

Cheryl Broom (4s):

Hi, I am Cheryl Broom, CEO of GradComm, and host of Higher Ed Conversations brought to you by Ed Tech Connect. Today's guest is Elaine Gosden, who is the founder and CEO of Blue GNU Consulting. Elaine is a leadership expert and we have a fantastic conversation around leadership styles and leadership development, including how to take into account your own personality and your own motivations and the personality and motivations of others in order to be a better leader and create a more happy workplace. Elaine and I have a fantastic conversation around challenges that are unique to higher education and higher education leadership, and she also has taught me a new concept called the Leadership Shadow, which I absolutely love, and I'm actually gonna reflect on myself after having this conversation with her.

Cheryl Broom (1m 5s):

This is the perfect podcast for anyone in higher education who is new to a leadership role and is looking to get their feet wet and becoming a great leader is in a current leadership role and wants to become a better leader and make sure that their teams are more productive and more satisfied at work. And it's also, and especially for those people who recognize that leadership is something you develop over the course of your entire career, and it's not just a workshop that you do on a Thursday, it is a long-term commitment to show up and be a vulnerable, authentic, and effective leader. I think you're gonna love this conversation.

Cheryl Broom (1m 45s):

So let's get started. Well, LA it's so wonderful to have you on the podcast today. Thank, you So much for joining.

Elaine Gosden (1m 53s):

Thank you for having me. I'm excited.

Cheryl Broom (1m 55s):

Yes. And for all of those listening, Elaine's all the way in England, so it's nighttime her time, and I'm still drinking my Starbucks this morning.

Elaine Gosden (2m 6s):

Yeah, it's gonna get dark here pretty soon. So we might just notice the change in the outside conditions.

Cheryl Broom (2m 11s):

Oh, yes. Wonderful. And it's beautiful, beautiful evening in England. So Elaine is an expert on leadership and the owner of Blue GNU Consulting, GNU, did I say it right this time?

Elaine Gosden (2m 24s):

Yes, you did. Yeah. Yeah.

Cheryl Broom (2m 25s):

So tell me a little bit about your business, what your specialty is, and a little bit of history behind what you do.

Elaine Gosden (2m 32s):

Yeah, so Blue GNU is nearly 10 years old, but I've been doing the, I've been self-employed for want of a better way of putting it for nearly 13 years. And what we do here is try to make workplaces happier in a, in its simplest form. That's our overall kind of intention. And how we do that typically is through learning and development initiatives. So kind of training workshops typically for leaders, board level executives and teams actually of all shapes and sizes. So sometimes we might be working on a team who are experiencing change or challenge or conflict even. And other times we're trying to be proactive in supporting leaders to be better equipped to deal with some of the, the management and leadership issues and problems that might come their way.

Cheryl Broom (3m 21s):

Great. And do you specialize in any, any industry or do you work with all sorts of businesses?

Elaine Gosden (3m 27s):

Yeah, no, the great, the great thing about working in the industry of learning and and people is that people are in every industry. So the, it doesn't really matter if you are leading a big global pharmaceutical company or if you run your own business, that essentially the, the leadership capability is pretty similar. Like the core, the core skills, the core behaviors needed to be a leader and to be part of an effective team are the same. It doesn't matter if you are a sports team and you play a sport with some people, or if you are a, a team who manufacture a product or if you're a team of sales representatives who go out and, and try and deliver effective sales.

Elaine Gosden (4m 8s):

People are people and teams are teams. So we we're actually really lucky in that we get to work across a lot of different industries, which is really nice because then we've got a lot to draw from in terms of experience of the different types of, of leaders. So yeah, I don't wanna make leadership sound simple, I don't think that it is, I think it's highly complex, but essentially the, those core behaviors, when we peel right back to, well, what does it take to be a good leader or the, the best leader that you could be? I feel like the patterns of behavior are similar, the application might be completely different, but the behaviors themselves are pretty core.

Cheryl Broom (4m 45s):

I love that your, like the first thing you said about your company is that you try to make workplaces happier. Yeah, and I love distilling everything you do into just that main point. Like that is why we wanna develop leadership and why we want a good culture so that people are happier and more fulfilled and more productive.

Elaine Gosden (5m 6s):

Yeah.

Cheryl Broom (5m 6s):

So what types you teach?

Elaine Gosden (5m 7s):

Of exactly that do

Cheryl Broom (5m 8s):

Like how do you get people there?

Elaine Gosden (5m 11s):

It's a really great question and it's, it's multifactorial in terms of the answer. Like it's difficult to say that it would just be one thing. This model that you can see on the wall behind me, that's one of our key models that we use and that we might meet a lot of people using this. It's called Insights Discovery. It's a global model so that many of your American or other audiences might recognize it, but it was invented 25 years ago by a Scottish company. So proudly, proudly British organization who took the kind of psychological works of Carl Jung, who was a Swiss German psychologist. And they've transformed it into a workplace preference model that helps us understand, well, how might I show up at work with my preferences and how might that be different from you?

Elaine Gosden (5m 58s):

And, and from that foundation of self understanding, we can do a lot of work because if I understand me, then that gives me a different lens to look at self, but it also gives me a lovely lens to have a great conversation with you about how you show up. And that tends to be our entry point with most of our client organizations that we work with. So this is great for individuals, it's also great for teams, it's really brilliant for leaders because there's a lot of misperception around on here. If we, we look at the color preferences, kind of what a great leader might be, and there's a word up there, you probably can't read it, but right in the, in the red section it says director.

Elaine Gosden (6m 38s):

So there could be a huge misjudgment, I guess that in order to be a leader you need a lot of red energy in the model. And actually that's not true. So, so yeah, we use insights. We also use another tool called motivational maps, which looks at, so if insights is behaviors and traits and how we show up, motivational maps looks at the level below, which is why I might behave in the way that I behave. So it's more looking at drivers, so what, what are those things that get me outta bed in the morning? Or when do I do my best work? What conditions do I need? So yeah, those, those are a couple of the tools that we use to kind of start that process.

Elaine Gosden (7m 20s):

Really.

Cheryl Broom (7m 21s):

Oh, that's so fascinating. Your, your model behind you. I see some of the words. I see coordinator, supporter.

Elaine Gosden (7m 27s):

Yeah. Helper at the bottom. Yeah, inspire a motivator, director and reformer. So they're all, all those words are meant to be like indicative of a style. But if I'm honest, and I'm pretty picky, I, I'd quite like insights and I've been telling them for a little while I'd quite like them to change some of those words because it indicates to me that coordinator, for instance, that that it sounds a bit like a title or a role and actually it's not a title or a role, it's a behavior. So I'd quite like them to change it to an ING word. So coordinating to me is more indicative of the style of what it means to be in this bluey greeny area.

Elaine Gosden (8m 8s):

So that's a coordinating style. I'm very good at logistics, organizing stuff, kind of making people feel at home and, and welcoming them and kind of, you know, putting on great things for them to do. But that doesn't mean I'm a coordinator in my role. So yeah, I'm really picky about that, but I'd love them to change it. So the words were doing words rather than role title words,

Cheryl Broom (8m 31s):

And once a leader knows where they fall, does that help? How does that help them? What does that do to help them become better?

Elaine Gosden (8m 40s):

That's a really great question, and it depends on the leader to be completely honest. So a a metaphor that sometimes I find myself using when I'm talking to clients is that it kind of depends what type of mirror that the leader is looking in. So, some leaders come to us with real curiosity about who they are and how they show up and they really want to look in the bathroom mirror. So you know the mirror that has all the lights and you can see all everything that's going on in your face. And it's like, oh, you can just see that tiny little wrinkle, tiny

Cheryl Broom (9m 16s):

Little, there are always in hotels too. I'm like, whoa.

Elaine Gosden (9m 19s):

Yeah, yeah, that one, you know, the one that spins around and it has the light on, right, and you can, yeah, so, so some leaders come to us really wanting to look in the mirror because they're so keen to become more self-aware so that they, they can move forwards in terms of which are the bits I need to improve, which are

the bits that I need to pay attention to, or which parts do I already do well that I know I can do more of, more of the time. But we also meet some leaders who aren't willing to look in that mirror, so that's really interesting. They might want to look in a different mirror, which might be the one in the, I don't know, in the bar or in the restaurant that's got some kind of softer lighting that makes you look great no matter which direction you look in, because it's not quite as, it's not quite as harsh I guess.

Elaine Gosden (10m 11s):

So it really depends on the leaders and kind of where we, we have, we can only meet leaders where they are. We can't force them to change. But what we do encourage is that any look in any mirror is a good place and we would hope to deepen your self understanding by encouraging you to look in the slightly harsher mirror. So we might also do some work with leaders in the shadow space. So often when I'm looking in the mirror, I can see, can see this right, I can see what's happening right in front of me. But we also might do some work in terms of leadership shadow, which is, well what's, do I ever pay attention to the shadow that I cast and how long is it and how dark is it back there?

Elaine Gosden (10m 55s):

And do, do people ever give me feedback around how they experience me, which is often in my shadow. It's not usually right here. So we, we hope to give the leaders that we get to work with some experiences or some feedback about what it's like to be on the receiving end of you because not all of them might be aware of that. They could have, some leaders have been leading people for 20, 30 years and never received any feedback about what it's like to be on the receiving end of them. So we, we do quite a lot of work in that space, which is really exciting.

Cheryl Broom (11m 31s):

Yeah, that is, I love that term leadership shadow. I've never heard that before. I, I immediately thought of one university president that I've worked with who is charismatic and bold and a great like motivator. But the issue with him that I saw working with him on a marketing standpoint is he's so bold. Yeah. That when he speaks his shadow silences everybody else. Yeah, yeah. And even if there's clearly something that needs to be said, nobody's willing to say it.

Elaine Gosden (12m 11s):

No, because it's hard to speak up in that shadow, right? It's hard, it's hard to, it's hard to speak up, it's hard to be creative, it's hard to give some new ideas. It's hard to challenge sharing. So you could create, you could that kind of leadership style if it's consistent. And over time, if create some real problems are some real, you know, people can feel a bit squashed or a bit held back if they don't get the chance to express themselves fully. And that comes directly from the leader. And I think, you know, another phrase that I use quite a lot, and I hope it's not too British, but you know, a lot of leaders don't always appreciate that they are exceptionally visible.

Elaine Gosden (12m 54s):

So another phrase we would use is that, you know, the people who report into any leader in any organization, in any environment, they usually notice everything and they say nothing. So people spot all of our behaviors because leaders and managers are, you know, more visible so people can see what we're doing, they can see what we're all about. And you know, the fish rots from the head is a, an expression that I like to use if there's,

Cheryl Broom (13m 18s):

I don't like that expression.

Elaine Gosden (13m 19s):

So, if there's poor behavior, poor leadership behavior, then you often see poor culture and some potential toxic behaviors coming from team members because we're, we're watching and observing someone else, role modeling some slightly less healthy behaviors in teams. And that gets magnified the further down the organization that we go. And again, if leaders have never been brave enough to look at their shadow or curious enough to understand how people experience me, then they may be accidentally disengaging teams for a very long time before they get the feedback. Because it's really difficult to give feedback particularly to.

Cheryl Broom (13m 58s):

Oh yeah.

Elaine Gosden (13m 60s):

Exceptionally senior people.

Cheryl Broom (14m 0s):

Yeah. I mean even, I remember even with this particular leader, there was a big decision that needed to be made and I was facilitating the research that we had done and he decided to speak first and then the rest of his leadership team wouldn't say anything. And what he had said was not supported by the research. So now as the consultant, I am obligated to share that. Right. But other people in the room knew it too. Yeah. They wouldn't, they wouldn't comment at all. They wouldn't, even though they'd participated with the research, they weren't willing to state their opinion because this leader was just so I guess powerful, you know?

Cheryl Broom (14m 41s):

Yeah. And, and very persuasive, you know, great speaker, very persuasive. I, I don't think he was aware. So this is, I love this idea of looking in the mirror, but also looking at the shadow. Yeah. And what a great saying. Fish rots from the head, very British.

Elaine Gosden (14m 57s):

No it's not a popular phrase to use when I'm working with leaders. I, it has to be the right time if I think it's necessary to mention it. But I just think there's a, you know, any change starts with a, an awakening, doesn't it? Any change starts with a consciousness about learning something new about myself or realizing, hang on a minute, I didn't, I didn't know that about myself. And I think people don't often realize the impact of sometimes some quote, what might be perceived as inconsequential behaviors, the kind of lasting impact and the, and the cascade of that impact throughout an organization. So it's, yeah, we, that's a problem we hope to solve at Blue News, kind of like helping people to understand their leadership footprint.

Elaine Gosden (15m 42s):

So, you know, what, what is that and how do I, how can I be aware of the, the footprints I left and the footprints I intend to leave in the future?

Cheryl Broom (15m 51s):

Well, I want to talk to you about your work with university leadership and some of the, the insights and the challenges that you've had there. But first, let's take a quick break and then we'll come back and discuss that. How do higher education decision makers find the right solution when technology evolves at light speed? Well, we usually start with our network. EDTech Connect is the network that's democratizing the higher ed technology conversation. EDTech Connect is free, so anyone with a .edu email address can sign up unless the software and services they use in their role at their school. Once you're in, you can find out what solutions similar schools are doing all over the country.

Cheryl Broom (16m 35s):

Whether you're looking to find the hot new AI tool or maybe learn options, you have to upgrade your campus search engine or even get to your short list of marketing solution vendors. EDTech Connect is the place to go. So visit [EDTechConnect.com](https://EDTechConnect.com) and set up your free profile to get a pulse for what's happening with higher ed technology today. Alright, we're back. So before the break we were talking about leadership shadows, we were talking about this great British saying that fish rots from the head and just having leaders be brave enough to, to take a look at themselves to see how they can improve their own style. And I wanted to talk specifically about your work with universities.

Cheryl Broom (17m 16s):

Most of our audience are colleges and, and university leaders. So tell me a little bit about the work in that space and maybe some things that you've learned from working with university leaders.

Elaine Gosden (17m 28s):

Yeah, I think it's really interesting working with university leadership because it's got a different kind of vibe than a corporate entity. But of course there's lots of transferrable transferable skills from a leader perspective, but also transferability of, of models. And I think one, one of the biggest things, and we're, we're actively working with the British University and their kind of exec board at the moment. So without giving

away too much about that, but I think the complexity of the organization and kind of the competing priorities of the different faculties that report up to in, in the UK we'd call the president like the vice chancellor, So I it. I think what's really interesting challenge for that, that person in charge is to hold, hold together quite a complex team.

Elaine Gosden (18m 14s):

Whereas if you consider the work we might do with a more profit making corporate organization is often they're all pulling in the same direction. So we, we get a bit of cohesive kind of direction and vision and we're all pulling to that. Whereas our experience of working with a couple of universities in the UK is that those, those different faculties, those different departments might have some very, very competing different. And so they're not all pulling in the same direction. So challenge becomes how do we help them understand how they need to work together and how those faculties or departments can become interdependent and begin to learn to rely on each other rather than siloed, you know, rather than kind of independent business units within the university structure.

Elaine Gosden (19m 3s):

I think that's, that for me is a big thing. And, and also I, I think what we are hearing in the UK is the pressure of digital transformation on the education sector. So, and I think ultimately that rolls up into leaders, leaders needing to be aware of what that means and how a digital transformation needs to be led. Because often the senior people at the university might not be the people with a full enough understanding of the root cause of the, the need for the digital transformation. So that's another step change, which might be different than our corporate customers because they might be more invested in, in digital transformation programs because it's directly related to their profits.

Elaine Gosden (19m 46s):

Right. There's a bit more resistance I think in the university sector to digital transformation. Dunno if it's, is it the same in the us?

Cheryl Broom (19m 53s):

Oh, yes and actually something that you said just hit the nail on the head so well with what we see with all of our clients and where I think that a company like yours can really help is this concept of silos. Yeah. And I've worked in education so long that I've forgotten what it's like to work outside of it. But that is one of the most common complaints that we hear is that there's these different divisions and they're just working independent of each other and sometimes their work is in conflict with each other. Yeah. And the, the leader, the head of the college is the one who's supposed to bring them all together, but they may be so busy with what they're supposed to be doing that they're relying on their leaders to run those divisions.

Cheryl Broom (20m 39s):

And yeah, the student is the one that ends up suffering when one arm isn't talking to the other arm and



processes don't align and everybody's confused and it does create a lot of problems, these different silos.

Elaine Gosden (20m 52s):

And I think as much as, and again, I said at the beginning like, you know, the leadership problems, the leadership problems regardless of sector, and it would be remiss of me to have you think that siloed organizations are only in the education sector. Because that's not true. Like, and like we, a lot of our clients struggle with this whole idea of we, we are a big team, but we all do have conflicting priorities and sometimes when they are in direct conflict with each other, like how do we navigate those conversations because it, a lot of these leadership challenges come back to how, how we talk to each other and how we roll up into that bigger vision rather than stay stuck in our small, our small silo.

Elaine Gosden (21m 40s):

Right.

Cheryl Broom (21m 41s):

And how do we do, how do we make change in an organization that moves very slowly.

Elaine Gosden (21m 48s):

Yeah.

Cheryl Broom (21m 48s):

Can be a little bit, you know, you would think that it, that a higher ed embraces change, but in fact most don't. They, they like tradition and thoughtfulness and collegiality things that typically make change slow.

Elaine Gosden (22m 6s):

Yeah.

Cheryl Broom (22m 7s):

But the world's changing really fast.

Elaine Gosden (22m 9s):

It's changing really fast. Yeah. And it'll only ever be as slow change as it is today. Right. It's just gonna get faster. So, you know, I think it's, I sort of think colleges and universities have an obligation almost to try and get to the front of the queue when it comes to, to change because they're educating the next generation of people that are ultimately gonna land in the, in the workplace in a few years time. So if they're not at the front of all sorts of transformation and change, then they're not, like you said, with the putting the student at the heart of everything, we, we owe it to that student to have them finish their education with all the tools and techniques that they need. And that needs to be the tools and techniques of 2024, not best practice from whenever, you know, so it's, it's a tough challenge.

Elaine Gosden (22m 58s):

I don't envy. 'cause how do you stay true to, like in the UK we've got some really old university organizations that have such heritage and such, you know, they're, they're world renowned for their kind of traditions and the, the way they educate and how, how do they stay true to that At the same time as, you know, creating an educational experience that leads people into a, a world of work as it is today. I think it's a real delicate balance for, for people to be able to hold. And I think acknowledgement of that, that it's not, it's not easy and it's not straightforward is one of the, the first steps.

Cheryl Broom (23m 36s):

Yeah, for sure. And that takes a strong leader to be able to, you know, give everybody on the same lane going towards a shared vision. So definitely a challenge. I think another challenge that I see colleges and universities is how promotions happen. So a lot of time lead faculty member becomes a dean or somebody who's really good at, at coordinating becomes an administrator. And so these promotions happen from within. And usually what I've seen is they are the people who have been the best workers who get along with everybody will be promoted, but maybe they're not ready to supervise, especially their other colleagues and friends.

Cheryl Broom (24m 22s):

And how, what advice do you have for people who are new leaders who may find themselves in these positions, especially if they have to start doing hard things with people that were their friends and colleagues before they became, you know, leaders?

Elaine Gosden (24m 37s):

Yeah, I mean that's a huge question, but I think there's definitely some top tips I could offer in terms of what, how, if that's just recently happened and you're at a beginning of a journey. 'cause what, what you've just said there is, is part of the reason we're in business because many, many, many managers and leaders get promoted because they were technically brilliant at whatever it was that they used to do. And I think there was a Harvard Business Review that came out about six months or so ago saying that something like 89% of people who are currently managing and leading people, and presumably it was a study from the US I don't know, but because it came from Harvard, maybe 89% of managers and leaders do not have any formal management or leadership training.

Elaine Gosden (25m 23s):

So no, that isn't that interesting that, but that shows that we're promoting just globally, a lot of leaders and managers are getting promoted because they're technical experts now. Now that gives us a three-way problem in the workplace because we, we promote someone who was previously brilliant at the job. So we've, by that promotion, we've inherited someone with an inherent lack of skill and ability in the actual leading of people. We've also created a recruitment gap behind because we now have to recruit to backfill

them. And the people on the receiving end are kind of going, hang on a minute, you've just created a massive dynamic change in the department, which is, you know, the, the hence your question. Like how do we, how do we do that? And I think in terms of my first top tip, if, if someone has recently been promoted or if I, if I now find myself in a, in a management role where I previously wasn't, I think one of the biggest and most important things we should do at that stage, particularly if it's at the beginning of the relationship, is to set out the boundaries.

Elaine Gosden (26m 22s):

So to what I would call a really important contracting conversation. So acknowledging the fact that, ooh, things are about to change around here, or maybe they have already changed, talking really openly and vulnerably about the impact of that on the person because it's not an easy journey to suddenly manage someone new and to begin to have those important early conversations about, oh, this is the sort of manager that I think I want to be So, I want to create this, this, and this in our relationship together. And what is it that you want from me? So I, I would call that a contracting conversation doesn't have, you don't have to write anything down or sign anything.

Elaine Gosden (27m 2s):

But I think that expectation setting from the off of look, this is what I would like to do in our relationship together and how do we regularly come back to that and give each other feedback is really, really important. But many, many people will just go, oh, it'll be all right. I think I've got this. And they might, they might forget or not realize the kind of significance of just how much time and pain and early conversation about that can, can resolve. Particularly because I think the boundaries have changed, right? Like, so the boundaries changed in the relationship. So we need to acknowledge that a little bit.

Elaine Gosden (27m 44s):

And I also think second top tip is that we need a bit of a reframe on what it is to have a tricky conversation. Because if we frame it as a tricky conversation, it will always be tricky. And many of us, regardless of our preferences, find conversations tricky. Particularly if it's with someone that I used to be friends with and now I'm managing them, they're just conversations. It might not be tricky at all. In fact, what we, what we know, what we learn in our work is that many, many managers completely overthink the conversation and make many assumptions and judgments about what may or may not happen before they even arrive in the room. And it's kind of that kind of thinking that can lead us into trouble because we might discourage ourselves from having the conversation before it gets to a crucial or a difficult stage.

Elaine Gosden (28m 37s):

So the reframe is, it's not difficult conversation, it's just a conversation. But we also need to have those conversations far earlier than we think. Whereas there's a natural human bias to avoid conflict. And so we avoid, avoid, avoid until we get to a place where we think, Hmm, darn it, now I'm gonna have to say the thing or do the thing.

Cheryl Broom (28m 57s):

And what I've learned as a leader too, is some conversations have to be, have to be had. And then by avoiding them as a leader, you're actually creating more problems with other staff members who are like, yeah, why isn't she doing anything about this? Like, this is going on for so long. Like.

Elaine Gosden (29m 18s):

Yeah, that, I'll take you back to that phrase I said earlier. Your team notice everything and say nothing. So they absolutely notice if there is a, a, a lower level performer in the team and that's not getting addressed, the team will notice it and say nothing. But gradually their engagement, their performance, their everything begins to go, oh, hang on a minute, what's that? Until we course correct and move it, move it forward. So yeah, it's, it's a really tricky, you know, I don't want people to think that just because there's a few top tips that it's easy. Like I think leadership is a life's work. Like I don't think it's the sort of thing you can go on a course and yeah, I'm fixed.

Elaine Gosden (29m 59s):

I think it's kind of, it's it's constant practice and constant challenge and it really helps if you have a few models and a few resources to, to help you on the way. And if you have some, you can get some formal leadership training. That's brilliant. You know, there are so many training organizations out there that do what we do and so many like approved courses. Like we, we are approved by the British Institute of Leadership, which is brilliant for us. Like that's, you know, it's a real sign over the door that what we do meets a, a high quality standard. And you know, I'd encourage people to get really curious about what sort of opportunities are available to them locally to develop your own practice because it is a life's work. It doesn't matter where you are at with leadership, I don't think anyone's perfect.

Elaine Gosden (30m 43s):

Right. And I think we can, we can all be better at work to make work a better and happier place for our teams and our people.

Cheryl Broom (30m 53s):

I agree a hundred percent. And I also, I also think it's really important what you said that this isn't, it's not like a one and done, right. Things change, people change, leaders change, and we can always be growing and improving technology changes and So I think that's something people need to think through. I see a lot of investment in initiatives in the university and colleges. So one year it might be like, let's do everybody do Myers-Briggs and then you hold a workshop and then you never talk about it again.

Elaine Gosden (31m 23s):

I know. And that makes me so sad. And I, I try and be really intentional with our clients because we do get sometimes those kind of requests like, oh hey, we have an away day. Can you come and do it? You know,

and it's, and I'm always, I have a, I have a mini kind of business owner moment of yay, that would be a great project for us to be involved with. But then I also have my bigger more important values kick in around. I really don't wanna do it if it's just gonna be a one and done because I just don't, that doesn't help me to achieve my personal vision and my, our business vision of making the, the world of work a better place for everyone. Right. You know, so, so, hmm. If you are only gonna give me one day, I, that's not a good thing.

Elaine Gosden (32m 3s):

So, you know, one of our values is partnership and, and we really mean it like, we like to work with our client organizations if we can on an ongoing basis because we don't want it to be like, yay, we did this thing and we had a great day out, but now we're just gonna forget all about it until the next one. It, you know, we, we want people to get that return on investment. And it return on investment is such a difficult thing to measure in the people industry. Because we, it's really hard to say how a few hundred pounds or a few hundred dollars investment in our person will make a difference to their happiness, but we kind of know that it does. So, you know, it it, and for, for some people, the same investment may only improve happiness by a little bit.

Elaine Gosden (32m 45s):

And for other people it may improve happiness by a lot. So it is really difficult to say, well you spend X pounds or X dollars and you'll get X back into your business. But we know that it's a great idea because we see engagement scores, we see, you know, happiness scores, we see performance indicators, confidence and capability around leadership skills and processes increasing. And that can only be a good thing for organizations. But it is a, it's a tough, it's a tough one to, to measure. I'd, I'd love to be able to measure it more, but that's the nature of humans, right? Like you and me could go on the same program and you might learn a bazillion things that help you.

Elaine Gosden (33m 25s):

And I might be like, oh, I've seen a lot of that before actually. So, or whatever. It could be the other way around. It's, it's difficult to say that there's a linear return on investment, but I'd love to be able to study it better.

Cheryl Broom (33m 38s):

Oh well we have the same question in marketing. You, you show, you show an ad and it gets, you know, 20 people excited and another people 20 are like, eh, whatever, whatever. But you know, it's always better than doing nothing. And that's on my clients like this investments in your team, investments in marketing is always gonna help the organization. It's never gonna hurt some.

Elaine Gosden (34m 6s):

No, exactly. It's, it's, it's, it's rarely harmful. Yes. Do you know what I mean? It's kind of, it's more often than not does more good than not. But, but if it is only a one thi if it is only a one time investment, I think that's also a message from the leadership to the people. Because if the leaders are saying, yeah, we'll do it once

on a Thursday in November, but they never come back to it again. The people notice everything and say nothing. And they're like, oh, they told us when we, when we first started working here, they said that personal development was really key and that they were gonna invest in us. And actually we had one day on a Thursday in November and there's, there's nothing, there's nothing else. You know, so it's kind of it, I think if you're gonna talk about personal development in your business and you can talk about it in your recruitment and your marketing, you've absolutely gotta put your money where your mouth is when it comes to investing in, in people because they, they notice it all, but they won't give the feedback to the leaders.

Elaine Gosden (35m 1s):

Because it's usually too risky to do that.

Cheryl Broom (35m 4s):

Well this conversation has been so fascinating and you've, and I'm super excited now about like my own team and looking at applying some of these thoughts and ideas to the way that I lead. And I know that you do work in the United States, most of our listeners are here in the US and if anybody's interested in talking to you more or, or getting in touch with you, how do they do that?

Elaine Gosden (35m 26s):

The best way is if, if people use LinkedIn, actually, because we're really prolific on LinkedIn, we get lots of really good feedback. So we try and use our socials to offer value. Like we're not, we we're, we're genuinely in the business of trying to make the world a better place. So we don't, we don't hide everything behind a paywall, if that makes sense. So if people reach out to us on LinkedIn, you can get me Elaine Gosden or you can follow our company. We've actually got a reasonable size following Blue GNU Consulting. We share leadership tips, we share team tips, we share all sorts of useful content. Just last week we did a quiz on like, what's your leadership style to get people kind of, you know, thinking about how they might show up.

Elaine Gosden (36m 8s):

So yeah, the socials is usually the best way or we have got a website. It's really rather lovely. I like it. BLUEGNUco.com. bluegncco.com. So yeah, you can find us out there.

Cheryl Broom (36m 21s):

Wonderful. Well Thank, you So much Elaine. And thanks for taking this evening to talk to me.

Elaine Gosden (36m 25s):

I know it's, I said it was gonna get dark and it's, yeah,

Cheryl Broom (36m 29s):

It's been a great conversation and I just love the work that you're doing.

Elaine Gosden (36m 32s):

Oh, thank you. And it was so great to meet you. I'm so glad we met. Alright,

Cheryl Broom (36m 38s):

Thank you. Yay.

Elaine Gosden (36m 39s):

Thank you. Take care.

Cheryl Broom (36m 40s):

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