

**EPISODE 72**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:35.3] CS:** Hello, welcome back to another episode of the Creative Empire podcast. I'm joined by Reina Pomeroy, and today our guest is Holly Patton Olsen of Perfectly Posh Events in Seattle. We're so excited to talk to her, because if you guys haven't noticed, we don't have too many guests from Seattle or the west coast. We're trying to fix that, but for some reason, you guys are all on the east coast.

We're really excited to talk to Holly today, because she is a wedding planner, but she's taken a little bit of a different approach to her in-person meetings, and I think you guys will start to see what we mean in the best way possible. Holly, would you mind just giving us a little bit of a background? How did you get into wedding planning, why do you love it so much, and what makes you different from other wedding planners?

**[0:01:21.1] HP:** Yeah, well thank you ladies, first of all, for having me out here to represent the west coast for you. I have been doing wedding planning for eight years now, and I got into doing it first coming from a corporate event background, and I actually grew up in the event industry here in Seattle. My dad has a business in the industry. Not in planning though, and so I saw kind of how it was to come in as a vendor working under planners, and that kind of instilled a love of events at a very young age.

I went into corporate events, studied business in college, kind of thought that was the direction I'd go, and eight years ago kind of made the swing over to weddings. I love weddings, and I

definitely think that's kind of where I'm going to stay for the foreseeable future. In terms of kind of what makes me different. When I started my company, I wanted it to be something beyond just myself. I wanted to have a team of people with me. I didn't want to be a one woman show, and so I started building a team of planners really early on, which was something that wasn't as common in Seattle.

In my market, out here at the time, it was a lot of one or two planner teams, and so I started to build a team, and now I have six planners under me, plus our day of assistance. I really believe that more heads are better than one, so we work together on a regular basis, collaborating with each other, and just helping to empower each other with our own individual weddings.

Then along with that, too, I helped to build a network of wedding planners in Seattle who all own their own businesses. There are 30 of us in this really close-knit group, and we support each other, we share calendars with each other so we can refer business back and forth, we share candid feedback on vendors, and the problems that we're going through as boss ladies when in on our wedding planning businesses.

That has really helped to build a community here of wedding planners in Seattle, and yeah, that's something I love, is a community

**[0:03:21.0] RP:** I adore that. I used to be a wedding planner before I had this business, and I found it to be really like, a lonely place. What you described is the complete opposite. That's exactly what I wanted. I wanted to be able to refer people, and to meet people, and collaborate, and have better ideas, and I felt like every door that I tried to go through was closed to me because I was new. I started probably around the time that you did, and burned out quickly because of — that was one of the reasons.

I loved the creative stuff, but without a lot of the collaboration with other people who did the same thing as me, it's really hard to do it. I really appreciate that you're leading that movement and kind of being a collaborative person in your industry.

**[0:04:03.2] HP:** Yeah, it's lonely if you do it by yourself. I would say now, some of my best friends are actually other wedding planners. It's really been a great support net to have and a good friend group to build.

**[0:04:15.3] CS:** What would you say is the biggest benefit of being — I know this is totally different than what we talked about before we went on air, guys. As a team member, you know, coming into a team of wedding planners, what's the biggest benefit there, because so many people are like, "I'm just going to start my own wedding planning business. I'm going to go out on my own, I'm going to try it all from scratch."

Why would somebody choose to do that, and then why do you think somebody might choose to work with a more experienced planner and come up through the ranks, that kind of thing?

**[0:04:43.0] HP:** That's a really great question, and I ask myself that frequently, actually. I'm wondering if any of my girls will eventually leave and go do their own thing, and I support them in whatever decision they make.

I'm fortunate that the very first planner I ever brought on is still with me, and actually everybody who is with me to this day has stayed through the years. I built a really great team, and I think the thing is we kind of are a family. We work together, we bounce ideas off each other, and I brought people on who really embrace that kind of team work mentality, and I think they might be kind of lonely if they went off and did their own thing.

I also encourage them to kind of be their own leaders and their own bosses. Even though they're with my company, each of them has their own style and has their own type of clients that they like to work with, and they have that freedom to kind of pick and choose which clients they have. It's also kind of nice when you work for a company too, as they don't have the stresses that I have as the business owner. They don't have to deal with the taxes, and you know, all that kind of stuff that goes into running your own business.

They get to focus on the weddings, focus on the couples, do the creative stuff that they love, and the logistical things and timelines and whatnot that they enjoy doing, without having to worry about the business side of it. They leave all the sales, and contracts, and taxes, and

bookkeeping to me. I think that's kind of an appealing thing. For my team at least, that's what they said.

**[0:06:09.7] CS:** That's awesome.

**[0:06:10.5] HP:** It's like Redfin of the wedding industry. I don't know if you guys have Redfin out there. It's kind of a similar model. I like that.

**[0:06:18.1] CS:** I don't know what Redfin is.

**[0:06:19.7] RP:** It's a really cool real estate model, you should check it out.

**[0:06:22.4] CS:** Okay.

**[0:06:23.1] RP:** It's really popular. One of the things that we were really excited to talk to you about, Holly, is that well, first of all, you look awesome in our video chat right now, but you've been renting your clothes for the past couple of years, and one of the things that we wanted to talk to our audience about is how you should present yourself as a professional when you do in-person meetings.

Tell us why you decided to choose the path that you're on now, and any tips or tricks you have in doing in-person meetings?

**[0:06:53.4] HP:** Yeah. Well, the renting the clothes thing actually came about not — I wasn't thinking of it really from a professional standpoint, it was more I had an online shopping addiction, and any time I was stressed out with work, I would go on to Nordstrom and buy something, and probably wasn't the best thing for my pocket books.

I discovered Le Tote two years ago, just over two years ago, and it's an online rental thing where I can rent clothes. I get five different pieces delivered to me almost weekly, and I instantly fell in love with it, because I realized how I could have a different outfit every time a couple met with me. I have to — I do a lot of in-person meetings, I attend a lot of industry events, and it's a very visual, creative industry, so people expect me to look good, look my best.

My brand is very much geared towards stylish weddings. If the brand is geared towards stylish weddings, then I should be dressed stylishly as well. By renting my clothes, I was able to have just a continuing rotating wardrobe without having to spend all the money that I had been spending before.

By putting rules in place for myself, I only allow myself now to purchase one item a quarter, and it has to be something that I need. Like a new pair of jeans, or a new winter coat, or something like that, and then everything else is completely either rented, or it's been given to me as a gift from my mom.

Yeah, that's kind of just changed my outlook in terms of my wardrobe, and also in terms of having those in-person meetings. Just constantly having a fresh appearance and being able to dabble with fashion trends without having to fully commit to them as well has been kind of a fun thing, too.

One thing that's really important, I always talk to my team about, is when you're having a meeting, especially like a new client meeting, and you're meeting them for the very first time. People almost have their kind of opinion of you within the first few seconds of meeting you. It's really horrible to say, but it really truly is based on your appearance, because within the first few seconds, if you look like a slob, they're going to assume that you don't have your stuff together and you aren't going to be able to plan their wedding.

If you don't have good sense of style, then how are you going to make their wedding look good? Not trying to be vain or anything like that with appearance, but just having a professional put-together look, hair's done, your clothes are clean, and not wrinkled with lint all over them type thing is really key, and you don't have to spend a ton of money.

I know one of my planners, she always has the cutest outfits and I love them. She is a bargain shopper, she loves to go to like Buffalo Exchange. I don't know if you guys have that, but it's kind of like a store where people can sell their gently used clothes, and she can go buy them. Like a step up from the Goodwill type situation. It's nicer quality. They have quality control check that they go through.

Yeah, her stuff is super cute, but she does it for like — she buys a dress and it cost like \$5, so I applaud her for that and yeah.

**[0:10:03.1] CS:** How has showing up as professional — how do you think it changes your mindset when you go into a client meeting to go through that added effort of putting on makeup, and doing your hair, and just, you know, getting out of the yoga pants?

**[0:10:18.8] HP:** Yeah, for sure. Well, I actually hate getting ready. I wish I had a professional hair and makeup team and we could do it every morning. I'm kind of a last-minute procrastinator in terms of getting ready for the day.

I can say that when I am, you know, hair is done, makeup is done, I'm in a cute new outfit, something that fits me well and flatters me, I feel confident. I go into a meeting feeling confident, and especially if you're trying to sell your service to someone, or your product, you want to be confident in that meeting. Just kind of feeling good in your own skin, as well as the clothes that you have on, I think really can help lend itself to that confidence.

One thing that I often kind of will talk to people about, too, will be your body language going into it, too. It's not just what you're wearing. They first walk into the room, are you standing up so you can greet them, or are you sitting down? Often, it's better to be standing, because then they can fully see you. They can see your hands, and hands are a big factor in kind of building trust with somebody. If they can see your hands, they feel like they are comforted and they know that you're not going to attack them.

It kind of goes back to the old primitive days of the man, caveman type thing, but where somebody might have a weapon in their hand, and if they're hiding it behind their back, they could attack you. Having your hands hidden sends an unconscious signal to the brain that you could be dangerous. I always tell my girls to stand up, have their hands out, put them out to shake the person's hand, and that kind of gives that unconscious thing of, "I'm safe, I'm your friend," kind of communications.

**[0:11:54.5] CS:** How did you learn so much about body language?

**[0:11:57.5] HP:** I just studied it. I found it very fascinating, and I'm just constantly reading about it, and so it's from quite a variety of sources and stuff. It's something that I find really intriguing is how within a few seconds, because I had studied marketing in college, and we learned how people make an opinion on a brand within just a few split seconds of being exposed to their marketing and their branding.

I was like, "How can the mind make decisions that quickly on something? That's not fair, they haven't had the time to give their sales pitch or say what's awesome about them yet." I just kind of noticed, picked up on it, and studied it for a bit, but I'm certainly not a body language expert by any means, but I think kind of putting those things into play doesn't hurt at least.

**[0:12:45.2] RP:** I love the kind of direction we're going with this conversation. If somebody is newer at the in-person sales conversation, and she's completely nervous and is kind of like, "I don't know what to do, and I don't even know what to say," and maybe she's scheduled her first couple, what kind of advice would you give her? Or could you run through maybe a typical meeting or something like that to give tips?

**[0:13:09.4] HP:** Yeah, definitely, I always tell my girls to just be yourself. It's kind of — you feel a little self-conscious. I think I need to fit into this mold of this wedding planner, or this certain kind of creative, and if you trust yourself and you show your personality, people will love that. They're going to be hiring you, basically, for you.

You want to find couples or clients who mesh well with your personality. Show your personality, but also be professional while you do it, too. If I goof up during the meeting, which happens all the time, just kind of laugh at myself and make a joke of it about it and it kind of helps things.

When going into like a new client meeting, usually what we — kind of how we structure it is we first have the couple talk about themselves so we can learn about them, and we can kind of put them at ease, too, because they are feeling nervous as well. If people talk about themselves, basically, everyone can talk about themselves, you feel a little bit more comfortable with that kind of thing.

We start off, we just talk about like, “Where did you guys come from? What did you do over the weekend?” Start off just that kind of chit-chat, and move and progress into kind of telling us their love story, and then telling us about getting into the details about their wedding, to that type of stuff.

Then we progress into talking to them about our services, and kind of what we do and what we offer. Often times, couples, we’ll ask questions throughout this time. Things that are kind of leading towards things that we would like them to say, in the sense that we often ask what are your priorities for the day. We want couples who their priority is that their friends and family have a great time, and they socialize with them, and that’s the type of couple that we want. So if that’s the case, we jump in at that point and tell them kind of what a heartbeat is of our company, and how its people, and it’s not — the getting featured in magazines is not like our priority with every wedding. It’s more that their friends and family have a fabulous time celebrating with them.

We have a set of questions that we ask. We definitely don’t go down the list. We try to keep it more natural flowing conversation.

**[0:15:15.9] RP:** Do you typically like have a questionnaire before you meet with them, or is it whoever calls to setup a meeting gets one?

**[0:15:26.2] HP:** Yeah, that’s a good question. We actually changed that this past year. We found that we were getting a ton of inquiries, and we would meet with people only to find out during the meeting that it just wasn’t going to be a good fit for whatever reason. We’ve always shared our pricing information online, as well as in a document that they receive when they very first reach out, because we want to be very transparent with pricing. We don’t want people to come in, and then find out it’s several thousand dollars more than what they can afford and shatter their hopes and dreams.

I try to be clear without a front, but even with that, sometimes people don’t fully understand how a wedding budget works, or how kind of the decisions that they’ve made for their wedding so far. If they’re bringing us in halfway through or near the end, can affect if we’re going to be a good



match or not. We started asking after they inquire, a few, there's like five questions that we send back to ask to kind of set up that initial consultation.

It really helps us weed out if people are going to be a good fit or not. If they're not going to be a good fit, then I'm able to use that planner group that I talked about to where I can go on and see who else is available and who I think might be a good fit for the person.

Our goal is that we just line people up with the best planner for their wedding day, not necessarily that it has to be that we have to book every single person that comes through the door. The questionnaire helps, but it's certainly not a very long questionnaire, and it just kind of gives us those great qualifying answers.

**[0:16:53.7] CS:** Yeah, I love having a questionnaire. I think it helps you qualify your leads to figure out if they're good, no matter what business you're in, right? Figuring out if they're good leads, and then if they are good leads, why are they good leads? They're not, why are they not? How do you use that to improve your client process, or your potential client process? I'm really glad you guys are doing that.

If you listeners out there aren't doing some kind of questionnaire or application first, it sounds counter intuitive, like it sounds like you should get less leads, because you have an application and there's this extra step that you have to take, but what I found when I put an application on my website is, in addition to filtering out the people that weren't a good fit for whatever service they were inquiring about, more people wanted to work with me because they saw it as like — I don't want to say it was like a prestigious thing, but it's almost like you're applying. You don't really know if you're going to get it or not.

I think maybe just that human interest was piqued, and I found that I had a lot more applications coming through my door, and better leads that were more likely to result in some kind of conversion. That's really interesting that you do have that questionnaire process ahead of time. What are some other things that you're able to look at and figure out if this is a good fit or not? Is it just the energy? Was it just the pre-consult, or are there other things that you're looking for?

Maybe like how they get along with you in your consultation, or how they get along together as a couple? What are some things that, as a new planner, I might be looking at and say, “This is a red flag, I probably don’t want to put my time and energy into working with this couple?”

[BREAK]

**[0:18:34.2] CS:** How would it feel if someone laid out a business plan, a road map, or some kind of strategy that would get you started and get you closer to the goals that you dream of accomplishing in your business? Well, Reina and I actually have done this. All you have to do to get this totally free resource is head to [creativeempire.co](http://creativeempire.co) and click on free work book. We will deliver to you 50 of our most potent, powerful strategies and proven tactics to getting our businesses visible, booked, and profitable.

If you would like to have this in your business for totally free, you can grab that at [creativeempire.co](http://creativeempire.co). We’ll see you there.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:19:18.2] HP:** Yeah, we definitely try to make sure that we’re a good personality mesh. There are some people who come in who are probably perfectly sweet, nice people, who would have a wonderful wedding, but if they don’t seem to vibe well off me, or me off them, we’re not going to get along well, especially when emotions are running high when we get closer to a wedding.

I try to pride myself in being able to flex and bend to kind of meet different people where they are. There’s just certain personalities that just don’t fit with us. We try to communicate our personality during this time as well, so that way if they don’t feel like we’re going to be a good fit, they can go on their merry way, too.

One thing, for example, is we, with our timeline, I’m not a stickler. Like sticking exactly to the time. We actually go with more of a natural flow. I don’t even wear a watch on a wedding day, which scares people sometimes, but I just read the vibe in the room and that’s how we go with the flow of the event, and it often times ends up being exactly on schedule, but it’s just a fluke with that.

So we explain that to our couples during the meeting, because if the couple is really adamant about things being on time, the groom is going to wear a watch, he's going to have a copy of the timeline in his suit, and he's going to be checking it throughout the day, it's not going to be a good couple for us at all. But that might be an excellent couple for a different planner who's super type-A, sticks to the timeline.

So we just try to communicate that, and that's just one example of something that we can know right off the bat if we're going to be a good fit or not. There's other red flags that we found over the years that when we can see them in a meeting we know, okay this person is not going to be a good fit, and then we kindly at the end, I usually will send them a recommendation of another planner who I do think will be an excellent fit for them, and just decline to give them a proposal at that point.

So it's hard when you're starting out to know what red flags are going to be your red flags, because mine aren't necessarily going to be the exact same as yours. I've turned down couples that have gone to my friends before, and they have been dream couples for those other planners.

So I would first think about yourself, and if you were working on a team project with somebody, and working really closely with emotions high, because people's emotions come out around their wedding, what are some characteristics that work well for you to work with that person as a team, and write those out. How are you on a team? Are you normally the leader, or are you the follower? Write out those things, and maybe think back to your school days of when you did a school project. Which team members did you like, which team members did you not like?

Maybe use that to help you decide if somebody is going to be a good fit with you, because you are going to be working as a team with the couple. Even if they say they're going to hand most the stuff off to the planner, they're still involved in the process, so you need to make sure that you can be a good team.

**[0:22:13.7] CS:** Yeah, one of the red flags that always tips me off, and as I've worked with more people on their businesses, I see it's a trend. Not just in mine, obviously, but across the board.

So for those of you out there that are like, “Okay, what are some universal things?” I think as soon as I say this you’re going to be like, “Oh yeah.” When people are asking about money right off the bat, that really turns me off.

It’s not because I offer an expensive luxury service like wedding planning, but because if that’s their first concern, not the service being completed, or us reaching their goal together, or whatever that is. I don’t know why, but it really rubs me the wrong way. I understand that we have budgets, and that’s why I have payment plans and things like that for people, but when people ask about money — and I’ve taken on probably two people that I felt bad for and I wanted to help them, but that was a huge red flag, and it turned out the whole way through to be a nightmare client for me, because I don’t know, that just can’t be our first priority.

Have you had to deal with anything where you have to fire a client, or you had red flags like that, but you kept going because of a certain reason or something like that? This happens a lot with new wedding clients, which is why I’m wondering.

**[0:23:31.9] HP:** Yeah, so on the thing with money, we have a hard rule that if anyone tries to negotiate the price of our services, we won’t work with them. So I have politely declined at that point. If we give them a proposal and they come back and I say, “I’m sorry,” that’s what it is. We also have payment plans to make it easy for people, but I found that if people negotiate on your service, they aren’t valuing the work that you’re doing, and in the end, they’re not going to be happy, even if you give them the money off that they wanted.

They still aren’t valuing you at what your real worth is, and I think that’s a disservice to you from the very beginning. So that’s our hard rule across the board, and it’s a hard one when you’re starting out. You’re like, “I just want to book the wedding,” but it’s better to say no and politely decline, and often times when I do that, people come back and they’ll be like, “Okay, that’s fine. I’ll still work with you,” and at that point I decide if I really want to or not.

I had one a year or two ago where they came back after trying to do some hard negotiating, and I was like, “You know what? I had some negative feelings during that time with our correspondence, and I’m sure you did too, and I feel like we would be going into this on rocky ground and not on that excited happy note that we should be starting this partnership,” so I

declined to work with them, and they were a bit shocked, I think, but I was like, “Here’s a referral for someone else...”

**[0:24:53.5] CS:** That definitely was probably not the easiest email for you to send.

**[0:24:57.2] HP:** It was actually on the phone, so it was even harder.

**[0:25:00.0] CS:** Yeah.

**[0:25:01.5] HP:** Because they called me and wanted to know why, and I was just like, “You know what? This is how I’m feeling, and it’s in my gut,” and I found that over the years anytime I had a gut feeling about a couple, I should just trust my gut, because that usually ends up being correct. If I leave a meeting feeling excited and happy and like, “Oh my gosh, I just met my new best friends,” that’s probably a good sign. If I leave feeling like, “Oh man, I’m don’t feel like this is going to be good...”

**[0:25:25.3] RP:** Yes, your intuition knows. Your intuition, I love that.

**[0:25:30.6] HP:** Yeah, and I’ve had to fire, unfortunately, only a few couples over the years, and it’s a really, really hard conversation to have, especially if you started working with them and have started down the process, and then you need to let them go later. So it’s better to just let them go from the beginning. I know that when I first started I know that I had a couple who, same thing, it came back to money.

We were at our very first meeting, they had written me a check, they had given me the check at the meeting, and then they started — I would say we had been meeting for about an hour, and then they brought up the topic of my final payment is due before the wedding day, and it didn’t set right with them. They felt they should pay me on the wedding day, where it goes against my contract, and my policies are that I get paid before the wedding, because I may never see that money if I wait until the wedding day.

So that was my policy and I stuck by it, and they just kept pushing me and pushing me, and I really felt like I was in a corner, almost, and I ended up just being like, “You know what?” I took

the check out of my purse and I was like, “I’m going to give this to you back. I don’t think I’m a good fit for you, and I don’t feel that even if we did come to terms on this, I think you guys might be,” — I don’t know if regret is the right word.

**[0:26:46.1] CS:** Resentful?

**[0:26:47.1] HP:** Resentful, there we go, resentful towards me throughout the whole planning process, and that’s not how you should feel towards your planner, and I recommend you go find someone else. I tried to say that in the nicest way possible, and I really always try to turn it around to where it’s I’m trying to find someone who’s in the best interest of the couple, not in my “I don’t like you. I don’t want to work with you” type thing. It’s more “I want you to find the best fit for you.”

**[0:27:09.8] RP:** I so appreciate that, and throughout the whole process as you’re describing it, you’re still a professional, right? It’s not that, “I don’t like you and therefore,” it’s more like, “We have to have trust with each other in this relationship.” Especially as a wedding planner. You’re in this for a pretty long period of time, unless it’s the day of, you are working a month ahead of time. You’re usually working long periods of time together, and if you can’t trust the person you’re working with alongside for the long haul, you’re not going to get the result that you ultimately want.

So that’s a really hard decision that you have to make, and I applaud you. I think that when you start to say no to the right things, you see your business flourish. I know that, Christina, you have done this for yourself, and you’ve seen it too. What I’m hearing both of you guys say is that we’ve learned what our red flags are, but when we’re starting, we don’t always know what they are. We have to make our own mistakes, and trip up, and not say those no’s at the time, and then learn later on that those weren’t those opportunities.

But one of the things that I’ve been seeing a lot of, and I’m wondering if you guys have seen this for other clients, or maybe workshop folks that you’ve encountered, or anything like that. One thing that I know that is a pretty big red flag for me, and I’ve seen from other people as well, is people who have tried to contact me on direct message, chat, text, or if you are trying to hire me through those channels, you are probably not the best fit.

I see screen shot after screen shot after screen shot of people who are trying to negotiate with somebody with their service on a text message. No, that's not how we do things, or that's not how I do business, and so I don't know if you guys have seen that or have seen other red flags that are present for business owners, but I think there's something that we have to protect as business owners.

Obviously, you probably text your clients after a certain period of time, or on the day of, or something like that, but until you get to that point, I don't think that that correspondence is necessarily appropriate, so I don't know in your case.

**[0:29:16.5] HP:** Definitely in the beginning stages of booking, I don't think that's appropriate at all.

**[0:29:20.7] CS:** Yeah, and I've actually consciously, and not that anyone has ever abused it, but as I've gotten more inquiries, and because I don't have an in-person, so this would be different for you guys out there that have in-person consultations, but I do my consultations over the phone, and it's my phone number. So I have to consider like, do I do that over Zoom or Skype now instead so that my phone number isn't out there? So yeah, I think it is tricky and we take it for granted.

I'm really glad that we're having this conversation, because it's really easy to have the fluffy bunny conversation about being a business owner, and especially a wedding planner, because wedding planning is such a fun industry. I'm jealous of you guys every day, but this is the reality of having a business is if you want to have a professional business, if you want to conduct yourself professionally, you have to think about these things.

When you go to post an Instagram story, do you want to tell people where you are, or do you rather leave that part out? What are the things that are appropriate for you to share and what aren't? It stinks to have to censor yourself in that way, and sometimes — but in order to run a professional business, I think it's a fine line, and Reina, maybe you can speak more to this, but it's a fine line of being yourself online and giving everything out that would reveal where you live, and all your personal details, and probably TMI.

**[0:30:43.2] RP:** I don't know what to say.

**[0:30:44.7] CS:** Oh, it's okay.

**[0:30:46.8] RP:** I am not sure of that, but I agree with it 100%. I definitely agree. Well, I think something that I learned about you, Holly, in just talking to you today, is that professionalism comes in a lot of different forms, but you embody it so beautifully. You show up, and you're professional, not in just appearance, but in your correspondence, in the way that you lead your team, in the way that you have these meetings that we're talking about, and are there any other how to be professional tips?

Because I think in this industry, it is a mesh. It's a mesh of we get to work from home if we choose to, have our yoga pants and our top buns if we want to, and then sometimes we do have to be professional, so what does that look like and how can we do more of the professional thing if we choose to?

**[0:31:35.9] HP:** Yeah. So I think one thing is I love working from home. We actually have a planning studio that we work out of as well, but I really only come in about one or two days a week, because I like sitting at home in my yoga pants if I can. But image, what I like to portray to my couples is that we're a professional business. We have an office, that's what we do, and so I set office hours, and those office hours apply to when I'm at home or if I'm in the office.

So if I'm sending an email to a couple after office hours, I actually set it up to where the email will send the next morning, and that way, they're not getting an email from me at 11 PM at night, in my yoga pants, with my cup of tea or glass of wine type of thing, so that way they don't know what I'm doing as well, and so they think I'm at the office at 9 AM the next morning, when in fact I might be at a barre class. So I have set things up like that to give that image of professional office hours.

That really helped me eliminate people just expecting responses instantly, because I can't respond to you just right away. If it's not a time sensitive emergency, you're not going to get a response at 10 o'clock at night, and if you email me in the middle of the night and you don't



have a response by 7 AM the next morning, that shouldn't be an expectation. I was finding that with some of my couples, that was an expectation.

That's because I was responding outside of those office hours, and was presenting an image of, "I work from home, I'm always working, I'm always on my computer," and even if that may be the reality, I don't want my couples to know that. So hopefully, they don't listen to this, but...

**[0:33:14.0] RP:** No, but boundaries are really important, right? I so appreciate that.

**[0:33:17.4] HP:** Setting those boundaries, yep.

**[0:33:19.6] RP:** What tool do you use to send those emails out?

**[0:33:22.3] HP:** I'm old school and I still use Outlook, and in Outlook I can just delay delivery and tell and choose whatever time I'd like it to send, and it does that. It's really nice when I go on vacation, because I can have stuff that's set up to send as I go, and that's really handy. Sometimes, I go on vacation, and people don't even know I'm on vacation. It's just a few days, a quick little trip here and there, so I've set emails up to send as I'm away.

**[0:33:49.2] RP:** Christina, what do you use for that?

**[0:33:50.9] CS:** I use Boomerang.

**[0:33:52.1] RP:** Awesome, I use Streak in Gmail.

**[0:33:54.4] CS:** I've never heard of Streak.

**[0:33:55.8] RP:** Streak is like a customer management tool. It's a big tool, but I only use it for a couple of things.

**[0:34:02.9] CS:** Okay.

**[0:34:03.5] HP:** Is it an add-on to Gmail?

**[0:34:05.6] RP:** Yes, and you can use it in your personal or in your business Gmail.

**[0:34:11.8] HP:** I'll have to look into that, because I've had people ask me how they can do that out of — delaying send emails in Gmail, because they couldn't figure out the feature, so...

**[0:34:20.7] RP:** Yeah, Boomerang works too.

**[0:34:21.9] HP:** Cool.

**[0:34:22.6] CS:** I love that.

**[0:34:23.2] RP:** That's a really good trip.

**[0:34:24.4] CS:** I know, we could have a whole other podcast episode about boundaries, because what you're saying, Holly, is so second nature for you now, as you're years and years in your business, but when you are just starting out, the eyeballs that I see when I tell people, "Just set up these Boomerang emails to respond the next morning instead of 10:00 at night," they're just wide eyed and like, "What? How? No, they're going to fire me." I'm like, "No, they're not going to fire you."

**[0:34:52.6] HP:** Yes, for sure and I play it too, like when you're going into a meeting and you're a newer planner, like we just brought on a new planner on our team. So even though she's working under my established brand, and I'm there guiding her throughout the thing, she's still experiencing the same exact feelings and emotions that a new planner would have meeting with a client for the first time.

The thing is I'm always saying like, "Fake it until you make it," which is a horrible thing to say, but just go in confidently and speak about how your other life experiences can lend itself very well to planning. So she had a previous experience being an elementary school teacher, and I think that leads right into planning, because groomsmen definitely act like elementary school children sometimes. So she's used to corralling people, and guiding people, and keeping control

of her chaotic situations, but in a very kind, sweet way, which I think is really essential for a planner.

So I try to tell each person to tap into their previous experience and what they have done in other areas, and how that can lend itself to weddings, because most people don't start off in this industry having years and years of experience.

**[0:36:03.3] CS:** Thank you so much, Holly, and just in closing today, what's one thing that you might do to continue to build this creative empire that you are building?

**[0:36:12.1] HP:** Yeah, so I started doing consulting and stuff over the past few years, and last year, I started what is called Bliss + Savvy, and it's a wedding planner's training program, if you will. I do webinars and workshops where I bring newer planners in, try to teach them as much as I know, and give to them so that way, they're still going to have to go through those hard experiences, no one can bypass those by any means.

But maybe it will give them that support that they need, and that education, and maybe they can learn from a few of my mistakes over the years, and also build community amongst themselves, because I think the next generation of planners, I love to see them have as great of a support group as I have with my current group of planners.

**[0:36:57.6] CS:** And where can people come and find you, and your workshops, and learning and educational experience?

**[0:37:03.3] HP:** Yeah so Bliss + Savvy, you can find us on Instagram so that's @blissandsavvy and then my professional website from my planning business is perfectlyposhevents.com, and that's our Instagram too, it's just Perfectly Posh Events. We have a page on that for Bliss + Savvy as well, but Instagram is a really good way to follow along for the latest happenings and things like that.

**[0:37:26.6] CS:** Thank you so much, Holly, it was so great to have you on here and to hear all of this great wisdom that you have to share. So for all of you out there listening, please go out and build your creative empire today.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:37:39.0] ANNOUNCER:** Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to [www.creativeempire.co](http://www.creativeempire.co), where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]