

**World Changers**  
**Goodbye 2021 Bonus Episode – Transcript**



**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Welcome to World Changers, a podcast exploring the trends making an enduring mark on our world of work, and how business leaders, HR teams and internal communicators can stay one step ahead.

**Kate Went**

Hello World Changers fans. Those of you who've been tuning in for a while now may be wondering what's happened. Rest assured, dear listeners, we have not replaced our beloved Elle Bradley-Cox. Rather, we've turned the mic around to chat with our velveteen voiced host as we reach the end of this year's series.

I'm Kate Went, marketing manager at scarlettabbott, and it's been my absolute pleasure to watch how World Changers has grown this year, as our guests have explored the themes from our report released all the way back in January 2021. As we wrap up the year and look ahead to what's on the horizon for 2022, I caught up with Elle to find out what she's unearthed about World Changers through the medium of podcasting, and how that's felt, from the heady thrills and sound spills of 'you're on mute' and the distractions of the ice cream van chimes, to the deeply insightful moments and personal truths of the past year.

**Sen Sami**

...And just phenomenal to be able to talk about some of the great technologies we've got. Can you hear the Ice Cream Van in the background?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Yes, classic lockdown!

**Patrick Halkett**

And they know what they want to say and where they're going to say it and they're touching all of the different ... woah, that's a terrible phrase "touching all the sweet spots." I've not had my sweet spot touched since Tuesday week!

**Russ Norton**

I've been desperate to make a yoghurt joke the entire half hour but I've I've not managed to make it happen. I'm sorry.

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Failed at the final curdle, Russ.

**Lindsay Kohler**

So, in true work from home COVID life, I've had my buzzer go off about four times, so I hope no one could hear that.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

What do you both consume? And why? Paddy, I'm looking at you.

**Patrick Halkett**

Biscuits! Lots and lots of biscuits.

**Kate Went**

Elle, welcome to World Changers. This is weird. What does it feel like on the other side of the mic?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

This is not my natural place.

**Kate Went**

So, it's been a year! 10 Hero topics that we've taken from the World Changers report. And I think it's fair to say we weren't exactly backwards in coming forwards with some of the topics. They're thought provoking, controversial and pretty divisive. We've talked about employee activism in the great awakening, taboo topics in stigmas in the shadows, the exam controversy in bad education, just to name a few. Is there one that you particularly enjoyed covering?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

I mean, you're not wrong. We certainly weren't backwards in coming forwards. And I've really enjoyed all of them, but for different reasons. I guess my big passion is obviously content. I'm a writer and so 'information now', for me, was an extremely interesting topic. And I got to unpick it with Patrick, who is another writer like me. We're both big fans of things like the New Yorker and long reads. And then with Craig, our head of creative, who's got a really different take on things much more visual, I quite liked that conversation of him picking between the two of them. Plus they're great mates so the bants were fab.

I also really liked 'the great awakening' because that was the topic I chose to write about last year. And I just think employee activism is so bloody interesting. Those brands that get on board with it really do make a difference and feel quite purposeful. And I really loved talking to Sally Bucknell about that. For me, one of the ones I actually really enjoyed was 'the quiet captain'. And it's probably because I got to sit Jez, our MD, in the hot seat and ask him why he was a leader, it's interesting to do that sort of thing with your boss! But yeah, they were all fascinating. I think one of the really barrier breaking ones, certainly at the time, was stigma in the

shadows, where we talked about all the things you're not really supposed to talk about, with Russ and Lindsay. She's a behavioural scientist and Russ who's our D&I expert. And we were just talking about things you're really not supposed to talk about, like salary, and I know mental health is becoming so much less destigmatised, but certainly speaking about that, and really opening up about that was fascinating. It's certainly been a year though I really enjoyed each one.

### **Kate Went**

There's some absolute cracking topics in there. I've enjoyed them all for different reasons. But yeah, particularly enjoyed putting Jez in the hot seat, I agree. So those are ones that you really got stuck into and you really enjoyed. Were there any topics that you particularly struggled with?

### **Elle Bradley-Cox**

Yeah, of course. I'm certainly not an expert in any of these things. And it's good to have people who are much more expert than I in the chair, for good reasons and bad, really, I really liked, the one I struggled with most was 'viva la revolution', probably because I feel like I sit on the side of the revolutionaries. And I'm like, you know, "screw the management, let's just sort this out together." But actually, it was really interesting conversation with Rachel, who is our co-founder, because she was talking about red tape.

I am very much a person who detests the process and red tape, even though I realise that it does get me to the right result, sometimes I just don't like going around things that way. But she was talking about the kind of organisations that thrive on red tape. And then we got into kind of freedom within that framework, which it was a really interesting conversation. And she said, something that stuck with me, as a leader she said, "never waste a good crisis, there's always an opportunity that comes out of it". And she makes such a good point, because, you know, the way that businesses have rebuilt themselves, after the pandemic, kind of mucked in together, it was quite an interesting conversation. I don't know if I struggled with it. I think I just struggled with the idea of hierarchy. But it was actually good for me to go through a podcast like that, to learn more about where it's necessary and why and, you know, explore my own freedom within a framework.

### **Kate Went**

You absolute rebel. So during the whole process of the year, and going through the topics, you've been fortunate to interview some really incredible experts in the field of internal comms and beyond. What sticks with you from those interviews?

### **Elle Bradley-Cox**

You're right, we've been so lucky. And a huge shout out to all of our expert guests. And Kate Shaw from Nationwide was pretty revolutionary to me. I loved her. She was on that podcast, actually, with Rachel talking about hierarchy, 'vive la revolution', and she was talking about Nationwide's great attempts to reduce hierarchy in the business and power symbols and talking about dressing for your day, instead of being so prescriptive on things like business dress, and I just found her really inspirational. I loved Iain Wilkie from 50 Million Voices. He was talking to me about quiet leadership and he had some really interesting things to say about introverted leadership styles. I loved him.

Obviously, I mentioned at the beginning Sally Bucknell from EY. She was talking about all of the work the firm's done on diversity and inclusion. But what was really interesting was, you know, I certainly think they're a leader in the field. But, she was very humble. She said, "it sounds like we're in a perfect world here, but we've absolutely got miles to go." I really enjoyed that humility.

And another big favourite was Paul Wells, who is the animation professor at Loughborough University. I studied on a course of his and I found him completely fascinating at the time, but what stuck in my mind? He was talking about animations and people who write scripts as 'world builders'. So, do they like to build the world? Or do they start to think about the things in the world like the blue mermaid, which stuck with me. And he talked to me about Norman McLaren, who was an experimental animator from the 1940s. I looked him up after the podcast and it's hilarious because he's done in the 40s, in animation, what we're kind of working on in a similar style now, with some dots - we're working on something with some balls. And I was just like, "oh, my goodness, what goes around comes around." It was so good. And he had some really interesting things to say about animation. Like, if there's nothing to say or do, then animation just becomes pretty things that move. But actually, if you've got something to say, animation can be an incredible tool for social change. And yeah, I'm a big fan!

#### **Kate Went**

Such a varied plethora of people to talk to and so interesting! Just a note to listeners there. If you have missed any of those in the last year, do go back and have a listen. There are some absolutely stellar interviews with people going very wide ranging. So go back and have a listen, dive in. So, although it's not been perhaps as dramatic as 2020, this year was not without plenty of challenges of its own. Looking back to when the report was originally released, which of the topics do you feel hold most true?

#### **Elle Bradley-Cox**

Now, I mean, a lot of them are still relevant. What's interesting is one of the later topics we covered which was 'self and safety', all about psychological safety, genuinely, it's the thing that clients ask me the most about right now. Creating really safe spaces for colleagues to share their thoughts and feelings. I think that's only becoming more relevant. I think they're all actually still interesting and certainly, I think, quiet leadership coming to the fore during the pandemic. I hope that we can keep on keep holding on to an appreciation, I suppose, of different leadership styles and skills. 'Information now' - people are still being absolutely bombarded with information. And the more that we can do to streamline communications and get everybody in the comms team on the same page.

I know that businesses can be so large and unwieldy. But the more that you can get the right people in the room to just get a plan on a page and then actually deliver that and check in on those monthly content planning sessions that you've, you've done? Oh, God, you'll make your life so much easier for the next year, I promise!

#### **Kate Went**

I know the answer to this, of course, but will there be a World Changers 2022?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Funny you should say that ... Of course one's coming! We've spent a good few months writing this now and we've got some really interesting topics. Am I allowed to? Spoiler alert!

**Kate Went**

Yeah, what can we expect?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Well, we've written a really interesting one on neurodiversity, which I'm incredibly passionate about, I think it's an amazing piece of work. And I'm looking forward to seeing how that lands with people externally, outside scarlettabbott. I've written something on constructive journalism, which I'm a big fan of. Any of my clients listening will know that I'm always banging on about it! And I think it's a really big trend on the horizon, but I'm going leave it there. I don't know if I dare reveal anymore with the prospect of being thrown out of the chapel!

**Kate Went**

There is going to be some exciting stuff. Obviously, I am feigning ignorance, I've seen it all from behind the scenes, and I'm so excited for all the things that we're going to go into next year. But for this year, of course, we couldn't end this season, and our chat with you, without asking you. "thinking about the people making the biggest impact in the world of work, Who do you nominate, Elle, as your 2021 World Changer?"

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Okay, I forgot to prep for this bit. Really sorry, Kate! Okay, I should probably say something really intelligent, and somebody who has made a massive impact to the world. But I think, being really honest, I know internal communications teams are just so small, and so under-funded and so under-resourced, that I just feel like you guys have been the absolute heroes of 2021. I allowed to say the entire internal comms community? Is that really bad?

**Kate Went**

No, I think that's a very apt way to wrap up this year. And I am in complete agreement with you. hashtag comms heroes!

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Not half. And you know, a particular shout out to those guys who are just doing it with one or two bodies, and then the best will in the world, a lot of colleagues across the world and just trying to trying to put something out there that's good and still striving for excellence, despite being beleaguered by a million things. I remember talking to Sen Sami from Raytheon on this podcast and she had come to me from back-to-back meetings all day and still made 20 minutes of her day for me. And those are the kinds of people that are good guys, right, you know, the people who are getting stuff done and still making time for excellence. So, shout-out to everybody who's been super busy and still delivered with a smile on their face and done great work.

**Kate Went**

Amazing. Thank you so much. I hope you've enjoyed being on the other side of the mic?

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Please, let this never happen again.

**Kate Went**

Well, you'll be pleased to know that we will be putting you back in the hot seat, back in your rightful place for 2022 when we return so thank you so much.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

I'm really excited, actually. I think it'd be a great next season for podcasts, particularly some of the topics that we've got coming up. Yeah, I can't wait to get started.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Okay, so that's enough of that nonsense of Kate interviewing me. Can we get back to normal please? So, "new year, new me" – that's how the old saying goes, right? Well, there's more than routine behind that ritual, as my colleague behavioural scientist Lindsey Kohler often tells us. As we say goodbye to 2021, I asked Lindsay to tell me whether this year we'll get to experience the power of the fresh start. Lindsay had a WiFi debacle on the day in which we spoke. So, she joins us from her local cafe complete with coffee machines and music and lots of joy and spirit. I hope you enjoy this interview.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Lindsay, welcome to World Changers. Thank you for joining me.

**Lindsay Kohler**

Thanks for having me, Elle.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

So, tell me, what is the Fresh Start effect?

**Lindsay Kohler**

So the Fresh Start effect is something that happens when we reach certain temporal markers. So, the start of a new year, a new job, move, basically things like that. And what it does is two very important things. The first is that it breaks us out of the day-to-day routines that we kind of have this focus on more aspirational thinking. And two, it acts as a clean slate. So we're just filled with a lot more motivation and hope to tackle new goals.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Oh, my goodness, that feels like what I'm absolutely ready for at the end of a really long year. I mean, a lot of us have maybe pinned hopes on the fresh start more than normal at the end of 2020. But how did that eventually play out do you think?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, you know, I think we were all really looking forward to 2021, right? We all have this rhetoric around, you know, "2020 can go, you know, do something unpleasant to itself". I was like, "how do I say that without cursing?" But yeah, we were all collectively over 2020. We were ready for 2021. And whether the Fresh Start played out, I think it really varies on individual. But I think with January 1st, very much feeling in like December 31st, with the lockdown that most cities were in, I imagine that we didn't get as strong a life going into 2021, as many of us had hoped.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

I completely agree. It was it was a really tough one. But we'd heard all of this stuff about "oh, it can absolutely do one, 2020". And then I actually think almost this year of recovery has been so challenging for all of us. I mean, do you think we stand a better chance this year? Because we've got through some stuff, haven't we?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, absolutely. I think the most important thing is that as life returns back to normal, I think that weird time loop that we all felt like we were in, where we're like "are the days really long? Are they really short? What's happening?" I think our sense of time was really, really messed up. And so, if our perception of time is starting to normalise, and the Fresh Start effect is all about these temporal markers, which are based on a normal perception of time, then I think the Fresh Start effect is going to regain its power.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

We always think, when it comes to New Year, you always think about the things that you're going to do and you get your ducks in a row. You maybe do your to-do list and you think about some maybe crazily out of scope things that you might challenge yourself with this year. But how can we, in the world of work, best harness that motivational power of the Fresh Start effect?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, I mean, keep it simple, right? So, pick just one thing, and really go for it. I think a lot of goals fail because they're too big. They're too nebulous. But if you narrow it down to its simplest, raw incarnation, and focus your energy there, you're going to be much better set up for success.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

I mean, what did you do? Did you do any kind of New Year's resolutions or anything like that last year? Because I feel like it takes something like, is it 63 days to start a habit?

**Lindsay Kohler**

So ,there's so many conflicting rules about habit formation, all about whoever found the snazziest way to market their book. 63 days, 63 years ... I mean, who really knows? But I think last year, I definitely set goals, which was helpful to give me something to look forward to. I set two goals really, I wanted to finish the book Even Better If, which is now available at Amazon and other selected retailers (hello, quick plug!) Another personal goal was I wanted to write a screenplay. So those were two and granted, they're big things, but there were game plans for each of them. I knew what the finish line was. And when you're locked in your flat for five months, it helps to keep you busy!

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Tell me about your screenplay.

**Lindsay Kohler**

Oh, I thought you'd never ask. So my screenplay is about killer jellyfish. And it is called "Are you ready for this jelly?" and it's actually just won its first international screenwriting competition.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

That's incredible, well done!

**Lindsay Kohler**

So that's, that's pretty exciting. So when I think about, you know, fresh starts and goals for 2022, I think, bringing those jelly juggernauts to the silver screen is really going to be the goal for next year. It's a great lockdown project. I'm super thrilled that we won the London International screenwriting competition. Good boost of confidence, I think going into the new year.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

Oh, absolutely. You must be jazzed. I can't stop smiling. That's just amazing news. Well done you. I just feel like you know when you see somebody actually manifesting and then living their goals, it's such an inspiration, amazing! Well, thank you for your time. I hope our listeners get a lot from this and think about their own fresh start effect. What is the one thing that you might do differently next year to set your goals on fire and motivate yourself to a powerful 2022? I need to think about mine. But thanks, Lindsay.

**Lindsay Kohler**

You're welcome.

**Elle Bradley-Cox**

A few of our loyal listeners were kind enough to send in their thoughts about the podcast. So, in their words, over to you Andy, Laura, and Chris.

**Andrew Plender**

During the pandemic, podcasts have become my medium of choice while remote working. And listening to World Changers, which I find fresh, fun and insightful, has become a must in my content diet. It's been milk for my mind in the cereal bowl of employee engagement and culture. World Changers, as well as the excellent webinars that scarlettabbott host, has helped me feel connected to the community of internal communicators at a time when, I think it's fair to say, we've all needed it more than ever.

**Laura C**

What I love about World Changers is each episode is full of incredible insights into our ever-changing world. As an IC professional, it helps me understand future trends and I learn something new every time. Looking forward to Season Two.

### **Chris Maloney**

As internal communicators, we're busy. The day starts long before the day starts. And ends for us way after it ended for many. I don't know about you but mines full of 'can you just' and 'would you mind?' And 'what do you think of this?' It barely leaves time to think. But as strategic communicators working in busy businesses, with people who always want us to raise the bar, we need to. I know I need to. I try. I don't always succeed, but I try my best. So, getting the chance to stop. Forcing yourself to stop and put yourself in that development thinking place is not only important, but it's healthy.

The World Changers reports is a great starting point for that. But it's even better to hear the voices of the experts, my peers in the comms world behind it, you know, to hear from experts who've done some of that thinking we perhaps haven't yet had chance to consider. And yeah, we're all busy. But without that fresh thinking you can be stale and busy. I don't want that. And I know my audiences don't want that. So, I give myself the chance to stop, but keep going forward. I'm looking forward to the next report because, let's be honest, it's been a pretty interesting 12 months.

### **Elle Bradley-Cox**

I couldn't end this podcast without saying a genuine and heartfelt thank you to the wonderful contributors who have given up so much of their time, energy, insights, and expertise to join me this year on the World Changers podcast. You guys are amazing. And I need to name check you so, huge shout out to these heroes: Kate Forgione, CEO of Customer Success Network, the lovely Paul Wells, professor of animation at Loughborough University, Iain Wilkie, quiet leadership coach and founder of 50 Million Voices, Sally Bucknell, director of diversity and inclusiveness at EY, Kate Shaw, head of employee communication at Nationwide, Sarah McGee, professional development manager at the IoIC, Sen Sami, director of communication at Raytheon, Janet Lessels senior IC manager at SGN, and Rob Briggs, director of Greystone Communication. Thank you all so much.

And I have to say a huge thank you to the incredible scarlettabbot team who have just brought so much wisdom, words and a whole lot of joy to our world of work and so many great puns on this series of World Changers. I look forward to speaking to you guys again next year / roping you into conversations in the podcasting room. I really couldn't do it without you. And to you guys, our loyal listeners.

We've loved hearing from you with everything that you've enjoyed about World Changers. Don't miss your chance to chat with us over on Twitter @scarlettabbott or drop us an email at Hello@scarlettabbott.co.uk and tell us what you enjoyed about this season. World Changers will return in 2022, covering 10 new topics impacting the world of work. So, we'll see you next year for a brand new series. Excited much?

### **Elle Bradley-Cox**

World Changers is a podcast by employee engagement consultancy scarlettabbott, hosted by Elle Bradley-Cox. Find out more at [www.scarlettabbott.co.uk](http://www.scarlettabbott.co.uk).