

**Laylee:** Hey friends. Welcome back to the Laylee Emadi Podcast. Today we are joined by Lyrik Fryer, who is the co-founder of Workplay Branding, and I am pumped because her business is so unique, and it's so, so, um, different than anything else that I've really seen up until this point, especially with my background being in photography and brand photography.

So I'm excited. We're gonna dive in. We're gonna talk to Lyrik all about, uh, a few different things actually today. First of all, Lyrik, tell us about yourself, tell us about Workplay, and then also tell us about your personal brand as well.

**Lyrik:** Totally. Well, I'm so honored to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

I am Lyrik. I'm one of the co-founders of Workplay Branding. I founded it with my mom, which is so much fun. Uh, we started back in 2019, and obviously the model and the business looks very different than it does back then. Uh, but, uh, we've had quite the iteration of who we are and, um, what the company does because as the years have gone on, the content demands and the content needs of our clients have also changed.

And so we're extremely innovative in the fact that we're always trying to meet our consumer where they are, and I love that about our company. But if you haven't heard of us, we are essentially your in-house media team. We plan and create the content that you use for your marketing and your brand on repeat.

So what that means is we have creators all over the world. I tell people pretty much in every English-speaking country or city, we've got a creator, so across from Australia, Canada, the US, and Europe, we've got a whole certified creator team that is there to create any type of content that you need, from photography to videography, to even the iPhone organic content when you want something that's a little more behind the scenes feeling, integrated feeling.

And so we're really there to kind of have that missing link, I would say, in between your social team, your marketing teams, so that you actually have the content that you need to fulfill the strategy or the plan that you have for your business.

**Laylee:** Diving right in a little bit to kind of the background of Workplay, you started it, and what made you think, like, this is something that really has legs?

Like, how did you know, I guess, or what, what was the moment that you realized that this model was something special? Because you've grown it into a

seven-figure company at this point, so what, what made you think, like, "Okay, this is something that really has opportunity, and it's not just something that's fleeting"?

**Lyrik:** Yeah, totally. I mean, going back to even 2019, we were more of a branding agency, and so we had, like, from color palettes to logos, all the way to the content creation and the planning the shoots. And at that time, video wasn't really a thing, and lots of businesses still weren't on Instagram or on Facebook, and they needed something or someone to pull them onto it without breaking the bank.

And so we realized that as clients came into this \$6,000 branding package that- Ongoing support, they just really needed the visuals because every time you log into Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, wherever it is, LinkedIn, they're going to ask you for a photo or a video to post on their platform. And so that workflow kind of came organically to us.

Like, our clients were like, "Well, we need more content 'cause we need to keep posting." And so we realized that people were coming to us for that visual content, not necessarily for the logos, the color palette. Like, that wasn't really our sweet spot. And so when we realized that, we turned it into a membership model for content.

And from there, we just kept listening to our clients. It's like, as the platforms change, now they want video. Okay, great, now we have to fulfill video. And so I think it was, like, 2022 we put a stake in the ground and we said we only wanna be known for the media asset creation piece of companies. And so when we had that really strong stake in the ground, we started to make decisions based off of that.

And again, once you get really clear, people now know that, okay, I need to go to you for this, or I need this because this is re- you've shown that this is missing in my workflow. And so I think we got very clear on that, and that helped to expand the brand because we're not trying to do everything. We wanna just do one thing really cleanly, nicely, and well, and that is content creation

**Laylee:** I love that so much because I think so many of our listeners, being educators and leaders and, you know, thought leaders, speakers, all the things, they're constantly looking for that clarity piece.

Do you mind sharing, like, a little bit of insight on, like, how did you find that clarity? Like, what, what led you to being like, "Okay, this is it. Like, this is the thing that we need to really hone in on," and put that stake in the ground that, like, this is what we're doing. We're gonna focus in on this one.

And how'd you know that that was gonna be the one that was gonna pay do- pay off? You know what I mean? Like, how'd you find that clarity?

**Lyrik:** Yeah. I love this question because I think it's the sweet spot between what feels really good for you as a founder and what you want to scale, and then also, what are your people asking for, right?

So we didn't just wake up and say, "We wanna create content." We realized that out of all of the things that we were offering people, that's what they kept coming back to us for. So we're not trying to force color palettes or logos down their throats anymore. We're gonna just say, "Okay, you guys want content?

We'll give you more content," right? And so then when it comes to how we wanna scale as founders, what feels really safe and frictionless for us was this monthly retainer model, because we were then able to have recurring income, MRR if you wanna get technical with it, coming into the business, which allows us to hire and make decisions that feel good for us outside of, like, this scarcity mindset.

'Cause at the time we were just project by project. So that means every single month, if you don't have three leads coming in, you're s- back at square one, right, um, with marketing and, and your income. And so we didn't want that. So we actually had to take, like, a, um, almost, like, a cash flow cut because we made that decision, but it was for the long-term gain of scaling.

So sometimes that does happen. But I'm so glad we made that decision now because we're able to build the foundation. I think me and my mom, as co-founders, we are not afraid of hard work, and if it's going to benefit the business in the long term, we will make that decision. And if we have to take a salary cut, um, a cash flow cut because of that, we're okay with doing that.

**Laylee:** Oh my gosh, there are so many things I wanna talk about in this. So first of all, I love that you said ... I love that you led with what feels good to you as the founder. Like, that, I think that's a piece that so many people just kind of skim over. They're like, they get to the what are people asking for, or if nobody's asking for anything, then they try to go to, like, the strategy part of it.

But I love that the first thing you said was what feels good. Um, that was such a s- I just had to highlight that. And then I also really enjoyed that you shared about taking a pay cut. Like, 'cause I talk about that all the time with transitioning into education from a purely service-based business. I had to be prepared to either work nights, weekends, every single waking moment to compensate for the loss of compensation, or I had to be okay with taking that cut, right?

And I chose to take a pay cut because I was able to kind of do it knowing that that was going to happen. Did you guys know that that was a possibility? Like, how did you prepare for that?

**Lyrik:** Oh, yeah, absolutely. And I, I remember the conversation with my mom when I had approached her about this idea of going into a monthly subscription versus a \$6,000 pay-in-full package.

And she was, I remember, a little bit hesitant because we wouldn't be getting... Once, when we got a new client, it would just be an extra \$500 in the bank account. It wouldn't be an extra \$6,000 in the bank account. And so, um, she was very hesitant about that. But at the time, we were early, I'm not gonna lie.

Like, we weren't making a whole lot anyway, um, so it wasn't too much of a transition. I could understand if you're making a million dollars now and then you gotta, you gotta cut it to, like, 30K, right? That's a bigger decision. But at the time, we weren't, we weren't even making 10 grand a month at that time.

So the transition wasn't too, too crazy. But at that time, like, when you're only making 10K a month or less, I mean, every single You know, dollar counts, right? And so you don't have a lot of leeway, but we had to take that risk, and I don- there's not really any other way to describe it other than we just have to hunker down and do it, and just not get paid as much as we were.

**Laylee:** Yeah, I love that. Thank you for sharing that. Kind of like switching into you've now chosen the model that you wanted to hone in on, you've chosen what you want, and you know that this is like the direction you want to take the company. How did you help people in your client, like in your ideal client base, shift their mindset from that one-off brand shoot that was so common at that time?

And because, like you said, you were also kind of like early in that, you saw the industry shifting and you shifted with it. How did you guide your ideal client into shifting their mindset to treating that visual content as like an ongoing

system? How did you get them to understand how important that system was to them, not just to you, if that makes sense?

**Lyrik:** Yeah, no, it makes total sense. And I think it started with us not looking at the industry norms or the standards, and basing our entire business model off of that. So something that in the early days of Workplay that was really key for us is saying, "Okay, all of these photographers have all of these restrictions around their content.

We're not actually photographers. We're more of a content creation comp..." Like, we saw a bigger vision than that And so none of the rules of the photography industry in our heads apply to us. We're gonna give you everything that was shot. We're going to give it to you in a really fast turnaround time. To us, we were looking not necessarily at the pain points.

I don't think we realized at the time, in full transparency, that's what was happening. But ultimately, we were ... We had a vision for what we wanted our client experience to be, and the industry had no influence over that. And so outside looking in, it seemed very disruptive. And so, um, at the core of that, I would say, when it comes to the quarterly shoots that we were doing, we

It, it didn't take a lot of convincing, to be honest. Like, because we had a vision for how the workflow should look like based off of client pain points and what they were experiencing. And so to tell the client, "You need to do four shoots a year," they were like, "Yeah, of course I do, because I'm already asking you.

I, I need more content." So to them, it was just an integrated, uh, thing. To them, it was ... There wasn't really convincing. It was like, "Thank God you offer this. I've been looking for this." So I think it was twofold of not looking at the industry like a blueprint, and then also listening to the client saying, "Oh yeah, you guys are asking us for more content.

We need to shift our model that allows us to give you more content." So it was all layered on top of, um, itself. But I would say absolutely listening to your client, not using your industry as a blueprint

**Laylee:** I love that. And I also, I would love to hear a little bit more about how you keep the noise kind of quiet.

And we've talked about this before, actually, like just ourselves one-on-one in the past, of kinda keeping your head down, keeping your blinders on. Like, can you talk a little bit about that? Because I feel like you do a really good job of

not letting the industry dictate what you're going to do, and what, like, you know is best for your company and your people and your clients and your team.

And the way that you guys have grown so quickly, I think speaks to the benefits of that. So like, how, how do you do that? Because I feel like obviously, personality has a lot to do with it, but if, if you're somebody who generally takes a lot of education and that... And I think, I mean, obviously, like, as an educator, I always think it's important to, to do that.

And I see you going to conferences. Obviously, you're going a lot of times to speak, but I also see you investing in other, like, networking events and things like that. Like, how do you quiet the noise around you?

**Lyrik:** So there is definitely a difference between looking at your industry for inspiration, and then looking at other industries for inspiration.

And I would say we've always looked at other industries for inspiration, and we have taken blueprints from other industries, and the reason why it's so disruptive is because we're not looking at our own industry or our own competitors and what they're doing. And so it looks like this unique mechanism that's already been proven in a different industry.

So it is still a safe option to go into, but it feels very disruptive 'cause it's never been done in this industry. So I would always say, like, go ... Like, noise is okay as long as you are 1- it's noise coming from a different, you know, uh, source other than your competitors, right? Or else that's not really doing anything for you.

Um, I would also say having a really big vision. I mean, I remember 2021, we're like, "I am taking inspiration from Uber and how they scale. I'm taking inspiration from Drybar and how they scale," right? It's like we've got big, big visions for Workplay And I think that big vision is a true north star for us, where it's like, doesn't matter what anyone else is doing, we're on this

We're on ... We're in our own lane. In full transparency, for five years since we started Workplay, I was in my own four walls. I was not out there doing anything, because I needed to really build the product without noise. And once I had that product, once I had that unique mechanism, going out into the world was so much easier, because now you've got a lot of value that you can give other people, and it's not the same as what everyone is doing.

And so again, you ... It makes you stand out. Um, so I would be really focused on what your unique mechanism is in your offer or your product, and then go all in on that. I mean, if I haven't said it enough, it's like, do not look at your industry standards for inspiration. That is, that is true noise that you absolutely don't need in your head when you're building your, your product.

**Laylee:** Yeah. Yeah, I completely agree. And I would love to hear about your process when it comes to finding inspiration, and how you stay strategic so that you're kinda leading the trends and not chasing them and not just doing that copy/paste, like what is everybody else doing. Um, I love that you said you built it within your four walls, and you were like really, really careful to build it, you know, in a silo.

Like you are, you are just finding what's uniquely you first, and then you're going out. So I feel like a lot ... I, I guess my question here is like either share, through sharing your process or just through kind of breaking it down into the how, like what are a few steps that people can take when it comes to finding what's unique to them?

Because I, in our world, in our society, in our creative industry, um, that all of our listeners are, are in right now, it's so hard to find something. It's actually, it's ... I don't think it's so hard. I think people think that it is so hard to find what makes them unique and what makes their offer unique, and to build something that is different.

I think so many entrepreneurs are struggling with the overthinking and overcomplicating of that, that I would love to hear your thought process on what are some things that people can be doing right now to identify what could be That big dream, that big thing for them that you were able to kind of like hone in on for yourself.

**Lyrik:** Yeah. So first of all, you h- I, I mean, we're all working for our customer right now, right? We're not working for other people in our industry, we're working for our customer. So if you can have blinders on of just what your customer is coming to, coming to you for, that's gonna tell you a lot. So what are they wanting from you?

That's gonna give you a lot of like self-awareness of like, "What are, what am I actually good at?" You might be doing things that you're just more like generalized at, right? I see a lot of generalists, especially in the creative space, like we wanna do everything for everyone 'cause we're so creative and we wanna go here, and we wanna go there.

And it's like, well, but what are people coming to you for? What are they attracted to you around? That's probably your sweet spot. So once you have your sweet spot, I would also then look at, well, what are people objecting to like purchasing around your sweet spot around? So I'll give you an example of this.

With Workplay, we're actually transitioning out of the four shoots a year model, and we're transitioning into a credit system. So this is going to allow people to book from like, with credits on an hourly basis, rather than doing a big shoot every single quarter. And the reason why we switched that model is because we started getting objections on our sales calls saying, "Well, I am not going to use a seven-hour shoot.

I only need it for four hours," or, "I only need it for two hours here and then two hours here," or, "Can you actually split up that shoot, um, so I could use three hours on this day and then four hours on the next day?" And we're like, "Oh, our model's not made for that, so no, we cannot." And it became such an issue that we're like, "We need to switch our model."

Um, and so that is what, what brought us to this crediting system. Turns out no one in our industry does that. So that is a unique mechanism that is totally proprietary to Workplay Branding. And so just by being so like cognizant of our ideal client and listening, we now have a blueprint and a pathway to create these unique things that do not exist in the world.

But we have to have a lot of self-awareness around what we're good at so that we now know, like, okay, this, this ideal client that's asking me for this thing is actually qualified. Like we know that they're coming to us for content. Now we can create a, a model for them that actually- Moves with what they need because we're listening to their objections to our current model.

So that's a really easy way you can figure that out for yourself.

**Laylee:** Uh, that was really helpful. I feel like one thing that you mentioned is nobody else was doing that, right? And I think that's such an interesting statement because sometimes we think nobody else is doing that, so it means that it's not proven, and I shouldn't do it because there's a reason it doesn't exist, right?

And so people tend to overthink that and think ... And maybe that's, maybe that's true sometimes, and it could be true sometimes. But I think it's always worth the exploration of like, is it, has it not been done before because people

are just fine with the status quo, or has it not been done before because it's not a good idea?

And I know that like back in 2018 when I started the Creative Educator Academy and nobody was really talking about what I was talking about, I was really nervous because I was thinking, "I'm gonna have to do so much educating on why this is important and why I believe in this, that it's gonna be so hard."

And then since then, so, like it's, it's exploded and I'm now like competing with my own initial first unique thought. So I thought that was really interesting that you said that, 'cause I went through the same process. And I actually think it deterred me for so long, seeing that it was so unique, and I was nervous that nobody would respond well to it.

And now I'm like, "Oh, I need to up the way that I, I need to up my sales game," because now it's so proven that like I've gotta, I've gotta differentiate in a new way. So that's been really interesting.

**Lyrik:** This is just the life cycle of markets, right? Like, it's, it's very, um, common to now see even photographers offering subscription-based things.

At the time of Workplay, it wasn't. And so when you're an innovator and you're at the front lines of your innovation, that is going to be a constant thing. So I would say like, not, you don't have to be an innovator. There's tons of proven concepts out there. You're gonna make a lot of money doing that. But if you are an innovator, that just is going to come with the territory.

You are going to have to educate your ICA on why these things are important. But if you're listening to your current clientele on their desires and their objections, it shouldn't feel like a heavy lift. It should feel like a, "Oh my gosh," like, "This is so cool," or yes, they get, they get magnetized to your offer because of that.

So you wanna make sure you're innovating based off of data as well.

**Laylee:** That's super helpful. I- it reminds me of the Educators Lounge, our membership. I just did, like, a full overhaul, and I basically am going against every piece of advice that's given about, like, a one-to-many offer, and I'm going, like, very high touch based on listening to our members for the past year.

If I listen to the, quote-unquote, experts, I would not do this. But their, the response, like you said, it was like that magnetic, like, "Oh my gosh, thank you.

This is what we wanted." It's such a no-brainer when you, when you put it that way, so I love that. That was super helpful Um, I'd love to hear a little bit, before we wrap up, um, I'd love to hear a little bit about how, uh, you are, like what you're up to right now, because obviously we had you at the Creative Educator Conference as our video sponsor and partner, and that was amazing.

So I'd love to hear about, I see you traveling, I see you going and speaking a lot. Are you growing your personal brand separately than Workplay? Are you sticking with Workplay as like your go-to? Like give us a little bit of like a sneak peek into what's next with Lyrik.

**Lyrik:** Yeah, totally. I am starting to become more visible on my personal brand.

Like I had mentioned before, for the first five years of Workplay, it was just like in my four walls of my apartment, just grinding it out. Um, and now I'm starting to become a little bit more forward facing with the brand. I think that's the era that we're in right now. It's definitely founder led. People wanna know the behind the scenes, they wanna know who is behind the actual company.

But I also think, you know, the content for the company is also really important as well. So I am kind of teetering those two things. Uh, it makes it very easy when I've got a whole content team as a business model, um, I'm not gonna lie, but we're making that even easier for our members to kind of get what I've been getting as a founder, where I'm able to just say, "Hey, guys, like, can you come to this conference that I'm coming, that I'm going to and speaking at?"

So with the credit system, our members will actually be able to like experience kind of what I've experienced for the past like five- I was

**Laylee:** gonna say like, yeah, it makes it easy for you, but like you're making it easier for everybody to be able to say that same thing. Well, I- So

**Lyrik:** yeah ... I kind of figured, I'm like, okay, as I'm becoming more visible, I'm also becoming my own ICA, right?

And realizing that, wow, yeah, I probably wouldn't use a seven-hour shoot, um, for, uh, just my personal brand these days. I, I need, I need someone there as I'm, uh, speaking. I need someone there filming behind the scenes. I need just regular content when I'm home in Miami where I can start posting. So I, I mean, it's kind of, it's, it's derived from a lot of different things like clients and me actually experiencing, um, my own process.

But, um, that is what I'm doing. I'm definitely growing both brands. We're in the middle of a big rebrand and a tech launch for Workplay, so there's a lot of behind the scenes that I'm doing as a founder that's being shared on Workplay's account as well. But it's just, it's been a whirlwind trying to change the model and then also Uh, create a tech platform that makes it even easier for our members to do on-demand booking, have a credit system where they get to do a two-hour shoot here in New York City, or if they want a five-hour shoot in Paris, they can do that.

Like, it's so much more flexible. So it's been a heavy lift, but I think when you are growing a company, and you're building an amazing company, an innovative company, you have so many ways to create content because the documentation of that building of your company is now content, is what people wanna see these days.

So it's all layered on top of one another, and I feel like we all feel like this, like we're doing five things at once, but I think it's all compounding together.

**Laylee:** That's amazing. I think so many people listening to this will be like, as a speaker, as somebody who's showing up multiple places, like, what a dream.

So I love that, and I love hearing about your, your own personal journey as well. Okay, so I always like to wrap up with a quick little rapid fire, quick rapid fire fun questions. Are you down?

**Lyrik:** Let's do it.

**Laylee:** Okay. She's n- by the way, if you're listening, you, you need to know I never prepare any guest for this.

So just know that these are like, we're just going with it, okay? And also, for context, Lyrik is planning her wedding right now, so one of the questions is obviously gonna have to be about that. Okay. What is the thing you're most looking forward to when it comes to your wedding?

**Lyrik:** Oh my gosh. Well, my wedding's in France, so I'm most looking forward to just being in Europe for the summer, and then also being in Europe with all of my best friends and closest family members.

I, I don't know. I'm, I'm big on experiences, and I just think it's gonna be the most amazing time of our entire lives.

**Laylee:** I love that so much. Oh, I'm so excited to stalk everything about that. Okay. Um, rapid fire question two is do, are you, like, a binge watcher? Or like, how do you spend your free time, and if so, like, what are you watching right now?

**Lyrik:** Okay. I do not watch any kind of TV during the week usually. If I do watch TV, it is Murder Docs all the way. It makes me feel better about my life, and I'm like, "Oh, it could be worse." Um, and so it actually eases my anxiety, even though it, you would think it would do the opposite. I love a good murder documentary.

I have seen all of them. Um, so I'm constantly like, "When is the next one coming out?" And then if I'm not watching a murder documentary, I'm watching a space documentary about UFOs, aliens, or anything like that. I'm such a total nerd about this. But again, it eases my anxiety, because whenever I'm like stressed about something, I'm like, "We are on a giant rock floating through space.

It's not that serious."

**Laylee:** It's not that serious. I love that. But also, Lyrik, not you being like, "I could be murdered, so it could be..."

**Lyrik:** I mean, this is how I ease anxiety. Everyone's got their ways. This is how I do it.

**Laylee:** I love it. I'm actually here for it, and you know what? I think I might have to adop- adopt that.

Like, um, your girl could've been murdered, so we're gonna be okay. And honestly, it's not that serious. That's amazing. Okay, what is the one trend you're seeing right now, like out in the world, in social, on social, in real life, it doesn't matter. What's something you're like, that's giving you like cringe vibes?

Like, what's something you literally hate?

**Lyrik:** Oh, I hate anything that's too, like, educational and fluffy. Here's how to do this thing in three steps. One, two, three, and like that's the content. I wanna see the journey. I wanna see your behind the scenes. I wanna see what you're doing. Like, I don't know. I feel like, uh, I don't, I don't know.

That's my, that's mine.

**Laylee:** I feel like that speaks so much to like the cookie cutter, like anybody can do that, but I wanna see like how you're doing it and what you're doing.

**Lyrik:** Yeah.

**Laylee:** Yeah.

**Lyrik:** And I want, I want nuance. Like I, and even I get this sometimes, like when people get on stages and start speaking, like, and it's like very fluffy.

Like, no, I wanna know the nitty-gritty. Like, I wanna know what you did to get from 50 employees to 100, and what the issues were and like how you overcame them. Like, I want nuance and I want speci- specificity in what you're saying and what you're doing and what you're sharing.

**Laylee:** I love that, 'cause my next question was gonna be what are you loving seeing.

So would that be the, would this be the answer?

**Lyrik:** That's the answer.

**Laylee:** Amazing. 10 out of 10. Okay. Well that's my, that was our quick rapid fire. I loved it. That was fun. I really have fun with that. I wish I could just do like nothing but rapid fire with everybody. I want more. I

**Lyrik:** want more rapid fire.

**Laylee:** I know, I'm like, what else can I ask you right now?

That was amazing. Well, thank you so much, Lyrik. Okay, y'all, check out Work Play Branding. Honestly, can't thank you enough for all your candor and your transparency. I always love talking with you.

**Lyrik:** Thank you so much for having me. Like I said, it's such an honor being a part of anything that you're doing.

**Laylee:** Oh, thank you, friend.

All right, y'all, we will catch you on the next episode. I hope everyone has a great week, and share your biggest takeaways on social, share this with a friend,

uh, that you think it would, it would resonate with. We always love being able to spread all of this fun, free content with you guys. See y'all next week Thanks for tuning in to the Laylee Emadi podcast.

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Until next time, keep showing up, keep sharing your voice, and keep leading with purpose