

# One Knight in Product - E136 - Sarah Doody

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people, job, resume, ux, programme, portfolio, product, career, job description, apply, problem, product manager, ats, ux professionals, cover letter, decisions, thinking, hiring, read, interviews

## SPEAKERS

Jason Knight, Sarah Doody

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Jason Knight 00:00

Never fear, I'm back! In case you hadn't noticed... I've had a couple of weeks off on holiday, but I'm here to stop you getting tempted by other podcasts, I've brushed the sand out of my hair and I'm back to look after you. If you're new to this podcast... Well, hello! And even if you're not, why not pop over to <https://oneknightinproduct.com>, where you can find hundreds of hours of content, sign up to the mailing list, subscribe on your favourite podcast app, and more importantly, make sure you never miss another episode again. On tonight's episode, we'll be talking about that tricky job hunting process, and I'm sure we've all got some horror stories from some points in our career. We'll talk to my guest about treating your career like a product, building out your MVP portfolio, and actually reading the job descriptions for change and optimising your resume to stand out from the cloud. If you want to find out the biggest myth of job hunting and much, much more, please join us on One Knight in Product.



Jason Knight 01:02

So my guest tonight is Sarah Doody. Sarah's a former UX design and research consultant turned company founder. But before that, she started out selling children's clothes at Oshkosh B'Gosh. She's now putting the kibosh on ill fitting resumes and unfashionable portfolios, and helping UX professionals dress for success and get the next big job move and get paid what they're worth. Sarah says she hates surface level UX advice on social media and says we should all treat our careers like products. So I'm off after this to check my CV with all my stakeholders, take all their feedback on board, then rewrite it all at the last minute because the VP of Sales says so. Hi, Sarah, how are you tonight?



Sarah Doody 01:35

I am wonderful. Thanks for having me. And also that was an awesome intro. I think one of my favourites.



Jason Knight 01:42

One of your favourites, I'm gonna have to have some words after this.



Sarah Doody 01:46

I can tell you did a lot of research.



Jason Knight 01:50

Right. So first things first, you are the founder and CEO of Career Strategy Lab. So what problem does Career Strategy Lab solve for me, or for people like me?



Sarah Doody 02:01

Right. So Career Strategy Lab solves the problem that a lot of UX and product, people are not great at the product of themselves. And we're gonna get into that. But what that means, really, tangibly is that they're not great at marketing themselves, selling themselves and like, the product of them, meaning the skills, etc. So we help people learn how to create effective resumes, portfolios, LinkedIn profiles, job search, and also, like, really own their career, and come up with what we call a product roadmap for their career. So you avoid, you know, getting stagnant, et cetera. There's a little bit of a long answer, but that's what we do. I'm still working on the one liner.



Jason Knight 02:53

Yeah, there you go. We need to get some marketing people in to do that.



Sarah Doody 02:58

Yeah, you're very familiar with startup incubators. And if I had to make one liner on the spot right now, it's an incubator for your career.



Jason Knight 03:08

There you go. I'll take my commission at the end of the interview.



Sarah Doody 03:12

Right!





Jason Knight 03:14

But you touched on it there just briefly, and it was one of my key questions, so I'm glad we got it on the table straightaway is like, obviously, you've got a design background, you've worked in UX and user research. And that's obviously a really fundamental part of product management, kind of that relationship and just how to build great products...



Sarah Doody 03:31

Definitely.



Jason Knight 03:32

But it sounds like you're not just talking about UX, and product design, the type people but but you're also talking about product managers and other people involved in building the product. So that kind of across the product trio. So is that how it is like you can basically help anyone across both of those disciplines? Or could you maybe help other disciplines as well? Like, how wide do you go with your brush?



Sarah Doody 03:51

Yeah, that's a great question. And, you know, it's been an evolution of this business, which is now Career Strategy Lab. This all started in 2017, when I was solving a very specific problem of helping people with their portfolios, and I have this product, it's still out there. Right now, maybe it won't be Sunday, but it's called the UX portfolio formula. And that's very, you know, specific to UX people. But I quickly realised through feedback from people who bought that programme, was, this should just be called the portfolio formula. So and you could substitute portfolio for articulate your work and experience, you know, it doesn't have to be a formal portfolio. But yeah, I've had product managers, graphic designers, product owners, I think I said UX writers, researchers, all types of people and some of the feedback is like this. This does not just have to be UX and product people. So behind the scenes in my business, we are considering the pros and cons of the benefits of niching down versus going wide. And there's a lot of there's a lot of decisions that need to go into that because it changes the business drastically.



Jason Knight 05:09

Yeah, I can imagine. And that's one of the things that kind of sprung to my mind, as you were talking now, is this idea of... Well, yes, of course, there are some common features between various different types of jobs. But also, there are going to be different things that they want to call out on their portfolio, different levels of work, that they're going to show different types of work. I've always, for example, thought it's particularly difficult for product managers, especially on say, B2B apps that aren't publicly available to actually sort of show a portfolio of basically anything, they just have to kind of write something down and hope people believe them. So I guess, when it comes to that niching down, do you feel that there's enough generic work that you can do with people, that means that you can offer that service at scale? Or do you feel that by sort of zooming out to a wider group of people that you're gonna maybe have

to get some additional sort of Sarah Doody from engineering and server duties and marketing and other types of Sarah Doodies that can actually come and do some of that stuff? And be that almost consultative expert that people need?

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Sarah Doody 06:08

Yeah, that's a great question. And I think in this moment, I think the answer is, what I've created inside Career Strategy Lab is very versatile. And yes, a lot of the examples are like, UX designer Sally, you know, here's an example of her resume and how she writes a bullet points and a good, better, best bullet point. But even if you don't work in user experience, even if you're an accountant, let's say or like a, I don't know, a teacher or something, you could, hopefully, I mean, I don't think it's rocket science to look at an example of someone in a different industry and translate that to what you do. And I think, why it could work to go wide with all of this is because the feedback we receive from people who've gone through this programme is that like, it is so granular, that it's almost like Mad Libs, you know, those fill in the blank things. So it's really a business decision. But it's definitely translatable to anyone. And I have a few friends or friends of friends that were recently laid off, and I was just chatting with them giving them tips. And it worked. I was kind of prototyping could the advice I've given this programme relate to Mike, the security guy, and it was like... "Yep, it worked!"



Jason Knight 07:34

Well, there you go, serving the security and guard dog industry, which is definitely a niche I wasn't expecting to get to. But one thing I see on the product management side is that there are people out there that are trying to break into product management, for example, in the first place. And I think that that's traditionally a tricky move, simply because there's quite a lot of variability between what different people consider product management, and also what companies believe it to be definitely. But also, there's, we'll come to the job specs in a bit, I guess. But there's just it's this sort of chicken and egg scenario that you get as well with regards to that you need to have the experience to get in, but you don't get into you have the experience type thing. So is that something that is common across for example, product? Sure, but like design as well? Or do you feel that there's more of a path into UX and design with maybe some hard skills that can get you in? And then you learn the rest on the job?

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Sarah Doody 08:28

Yeah, I mean, I think of product management, and I kind of agree with you, you know, just coming straight out of college or some boot camp and getting hired as a product manager, you know, like Canva, or QuickBooks or something, that might be a stretch, because to your point, I think it is very helpful to have kind of worked in the trenches, for lack of better word.



Jason Knight 08:54

Yeah.

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Sarah Doody 08:55

And be exposed to how product is done at different types of companies. And maybe you could go be a product manager at a two person startup or something with your friends, right. But the context of the company, you're going to, I think, kind of dictates whether you can just roll in there as a total newbie, or if you might need to climb the ranks, so to speak, to get into that role concerning quote, breaking in, it's not my favourite term, but everyone uses it these days. And it's not my favourite term because I think it's really about the expectation people have we even see this, you know, with UX roles, right? People have this expectation that if I just get this degree or do this programme and make some fake projects, I can get hired at Google for 100 grand or something and more power to you if you can do that. But you know, I think it might be a little easier for UX people than product managers because there's more entry points, you know, it doesn't require management and understanding of tonnes of other areas. So yeah...



Jason Knight 10:10

It's just drawing, right? And colouring in.

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Sarah Doody 10:13

Oh, yeah, just moving stuff around on the screen, like, anyone can do it.



Jason Knight 10:18

We're gonna get some hate mail at this point. But are you optimised then for that... Let's call it breaking in for the time being like, is that a really big part of your game? Or are you also looking at people trying to move up through their career ladder trying to get higher positions, maybe even breaking into leadership? Like, where's your sweet spot? Or are they all your sweet spots?

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Sarah Doody 10:39

So this is a fun question from the perspective of this programme is a product. So it started just focused on portfolios, like I said, and in that moment of creating that I was just thinking, How do I make people stop asking me how to make a portfolio? Because I'm so sick of this question. Like, literally, if I just make this thing, every email inquiry I get, I can just say go by this programme, then that inherently attracted a lot of newbies. And that went on for a few years. And then I personally made a decision, you know, on my career roadmap to get really meta of thinking to myself, I actually don't want to work with newbies for like, the next decade or something. Nothing against newbies.



Jason Knight 11:30

Oh, it sounds like there's something against newbies! Come on, you can be honest.

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**Sarah Doody 11:33**

You know, I didn't... Well, there's two problems. I didn't like answering the same questions over and over and over and over. Yeah, but also the newbies. They came to me because they wanted to make a portfolio. But they also wanted me to teach them UX. And I was not in the business of making a UX bootcamp, even though yes, I did help General Assembly I made the curriculum for and taught their first programme. I myself didn't want to make series UX Boot Camp. And so I diversified slowly. And now, this programme covers not just your portfolio, but many other things. What I have found now that I got out of just portfolio land is probably and I don't have the exact number on this. But I would say 70% of people that join this programme, have either been working in UX for like 10 or more years, or they are switching to user experience from another industry such as teaching, occupational health, psychology, architecture. And that has been a quite a surprise for me. Because the problems that we face in our career, job search, etcetera, you know, figuring out what you want to do next, those problems don't go away, you know, after working for three years. Those problems just get more complex, because you have more experience, you're exposed to more areas within whatever you do. And it's almost that problem of too many options and trying to like we talked about in the in the beginning, kind of like figure out, do you niche down? Do you go wide? What do you want to do, not to mention, whether you're a 20 year old, just getting your first job or your 50, figuring out your next job. Everyone faces the same problems with resumes, LinkedIn profiles, networking, job search, interviews, etc, at least from my experience of doing this with like, now 1000s of people.

**Jason Knight 13:44**

Yeah, and I've seen the graphic with all of their salary increases as well. So you're obviously doing good work there. But on that work, I mean, you've touched a little bit on how you started out with this resume or portfolio builder. And then some of the work that you then progress through. But obviously, before that you are practising or you are a UX practitioner, UX leader, you worked in a number of organisations, and then you of course, then decided to kind of give up that life and move into this new world of helping other people succeed in their careers. So I guess that is a bit of a pivot. So was there anything that specifically got you to just decide to concentrate on that as an actual career and an actual company of your own, like any pivotal moment, or was it just a natural progression from some of the work that you were doing?

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**Sarah Doody 14:28**

Yeah, it's kind of a combination of both. It was definitely a natural progression. But, you know, looking back on my own career roadmap around, I would say, 2015 or so I started to dabble in the world of teaching UX. I did a lot of teaching around research and things like that. Kind of a little, like UX fundamentals, let's say. And at the time, I was consulting you know, I had been running my own consultancy And I had this moment where I thought there will eventually be a ceiling with this consultancy where I can't likely raise my rates, you know, infinitely. And there would be a moment where I needed to decide, do I want to grow an agency or what? How do I, you know, scale this. And I knew I didn't want to build an agency. So I thought to myself, education, especially online education can scale. So it's really a decision, a business decision and looking and knowing that my opportunity to earn was kept, I felt like, however, when you have digital products, those are very scalable in a very lucrative way. But also, it was not just

about finances, it was about lifestyle. And I think honestly, lifestyle is really how I make a lot of my decisions in that. I remember waking up many mornings and looking at my calendar and just seeing walls of meetings, and I hate meetings. And I did not want to have my life look like that specifically, because I had this master plan kind of to move away from New York City and move to the mountains where I live now. So I can ski all the time. So I clearly have been designing my career subconsciously and consciously so as a financial reason and also free up my calendar so I can live the life I want to live to.



Jason Knight 16:37

Well there you go, and we won't hold the skiing against you as the snowboard collective.



Sarah Doody 16:42

No I was ... and it worked. I was on the slopes 65 days this winter. And I'm actually going on a very exciting bucket list trip to Chile to go skiing at the end of August. So I'm like, The Night Before Christmas right now.



Jason Knight 16:57

I'll have what she's having.



Sarah Doody 17:00

Follow me on Instagram for behind the scenes.



Jason Knight 17:04

Make sure you wear helmets.



Sarah Doody 17:05

Yeah. Now all the time.



Jason Knight 17:07

Now I've heard that your privately held you've never taken funding.



Sarah Doody 17:11

Yep.



Jason Knight 17:11

Now that's always refreshing to see in this day and age all these hustle bros out there and growth all cost VC crowd. But do you feel that being self funded as ever limited yours instead of giving you some kind of freedom to pursue things the way that you wanted?



Sarah Doody 17:26

With this business, I would say I do not regret not seeking out funding or anything. I really value the freedom, I have to make decisions and move as fast as I want. And I think that looking at, you know, when this all kind of started from 2017. Until now, I have made so many data and just gut decisions that I think probably would have been slow down if I was accountable to other people. And, you know, I think part of why I feel confident in continuing this way is because sure I don't have like a board of directors or VCs to be accountable to. But I've kind of formed my own board of directors with other trusted people. Some kind of are in the online education space, but in different niches. Some you know, our financial planners, for example, are therapists, but they all are a great sounding board for decisions. And they do remind me of statements I've made in the past and stuff like that. So yeah, I think for this business, it would be very limiting. But I'm able to sell fun this because the profit margins are quite high. And to be honest, I automate a tonne of stuff in the business. So I am saving a lot of money on team because my team is focused on doing very strategic things, not manual repetitive conveyor belt type things because I've automated stuff using Zapier and a tonne of automations and Airtable to get really nerdy.



Jason Knight 19:16

But just for the record, we should call out the alternative automation and data storage platforms are available definitely since none of them are sponsoring me. Now I've never applied for a UX role myself working, as I do, in product management and formally engineering. But product management job descriptions are famously a car crash with unclear ambiguous requirements often feeling like had no hiring managers have basically taken two or three other job specs and just sort of smoosh them all together and definitely buzzwords on the top and they're kind of company logo. So that's product management. And obviously you're helping to serve those people as well. But is that also something that you find with say, design and UX roles or is it a little bit more or settled and is a kind of more consistency between the different types of job ads that you have for specifically UX roles?



Sarah Doody 20:09

I think it's a problem that is widespread in the product industry in general. And if I had to wager a guess, I think it also expands to many other industries, I think we have to think of how job descriptions are written. And a lot of times they're written in a rush ship by someone who maybe has not written a job description ever. Or, you know, it's been a couple of months or a year or something like that. And so what are they doing to write that job description, they're probably either googling to find examples, or they're finding other examples from within their company, and just kind of like, doing a Frankenstein or mashup of job descriptions, right. I think

job descriptions often focus on sometimes too granular of responsibilities. And I think it's really helpful, even if you just discuss this internally, you know, think about like, the key areas that this person would be involved in, and, at least before the job description, discuss actual examples of projects that this person will work on. And I think, if you start with examples of in the first six to eight months, what are the real things someone would be working on in our org, that is a lot more valuable than coming up with this person will be responsible for generic things 1, 2, 3. You know, it just helps contextualise it a lot more. And it helps you, I think have better conversations in the interviews is you're able to say, like part of this job would be working on this project in the next three months. Like, tell me about something you've done in the past that relates to this. So yeah, yeah, job descriptions are a mess all over.



Jason Knight 22:10

But obviously, you're coaching people to get these jobs. So that calls to mind some of the things that you read online about the different types of people that apply for jobs, and how much of the job ad they feel competent applying for a job if they match or don't match. And this is famously something where, for example, women will tend to try to basically only apply for jobs where they meet everything, whereas your back to your tip room men, like there'll be the ones that probably try and apply for the jobs at the 30% mark or something like that. So I guess if we take the cliches aside, what's your recommendation for when like, if you're looking at a job and you say, Okay, well, actually, I've got like, X percent of those things. So maybe I should go for it. Like, what is X? I mean, I'm sure it's variable, but like, as a kind of, kind of finger in the air? Like, if you if you had to, sort of have a starting point? What was the starting point for X?



Sarah Doody 23:04

Yeah, I mean, this is a completely subjective number. But the number I've been saying most recently is about 60%. And, yes, one of the questions I receive a lot from, you know, men and women is, "I don't think I can apply to this job because I don't meet 100% of those things". And my feedback to them is always, like the job description is not a list of every requirement. It's really a wish list. And I know that's frustrating for candidates, because we see them complain about it on Twitter and LinkedIn all the time. But it really is a wish list. And so when you look at a job description, first of all, like actually read it because I myself had been getting into hiring. And my hypothesis is proving to be true in that many people do not read the job description. Therefore, the bar to like stand out is really low. Because if you actually read the job description, and you can, you know, literally highlight or virtually highlight on your screen, the bullet points on there that you think match you the most, then that is how you go into slightly customising your resume for that role or writing a really effective cover letter, or writing that email that you're going to send the hiring manager because you're able to track them down and call out your specific experience that matches some of those bullet points on that job description. But you can't do that if you only read the job title and just click apply because it has the word product management.. product manager in the job title, right?



Jason Knight 24:54

That is true, or this "Quick Apply" button that you got these days. It's just like you're taking all the humanity out of it. But that's interesting around the customization as well, because

obviously, you're doing a lot of work or you have done a lot of work around CVs, you've been doing work around portfolios, and there's always this debate around about how much to customise, how much to put into a cover letter, right? How much to put into your actual CV, what to put in your portfolio, what to not. Sounds from what you're saying that you very much recommend customising for every single job that you apply for, and making sure that you're very specifically calling out what makes you special, rather than tossing a bog standard resume over the ball that you wrote and just download and send to everyone. Is that fair?

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Sarah Doody 25:39

Yes, definitely. And the people that actually do this are the ones who get hired faster inside our programme. And I think a lot of people push back on this concept because their definition of customise your resume is vastly different from mine, a lot of people think I don't have time to write a resume from the ground up all over again. Right. And so yeah, one of the guiding principles we really focus on in career strategy lab is trying to get people to remember this is about creating the MVP version of cover letter, resume, presentation, etc. And so, tailoring or customising your resume, for example, could be as simple as reordering bullet points under one of your work history lines, removing bullet points that maybe don't really relate to the role adding bullet points, because you read the job description and you think, oh, yeah, that thing that I did two years ago is super relevant. I'm going to add that in. Also, the at the top of your resume, your little summary, whatever you want to call it, that is an excellent thing to customise because you, let's say you are applying to a job in the finance industry, you're doing product management, for some finance thing, great if you actually have finance experience in the past, but at the top your resume, it doesn't say like, I'm a product manager with five years experience and two years experience working in finance, if it doesn't say that, that would be an example of how to customise that resume. So it's little, little things like that. And concerning the cover letter, I think a lot of people push back on cover letters, again, they think I don't have time to write a cover letter. Here's the deal, if you just write a good baseline or template cover letter that covers 90%, of what the cover letter needs to include. And then you're changing or adding or removing 10%. Similar and what we just did with that resume example. That's how you're able to send a cover letter with every application. And it could also just be an email, it doesn't have to be this formal cover letter, then you're able to solve that problem of, oh, I don't have time to write a cover letter.



Jason Knight 28:05

Yeah, no, that makes a lot of sense. I think that it's funny though. And this is something I've had in the past as well, when you, you kind of fall into a cognitive trap of your own, which is like, you just expect that everyone will know that you sent that letter to someone else, or something very similar to that letter to someone else. And it's, of course, it... Like there's not like a gang of people sharing CVs backwards and forwards. So it's just really interesting kind of cognitive bias where you kind of after a couple you like, oh, no, can't send that to someone else they might know.

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Sarah Doody 28:34

Yeah. But they will know if it sounds like just business jargon and buzzwords, right? Like it is a team player who is passionate about changing the world through design, and you know, et

team player who is passionate about changing the world through design, and, you know, et cetera, et cetera, right? So you have to make sure that it doesn't sound like that. And by tailoring it, it makes it feel more personalised, right? Like, when we work on products, think of the products you use, like, I use a lot of fitness apps. And what makes them really effective is when I open my Garmin, for example, the app, and it gives me this personalised dashboard of my day and my sleep and my heart rate and this and that, and that is why I'm intrigued in compelled to keep using that. In the same way. If you do that slight customization of the resume, cover letter, et cetera. It's those are products. I mean, if we want to get you we can debate that but like if you treat it like a product, it's a lot easier. And you're gonna realise changes that you could make that you've completely overlooked by not thinking about all this as products.



Jason Knight 29:56

No, absolutely, I think is really interesting. That idea of personalization and also just making sure that you're even doing a little bit of A/B testing from time to time just trying to work out where things land with people. I'm also very curious, and I don't know if this is something that you advise people to do as well... But one of the things I remember reading in No Rules Rules, the Netflix book, is about how they encourage people to just kind of apply for jobs, even when they don't want one just to make sure that they that they actually still want to work at Netflix. And my extension of that is like, sometimes it's just kind of fun to apply for jobs just to get good at applying for jobs as well. I don't know if that's something that you advocate, because I guess technically, you're wasting other people's time if you don't want the job. But at the same time, it can really help to sharpen your own story, your narrative and bigger narratives.



Sarah Doody 30:41

Yeah, well, I think if we're going to treat our careers like products, it's helpful to be doing some research sometimes. And sure, one could argue that if you're applying to jobs, and you have no intention of taking it, you're wasting people's time. But selfishly, that's a great way to do research, right? And figure out, is your resume getting you interviews, right? What type of salary can you command, and, you know, you might actually have no intentions of working at whatever company you apply to, you might also realise, wow, this is a great opportunity, or "Wow, I'm actually very underpaid in my current job, I'm actually going to rethink my original stance of, I'm just applying to this job, kind of for research", you know? And that idea of like testing, it really goes back to this whole MVP mindset that I'm trying to convey to so many people, because that ties into the way people approach the job search, which is very much a numbers game, right? Lots of people are taught, and sidenote, some, like UX Boot Camps, mandate this in there, you'll get hired guarantees, because I've read the terms and conditions. But a lot of people play this numbers game. And my kind of counter thinking to that is, you could keep playing the numbers game. But it might be better to apply to a job with a resume that maybe you don't think is perfect, because the longer you keep trying to perfect your resume, whatever. It's preventing you from applying to jobs. Yeah. So by applying with this, say MVP version, you might actually be surprised and get interviews and stuff. Because that extra two weeks you are going to spend tweaking your resume or presentation, chances are like those differences are so minut, that it's not going to impact the grand picture of getting interviews, etc.



Jason Knight 33:00

Well, this is interesting, because one of the things you see bandied around on the internet these days is this whole idea around well, everything's just been automatically scanned by ATS systems these days, and you don't really need to write anything great, you just need to hit the certain bullet points that they expect so that you pass their automated systems. Now I'm a strong advocate for hiring managers actually reading CVs and basically doing their job. But do you think that the threat of AI and ATS is overblown? Or do you think that's a real problem for kind of gatekeeping to even get a job into in the first place?



Sarah Doody 33:36

So I think it is slightly overblown, and I think it's overblown, because it's an easy excuse that people can use when they're not when they're frustrated with the job search, right? Like, "oh, like the ATS systems are so unfair", or "the ATS systems or biased" or whatever, right? And, yes, ATS systems exist and a lot of companies use them. But eventually a human is going to look at it right? And so you need to keep that in mind and not just flood for example, your resume with like, all these keywords and make it hard to read and everything I think to sure ATS systems exist, but guess what, I just read this stat... 85% of jobs are found or like secured through relationships. And that's from the US Department of Labour. I believe. I could be wrong, but 99% Sure. Anyway. The reason I bring that up is a lot of people really focus on platforms in their job search meaning, okay, I have to go to LinkedIn jobs today and do quick apply on 10 jobs and also some boot camps mandate Like the number of jobs you need to apply to. So that's a whole other podcast. But the problem here is that by focusing on platforms, you're missing the opportunity of people. So let's say and I see this on LinkedIn all the time, a product manager, or a hiring manager, or research manager will post on their LinkedIn profile. Hey, guys, I'm hiring for my team. Here's the role anyone interested? Like, let me know, that is a great example of where you need to like, personally reach out to that person, because now you have a real person, and you're in effect, able to bypass any software AI right? Now, they might tell you, Okay, go apply at this website. But at least you still have a person you can follow up with, and maybe send, like a cover letter to I use cover letter loosely here, right, like a short email to sell yourself type thing. So you have to consider both, but I think a lot of people just moan and complain about the ATS systems. And I think it's kind of lazy, because, sure, sometimes it can be a barrier. But equally, I see so many humans, people, hiring managers posting, it's a lot easier than people think, to like, bypass those systems, and or at least make contact with someone on the inside.



Jason Knight 36:35

No, absolutely. I think it's really important to use your network as much as possible as well. There's something that I think is just, I mean, not just for jobs, obviously, just in general, I think networks are so important. We spoke before this about some of the myths that UX professionals believe about recruiting and hiring managers. And I'm sure that some of those myths have been covered by some of the things that we've already talked about. But is there like one mega myth that you really would want, I guess, UX professionals, but also put up people and professionals in general to understand isn't true, aside from the things that we talked about already?

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**Sarah Doody 37:11**

Yeah, I think one that comes to mind, that is also applicable to anyone at really any stage in their career is, when you see a job description or a post that references desired years of experience. Even if you don't have those number of years of experience doesn't mean you can't apply. Now, I will caveat that and say, if it says you need to have 10 years of experience, and you have six months of experience, that's a stretch, right? Like you kind of have to think critically about this. But I'm often asked, I'm a junior, whatever, product manager, designer, researcher, writer, I'm a junior, all the job descriptions say one to three years of experience, how do I apply if I don't have 1/2/3 years of experience? And again, I think this is a little bit of like a blame game where people just love to latch on to this kind of issue. But I have talked to a lot of hiring managers. And in this one Twitter thread I did a while ago or discussion that became a thread, why the hiring manager chimed in. And they said, I actually just hired someone who didn't have the years of experience. And I said, oh, like say more. And they said, Well, the way this person communicated their skills and experience, what they did their thinking behind it, et cetera, it blew other candidates with like four years of experience out of the water. And so I think as much as people love to say like, it's not fair that it's all says one to three is years of experience, how do I get experience of no one will give me a job to get experience. It's kind of like, the bar to stand out is really low. And I say this all the time, but it because it is. And if you can just communicate what you did, why you did it, what happened, what you were thinking at an appropriate level of detail. You are going to stand out like I guarantee it, and I wish I could like do a live stream and show you a lot of the portfolios and resumes I've received as a part of our hiring activities. I'm not going to do that. But like trust me when I say it is so disturbing and horrifying. I think that's an appropriate word. Like that is why I am so passionate about this business because these skills that we're teaching, it's not just about the act of making a resume, like this all boils down to communication, storytelling, critical thinking and if you can learn those at any stage of your career. It's going to help you excel once you are hired. So, I mean, I joke that we should just call this programme, the communication strategy lab or something. But maybe that's in two years.

**Jason Knight 40:17**

One day, but excellent advice, and again, maybe doubles down on the idea of a narrative and being able to own the discussion rather than being dragged into someone else's conversation.

S

**Sarah Doody 40:26**

Definitely. I mean, you know, like, how many discussions have you been in, in your own company with your own team and colleagues where you think, if we were just communicating more clearly, like it's not, we're not that far away from each other. It's just that we're not doing a good job at communicating, right? Or you have that stakeholder that pushes back on something, but then you realise, oh, the way we communicated, this probably wasn't clear. You've... research findings are another great example of where this all comes into play. So anyway, it's all about communication.

**Jason Knight 40:59**

100%, as so many things are, but speaking of communication, where can people find you after

this if they want to talk about UX careers or any other type of careers, I guess, from what we said earlier, job hunting in general, or see if you can still get a kid's clothing discount?

S

Sarah Doody 41:14

So I no longer work warehouse sales for Oshkosh B'Gosh. But that was one of my ...



Jason Knight 41:20

But you know a guy, right? Do you know a guy?

S

Sarah Doody 41:23

I know a guy. But yeah, the best way to learn about me is head to my personal website, <https://sarahdoody.com>. And then, for all things related to career job, search, resumes, interviewing, etc. That's all over at <https://careerstrategylab.com>, where we have a tonne of articles, as well as where you can learn more about this six month career incubator /career strategy lab.



Jason Knight 41:49

There you go. You heard the incubator chat here first. Well, that's been a fantastic chat. So obviously really grateful you could spare the time to hopefully inspire a few people to think about their job hunt differently. Obviously, we'll stay in touch but yeah, that's for now. Thanks for taking the time.

S

Sarah Doody 42:04

Thank you. This was awesome and I'm glad to have riffed on some marketing stuff as well.



Jason Knight 42:12

As always, thanks for listening. I hope you found the episode inspiring and insightful. If you did again, I can only encourage you to hop over to <https://oneknightinproduct.com>, check out some of my other fantastic guests, sign up to the mailing list or subscribe on your favourite podcast app and make sure you share with your friends so you and they can never miss another episode again. I'll be back soon with another inspiring guest but, as for now, thanks and good night.