is probably first response either.

Laura (09:48):

Nope.

Ed (09:51):

Because I realized there's this watershed moment. And I finally voice up and say, you know, no, I'm not. She says, I know you're not, you haven't been for about six months. What are you going to do about it? And being the perfect husband, I looked at her and said, what do you mean, what am I going to do about it? You're not working kids, mortgage insurance. What do you want me to do about it? And she asked me the most powerful question. And she said, what makes you happy? And I was like, I don't know. And she said, what makes you happy? And my first response was, well, I like helping people sell stuff. And she said, you mean, you want to be like, you want to like be a salesman. I was like, no, no. And what I said, and this was literally 17 years ago. I said, I like helping people do all they can with what they have. And she said, the next most important question was, can you make money doing that? No, can we make money?

Laura (10:45):

All right, let's preface this. Do I need to get a job?

Ed (10:49):

That was the underlying question. And I was like, you know, I don't know. So truly, and you know, we both believe in Providence. The book in my lap was now Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham, 2003, my wife was driving. We were on our 10. I just got out of the back of the car that, you know, that book. Remember when you had to carry stuff with you on vacation to read right. Versus the e-book. So I literally had the book. And so we finished this conversation. She's driving and the kids are napping. My mind is blown. I start reading this book and it says, if you order your world around your strengths, not only you happier, you're more effective. Yes. Get home the next night, print out my five strengths. She reads them, it's 10:30. She said, well, they nailed you when you can do about it. I said, I think we're starting on company. She said, can we make money doing it? I said, I think so. And literally, it is hilarious again, providence that I have this on top of my desk. I found this yesterday. This is my business plan from 17 years ago. It was a one page business plan. And it was, that we combine 21 years of marketing, operational experience with the United States, leading restaurant retail chains, to help you activate your brand to grow sales profits and market share.

Laura (12:08):

It pretty much stayed that way. Crazy. That is crazy. Cause most people's business plans are nothing like what is actually happening in their businesses.

Ed (12:17):

Yeah. The first name was Brand Action and it was, and we never, we couldn't get that domain and stuff, but the idea was brand action, activating your brand through product people, place and promotion. So we celebrate December 8th is 17 years.

Laura (12:34):

That's so, so cool. And it's so funny that you were saying, you know, you just mentioned the four p's of marketing. Like there are some classic strategies that always work, right. That just are, are timeless in the sense that no matter when you deploy them or how you deploy them, they're going to be effective for the brands that you help. And so you have a system that helps so many brands be different. And why do you think that so many brands struggle with this?

Ed (13:04):

My passion is entrepreneurs. Okay. It's nothing against corporate America. But frankly we, you know, I always say stuff I shouldn't say, but like, you know, I was visiting with a colleague who had done work with a large, fast casual chain and we don't thrive in that environment. I would put it that way, of working with large corporate brands with a marketing department of 34 people and where the agency of record, I personally like to know actual owner of the business. Because when, when I know the owner of the business, I'm able to truly understand not just what they want to do with marketing, but

why they have, like, why did they start this? Why do they risk everything? They've risked for this? Where's their passion. You've seen many business owners being a business owner yourself. You can understand this, you know, the novelty of launching is a lot different than the reality of leading it three years after you launch it. And so I just feel like that what entrepreneurs need is they need a like brain with a different lens that can help them weigh and balance the choices they're making. And if we can help, not only that on the strategy, but then what we found is that most entrepreneurs is not, that they don't have. The idea is that they don't have the resources to execute it. So if we can come in and backfill and help execute it, then it's helping entrepreneurs.

Laura (14:33):

Yes. And what I have found is that many owners, many owner operators and entrepreneurs really underestimate the degree to which they are different in the marketplace. And why do you, why do you think that is?

Ed (14:44):

So I think that as they get caught up in running the business, they forget why they're different and or they forget about what was that spark that caused them to believe, Oh my gosh, I can do something different now you and I probably have a shared kind of disdain for commodities. I mean, like who'd wants to be a commodity, right? And I mean, commodities serve a purpose in the world, but that's not the sandbox I want to play in. And so I think what happens is that you have an idea, oh, I've got a new idea, right? I want to do this. And the world needs it or my town needs it or this population needs it. But then all of a sudden you're in to the obligation. Sometimes the drudgery, the reality of, of doing it. And you get so called the mechanics, you forget your uniqueness.

(15:31):

You forget that, that thing that you said that was be different. Or I think what happens is just because I have the idea and I can start a business, it doesn't necessarily mean I'm the best profit for that business, the best storyteller, the best missionary, whatever analogy you want to use. And so a lot, I've met a lot of great business owners that clearly had the vision of why they're different, but they just didn't necessarily possess the skill set the finesse, or even the focus on making sure they're continuing to tell the story. Does that make sense? Does that make sense?

Laura (16:10):

It does. So what you're saying is that actually that point of differentiation is stems from the founder's story, which often gets lost when they're scaling. Am I hearing that right?

Ed (16:21):

Yes. I think so. I think it can get, I think it can get lost in their scaling or the other can occur. And you've seen this I'm sure is that the founder is still living in their story from 10, 20, 30 years ago. And they haven't, I hate the word pivot. So we're not going to use that word. They haven't, re-imagined their brand evolution to where they're currently

relevant and the terms of what the customer needs. And sometimes they feel like they have to give up their original vision to morph into the need. Really, it should be a string and continuity that stays true to their story, even if it looks different than it did 30 years ago.

Laura (17:05):

That's so, so interesting. And I have totally found that too. And a lot of the companies that I work with are internet companies and they aren't that old. They haven't been around for that long, but because that world moves so fast, that the things they used to do no longer work. And it wasn't that long ago that it worked really well. And that ends up being a conversation around differentiation as well. So at the time of recording September 2020, it's the year of the pivot and you hate the word pivot. I got to go there. Why?

Ed (17:39):

You know, I'm probably going to make some metaphors here, but to me, pivot is like a play a part of a play and was like you pivot to be able to reposition, but it's not necessarily, you have to do it over and over and over again. And what I believe the brands that are going to more successfully navigate the next six months, as opposed to just trying to survive the last six are the brands that have truly identified if they need to re-imagine themselves. What I mean by re-imagine is that they recognize that what they were to their customers six months ago, nine months ago is probably not going to be the same nine months from now. And so, instead of just trying to figure out how to protect cashflow or not have to lay off employees, or like still pay the mortgage on the house, it is more about what do I need to be for the customers in the future that I'm not today.

(18:35):

And I don't think, yeah, I don't think it's Laura, I mean, you know, the power of storytelling, I don't think is necessarily changing their business model it, some, some have to, I mean, we work with a client, they are in a category that has been decimated and that decimation is a fact that they're a dry cleaner, and no one is wearing business clothes. And so you could spend a hundred thousand dollars on paid advertising for traditional dry cleaning, and it's not going to create any more dirty clothes than exist already. Yes. So they do have to, they can't just pivot. They just can't like, figure out how to tolerate or endure the next three weeks. They're going to have to really reimagine. And they're doing that. So the, the pivot thing is I see more as a temporary, like part of the play action and, and where I got to this was, you know, running your business is not easy. It's never easy. And aside from marketing branding, you know, I finally realized about eight years ago, the magic of successfully running a business actually is cashflow.

(19:41):

And, and also learned that it doesn't really matter if you've got 1 million, 2 million, a hundred million, it's all about cashflow. So with that being said, I by nature, play off

offense versus defense. And I believe in going after the next and recognizing the opportunity and being enthusiastic, but also optimistic and looking for the best. And if you don't like what you got, then you just kind of got to make your own better. And that kind of thing, the reality is we have all been thrown into this like defensive strategy of like, don't touch me, don't cough on me. Don't kill me. You know, all that kind of stuff, man. There was more truth than all that then the scary. I mean, worldly, I mean, everybody is like in this defensive strategy on all things and you know what, I have not found much joy in running a business from a defensive strategy.

(20:28):

The team and I basically kind of had a family meeting and we decided to remind ourselves about what it is we do for our brands, for our clients and why we're doing it for ourselves, for our families, for our community. And if, because budgets were cut or things were changed that not the same people needed us today, that did six months ago, which we've been very blessed to only have like really one situation that it really changed significantly that we just needed to let more people know what we're doing. And you know what, without like running an ad campaign, but having honestly a mindset of intention, we've had one, two, three, four, we've had five new client prospects in last two weeks sound great. Yeah. I mean, very thankful, but I, I know you believe in mindset and the power of that is that instead of trying to protect sales, I shifted my focus as the leader of being enthusiastically proud of what we can do and being open to opportunities that it might be more people that need what we do.

Laura (21:35):

Yes. Yes. And it's really difficult because you do come, probably a lot of your clients are in the traditional space, they're in food or they're in in-person service. You're only probably able to react to the degree to which your clients are reacting at first. And then realizing that there's this opportunity to re-imagine is such an amazing potential. I can speak from my own experience that my clients that have in a lot of ways, re-imagined what they call it pivoting. So I was so curious on your reaction to the word, but now that you're saying it, they really have re-imagined themselves in new ways and .doing phenomenally well. Is there any, any examples of re-imagining that you think would be beneficial for the people who are listening to hear about ?

Ed (22:21):

I'll use an example of, of, if you think as a pivot better, make sure you bring your customers along. You know, we serve clients throughout the country and I was probably one of the more early people to go out and venture and travel. And I got to tell you the more I've done it, the safer I felt, but like I use, I use Delta and United as two good examples. They each have used a little bit different approach. If you follow the airlines, Delta is committed to not filling up the center seat. United is committed to letting you know that the flights can be kind of full. If you want to take a different one, they'll easily accommodate you. Two similar solutions to the same read issue. But this is what I just hope every business operator has thought about. As they have explained how safe their customers are in their environment.



(23:10):

How does Delta stop Defogging the plane in six months? How do they stop like thoroughly cleaning the plane on that quick transition, which the metric of airline profitability used to be, how fast you could turn planes at the gate. I mean, really are customer's going to accept Delta saying, you know what, the pandemic's over. We're going to, we're not going to clean our planes as well as we did last year, when we told you it was your safety was essential to us. And so to me, if cleanliness of planes was a pivot, that means it was intended as like a band-aid fix. But I would say that with all the money that's been put on how to, how we're keeping you safe, it was not a pivot is actually was a new, a new operating procedure. Right. Is that, is that tracking?

Laura (24:01):

Yeah, for sure. Because what is a band aid for some companies of just keeping things moving right? Could eventually become standard. Now our standards are raised for something like what you're saying of cleanliness. What I have found is for some traditional businesses that have embraced online, which is really my specialties, is the online sales processes and online growth. Those companies now have two ways in which they can generate revenue when if and when their customers are comfortable coming back to them in person. Right. And now, instead of it being a band-aid, it's a business strategy. That's really what I hope anybody who's listening begins to think about.

Ed (24:51):

As you know, we do a good bit in the restaurant retail, consumer packaged goods area. And we have a client that on March, let's say March 16th, their customers had no way of ordering online. And on Friday, the 20th of March, they did. And I got to tell you a shout out to Chow Now. Oh my gosh, they were incredible partner with us and this client of taking this iconic high volume much beloved brand. That was not only about the food, but the experience of coming to their place. And when your dining room shut down, how do you deliver the brand in a way that you can do legally as well as safely? And it was all curbside and to go, and that was not a major part of their business. Now, when we talk about restaurant marketing, we use a very, a high-class Harvard MBA term, which is basically butts and seats.

(25:59):

The reality is if you don't have online sales, if people don't show up at your restaurant, you don't get the sale. It doesn't matter how much they love you. I could be craving that burger or that pizza, but if I don't show up, I can't buy well, if I don't now, if I don't show up or if I don't click on you, I don't buy. And so they have, I'm, you know, we're optimist. I know surely our endurance over the last five and a half, six months is going to be rewarded with bluer skies in the future later. But the reality is it's like they built a whole nother restaurant, a brick and mortar without building it with brick and mortar. And so it's really more about their capacity, they still make as many burgers perfectly for twice the volume as they did before, because I believe their restaurant and patios are going to be overflowing as they have been for the last years and years and years.

(26:57):

But now they have customers that say, I can actually buy more frequently because it doesn't have to be contingent upon me coming in. Right. And that's where this, you know, all the big corporations use omni-channel right. The deal is that 15 years ago, 20 years ago to open another restaurant, you had to build another restaurant. And the reality is that through e-commerce all these retailers hopefully have recognized that they can actually create another location. Like for example, how multi locations have the location page? Well, it's like you have this shopping center, the shopping center, and now you have online. It truly could be your highest performing location you have.

Laura (27:43):

Absolutely. I mean, we haven't even talked, I haven't even mentioned on this podcast about defensive business and having a baby during a pandemic. I probably mentioned that!

Ed (27:54):

We didn't have a baby. Good for you.

Laura (27:57):

I mean, talk about defensive. I had to have a COVID test two days before I was induced. And that was really fun. And then going to the hospital and having everybody be on such the defensive, which is totally understandable. But you saw what happens when people switch just psychologically from defensive, like, oh my gosh, I don't know if you're going to infect me too. Oh, you've been tested. We're totally relaxed. Now. I actually think I had better care because they didn't have to be on the defensive, which is really interesting. But now my husband and I, because we have the baby at home and it is, you know, still a, still a time of quarantine. We will put the boys in front of the TV with some hotdogs. I mean, now the truth is all coming out. We will get takeout. We'll sit on the back, but the baby under the table and pretend we're at a restaurant. And it's like, it's really the only way to stay sane, quarantined with three little kids. And we really haven't left the house since March and it's September now, but, but many parents are probably doing that. Right.

(28:51):

They're realizing, oh, actually I could probably not get a sitter. I could probably get some takeout after the kids go to bed and actually have a really nice night together. So there's all of these probably little micro angles. There's these little sub categories of need that are coming up, that I'm sure those companies don't even know about yet. And they'll find out as they end up serving customers and get to know them better. And behavior patterns start revealing themselves in social media or whatnot. I'm sure the opportunities are really in looking at where is that consistent behavior again? Where are those patterns taking place that we could actually turn into programs like home programs or something like that?

Ed (29:32):

Well, and that's where, you know, I do believe sadly that a lot of times some of our greatest learnings is through the pain we experience and that it forces us to really kind of like sounds all super cheesy, but dig deeper. You know, that's why I think you come back to pivot versus re-imagined is that let let's say, you know, you know, I, this is a whole nother change, but probably remember the Flintstones. And you remember that when Fred and Barney got off of work and they pull, they pull the thing and the whistle blew and they were able to go home and, you know, I keep kind of imagining that, is that going to happen one day with this whole pandemic crap? It's like, if something, somebody, whoever get on, get on GoPro off unfortunate. I don't think so. And so I think there's going to be more, I don't think there's going to be, I don't think the roll out is going to be as implicit as the roll back was. Yes. And so I think it's going to be very difficult for us business owners to figure out what, to keep, what to add, what was necessary out of necessity versus necessary out of a true brand deliverable. It's just, it's, it's super complicated right now. If you're running a business right now, you know what I mean? And you're talking to someone else who's running a business, then, you know, the secret handshake of what it's been like.

Laura (30:56):

Yes, for sure. For sure. And so through all of it, I know you talked about going from defensive to offensive, but how else have you stayed joyful this year? What else has brought you joy?

Ed (31:06):

So I teach indoor cycling. I'm a spin instructor, you know, um, that was not my business plan when I was 47, but through some interesting, interesting turn events, I ended up getting certified and I've taught, indoor cycling about six years, taught this morning at 7:00 AM. And honestly, getting back safely in a studio with bikes, six feet apart. And it was 14 people versus 40 people and, you know, super sanitation, that kind of stuff that has been grabbing onto as much of my known routine as possible. And for me, exercise and sweat is a huge part of it. But also, was come through that process and we've been doing it for two and a half months, and I've only had like one like mini, like concerning scare. And so, and it wasn't even that concerning, but it was just, you know, people panic, I say it to say is that, you know, we have to be defensive.

(32:05):

And in no way should be we, should we be reckless? Okay. Everyone has to be concerned about everyone. I hope honestly, that we look back a year from now and learn that some of the things that we did were not necessary, but they were the right thing to do without information, all that being said is while some people will make freak to think of going in and doing a spin class with other people right now, it has been very liberating for me. And for those who felt comfortable doing it. And part of it is that we've been conditioned the last four months to fear our breath, you know, fear our nose and like, it's all about containment. And so I got to tell you this morning, I showed up at the

office a team with a different energy. And it was very hard to muster up during those two months of isolation where literally none of us are seeing each other and it's all remote.

(32:55):

So, so that's one thing that's helped is getting back in the exercise. I was thinking, the other thing is employing deliberate grace. So I love to sweat, but I also love to eat. And when things got really stressful in the March, April may, I'd have a little more of the donut or the carb or that kind of thing, knowing that I could do what I know what it takes to get rid of it. But I was like, you know what? I can't be perfect at everything. And so I'm going to choose to focus my energy on areas that I can best enjoy. So like, especially entrepreneurs tend to want to be perfect to everything. And so I guess my deliberate grace would be, there are some areas where I, I tolerated. I gave myself deliberate and just realize that I couldn't just nail everything like I usually try to do.

(33:50):

And then the third thing I'd say is being thankful in all things. Yeah. You know, I, you can't see it. I don't want to tip the camera over, but on March 15th, I ranked all of our brands and tried to do a risk reward assessment for each of the brands on what the potential pandemic could do to them and how we might be able to serve them. And I just re ranked them all yesterday, as far as ok the next six months, trying to anticipate their needs, their needs for us, quite frankly, that kind of thing. And having that side by side, I just took a moment and was very thankful for a trust our clients place in us, but also the fact that my team has navigated their own personal fatigue and their own personal fear and still committed to serving others. We work with a brand, be good to people, and it's really cool black t-shirt white letters. And I think that even in our fear and panic, that the more I've intentionally attempted to be B to B, good to those around me. And it's helped mitigate the fear that steals the joy.

Laura (35:01):

Yeah. Yeah. I love that. So we're going to go into a couple of quick questions before we wrap up. So what is your favorite book?

Ed (35:07):

My favorite book would have to be now Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham. I think I've given away 20 or 30 of those in my lifetime. It was one of the most powerful interventions in my life, as far as clarity now on a fun note, I liked Stuart Woods. It was like a beach reading and a Stone Barrington.

Laura (35:31):

Every entrepreneur needs some fiction because we rarely will give ourselves permission to read it. Right. Where can people find you at if they are interested in learning more about you or just want to connect with your brand new brand, which I love.

Ed (35:43):

Yeah. Howie Grow a Brand. Yeah. So that's one way. And it all leads back to podcasts, YouTube and stuff. Social media network is how I grow a brand LinkedIn, et cetera, links back to two things. One is edhowie.com. And so I have had some people reach out to us personally, as far as needing some direct help their brand. But then my enterprise is just 17 years old as BTY creative B T Y creative, and the BTY stands for be true. You that's really from the kind of the crass belief that you can't lie your way to good marketing, you know? That is exactly right. That is exactly that the notion of be true you and in our process that we believe that really tees up your fortitude of brand differentiation is called the FBO process first best. And only if you're not first, you better be best. And if you're not best, you better be only. And some of those prowl for brands own all three, what would it take for you to own all three? And so there's multiple ways through the firm directly at edhowie.com, social media, but then Howie Grow A Brand.

Laura (37:03):

Awesome. Thank you, Ed. It was so, so great with this chat. I know so many people get a lot out of it. There is nothing like two geeks, marketing geeks, geeking out over branding. So thank you again for allowing yourself to be in my company today. Thank you everyone for tuning in, and we'll see you next time.

(37:26):

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