



## Season 6: International Marketing and Brand Management Episode 1

### **Stacie Berdan**

*International Careers Expert  
(Podcast Host)*

### **Philippe Harousseau**

*Fractional CMO  
Chief Outsiders*

[Music]

#### **Stacie Berdan:**

Welcome to the global careers podcast sponsored by GW-CIBER – THE source for inspiring stories from seasoned professionals who have embraced a global role and reaped the benefits. We offer practical advice and insider tips across a broad swath of industries and fields around the world. Whether or not you've considered moving abroad or taking on an international role, globalization will impact your career. So join us for a lively discussion as we explore what an international career really means. My name is Stacie Nevadomski Berdan and I'll be your host!

In Season 6, we focus on the challenges and opportunities in global careers in marketing, communications and brand management. What are the rising trends and skills employers in the field are seeking in new hires? Join us as we hear from award-winning international marketing professionals as they share their stories working on some of the most iconic brands around the world. Today I have the pleasure of interviewing Philippe Harousseau, Fractional CMO at Chief Outsiders. Philippe is a pioneering marketing executive and purpose driven leader who delivers share gains and profitable growth for both large and fast-growing businesses. He has worked at leading and progressive organizations like Unilever, Shiseido, GoGo squeeZ, YuMove, while delivering results through unconventional marketing approaches, disruptive innovation, brand expansion, and brand purpose, for which the Dove campaign for Real Beauty was one of. A global citizen with dual French and American citizenship, Philippe has held multiple regional and global roles while working and living in Paris, Istanbul, London, New York, and now Atlanta. Philippe speaks French and English. And we are so happy to have you with us today. Welcome!

#### **Philippe Harousseau:**

Thank you, Stacie.

#### **Stacie Berdan:**

Great. So, one of the objectives of this podcast is to provide a sense of the careers that are out there – more than just titles. Tell us, what does a Fractional CMO do?

#### **Philippe Harousseau:**

Yeah, so I'm a fractional CMO with Chief Outsiders, and what I do is that I basically help CEOs of small to mid-size organizations, transform their vision into growth plan. And we've set that up, because the founder of Chief Outsiders, realized that CEOs of small to mid-size companies just simply could not afford a full time experienced CMO, that the fractional concept enabled us to come and help them – sit at the leadership table, become their trusted advisors, and help them stop doing random acts of marketing, and really having a growth plan instead. Does that make sense?

#### **Stacie Berdan:**

No, it makes perfect sense and brilliant. And of course, you were able to bring all of your decades of experience as a marketing pro across so many amazing brands to bear on all of these clients. So that's cool. I really want to go...



Yeah, I want to go back a bit to the time and ask you about the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty because that was one of the groundbreaking campaigns of its time for sure. Can you talk about that and brand purpose?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Yes, no, it was groundbreaking. And to be very clear, I had nothing to do with the inception of this brilliant campaign. My role and that of my team was to launch it in the US. And that in itself was very exciting. I think there were two things that were fundamentally disruptive at the time. The first thing is that this campaign was all driven by PR. It was not a campaign driven by paid media. It was a campaign where we banked that our story would pick up interest. And it's interesting because, nowadays, we call these paid media, owned media, earned media, but that then the terms were not coined. And we were kind of discovering how to play with three different kinds of media. Now, the most exciting one is undoubtedly the purpose nature of that campaign. And again, we didn't really know that it was purpose. We knew that there were very strong insights in the insecurities that women had with a stereotypical definition of beauty. And we knew that it was important for a brand like Dove to have a point of view. But what we discovered is that the sharpness, the relevance of that point of view made a win-win perspective where you could do well and do good at the same time. And actually, over time, many brands have realized the power of a purpose – not only to do good for their communities, but you have their brands do well.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Absolutely. And that was that just an amazing one, and still continues to be, right. I know it has evolved, and you're not working on it anymore, but it but it really does stand as a beacon in marketing, which makes me go back. So, your French and you were working for the U.S. part of Dove, but it's still as part of an international marketing team. What do you think it takes today to be successful in marketing on a global scale?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Well, I think it takes curiosity and humility, right. We are all born in a specific country, in a specific cultural environment. And the minute you move into an international environment, the background is different. And the cultural environment is different. It's not better or worse, it is different. I've lived in four different countries, I am sorry to tell you none of them was perfect. Right? They all had good things and bad things. What is difficult is that when you do it for the first time, the background is changing. And your cultural reference points are a bit lost. And it takes curiosity to go and discover and understand and not judge, and humility. The first time, the first country I worked in was Turkey. While being French, it didn't make me any better than the people who lived in Turkey; my approach didn't make it any better than that of my Turkish friends. And that humility is absolutely critical in your ability to understand another culture, understand another environment.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Oh, great. I love that – curiosity and humility. That's wonderful, wonderful. Makes me think... how do you then, kind of diving a little deeper, how do you successfully market one product or brand across a variety of cultures, right, and different languages, different things? And do you have any mistakes, not necessarily your own, but teams or things that you can share with listeners, to really highlight how challenging it can be to take one product and actually market it around the world specifically to those local markets.

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Yeah, I actually came across an article recently on the Business News Daily, which was called “Lost in Translation: 13 International Marketing Fails”. And I would recommend for the audience to google it and read it, because it's a great article. And I stayed clear of most of those. Actually, the one that was closest to me that's mentioned in this article is the challenges that Dolce Gabbana had when they were trying to mix Chinese culture and Italian culture in a way that was culturally insensitive. And I was at Shiseido at the time and we had a license for a fragrance, and it was a mistake that we hope that had not happened. So, I will encourage your... I will encourage the audience to



read that article. But to go back to your question... I think there are two things – there is the insight, the core, the basis of your brand and your proposition. And in most cases, that insight tends to be universal. It tends to be relevant in many different countries, many different cultural environments. And then there is the way you express it, and that is a place where you can have... where there can be more difficulties and where things can be lost in translation. If... you know, we started talking about the Dove campaign and I remember that the very first iteration of the campaign was about women of different sizes and shapes and curves and not curves. And I remember that back then this expression of the negative impact of the known definition of beauty, this expression through the various body types was highly relevant. In the U.S. culture, where indeed you have, you know, you have people of different body types, but we also realized that it was probably more difficult in some other countries... I can think of Japan, for instance, where the diversity in terms of body types is not as pronounced as it is in the U.S. And, as you mentioned it so brilliantly, this is a campaign that has... that keeps going. And I recently came across the work that was done in the Middle East. That was absolutely stunning. Because the insight – the sense of insecurities, the sense of forced definition of what a woman should do or look like – were still completely there, but it had been totally adapted, dovetailed (pun intended) to the specific situation in the Middle East. And that's where, you know, that's why I want to make the difference between the insight, the core, the thing that is more likely to be universal, and the expression, the translation, the adaptation, where being careful about the local sensitivities or the local relevance is critical.

**Stacie Berdan:**

That's great, well said, thank you for that. And I'm gonna ask you a follow up question. So, that's local cultural sensitivities, and I love it, it's core brand insight and how its expressed and the relevance... but how about the insight of an organization? So, you're just talking about the brand consumers, but what about the insight of an organization, that kind of smart or dynamic tension that occurs on global teams? Sometimes it has to do with finance, sometimes it has to do with timelines, how do you handle that on a global team?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

I'm not sure that you handle it differently than you do in a local organization.

You know, if you're talking about the normal tension that happens from a cross functional perspective, I think you just do it the same way. I think it's really the tension that I think is specific to being a global brand, is really that tension between what are the things that are essential to the brand and can never change and what are the things that are more executional and that can be adapted, right. It's also that some of the... it can also be about... You know, I'm gonna tell you a story of another brand that I worked for – that brand is GoGo squeeZ. And GoGo squeeZ is basically a very healthy snack for kids. It's basically applesauce in a pouch. And it comes with different with different variants. And in the U.S. one of our top variants was, of course, apple cinnamon, because cinnamon is the flavor of choice in the U.S. In my first country, cinnamon is absolutely not liked, right. And the cinnamon variant does not even exist in France. On the other hand, they have a variant which is basically apple chestnuts, right, which would do awful in the U.S. because chestnut is not a typical dessert flavor or sweet flavor that we have in the U.S. But it's a killer in France. And you know, what I'm trying to bring to you through that example is that, yes, they are products that are different, but no, they are not fundamentally different. They share the same core principle, they share the same insight about the mother and the kids, about what's important and healthy and good for them. But then the presentation can change just to reflect, in this case, local tastes.

**Stacie Berdan:**

That's cool. I like that. Thanks for sharing that. That's neat. Going back a little bit, or maybe taking a 30,000-foot view, what do you see as the biggest change or maybe challenge that globalization has had on marketing in the past couple of years? Kind of like... COVID withstanding, because that's kind of an obvious one.



**Philippe Harousseau:**

I think they are related. Because, you know, I will confide to you that I finished business school more than a decade ago, and I'm underplaying it... But when I started my career, what was happening in an international context – the Berlin Wall had fallen down, European countries were getting together and creating the euro, the Internet was created and was becoming an opportunity to make the globe even smaller. And in a way, I had a lot of tailwinds, you know, there were a lot of things that were making globalization something that there was right, that was the “in” thing to do. There was a lot of drive to be as inclusive and as global as we could be. You fast forward to 2023. What are the things that are... the things that we're seeing are very different. We see a trend to saying that globalization is not that great and are trying to say, can we focus more on our countries, right? And you have situations like Brexit, you have situations like COVID, you have situations, unfortunately, like the current war in Ukraine, that have a tendency to bring us back more to nations rather than the globe. And I think that the generation that's coming up, is actually... is likely to face headwinds, when mine faced tailwinds. At the same time, there is no more pressing need to market, act globally. You know, the climate change is on us and we're never going to be able to do anything at nations level. The lung of the planet is in Brazil, it's in Amazonia. And we can say whatever we want to, there is no other lung for the planet anywhere else. And so, at a time where they will be headwinds for the new generation, there will be actually a greater need, a greater existential need of acting globally.

**Stacie Berdan:**

On that point, what do you think marketers, those starting out early in their career now, what kind of jobs are out there for them to do? You've just described a very different kind of world, right, as you've watched it evolve and worked through it. But what kind of jobs are out there now for them to do?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

You know, I think they're going to find the same jobs as the one that my generation created. You know, the global marketing rules and the local roles, I see them continuing to exist. I work with a lot of small organizations who expand themselves internationally and need the benefit of global thinking. So, I don't see a big change on that balance between local role and global roles. If that's the answer to your question.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Yeah, yeah, sure. No, absolutely. And anything that you see that's out there. But clearly, marketing matters. It's just the way you do it, how you do it, and adapting to the evolving consumer market and what matters to them, right?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Correct.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Yeah, yeah. So you are French, as we can tell with your accent, and you've been working in the U.S. for a long time. How have you had to adapt? And what have you learned, you know, that our listeners would benefit from? Because this podcast is all about global careers, and a lot of times it's U.S. citizens going abroad. But we have international students, and we have international listeners, actually, who want to go to a different market. So, how have you had to adapt?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

I was lucky for two reasons. First of all, the U.S. was the fourth country I lived in. So, I had already understood the need to be humble and curious. The second thing is that my wife was American, so I had constant exposure to the American culture. So those two things made things easier for me. I think the adapting is, as I said early on, it's understanding that France is France, with its strengths and weaknesses, and that the U.S is the U.S. with its strengths and weaknesses, and that you have to play to the environment that you're in. And, you know, because we



talked about the Dove campaign, I'm going to share an anecdote. And I don't know if I talked to you about that when we were both working on that campaign, but basically, I ended up being the spokesperson for that campaign and taking numerous calls with journalists. And very early on in the campaign came the opportunity to have a TV interview, and I don't know why I had the good sense that day to turn it down. And I remember going to the team at Edelman, and I told them I am not going to take a TV interview. Because I am French, I have an accent, and my Frenchness and my accent could distort the message of the campaign. My American public may not hear the genuineness and commitment that we have on that campaign if they hear it coming from not only a male, but a French now, with an accent. And I told them, don't you fret, I'm going to find you an avatar of me, someone who is going to be an American woman and who will be answering all the questions. And from that day on, I actually took all of the press questions, you know, because my accent doesn't show in writing, but whenever we needed someone on TV, I had an avatar who was doing it.

**Stacie Berdan:**

I remember that. And that's brilliant, great way to really sense your audience and to know what's right and what's wrong when you're working in, you know, in a global market especially, in a market that's not your home market. That's great. Can you share with us – it's a question that a lot of our listeners ask – one of the biggest challenges you felt you have faced in your career and how you dealt with it?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Well, listen, for those who know me, they know that I am an extrovert. And the very common issue with extroverts is that they use their mouth more than they use their ears. And certainly in my career, and certainly in my first expat assignment, this was a challenge. This was a challenge, because, you know, if you think about curiosity and humility, it is best to express those two things by listening, then by speaking, you know. And one of my vulnerability is that, if I don't pay close enough attention, I can easily talk too much and miss the other very important thing, probably the most important thing, which is listening.

**Stacie Berdan:**

That's great. That is wonderful. And that's super important in different cultures than our own as well, because so many times, if we talk too much, we don't give the pause, and others continue to pause while we're paused, so we fill in the blank, right. I imagine you've had. That's happened to me in many places around the world – I think, oh, they have nothing to say, so I should just keep talking.

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Yeah, well, there is that. But there is also the fact that when you are in a different culture, you should be listening twice. You should be listening to what he said, right, but you also should be listening to what it means. What does it mean in such and such culture to not say anything? You know, I've worked a lot with Japan. And, you know, in Western environments, we assume that if we don't hear no, it means yes, right. Well, in Japan if you don't hear yes, it means no. So, all of a sudden, it is not only about doing a great job at listening, which some of us like me can need a bit of a reminder, but it's also going that extra mile of saying, okay, I heard it, but don't forget that this is not your cultural background, and that in that cultural background, what you heard means something different than what it would mean if you were in Paris.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Absolutely. Wonderful. That's a wonderful example. Thank you for sharing that. Thank you. You've given lots of advice already, but is there one piece of advice that you'd like to give listeners who are interested in pursuing a career in marketing today?



**Philippe Harousseau:**

Marketing is at a stage where it has changed so much in the past thirty years, and it continues to change. And I think that for anyone who is excited about an ever-changing environment, and discovering new ways to interact with our audience, I think this is exciting. And I think that being in marketing today is a promise of never getting bored, because you're going to have to learn every day and change what you do, you know, very, very often. If you like routine though, it may not be the best option for you. In terms of the international scene, well, first of all, I would like to encourage our best and our brightest to engage on the international sphere, because I think that the future of the planet actually depends on it. And, you know, my advice is to go and have fun, right. It is incredibly... it's a lot of fun to discover new people who do things differently. It's incredibly rewarding to augment your knowledge, to augment your appreciation of the entire world by understanding, you know, how someone living with very limited amount of money in a two-room apartment in Mumbai, India can live there with eight people, right. It is so rewarding to see things that are just different. Not better, not worse, just different from what's happening in my neighborhood in Decatur, Georgia.

**Stacie Berdan:**

Absolutely. Well said, that is great. Fun, exciting and rewarding, but gotta be on your game all the time. What piece of advice would you go back and give your younger self, anything different than what you've shared today?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

No, I think that the advice is about knowing your strengths and weaknesses and being self-aware as quickly as you can. And in my case, I shared a challenge for an extrovert of using my ears more often than my mouth even though my natural inclination is to talk. And, you know, I wish I had understood that, you know, as I was a teenager!

**Stacie Berdan:**

This has been a wonderful, wonderful conversation, Philippe. But before I let you go, because I know you are a busy man, is there anything else you'd like to add for our audience, maybe something I didn't ask or something you'd like to share?

**Philippe Harousseau:**

No, I think... First of all, it was great talking to you, Stacie, I think it's always fun. This topic is really exciting. And, you know, the only thing I want to share with your audience is to repeat my encouragement to go on the global scene, and to go there with no preconceived idea, no set mindset, and just enjoy the ride, learn and become a better person from all the learning you would have had.

**Stacie Berdan:**

That's fantastic, great advice. It has been wonderful catching up with you, Philippe, after all these years, and loved working with you, Unilever was great... and super excited about your latest adventure as a Fractional CMO at Chief Outsiders, that's terrific, that's great! Thank you so much for taking the time.

**Philippe Harousseau:**

Thank you, Stacie.

[Music]

**Stacie Berdan:**

You have been listening to the GW-CIBER Global Careers podcast. Join us again next time, and in the meantime – go global!