

**CAROLINE:**

Hello, and welcome to Mind your Ps: The Purposeful Leader's Guide. We believe in all the Ps. People, purpose, planet, philanthropy. Today, we're speaking to Darina Garland, who is co-founder and Chief Experience Officer of Ooni. Ooni Pizza Oven, the best pizza at home. We're bringing in another P today, which is pizza. Darina and her husband, Kristian, have built their portable pizza oven company from humble beginnings in their backyard, to global success, and recognition. I think Wired magazine, amongst others, recently named them as the best pizza oven. I can attest to that. It is brilliant. Along the journey, they've stayed true to their core values, and let their personality, and people-focused approach shine through. Darina, it's great to have you here.

**DARINA:**

Oh. Thank you, Caroline. What a lovely introduction. It's nice to be here.

**CAROLINE:**

Listen, tell us all about Ooni. A little bit about Ooni, and your values. Where they came from? Why they're important to you?

**DARINA:**

Okay, I'll jump in. Kristian and I are married. We had another business before we started Ooni, which was called Suklaa. Suklaa means chocolate in Finnish. That was one of my first words I learned in Finnish, Kristian is from Finland. Nothing to do with the business, but just the word, I liked. Our work there was all about empowering those within the education systems to actually help build learning systems of the future. Often, young people aren't involved enough. Often teachers aren't involved enough in design and how education rolls out. They can be quite disconnected from why they got into teaching, in the first place, for example. What we learned through this, there is a reason for going here. What we learned from this is we met so many different organizations. We were in so many schools. We were in so many NGOs. We were doing global partnerships. It was an incredibly exciting business. Every time we went into a new school, you can tell instantly from the receptionist, what kind of culture the school has, or the business has.

I think you know what I mean. Where you're greeted with warmth, and you can see staff feeling empowered. A lot of it was just learning by being there, and going, "Oh, wow, this is a massive difference." We were often working in areas of social deprivation. Some real challenges, but there was really different cultures in those organizations. When we came to design Ooni, to build Ooni, the company, it was based on Kristian having a great idea for a problem that needed to be solved. Which is about himself getting great pizza at home. That's where the idea came from. When we started it, we particularly put culture at the heart, from the beginning. Culture and values have always been really key. The culture piece is about making sure that is as important as the product. We love work, and people spend a lot of time at work. We may as well make it a really amazing place to be. One of the reasons that we can do that, and I fully believe that it's beneficial to everyone, including the business.

In the bottom line, is to have a team who are truly engaged and empowered, like the great staff and some of the experiences at Suklaa. Who are building the company with you, and building the vision with you. Yes, I believe it's a key motivator for teams. There's just no loss. It's a complete win-win to have that, front and foremost, in your business. Yes, that's the purpose part.

**CAROLINE:**

Yes, and you talk about culture being as important as the product, having an engaged and empowered team. Why is it as important, do you think?

**DARINA:**

We're only as successful as our people. Kristian and I are incredibly humble, and rightly so. You mentioned that in the outset. We hadn't done this before. Neither of us were designers. We had a business that was Suklaa, that was a consultancy. It very much washed its face, and we did brilliant work. We weren't a global consumer brand. We've not done this before. Actually, many of our executive team, as brilliant as they are, truly brilliant, they hadn't done this either. We are building something that we haven't done before.

Therefore, we're incredibly reliant on great people we bring into the team, from every level, and they are fresh eyes on the business. That's something I say in our introduction. Very cheekily called history in the baking. When we're inducting people, I tell them through the story and say that, underlying that part, "When you join us, please look with fresh eyes, and tell us-- or ask questions. Why is it done this way? My last place we did this."

It might just be that we've not thought about it. I think people are everything. I also believe that-- it wasn't me that said it, I'm pretty sure it was Sir Tom Hunter that creating good jobs is one of the best things you can do for society. I think, "Yes, having a business that's good. It's having a team that are happy and engaged, is good for society, as well as just your organization." Yes, truly valuing people, and what they can bring, is part of our plan.

**CAROLINE:**

I love that. I just love that. Creating good jobs, the best thing you can do for society. I've never heard it put in that way before, Darina. I think it's great. You've got five values. Ambition, innovation, rigor, kindness, and passion. Obviously, we're interested in the P's, but kindness is in there. I don't think I've seen kindness as a value in many places. Why did you put that one in? What does it mean?

**DARINA:**

We are now 110 people in our business, which has grown pretty quickly in the last year, numbers-wise. For the first few years, we were really tiny. I think when we were about three years into the business, we did a values exercise with the seven of us, I think we were, in the team at that point. Looked at words that we already live by, and that we want to be associated by and finessed them down. This came from the team, the wider team, albeit a tiny one at the time. We came up with four of these. Rigor was brought in later. I have to say that rigor was one that was aspirational. It wasn't really a true value at the time. We were just like, "We're so lovely, like scale-up-y, and agile, and fun." We probably didn't have enough people in the team at that point who brought natural rigor and dot the I's and cross the T's. As we scaled, we realized that we really do have to be that. We're not a scale-up anymore. We are a global brand, and hopefully, we'll be a lot bigger in the future. I went through, and actually, kindness spoke to me.

I remember when it was suggested, it's like, "Well, I love that," but like, "Is it a bit wishy-washy?" I swear, it's absolutely the most powerful value that we've got. It covers everything, from interactions we have with our customers, to partners, to communications, and to thinking about competitors. It just is really important. Especially, just now, remember all working remotely, slack messages, our internal message system, they could be clipped, or not quite understood. We're always reminding people, "Was that kind?" Actually, we're not always having to, but people self-police and recognize that it is truly a lived value at Ooni. I absolutely love that. They're all really important. That was one I

was like, "Well that--" and people ask us about it quite a lot. It's probably the one that, during the interview process, candidates say that they love when they hear that in the job spec, or they see that in the job spec.

**CAROLINE:**

Yes, I spoke to Lise Hudson, who's the director at Dundee High School. She talked to me about their kindness agenda. I just love that. It's not something-- it just puts people at the heart of everything, doesn't it? I really understand where you're coming from there. Listen, you co-founded and created Ooni with Kristian, your husband. What's that experience like, Darina? We want a bit of warts and all here.

**DARINA:**

[laughs] That's so funny. Someone else asked me that recently. Since we had Suklaa, we basically always worked together. I don't really know much else. I have to say we're incredibly different. That's always been a real strength. I'd say, complimentary, in our skills, and the way that we look at business, but ultimately aligned on our purpose and vision. That's important. I think just being really different, and having different areas of responsibility, is the best thing. I can't remember who I was talking to, but somebody recently-- I have said, in the last year, because we are literally working at home, and being at home the whole time. It's been really busy. Although, we've had some great success. It's been a challenging year. [laughs] Kristian's like, he'll come into the bedroom-- he gets up at 5:30 AM. You probably know this about him, 5:30 AM at the latest. I don't usually get up until about 7:00 AM. He comes in at seven O'clock, with a full meeting agenda. I'm just still laying in bed, like, "What?" Full on, massive discussion because he's really awake. He's had time to think about this huge challenge of whatever it is that day.

I've had to say, "Can we not do that?" We've always had a bit of a rule that we don't speak about work after 9:00 PM very much because he goes to sleep very early and without any challenges. If I have any work conversations good or bad after 9:00 PM, my head is buzzing and I'm there. Things like we've got kids, so we try not to speak about work at the table and have our phones away and that kind of thing, which are just healthy rules. We have had a really good balance because we've always had young kids in the business like we also had Ooni and that's coloured our culture as well. What we hope the team can experience is work-life balance, so it's good. I don't know if you know about my brother is our chief sales officer, so we've got more than just family in the business. Some of our other execs have been lifelong family friends. There's other husband and wife teams in the business now and good best pals for life and all sorts. I think it's good because there's a shorthand in terms of purpose and-- What's the word?

It's definitely a shorthand that we get each other, but we also really, really meet and have brought in diversity of thought to make sure that we are challenging each other. Yes, it works. I think that it'll probably even easier when we're back in the office again to have a bit more division of life and work.

**CAROLINE:**

It's so interesting, because we're obviously, all currently during the pandemic working at home. Now, more than ever more people have been with their partners and their kids at home. In fact, I read an article this morning that said that the divorce rate has gone up [laughs] 300% in the last 12 months, which is pretty scary stuff. It's always really interesting when you've got a family dynamic

there. From a sneaky peek at your LinkedIn profile, I can see that throughout your career, you've always combined creativity with a passion for education. Does that follow through into Ooni?

**DARINA:**

Yes, definitely. Creativity is huge everywhere. We worked for-- Kristian and I met when we were both studying photography down in Kent. I was doing a Master's. We were studying a creative subject. Then, when we worked for our first company, Suklaa we had big contracts with this thing called creative partnerships. Which was basically on the back of a white paper written years ago now by people like Sir Ken Robinson and Jude Kelly from the Southbank Centre and Sir David Puttnam. Great leaders in creative thinking, who said that the education system isn't giving young people the things they need to thrive in real life. Real-life skills and creative thinking skills and divergent thinking skills are being almost eradicated by the way that the school system is set up. Really simply put, creativity is just problem-solving. There is all sorts of things that we've tried to sort out in schools where they would have like, "Oh, here's our creative space where we can go once a week and be creative." I'm like, "Oh, my goodness, can you see how constraining that is?" Here we go and today we're going to play with paint and then go back to real-life sitting in our desk.

It is really important to me, but I think it should flow through everything because it simply means that I have the mindset that you can solve a problem and that you can get better at things and you can approach a problem in a certain way. Innovation, you mentioned, is one of our core values and that ties it in quite a lot to that mindset. It's something I'm really passionate about and I think it has a place in business. Especially an entrepreneurial business like ours, where you constantly need to be adjusting and adapting and thinking on your feet. Yes, it should be a skill that we all nurture and believe that we're capable of.

**CAROLINE:**

How does the Ooni product of today compare with the original? Has there been lots of changes and iterations?

**DARINA:**

Yes. What are we, eight or nine years old? Kristian's really led this in terms of wanting to constantly iterate and innovate and act like a tech company. Usually, hardware product companies don't release as many products as us. We could have had the first Ooni for three years and done well with it. We were selling really effectively, but we've never rested on our laurels and are always pushing the boundaries. Because we've created this category of backyard pizza ovens, it's been ours to shape. Having that speed has been a key thing for the success of the business because we get a lot of interest every time there's a new product or press, a lot of new customers, and just incoming eyes on the business. That's been important, but yes, we've brought on a product team now who are incredibly brilliant. We have an engineering team. We have a product design team. We've just brought in an electronics engineer. There's lots of things we're doing to make sure that we're pushing and leading the way.

One of our goals actually was for-- The first oven was brilliant and not too complicated, but there was certainly-- We launched some Kickstarter and there was certainly geeky niche element to it, where people who could work with this tool we're all about it. To become the global brand and a mainstream brand that we want to be we need to make ovens as accessible as possible and as easy to use and intuitive. Which we definitely have done and are continuing to do. No, we're not stopping yet.

**CAROLINE:**

Yes, brilliant. Just on the topic of work experience, what would you see on your CV that your family are most and least proud of?

**DARINA:**

My own work experience? Things I've done? Jobs wise, you mean?

**CAROLINE:**

Yes?

**DARINA:**

I think they're really pros of everything, to be honest. I think having supportive parents is something I'm really lucky about. What was this like? Probably Ooni, because we clearly are able to create jobs and do things at the moment that have an impact, but our family really loved the events we did in Suklaa. We still have this thing called Oppi, which is our global learning festival that happens every year and my mum's been to that. Both my parents had backgrounds as teachers, they really, really care about the changes we've made in education. At least to facilitate good conversations. [laughs] I got fired from a job in a next-door hotel when I was young. I was working when I was 13 and I got fired as a waitress doing silver service and stuff, but it was because I said I was 14. It was just for straight-up lying. I don't know if they'd be proud. My mom knew I was working there, so she was probably quite proud. I would say that we've always worked. Kristian's background is his family have been entrepreneurial for a long time. Owned businesses locally in Finland from a metal-- Not metal welder, a bell foundry to a restaurant and service station, and his parents own the local supermarket.

Then the building that housed lots of other things. Working hard is probably in both of our blood. Yes, it's just part of who we are, but [crosstalk]--

**CAROLINE:**

I love that, sacked as a silver service waitress only because of your age, not because you dropped anything or--

**DARINA:**

Oh, well, yes, actually. They found out I was young. I'm sure they might have kept me if I was any good. I am incredibly clumsy, so it doesn't make me laugh, even now. I was a waitress as well in Glasgow when I was at uni and I would just-- [laughs] You have to open bottles of wine at the table. I would just splash it on the customers and then try and be endearing and still managed to get tips, but yes, not the best. Not the best there.

[laughter]

**CAROLINE:**

How would your friends describe you? Did you know? What three words do you think they'd use to describe you?

**DARINA:**

Oh, gosh. I guess, people-orientated. I'm really feeling the lockdown. I think everyone knows, but I talked to Paul, who's our joint coach for investors and he definitely would describe me as an extrovert in that way where I get my energy from people. Talkative, people orientated, and positive without a doubt. I'm positive to a fault, I'm sure.

**CAROLINE:**

Brilliant qualities. Let's talk a little bit about purpose. We talk about purposes, your company's reason for being beyond making money. The positive contribution that you bring to the world. I know that Ooni, you're really committed to supporting social and environmental causes with your partnerships. I think you've got partnerships with Eden Project, One Percent for the Planet, Slice Out Hunger. Just tell us a little bit about that.

**DARINA:**

Again, I think because we've had experience with another business before we started Ooni, we're in a good place to go, we could be a company for good and I think that we're not by ourselves here. There's so many companies in Scotland, particularly that we know about that had that similar mindset. We've always been motivated by more than profit. In fact, profit is kind of down the pecking order and stuff here then and as a lucky byproduct at the moment, enables us to continue to grow and make new jobs and to serve customers and all of that. Having a positive impact on people's lives and I believe it's actually we have to do it. We have to and companies should act in this way and there was a lot more we could do. I remember asking some of our team that had joined from really corporate backgrounds, imagine the big companies did the stuff that we're doing? Imagine they decided to give 1% of their revenue to social-environmental causes? That would be amazing and I definitely felt a difference.

When I was in Suklaa and I was doing, making a connection with people, found myself at dinners with ex-prime ministers and talking to celebrities. Wiggling your way into these great, lovely relationships with really important people. When Ooni started doing well we had a different seat at the table and we had a different voice and whether you like it or not, businesses have power. To both demonstrate good behaviours and to give back and put their money where their mouth is in literal things. It's something that's really important to us and when we first started it was just important to us but as we've grown we realize that it's incredibly important to the team. Especially when we do values-aligned hires, which is all we do now. It's crucial, essentially.

**CAROLINE:**

What you're saying is business have got the power and it's almost like there's a place in society for those that do more. I'm really interested in your comment about profit being a lucky by-product, which to some might find-- they might find alien? That I think what I'm hearing you saying, Darina, is that you put people and purpose first, and then the profit comes.

**DARINA:**

Absolutely and I stand by that. I think you'd be laughing if our CFO was on the call but also he really cares. There's revenue is, what is it? Vanity and profit, sanity, and all of those things. Reports is important and we haven't been a rescue business in the sense that we've always been profitable. Which is incredible and we know that we're lucky because we started on Kickstarter, we had money upfront and interest upfront and we've always grown being in demand. It's from a privileged position of having profits in the first place and it's enabled us to grow but it's never been the gauging way. We started off with a gem of an idea and it's like, "Wow, this is incredible. Kristian's created

this product that's really special. We love it, other people love it, tested the market. Other people loved it. We got loads of press and their hearts and mind is won over by this amazing tool." Then it's grown from there. It's much more about enabling people to have great pizza at home and seeing the joy that comes from the customers. Then I definitely get my text from the teams' feedback and how our own team are growing and thriving and engaging and coming up with ideas and helping shape the business.

That's usually, I don't know, motivating for me. There's loads of reasons that we want to keep on going and going in this direction but there's way more than profit. In fact, I think if we chased that we would have just fizzled out ages ago. I really do. For example, one thing we could have done is and we still could do is very, very cheap products because we know people will buy them but that's not good for the brands and it might be a flash in the pan whereas we were really trying to build a company to last and to be a global brand that's authentically good.

**CAROLINE:**

You recently made the decision to increase your employees' wages. Speak to us a little bit about that. What led to that decision? Why was that important to you? What did you do?

**DARINA:**

We've been back and forth about, I mentioned this already, Caroline, about motivation and I'm obsessed with what people get from being at work and we constantly talk to the team about that. Not constantly but often checking about what drives them. I'm really inspired by Dan Peng's work. I know that other people have done similar things about they want autonomy. They want mastery and they want to be, what was it? Empowered, autonomy, mastery, a few things, anyway. Interest in what drives people. The reason I talk about this is because we've been like, "Should we do bonuses? How does bonus culture work?" We want to have a team that celebrates in their success if any and is growing with us. That's without a doubt and we've been back and forth and we talked to our board and talked to many businesses about it. A few of our team have come from a corporate background where the bonus culture was a norm. Essentially, everyone has said that it feels it doesn't work and that's because that kind of care doesn't make people work harder.

In fact, it can lead to disillusionment. We're often thinking about how we can reward our team properly and in a meaningful way. One thing we've always done is to have a passion fund. Passion is probably my favorite value and that is basically £500 a year to spend on something they really care about something for them that they're passionate about. It's an odd one because £500 is significant money but not masses but it's something you have to spend on yourself. It make people think and there's been some brilliant stuff that people have got over the years. Thinking about rewarding the team what we've landed on, at least for this year. We had really a figure of growth last year. It was incredibly busy and people worked super hard and every year we've had a theme, a working theme for our focus. Two ago it was focus actually. That meant getting people into positions where they really did own it. They owned a channel and they knew that this is my part of the puzzle because prior to that we were quite stocked up in what people do. Lots of people did lots of different things. That was part of it. The next year, so 2020 our focus was being a world-class team.

How do world-class teams operate? How can we level up from being really great to being world-class in our behavior? Then this year our theme is leveling up. What that means is we've scaled so quickly. We've probably accelerated our growth about three or four years faster than we planned, which has been so-- It was already ambitious but it's incredible and to commemorate that at Christmas we announced to everyone that we were going to raise the base point salary to £25,000. Previously

some of the opening salaries have been \$19,000. Not usual for a graduate role, for example, but we wanted to do that. A very long answer because we think that that having a decent salary is more beneficial for individual's lives. They can do more if they have that take-home salary in terms of paying mortgages or life decisions. Everybody else on the business who was on more than 25 went up by 10%. It was a leveling up of salaries and our investment in people across the board. It was something we're really proud of.

I was talking to a potential candidate for a role who worked from London in a really big organization and told him about this. He was just like, "Wow, our starting salaries are \$20,000 in London. How can you do that?" "Why not? Why can't we?" Something that the exec team talked about. I think it's Kristian and Andrew who had the idea originally and it's gone down very well to the team attitude. It just means that anyone in our role hopefully feels valued from the beginning and we can continue to scale with them

**CAROLINE:**

That's brilliant. What's the feedback been from the team on that?

**DARINA:**

Very positive. We've hired a lot of people in customer experience or Ooni experience team, they're called. Naturally, those opening roles would be lower in the banding but been able to bring people on and say straight off the bat, "We're investing this in you." I think has been very positive and we've had some people who are higher up in terms of pay who've come and said, "I'm so proud to be part of a company that thinks about the gap between the top and the bottom end and tries to narrow that." It's been positive, I can safely say across the board. It's something that people can say we're putting our money where our mouth. We could always do more but it's important to us.

**CAROLINE:**

Your passion fund. I love that. What sorts of things do the team use it for? Is it personal hobbies or is it charities?

**DARINA:**

It's always hobbies or it's individual things. Certainly what people can't use it for is your weekly task or shop, things you would have to do normally. It should be something specifically about passion for them. For example, it could be that they're really into specific foods and they want to get really posh ingredients and have an amazing dinner or visit the best restaurant in Spain and they often do so we could travel. Lots of trips have happened. People going to New York baseball games with their partners, people doing yoga retreats, buying electric bikes. Quite a lot of sports stuff. What else? Camping. Somebody bought a puppy.

[laughter]

We think people have bought puppies this year. It's just been brilliant to see, and then there's a thread on our Slack channel where they share the things that got up to the passion fund. Yes, we're really, really keen to hire people who are passionate about stuff and stuff outside work. It's a weird one. You can tell. I'm sure if you were to interview him but straight away, we asked, "What are you passionate about outside work?" People light up and that's the kind of thing we want to encourage as well is to like, we're hiding the whole person. So don't-- Even if you're busy at work, keep going with the things you care about and actually invest their time in them.

**CAROLINE:**

Yes. The passion fund, brilliant. I'm going to take that back to our team actually.

**DARINA:**

That's grateful.

**CAROLINE:**

Wait, we can't ignore the fact that you've gone from-- I think you said 50 to 110 staff. Have you recruited them all online?

**DARINA:**

Yes, yes. It's mental. I think, again, this is good and it speaks the importance of culture because culture is infectious and the right-- The positive sense of infection. That it's not just about us doing this onboarding now. Our team onboard their team members in really brilliant ways. I can't believe how successful it has been we've literally got half the team that we haven't met in real life, but they feel like part of the team. We've-- Yes. The feedback from all of the new start ups has been like, "Wow, we're so excited to be here, and what a positive culture and we feel lucky to be part of it". Starting off on that footing is really good. When we talk to individuals who join the team, we're like, "We need you to continue this. You won't be the new ones for a very long time if we keep going this direction. Please, promote a positive culture for everyone in your interactions. Be open, and feedback when things aren't good". Making that culture of feedback the norm and all of those kinds of things.

I'm surprised because as I've mentioned, that they absolutely love people, and there have been things we've lost this year in terms of those interactions are informal, and the coffee-making moments and all of that we've gone out of our way to make sure that we are making those happen. There's a random coffee generator on, that's announced every week on Monday, where people are paired and have a coffee. Someone in Austin with someone who's working in Bangkok for us, [laughs] for example. All sorts of random coffees and then trying to like most people to keep the social elements going even if the folks are remote. It surprised even me. I think it's been incredibly successful considering we haven't met. I don't think I would have ever said, "Oh, you should hire someone without meeting them in real life before." So, who knows what can happen.

**CAROLINE:**

Well, listen, nowhere near your numbers, but the whole of my team was recruited online because we always [crosstalk] connected me. Of course, it's difficult, and I suppose in old worlds, who on earth would do that? Actually, it's been brilliant. We've had to build relationships online. We use Slack as well, and I think sometimes you're right. It can be-- You need to be careful on Slack, and that kindness element is really important. That's good. Listen, there's one thing that I admired about you, among many Darina, and it's one of our values is about being brave, and just asking-- I want to talk to you just a little bit about Louis Theodore, Dolly Parton, Tom Kitchin, Phil Schofield, all those amazing celebs who are endorsing and buying your product, how did you make that happen?

**DARINA:**

Well, it is being overly familiar is definitely something I learned quite early in my career, and probably because I just genuinely love people. I think if that comes across, and when you make a connection with someone, you're that person rather than like, "Oh, can you do this for me over

here?" Like, "Please do this for me, or I've got a really specific request straight off the bat." It can be a little bit too much, basically. I've mentioned our learning festival Oppi and in the first year of it, we did this huge festival that was like 1,000 people. We had prime ministers and we had will.i.am's team, and we had NASA Space Station involved, and we had-- It was just brilliant. Angry Birds all playing that game. Just so many different, brilliant people involved. `It was just from being open and authentic and going "We love what you're doing." They asked at that point, "If there's something that's already on YouTube or that's in your regular talk, don't do it. Give us the thing that you're really struggling with. Create something new and use this audience in a much more active way, then it's like usually like a stage on the stage."

Anyway, I digress but our kind of skill set, called DNI, who run Suklaa mostly, we're just that type of person who-- Or the type of people who can go out and be like, "Hey, we love you. Let's be friends." That's something I've taken into Ooni and I've tried to sprinkle across the team. Everyone is accessible, and if you love someone, and if you're in love and impressed by somebody, you should tell them and make a connection with them. That's been part of our culture for a long time. I didn't mention Barack Obama. He's also got an Ooni. That is one of my ultimate dreams come true. Dolly Parton, she's got four. That first bit all came from basically an idea we had which was-- At the start of the pandemic, everyone stuck at home. We ran this tiny campaign-- an internal campaign called stars stuck at home. Which was-- Usually people are hard to get hold off because there's agents involved. If we were to reach out as a brand to say, "Oh, we'd love to get so and so an oven," and be like, "What is their expectations? Do you want them to do social media or da, da, da or there's a massive fee involved?"

Our philosophy has always been-- I don't really think that paid social influence is that useful, because it's not always-- it's not authentic half the time. Sometimes it can be but we've never really done much of that at all. We've always been on the mindset of like, "Give people we admire products and if they cover us, they cover us." That was exactly they was stars stuck at home, is to go cure the people that like culturally aligned, values-aligned, that we think are a kick-ass, and let's reach out to them, and see if they want an Ooni?" That was basically it. "You're bored at home too, and we'd love-- We are very impressed by you. We'd love you to have a product." It really did work. Just reach out and then with a new ask, right? There's lots of people there, who'll never make social media content. Beyonce, she's never gonna make any ad for us, but [laughs] she's got an Ooni. It's mind-blowing. People that you think are great, reach out to them and tell them it's my responsibility.

**CAROLINE:**

I just love it. Honestly, I've taken your advice, and I'm using it with my own stuff and people that I admire and really reach out to them. I've got a little post-it note on my desk that says, "Just ask."

**DARINA:**

Oh, amazing.

**CAROLINE:**

Honestly, for weeks, I was trying to get someone actually to come on as a podcast guest. I was like, "Oh, I don't want to ask. Don't want to ask". Just that whole philosophy of-- What's the worst that can happen, really?

**DARINA:**

Absolutely. People really don't say no as well, if you are nice. That's part of their reaching out to get help or in terms of giving away ovens and making friends. Our project is basically now called operation make friends which is kind of how we want to do all partnerships. In terms of business help, it's been incredibly helpful to-- We're, I'd like to say we are humble and humble for a reason. If there's anyone amazing, or that company is smashing it, just ask and everyone will say yes around the world. Like, "Yes, what do you need? Here's our CFO, or here's our CEO or let's talk." It's even easier during this kind of Zoom age, isn't it? Because we don't have to travel.

**CAROLINE:**

Absolutely, absolutely. Darina, we really want to encourage other business leaders, charity leaders to include purpose, and people in purpose right up there, right up the top. I've worked in a corporate social responsibility charity area for years, and never more so than now do I hear people talk about this Which is amazing because five years ago, there was very few that you could pick out and see, wow, they're leading with people in purpose. Which results in as you've described, a brilliant culture, massive growth for the company, just benefits all around. Are there any other individuals and companies that you think do this well, and what do they do?

**DARINA:**

Oh, there's loads. Wonderfully, there's loads in Scotland. I'm part of a-- like started being what's called Scale-Up Scotland, which was an initiative run by Entrepreneurial Scotland and the Hunter Foundation. That was great. We met so many, I think there's about 14 companies in it. All of them are pretty much purpose-led. Beauty Kitchen springs the mind they do some incredibly, beautiful sustainable products that are completely 1% of the planet and B Corp Blades or B Corp is an interesting tool and platform that we're going through as well and want to be certified for.

Obviously, there's companies like Netflix for sure, up there at the top of leading on a global scale. BrewDog, you mentioned amazing stuff, where they're incredibly political, I think in a good way. Make sure that they jump on things and but ultimately have huge sustainability goals at the heart now and are really leaning into that. Loads and loads, I think the good thing is you say, is that we're not by ourselves now. My point about why didn't big companies not do more to do good? Because how easy is it for us to make that decision? The answer I got was because their structure is so complicated that they actually can't and the way that their shareholders are. You're receiving more younger companies really believe in these things and, and start from the beginning. That's an authentic part of their business, or charity goal. You must be much more up-to-date than an I on it. In terms of what team members want, they do want those purpose-led companies.

If you want to retain and attract talented people, and it's a no-brainer.

**CAROLINE:**

Absolutely. Finally, Darina now what parting words of wisdom would you have for those businesses who they're maybe just going through an evolving journey, and that's a real challenge for people as we know, right now. It's right, slap bang in the middle of a global pandemic, second lockdown hopefully some light at the end of the tunnel with the viruses, sorry, with the-

**DARINA:**

Vaccines.

**CAROLINE:**

-vaccines [laughs], virus, vaccines. The vaccines, what advice would you give to those organizations who've not quite figured this stuff out yet?

**DARINA:**

Oh, I think to make sure that you spend time looking at what your values are and what your purpose is, because you should be able to align your whole strategy around it. For us, it's given us a lot of clarity. I say to people when I do the onboarding, actually in a baking session that the only hiring mistakes, I believe we make are when we haven't used our values as a key part of that. We've known that they're not quite our values, but their knowledge is so good and their experience to date is so good. I sustain that they're not passionate because if we've got a passion in spades, but we don't have this particular part of it and it's just not worked out. Those few teams that we've gone with that more sensible, it's been rather than the gut and their values alignment. I would say really hone in on what they are for you and they should be real, not aspirational. They should be things that you're already doing that are really core to you, and your beliefs, and your founding team beliefs.

Then hire and live by them. They shouldn't be plaques on the wall. They should be things that we have values awards every year. Then people nominate when they see their fellow team members doing things. Throughout the year, put in values, nominations, in their feedback. It's really part of our comms and our culture all the time. Hire by them and live by them and then you'll have a really strong team.

**CAROLINE:**

Brilliant. Well, listen, some of the key things you've talked about. We're obviously all about Mind your Ps, we just want to really inspire people and leaders to think about this stuff. Some of the bits that you talked about Darina, they were culture is important as the product., engaged in empowered teams, creating good jobs is the best thing you can do for society. I think we'll be pulling that one it was a great pull. Kindnesses is a value-

**DARINA:**

You definitely have to, quote Sir Tom Hunter there because I'm pretty sure that's his.

[laughter]

I love it. I think it's true. It's really true.

**CAROLINE:**

Profit's are lucky by-product for all the other things that you've put in place and businesses have got the power to give back. Your passion funds, I think we've got power, passion, and pizza coming from you today.

[giggling]

**DARINA:**

People too.

**CAROLINE:**

People, absolutely. The most important question of the day is should you have pineapple on your pizza?

**DARINA:**

Well, we have made a lot of material around this. You mentioned Lou [unintelligible 00:45:10] you know that he starred in our campaign around this controversial subject. I couldn't possibly comment. It's too controversial.

**CAROLINE:**

We just need to watch. We just need to watch that [crosstalk]

**DARINA:**

Just Google pineapple and pizza. I'll fix it. I'll give it to you and you can check it out. It makes me laugh so much how controversial it is so we try to play on that. The truth is, it's not for me, but I wouldn't judge.

[laughter]

**CAROLINE:**

If our listeners want to follow your journey, where can they find you?

**DARINA:**

Oh, well, we're on Instagram as @OoniHQ is probably the best place. We have a Facebook community, which is again, it called Ooni Community and that's absolutely thriving and lots of chat there. Obviously on our website, because we're creating more and more content all the time and have lots of exciting pizza lessons and masterclasses and stuff coming so yes. Ooni.com.

**CAROLINE:**

Brilliant. Darina, it's been an absolute pleasure. Thanks for being a guest.

**DARINA:**

Thank you so much, Caroline. I loved all your, all the Ps that's excellent to hear, and well done on your journey so far and smashing it.

**CAROLINE:**

Brilliant. Thank you.

**DARINA:**

Thank you so much. Thank you.