

Disrupt Yourself Podcast with Whitney Johnson

Episode 84: Diane Dietz

Whitney: Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast, I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption. My guest is Diane Dietz, [CEO of Rodan + Fields](#), a premium skincare brand. She sits on the [Board of Whirlpool](#) and is the former CMO at Safeway. Welcome, Diane.

Diane: Thank you, Whitney.

Whitney: We are just delighted to have you be here and be able to hear a bit about your journey and, um, I, I've had the pleasure of being able to speak with you on one or two occasions previously, and I'm really excited for our listeners to be able to, to learn from you. So let's, let's start with, um, where you grew up and what you thought you were going to be when you grew up?

Diane: Okay, sure. So I grew up in a small town outside of Chicago and, um, my mom and dad still have the same house I grew up in and, uh, we go back and visit quite a bit. And, uh, my kids are kind of shocked that, you know, my, my mom is still in the house. My dad passed away a few years ago but it's really fun to go home and see my little nameplate, Diane's Room, on the door, uh, to my bedroom. But when I was a little and, and this went on for a while, I actually wanted to be an artist, and so that was kind of my passion drawing and painting and I really thought that's what I would do when I grew up which obviously didn't end up working out (laughs).

Whitney: Did you study a lot of art in high school and college or was this really much more of a childhood passion for you?

Diane: No, it was really just more of a passion, so every night I would, um, I had a desk in my room and I would pull the desk drawer out and it had paints and markers and crayons and I would bring it downstairs, and in those days we had the old TV trays and I would just sit and draw and paint. So I never really had any formal training, um, I just was always really passionate about drawing and painting.

Whitney: Hmm, so what did you study in college then?

Diane: Uh, well, I studied marketing and economics, so, um, nothing really to do with art, although, I do think marketing is a very, you know, art and science kind of intersection because there's obviously a lot of creativity, um, in terms of marketing approaches. So I do think in some ways, um, it is you know a bit of my art passion.

Whitney: Do you remember when you discovered marketing like because you probably didn't know what marketing was. You, maybe you've had an idea of economics in high school but did you have a sense of what marketing was or like how did you discover that marketing was something you could do and get paid to do?

Diane: So I don't think I really went in thinking I would do marketing in college, it's just you know I found it interesting and, um, I probably was less into accounting and some of the other business majors. So I thought, you know, marketing for me was the best fit. I just thought I would go into something really, you know, business related. So I didn't necessarily think I would go pursue marketing or economics, it's just the two majors that I declared in college.

Whitney: Okay, you loved art as a child but then you knew in college you wanted to do business. Did your parents do business? I mean, how did you realize that that was something that was interesting to you?

Diane: Well, my dad was middle management in AT&T Illinois Bell and, um, so you know he was in the, you know, on the business side and my mom was a stay-at-home mom. So, you know, it's just probably looking at different options and thinking that I definitely liked the business side, but I think you know I kind of pursued you know things that, uh, attract both sides of your brain so the economic side to me is much more of a left brain whereas marketing in some ways is more right brain. Um, so I don't know, I just found this both very, very interesting in college and thought that would take me on some kind of path in business.

Whitney: It's so interesting, isn't it, to just kind of understand what people, what you, what anyone, any of us like to do as children and then how that somehow becomes, you know, the parent of what we end up actually doing.

Diane: Yeah (laughing).

Whitney: So it's, so it's fascinating to, to listen to you talk about that. So you after you graduated from college, did you go directly to work for Proctor & Gamble or was that did you have a-, another job before you started at P&G?

Diane: So I, I went directly to Proctor and you know what was interesting is I ended up starting in sales. Um, so interviewed with a lot of companies and graduated in '89 and there was, you know, the economy was booming, I had a lot of different offers and ended up taking the P&G Offer but it was actually in sales, not in marketing.

Whitney: Okay. So were you surprised that you took a job in sales?

Diane: No, because I'm you know I think that I like being around people. I was really impressed with, um, P&G as a company and you know there's just several iconic brands, and over time I ended up deciding to switch out of sales into the marketing side of P&G. Um, but again, you know, I never really envisioned that I would go from sales into the marketing side but I, I was always kind of enamored with P&G and brand management. So when I ended up getting the offer to go to P&G, um, I was really excited even though it was more on the sales side.

Whitney: It's interesting to me to, to hear you say that because so often you hear in organizations about how marketing and sales are sort of, you know, butt heads a little bit. What do

you think you learned, um, having been in, um, in sales that made you a better marketer?

Diane: The sales side is really connecting with the customers, um, you know at P&G it's all the big retailers. And then the division I actually I entered was in the oral care business, it was calling on dentists and dental schools. And so it was almost like a pharma type job but more OTC products, and so I think you know it helped me to understand how the brand is viewed through a professional's lens. And, you know, at that time and, and you know still probably today, we felt it was really important to have the professional recommending our brands and having really good relationships with them. So once I moved into the marketing side, you know, I always understood the background of how our customers think. And, you know, it made me, uh, I think a better marketer being close to the customer.

Whitney: So you were doing market research (laughs) for a lot of years in sales and then moved to the marketing side?

Diane: Exactly.

Whitney: One of the things you've been quoted as saying in the press is that people should follow their passion and find a career that they love. Um, what did you love, and I know you were at P&G for almost two decades, but what did you love about working at Procter & Gamble?

Diane: So for me you know it was you know really amazing to work in a company where at a very young age you had pretty big responsibilities. Um, P&G really was the inventor of the concept of brand management, and so you know when I was on the sales side and I kind of looked up the P&G ladder, everybody who was at the top had all gone through the marketing brand management side. So I thought, "Hmm, you know, if I want to keep moving up and I really want to be a senior leader in the company, I need to move to this brand management marketing side." Um, and you know what was interesting is in those days you had to interview to move over out of one function into brand management and marketing. So I moved over and you know worked my way up and you know just really found it to be a, a, a company that gave you a lot of responsibility, a lot of autonomy to really build a business.

Um, all the brands were run independently, uh, yet they were part of an overarching category. And, uh, you know I found that to just be incredibly exciting so at, you know, a young age I was a brand manager of Crest toothpaste which was a billion dollar brand and I was making all the decisions from the budgets to, you know, what innovation we should focus on, to the marketing, to our approach with customers. And so I just, you know, I found that to be just super energizing. Um, and the other thing that I really liked was that it was a very results driven company and an uproute company. So you really got promoted based on delivering results which I liked because it felt like, you know, that really levels the playing field. It's all about what you deliver and that dictates, you know, your career trajectory.

Whitney: So, you loved that you had so much autonomy, right? It sounds like you were in charge of a billion dollar P&L in your 20s, like your late 20s, early 30s?

Diane: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah and then-

Whitney: Wow.

Diane: ... I, and I, and I unlike many people at P&G, they move around to a lot of different businesses. I started in oral care sales and then I ended up moving into marketing on the oral care side and brand management and I worked my way up to eventually run the entire Oral Care Division. And it was, you know, multiple billions in sales and, uh, you know several amazing brands like Crest and Oral-B, and Whitestrips, and so it was a big responsibility at, at a very young age.

Whitney: During your tenure there, what was, who was one of the best bosses that you've had or who ... not the best boss, who was a really good boss? Because I don't want to have you, have you have to single anybody out necessarily, but who was a boss that comes to mind and just was a really good boss or a really formative boss for you?

Diane: So, you know, there's probably two people that really stand out. Um, one is Susan Arnold who was the highest ranking female I think ever in the history of Proctor & Gamble and, um, she was running the beauty care division and then eventually became the vice chair and had both health and beauty care and the oral care business, um, really fit in the health care division. And I had a chance to work very closely with her and just found her to be an incredible leader and, you know, just such a good person and she's someone I'm still friends with. And has been a mentor to me for years and years.

Um, and then I would say the other person was one of the former CEOs of Proctor & Gamble, um, a gentleman named John Pepper. And I just remember how, how he approached every person, you felt really like when you talked to him that you were the only person in the room. He really cared about what you had to say no matter what level you were in the company. Um, so they both had very big impact on me and just what I aspire to be like as a leader.

Whitney: You made the comment, so John Pepper It sounds like people felt like they mattered when they were there, when they were in his presence or are in his presence. With, with Susan, um, what you said she was a great leader, can you think of some attribute that in particular really, um, makes ... when you say that word, what, what comes to mind?

Diane: Well, I think first of all she is one of the most authentic leaders I've met. Um, she is, um, pretty small in stature and, and sort of petite. But when she walked in the room she just had such a big presence and very smart, no nonsense, you know, you could tell she quickly would get to the point, quickly get to a conclusion. And you know she just was so bright. Um, I was just impressed always with her thinking, but also just how authentic she was. You know, she would, would just make you feel like you could just be totally you in her presence. Um, even though she was a bit intimidating because she was so

quick-witted and, and so bright, and you know but still I just felt always so true to myself around her.

Whitney: What I'm hearing you say is when you're saying that she is, she was authentic because she was herself, she gave you permission to be yourself?

Diane: Exactly.

Whitney: So any teams that you can think of that were really, really kind of ... when you were on a team and it could have been one that you're leading or one that you are a part of that you were just like, "This team just works." Can you think of any, um, particular team that, that comes to mind?

Diane: There's a few I would say in my career and, and it's interesting because at the time when you're on one of these teams, you almost don't even realize how amazing the experiences, and I had this happen to me two times. So first was at P&G and it was, you know, after I took over as Crest brand manager, we had just lost leadership in the U.S. for the first time since the '60s. Um, so it was a pretty tense time and we, you know, really put a team together and, and it took me you know a few years to kind of get the whole team in place. But I just felt such a, a connection to all of these folks and we started winning together and it, it was just, I don't know, it was kind of a once in a lifetime experience and I'm still very close friends with everyone that was on that team.

And so many of them have gone on to very big jobs and have done very, very well. Um, but it was, it was just really amazing because it kind of started out as, you know, a terrible situation where you know the company was embarrassed to have one of its iconic brands lose leadership and you'd see kind of smushed tubes of toothpaste on the cover of Time Magazine and (laughs) there, there you are as, as the leader saying, "Wow, this is certainly doesn't feel very good." But then as we started to get the momentum going, you know, it just felt, felt pretty incredible. And then I would say the second time is really joining Rodan + Fields and getting a team in place here. Um, we have had just such unbelievable growth in the last few years.

And what was interesting coming in here was I really have a balance of, you know, a few folks who've been here since, um, you know the, the ... not when the company started, but few years after the company started and then about half the team, you know, me included, is new. But we have just had such an amazing run, so much growth in the last few years. And, again, it's a team of just very connected people who really care about each other. So it's only been probably the second time I've ever felt like this. So one time I was at P&G and now again at Rodan + Fields.

Whitney: It sounds like in both instances there was a sense of mission and the sense of purpose, right? Crest you were going to get back to be number one with Rodan + Fields, and I want to talk more about what you're doing at Rodan + Fields in just a minute. But just we're going to grow, um, this sense of people all on a team caring about each other, being respectful of one another. Um, everybody having a specific role to play, would that be accurate to say?

Diane: Yeah, and I think you know I've, I've thought a lot about what made it so unique the time I was on the team at P&G and the time here. And I think the other thing that makes it so especially unique is just how much fun we started having. So, you know, I think and, and fun and, and doing goofy things and, you know, at P&G we did you know a little pranks on each other and we would, every time someone would get promoted, we would put, put a funny spoof video together. And, you know, we'd end up going out and doing toasts and by the end of the night half the, the crew was crying because we were so emotionally connected.

It's you know that's the other thing I've thought about is just how much fun it was when you're with people that you really care about, you're winning together, and you're just sharing this, you know, moment in time that really feels like you're making history. And so that, you know, that's the other thing I would say that we kind of felt during that time.

Whitney: So you, all right, so you had this really, um, terrific, uh, run at P&G nearly 20 years. You learned a lot, you really grew up as a professional there. I think it's probably fair to say how did you wrench yourself away (laughs) to go to, to Safeway and what, how did you make that decision because it must have been tough to do?

Diane: Yeah, it was, um, but what happened is I was, you know, living in Cincinnati working for P&G, and in some ways I thought, you know, I'd probably stay there forever. And I went to a wedding, um, a friend of mine's and happened to sit next to this tall dark handsome guy from San Francisco. Um, and then you know ended up dating him and the funny thing was he said, "Well, you know, I, I want to get engaged, I want to get married but you know I just don't know, I don't think I can live in Cincinnati," because he lived in San Francisco. So, you know, I, I was kind of relying on my old sales skills to see if I could convince him to move from San Francisco to Cincinnati which is you know it takes a lot of skills there, um, if you've ever spent time in the Bay Area, it's a pretty amazing place.

And, uh, he agreed to move for one year and literally by the end of that year was, you know, saying to me, "I hope you're getting your resume ready." And, uh, and so you know what ended up happening was I really didn't get the resume together, I thought at some point he would just love it out there but we both kind of made a decision that we had to be in a place that both of our careers could thrive. And so, um, we ended up moving out to the Bay Area.

Whitney: As with all of our lives, there are lots of different pieces and threads, um, of the story. So really you moved to San Francisco for love.

Diane: Well, you know, I also had in, you know, one week, um, it was funny because I kept telling him, "Yes, I'm working on the resume," but I wasn't really working on it. And in one week I had a call for two companies in the Bay Area. One is an amazing tech company which I won't name, um, and then the other one was Safeway. And, you know, they both, both jobs sounded amazing. The Safeway one was further along, they had been searching for about nine months, um, to fill, um, the CMO role which was really an, an amazing role because it encompassed all of merchandising, all of marketing, all of digital supply chain. And then, you know, an, uh, \$8 billion private label business. So in

essence it was running a \$40 billion P&L, um, and you know managing, you know, very large organizations.

So in some ways it was a pretty stretching job for me to move to, um, you know, having been senior at P&G but this really moved you know up to the top of a, a, of a pretty large company. So I went for it and I, and I interviewed and, um, ended up getting the job offer and so the other tech company was, you know, still kind of in the midst of setting up, um, interviews and it was one of those bird in the hand. So I ended up taking the role at Safeway and, uh, and moving west.

Whitney: Let's now talk about Rodan + Fields, how did this, um, CEO job come along? Did you court it, did people come after you? How did you make the decision to move into this slot?

Diane: I was at Safeway for about seven years and then the company was acquired, um, by private equity and you know I ended up deciding to leave at that point. And, um, you know I started kind of with a wide net looking at a lot of different jobs in a lot of different industries, and, um, what ended up happening was my daughter got sick, um, and right as I was, as I was leaving Safeway. And we realized that, you know, I needed to take some time off with her and really focus on, on her health. And so I took a year off which was really crazy for me because I've worked since I was 16 but it helped me really get perspective on you know what mattered.

And I really kind of changed my view of this, you know, I got to get to the next biggest job in the biggest company and the biggest role, to really trying to find something that you know gave me purpose and gave me focus on things that really mattered to me. So, um, you know when you face a crisis in your life you know I always say never waste a crisis because it really does provide clarity. And, you know, the other clarity was we didn't want to leave the Bay Area, so you know at first I kind of cast the wide net of you know would we go to Europe? Would we go to Southern California? And we really stepped back and said, "Okay, what's best for our family staying here and making sure our daughter has care and finding the right thing here."

And so that's what kind of led to Rodan + Fields, um, which was interesting because when the recruiter called me about it, you know, it in some ways it didn't match the profile I was looking for, big, public, you know, which has been kind of my path. Um, but, uh, she kind of talked to me a little bit about the founders and the focus on female empowerment, I was, it, it piqued my interest. And so I ended up meeting with the chairman and the two founders and, and another, um, board of, uh, board member and I just became so enamored with what this company was doing, and, and just kind of fell in love with it.

Whitney: So for a lot of our listeners, um, they're not going to be familiar with Rodan + Fields, so this is your opportunity, tell us why you fell in love with Rodan + Fields?

Diane: So (laughs), um, [Rodan + Fields](#) was founded by two Stanford dermatologists who, you know, really focused, um, you know a lot of their practice on giving people the best skin

of their life. So they first, um, launched you know prior to Rodan + Fields, Proactiv and then, um, you know in 2008 they launched Rodan + Fields which is really based on, you know, a simple concept of using the right products in the right order with the right ingredients, um, really to focus on the skin condition you're dealing with. And they really fo-, you know, kind of isolated four main concerns and, and primarily women have.

So one is we still can experience adult acne, um, which I didn't know that until I joined Rodan + Fields. So, um, those hormones can, can work wonders on your skin. So there is a product for, for anyone who's still dealing with [adult acne](#). There's another product called [Reverse](#) that deals with sun damage, um, there's another product called [Soothe](#) which is for anyone who has rosacea or sensitive skin. And then there's a product called [Redefine](#) which is really dealing with fine lines, wrinkles. Um, so you know pretty simple lineup of products, um, but just two amazing founders who have just been really focused on, you know, really making an impact on people's skincare. And so until I used these products, I've never ever complied with skincare regimens.

And you know I was one of those you know sometimes went to bed, didn't even wash my face, I was just too tired. And now I'm just so focused on it because as you age, you know, you, you want to, you want to keep your skin looking great, you want to do whatever you can to feel your best and look your best.

Whitney: It's interesting because on the one hand you, it was a step up because now you're a CEO. But on the other hand you had been running a P&L, well maybe not a P&L but a business that was a \$40 billion business and growing that business. And then Rodan + Fields at the time you joined it was a \$600 million business, and now it's grown to 1.5 billion. But that was a big step back, did you ... For you, as you thought about it, how did you kind of get over, over that? Was it just the sense of mission or was there anything else that you thought through in your calculus? Because a lot of my listeners are thinking about personal disruption and it's really helpful for them to hear how you thought through this process.

Diane: Yeah, so I think you know there was sort of two sides of me. So on the one hand I was interviewing at a lot of really big companies and I kind of focused again on the number two role. And, uh, you know, um, I talked a little bit about Susan Arnold and you know and then I was looking at this job which was obviously a CEO job, and she said to me, "You know, you don't need to be anyone's number two, you know, go for it, go for the CEO job." So in some ways and you know and I think in some that we do this a bit as women, you know, I was still kind of holding myself back. So I was fine to go interview for a President role in a big public company but I was still a little nervous about going to be a CEO even though the company was fairly small. So I had that side of me.

Then I had the other side of me which thought you know in general it's a pretty small company, but what I found so interesting was the disruptive approach they had and actually the similarities to the oral care business. So, you know, highly credentialed, professionally endorsed, kind of the intersection of health and beauty which was very similar to what, you know, I was running at P&G. And I felt that this was a brand that literally could be a rocket ship, it just felt that it had so much potential and there was

also very little innovation at the time when I joined. So they really had not yet focused, you know, that much on kind of extending and expanding the brand.

So it just felt like so much opportunity to me but, you know, I still had all those little thoughts inside of, "Is it too small? You know, it's not public, it's a different model, and, and am I ready?" You know I just kind of inside still had that little negative voice saying, "You know you're not ready yet."

Whitney: What you're saying and I think that I love how you're, you're willing to kind of lay out this duality. On the one hand you were like, "Of course, I'm ready." On the other hand, "Am I ready?" Like you-

Diane: Yes.

Whitney: ... like you it's almost you had like those two little people on, on each side of your shoulders going back and forth having this argument.

Diane: Yes, yes. Well, I think you know having managed a lot of men and women in my career what I see is the men will push themselves and say, "I'm ready." And the women, you know, they just want to be perfect before they raise their hand and say that they're ready to do something. And in some ways you know I just think that's the age old struggle that we deal with as women. And we, you know, hold ourselves back because we want to be perfect, we want to be ready, we want, you know, have all the T's crossed and the, the I's dotted. And yet the guys will say, "Hey, I'm ready," and they may not be ready. But they push themselves into it a bit more and again these are generalizations but it is a little bit of what I've observed, um, you know, managing, managing two, the, the genders.

Whitney: Right and, and it probably was interesting to watch that playing out in yourself, you're like, "Wait a second, I know better here." And yet you were still finding yourself having to, to struggle through that.

Diane: Yeah, I mean I ran bigger brands in my 20s than this brand yet I was still questioning, you know, whether or not I could do it, uh, because I think you know ultimately when you're the CEO, the buck stops with you and you know you're accountable, and you're accountable for people's careers and you know their livelihood. And so it is, it's a big weight and you know I just thought, "Wow, am I ready for that?" Um, but, um, you know I'm glad I had mentors that pushed me and I'm glad that ultimately I pushed myself because I think you know going into another big company and being the number two and I was running the P&L at Safeway so it was a very big job. But it's just a totally different experience, you know, when you're the CEO of a company.

Whitney: In looking at the press reports, you've, you're really focused on digital branding, um, and, and are talking about how you're going to continue to make strides in that area. Can you share, um, any other ways that you're looking at, um, you know what kinds of innovations that we can look for or look at that obviously aren't confidential? What, what can you share with us?

Diane: Well, I think you know the interesting thing about this brand is it really was born in the digital era and you know it's, it's a world now where people immediately share feedback, negative or positive, on brands, on restaurants, on you know experiences. And so what's really great is when you have a brand that truly delivers results you benefit from that. And so you know our brand is all about real experiences and real photos and real pictures that people take based on using our products. So you know we don't have you know paid advertising, um, which again was a funny story because when I, you know, first interviewed and the chairman, uh, said to me, "You know, we have never spent a dollar on marketing." And right then my brain thought, "You know, wow, I am going to change that. You know, I am from a marketing background, we're going to start investing big time in marketing."

And you know what I realized is coming in here that if you have a great brand and great products that really work, people will go and talk about it, they will show photos. I mean, with the amount of Instagram photos that are posted every day, you know, people are very conscious of how they look and their skin, and when they have great results they're out talking about it. So, you know, that's, that's a big part of our strategy is having great products that then people can go and you know talk about and, and you know show the real results that they got. So, you know, that's been a big, big part of why this brand has done so well.

Whitney: It's interesting, so real, um, almost tutorial for you to go from somewhere like Safeway or P&G and Crest and Oral-B, etc. to a world where it's really all about the social share of, of people having an experience and wanting to talk about it.

Diane: Yeah, I mean it's just funny because sometimes people say to me if I'm on a panel, you know, "What is your digital strategy?" It's almost like, you know, you have this little, little boxed off group that they're just working on digital, and you know we are digital, that's our whole strategy. So, you know, we don't just have a little small group off in a corner working on digital, it's, you know it's every part of who we are as a brand. And so you know we are not in any brick and mortar stores, we don't, we don't advertise. And that's why some of the listeners may have not, you know, heard of us because our awareness is still relatively low at about 30% in the U.S. and yet we are the number one skincare brand in the, in, in the U.S. and actually in North America.

So, um, I, I say we're the unicorn brand that no one's heard of. Um, so (laughs) we've been kind of below the radar but for those who have heard of us, um, they probably have heard of us through you know some sort of digital channel.

Whitney: You know, it's really interesting hearing you talk and there are all these pieces coming together and I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to articulate it. But one of the things that was fascinating to me as we were doing research on you in preparing for this, this interview is that you know a lot of our guests like you can Google their name and like you see all the stuff online. You know, they've got these websites and social media accounts, and you have actually a pretty limited presence online. So it's fascinating because on the one hand you've got this limited presence like not necessarily a lot of people know about you and yet, yet you have done these really substantive interesting things. It's almost like you're, you're similar to your brand.

And now Rodan + Fields is like this big brand that no one knows about but it's a big brand (laughs) and you while you've been there you've grown from 600 million to 1.5 billion which is super impressive. Uh, I'm just wondering how do you, how do you respond to that? I guess I'll just say that, what, what are your thoughts as I, as I throw that out there?

Diane: So, you know, I think there's, there's two parts of it. So one is, you know, we are starting to work on you know generating more awareness of the brand and you know we've definitely you know probably spent a little more time thinking about that. Um, and then you know I think for me personally I have not done a lot of interviews or, um, you know really reached out to you know try to get my personal brand out there because I'm, I'm really all about the company and less about you know trying to develop my own brand. Um, so I think you know I'm, I'm here with Frannie, my, my PR guru, um, I think sometimes she'd like to wring my neck because she's always asking me to go do interviews and go on media tours. And you know I kind of feel like put our head down, deliver results, focus on what we do, and you know all of those things will come in the end but it's not what we're really about.

We're really all about delivering great products and really giving all of our consultants this chance to be entrepreneurs and do things the way they want to do them. Um, not as defined by corporate America. So I don't know, I think that's maybe why we're a bit below the radar but hopefully, um, you know as we build and, and more you know people will hear more about us.

Whitney: Well, you keep up this kind of growth and it won't be for long. So is there ... when, when people ask you, "Okay, so how have you more than doubled your revenue in the last two years?" What are one or two things that you, you point to?

Diane: One of the big areas of focus for me when I came in was on innovation, and we've had really some blockbuster products launched in the last few years and one is [Lash Boost](#), um, which has generated over \$275 million in sales, um, the first year that we launched it. So that has been a big one, we-

Whitney: What does it do Diane? I mean, you simplify it.

Diane: So, yeah, so it's basically, um, you know it helps with thickening and you know fuller looking lashes. So if you, you know, have a friend who sells Rodan + Fields and you go online and you'll see a lot of photos of, of beautiful eyelashes. They, you know, as we age we don't have those same, uh, beautiful baby lashes that we used to have. So, uh, it's a pretty, you know, pretty noticeable result, um, just really a fuller, a fuller look. Um, and then we also launched another product called [Active Hydration](#) which, um, is again another great product for helping to hydrate skin. Um, and we you know have done really well with both of those. So I think innovation has been pretty pivotal, um, uh, uh, as part of you know why we've done so well. We've also expanded, um, from just U.S and Canada to Australia, um, which has also been very, very successful.

So, you know, I think global innovation and you know continuing to just build on the disruptive model we have, um, with, with our consultant population that is, you know, really these digital social mavens that are out talking about our product. And really trying to give, you know, their customers white-glove service. And so, you know, I think all of those things together have really propelled you know kind of this exceptional growth.

Whitney: The reason I first learned about you is I read Eric Liu's book called [Guiding Lights](#) that came out like 10 years ago. And I read the story about you, I read the story about Jocelyn Wong, and, um, that I, I, I actually profiled in the book [Build an A-Team](#). When you think about, um, spotting and developing talent, uh, how do you think about that? Um, because you do have a pretty strong track record of spotting talent, do you have any in your mind? Have you quantified that at all or is it much more into it? You know, is this the economics brain at work or is this your marketing brain at work or a little bit of both?

Diane: You know, I think it's a little bit of both. Um, you know, I feel that, you know, for the most part when I connect with people and I get to know them, I have a, a feeling of how well they would do you know on a team. And, uh, you know, for the most part I would say it's played out really well. I've also tried not to look at, you know, cookie cutter backgrounds. So, you know, I, I had a few people that I brought in, you know, obviously Jocelyn who was engineering background, was in R&D, and you know at, at P&G. And, you know, it was kind of even thinking about whether or not she would stay at P&G and I met her and I thought, you know, she's just really, really bright, very creative. You know, she's now the CMO of Lowe's. I had brought her with me to Safeway too when I went to Safeway. Um, you know and it just there was just something about her.

And, you know, another person who I think about, um, who was at Yale undergrad and she was a drama major, and you know people kind of crossed her off the recruiting list at P&G and I, I looked at her profile and I said, "No, I want to meet her." And I met her and she's just phenomenal and she's now a pretty senior management at Taco Bell, um, doing very, very well. So I don't know, it's just I think you, you have to get away from cookie cutter approaches. I don't necessarily only look at, you know, where someone went to school or you know what their major was. I, I try to go deeper into why they do what they do and, and really get a sense for who they are as people. And then that sort of led me to you know whether or not they would be a good fit on my team.

Whitney: One of the, the things I talk about in the book [Build an A-Team](#) is is that when you're willing to develop talent, you won't build just one A-team but you'll build vast networks of A-teams across your career. And I will tell you that, um, even though our original interview did not make it into the book, um, whenever I make that statement of being able to build vast networks of A-teams across your career, I always think of you. Um, I was just truly, truly impressed of being able to have that conversation with you, what I learned from you, what I read from Eric when I had the conversation with Jocelyn.

And I just wanted to give you that shout out for, um, I think anybody who's trying to figure out how to really develop people and be someone, be a great boss, I think they would do very, very well to look at you and what you've done and accomplished in your

career. And so I just wanted to say, uh, you know I'm impressed and, and, and really admire what you've been able to accomplish.

Diane: Well, Whitney, thank you. I really appreciate that.

Whitney: So with that, any last thoughts that you would like to share as, as we wrap up?

Diane: You know, I think the only thing I would say is you know we did get a chance to talk about you know building an A-team and you know the thing that I, I think about quite a bit is I remember early on in my career someone saying, you know, you really have to separate yourself from your employees and don't get too close. And you know I've heard all those types of comments over the years and you know when you're CEO, you know, you're not anybody's friend and it's lonely at the top. And I would say you know my focus has been completely the opposite of that and really getting to know the people that work for me and I mean I love so many of the people who work for me and have worked for me in the past and some of the people I've worked for where we have very, very deep relationships.

Um, a few years ago when my father passed away I mean I just was in tears when I saw some of my former P&G colleagues walk into my dad's funeral, and I thought, "Wow, you know, they traveled from you know different parts of the country to come in to be with me even though we hadn't worked together in years." And I think it's just you know open yourself up and get to know the people that, that, that work with you and for you and be vulnerable and, and love them like they're part of your family. And you know they will work so hard for you when they feel that type of, of feeling back for you.

Whitney: That's beautiful. Diane Dietz, thank you so much for joining us today. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Diane: Thank you Whitney.

As I reflected on Diane's ability to build a team, it occurred to me that the work of team building isn't limited to your boss. If you have a mindset around getting to know the people who work with you, offering up your expertise as a resource for their development, you can build an A team whether you're in charge or not.

Like Shane Battier, two time NBA champion with the Miami Heat. I [wrote about him in an article](#) we will link to in the show notes, but when he played basketball, he was the key to his team winning. He made everyone better. He knew who he was working with and how he could support them, and not surprisingly, he's still doing that in the front office for the Miami Heat.

Throughout Diane's career, she's filled that role. She's the person you want on your team. She makes everyone better.

I also loved hearing that someone's major in college doesn't matter to her. She brings in the engineer for the marketing position or the drama major. She focuses on building relationships

with the people on her team. So much so, that people she hadn't worked with in years attended her father's funeral.

Practical tip:

Are there relationships on a team you are on that can be strengthened? Whether at work or somewhere you volunteer? How can you use the tasks you're working, how can you lend your expertise, to strengthen your relationships?

If you'd like to learn more about building a great team, check out my book [*Build An A Team*](#), my book with Harvard Business Press, download the first chapter at whitneyjohnson.com/ateam.

Thank you again to Diane Dietz for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributors Emilie Davis and Libby Newman, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.