

# E130-Darby-Maloney

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people, product manager, product, engineers, tech, job, management, pool, friends, posted, work, tick tock, video, tik tok, twitter, marshalling, prove, generally, feel, stand

## SPEAKERS

Darby Maloney, Jason Knight

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Jason Knight 00:00

Hello and welcome to the show. I'm your host, Jason Knight, and on each episode of this podcast, I'll be having inspiring conversations with passionate product people. If that sounds like your cup of tea, why not head over to <https://oneknightinproduct.com>, where you can find interviews with some of the finest minds in and around product management beans the back catalogue, subscribe on your favourite podcast app or share with your friends. And if you fancy popping some spare change in my tip jar to help with hosting costs, there's a handy donate link to stop me turning to the dark side of having to read out can advertising text at gunpoint. On tonight's episode, we take the plunge and dive headfirst into the recent TikTok and Twitter phenomenon where a female product manager had the audacity to post a video of her working from a pool and the inevitable on sort of abuse that headed her way. We talk about how the video came about how the response to it demonstrates so much about the low value ascribed to product management and how women in tech often find themselves undervalued demeaned, and having to work twice as hard to prove their worth. We also ponder whether kicking up all this fuss was worth it in the end. And if any of the haters managed to redeem themselves with having a good old think about what they've done for this and much more, please join us on One Knight in Product.



Jason Knight 01:15

So my guest tonight is Darby Maloney. Darby's a former marketer and previously an airport ramp agent whose career has now been granted runway clearances taken off into a clear blue skies of product management. As an avid TikTokker, Darby's well used to vying for people's eyeballs to her channel but came to the internet's attention recently when she posted a video about her day job as a product manager. And she posted it from a swimming pool. Aside from people wondering whether she could see the screen in the sun, this also kicked off a procession of tiresome tech bloggers who variously had opinions about her worth as a person, as a product manager, or the very fact that any product managers exist at all. She's here tonight to talk about the video the aftermath and to stand up to the haters. And I can assure you there's not a waterway in sight. Hi, Darby, how are you tonight?



Darby Maloney 01:55

Good. How are you doing?



Jason Knight 01:57

I am doing wonderfully well. And I can assure our listeners that I also am not in a swimming pool tonight.



Darby Maloney 02:03

I can vouch for you there.



Jason Knight 02:05

Although with the magic of virtual backgrounds, we could make that happen.



Darby Maloney 02:10

That's true.



Jason Knight 02:11

All right. So first things first, it started the beginning, set the scene. So you're working in product management now. But you've obviously had a few roles in your career before that. So you've been working in marketing, you've been working in customer services, you worked at some airport, which I definitely have some questions about, which I will ask in a minute. But I guess the first question is, from a product management perspective, like how was it you got into product management in the first place? Was it a case of Right Place Right Time? Or did you have some kind of game plan to get in in the first place?



Darby Maloney 02:37

Yeah, I think a little bit of both. So I started working at a tech company on the support team. And my goal is to get into the marketing department. And then while working on support was very exposed to a lot of bugs problems working with engineers, we were very small. So the support team had the ability to talk to engineers directly. And through that, I thought, this is fun, like problem solving at this level is much more fun than a problem solving level I'd done in past marketing jobs, and kind of thought, okay, maybe I'll do a boot camp, get some coding skills, learn to be an engineer. And then while kind of diving into that route, came across product management and realise that's where my passion lies, I want to do that. And here we are.



Jason Knight 03:24

And here we are. But that's interesting, because I've always thought that people that are kind of on the frontline of, as you say, kind of customer support. And also I kind of have this opinion about maybe QA people as well, these people that are exposed at the front line and getting all of the nonsense and all of the feature requests and all the bugs that are coming in from the users will probably make inherently good product managers, aside from maybe technical skills and the strategic stuff which they maybe have to develop. Do you think that that's fair? Or do you think that you're maybe an outlier? In that case? i How do you see maybe some of the people that you've worked with in those roles? Do you think that there's a natural hunting ground for product managers?



Darby Maloney 04:00

Oh, I I absolutely do I think a lot of support reps in general, our customer service reps are good with people. They're good at De escalating problems. And then they're hearing from the customer exactly where the problem lies. And they know the product better than anyone else. And so I think those two combinations, make perfect candidates for product managers and helping decide what's the most valuable thing for a team to work on. And there's a lot of you might get into this, but it was a lot of, you know, engineers, a lot of people think engineers should be product managers as well. I think if an engineer doesn't have the passion for people and speaking with the customer, then there will be a disconnect between the actual problem and what's being worked on. Or can be maybe not every time but I do think that that is a huge point that's missed. Oftentimes when people say product managers are not valuable.



Jason Knight 05:00

Yeah, absolutely. Now, we absolutely will be talking about that in a minute. But I completely agree that you need to be a certain, or you need to have a certain interest and a certain view of the world and a certain passion to actually solve real problems. Otherwise, you just end up in something like web three, or something like that just burning technology for technology's sake. But as a former developer, myself, I'm more than prepared to stand up for the fact that product managers can come from an engineering background, but they absolutely don't have to. And in many ways, I think it's better to have people from a variety of different backgrounds. But product management isn't an easy thing to get into. You don't have to go too far online, to find people complaining about how they can't get that tricky first product management job. Everyone's looking for experience, but they can't get the experience because they didn't have the job and so forth. So you've got this whole kind of chicken and egg situation going on. So how was that for you? Did you find it quite easy to get that kind of transfer into product based on the experience that you had from a tangential role? Or did you find that still kind of tricky?



Darby Maloney 06:02

It was definitely tricky. It was definitely an uphill battle, I ended up finding a product manager at the company I was at who took me under his wing as a mentor of sorts. And that was the key for me is having someone with a voice someone with experience to kind of tell me what

product management is on a product that I understood and was working with daily. Yeah. And then I was working until seven or eight at night, doing whatever the product manager, I was working with what let me get my hands on, in addition to my actual job from nine to five. And so that went on for a little over a year, I didn't even get I interviewed I think three times before I was even offered a role. So it was definitely uphill battle I took, I took some SQL courses online, just to kind of up my game. And then I would work with the engineers on different mutations that I could hit from the support side that would save them time, that would also have my technical background. And then I ended up taking a product management course from Berkeley. That was just three months. And it was just kind of a deep dive into skills and different critical thinking practices. And that was also a great resume builder to break in to the actual role.



Jason Knight 07:20

Oh, there you go and get your certificate on the wall somewhere somewhere near those lovely flowers that you've got behind you. But I have to ask, it does sound pretty cool. Working at an airport and helping planes takeoff, which I do believe was one of your jobs actually helping to marshal the planes out of their stands and pointing them at the runways I guess before they then go off and do the aeroplane stuff. So how does marshalling stakeholders as a product manager compare in complexity to marshalling planes?



Darby Maloney 07:51

Yeah, marshalling planes was a lot more physically demanding. Loading bags, making sure things get out on time. I think that's one thing that's similar is responsible for deadlines and commit dates, right commit time set of planes leaving at this time. And the nice thing about marshalling planes is I left work at work, like work was done. I think with products, you can shut your computer, but that doesn't mean you're done. Yeah. Or there's not more to always be done. So, marshalling engineers, I would say is much more mentally demanding. Yeah, but also a little more fulfilling. I love being a part of a team where honestly, without them, I couldn't do it.



Jason Knight 08:33

Yeah. So yeah, you obviously gave a lot of praise in the video as well, which we'll talk about in a minute, which I think actually makes the reaction to the video a little bit more disappointing as well. But we'll come back to that in a minute. But it is time to talk about the elephant in the room, and TikTok. But before we talk about the video that started this all off, you've been pretty active on TikTok for a while. I had another look on your page earlier, you got a bunch of videos.. I couldn't even count them. Don't think there was a number. It's got an infinite scroll thing going on. You've got loads of followers as well. So you've obviously been in around TikTok for awhile but you say at the beginning of the product management video that we're about to talk about that you've got a few requests do some tech TikToc, which is what motivated that in the first place. But what were you using TikTok for before that?



Darby Maloney 09:19

Yeah, originally I made my TikTok as just a creative outlet. I didn't even associate my name with it. So my username is @durbinmalonster, which is just not my name. I thought was fine, no one that I knew was going to see these videos was my original hope. And then some videos start taking off and generally the ones that did well were just videos of me and my friends. I have a lot of girlfriends and we're very active we do like we love snowboarding,



Jason Knight 09:48

Oh there you go. You're one of the good ones. Snowboarders forever!



Darby Maloney 09:51

Yeah. Some of my some of my friends ski but we still love them.



Jason Knight 09:56

Well, we don't put those into videos.



Darby Maloney 09:59

Kelly has a... the product manager in the video, she's a skier and we, we tolerate it, but she's the only one. So, yeah, we're very active. And that always did well, just girls doing sports generally. And then a lot of my just my friends and my neighbours, just posting kind of just the fun stuff we do, and we're not at work. And that was kind of my, what my talk was all about.



Jason Knight 10:24

There you go. But you decided it was time for classic product management pivot, and started talking about work instead. But you started talking about work in a sort of a ball. And in that sort of pool, you and your friend decided to kind of give a brief introduction to product management. And kind of talk a little bit about what the job means and and what you do. Which, obviously, in and of itself is a fairly innocuous thing. But I have to ask, before we even talked about that, where you went on holiday with your friends? Do you have a pool at home? Do you always work in the pool? Or were you somewhere special? Like what was the situation that actually led to you even being with your colleagues in that pool in the first place and feeling compelled to take that video?



Darby Maloney 11:09

I was actually at a work retreat. So a work conference, we had hosted a work event for some customers. And I was there, we had done all the meetings in the morning, and then it was break all the customers were going to do activities, some of the employees had massages, and I was like, I'm gonna go to the pool for for a little bit. And so Callie was my plus one, you know,

because I had a hotel room and brought a friend. And so she was had been working all day at the hotel. And we thought let's go chill by the pool for an hour. So what's funny is, it was a workstation trip, my manager knew I was at the pool, my team knew I was at the pool. And I wasn't going to bring my computer. But what happened was, as we were about to leave, I got some questions from the engineers and said, oh, I'll just bring this and then answer any questions that come up. During my time off.



Jason Knight 12:07

Well, the as you said earlier, the product manager never really has time off, though. Yeah, but in a video, you and your friend, you say that product managers do something along the lines of and to quote, we help to prioritise and help the engineer stay on track, we help them know what to build. So you've got a product to use. You say, actually, that was her, then you say that the engineers do the developing, which is the impressive part. Design has also done an impressive part, which is everything you see. And then product managers decide what the team is gonna work on. Do competitive research, prioritise bugs, keep everyone focused, motivate people and drive people towards business outcomes. So that's, in my opinion, not a particularly bad description of product management, it seems to hit many of the beats. But do you yourself having, obviously what's that video take off? And some of the criticisms that you and product management in general got after that? Do you think there's anything missing from there? Or would you stand kind of behind that and believe that that's basically a good description of product management as a practice.



Darby Maloney 13:06

I think in context, the video was taken for my niche on TikTok, which is generally people not familiar with tech at all. And then to add to that context, Callie had no idea what video I was filming. And I was asking you those questions on the spot. And we didn't edit it. I'm just sitting there whipped out my phone and said was the product manager doing hold the phone in her face? And she's like, you know, like, there was no, this was just taken on a whim for a target audience of people with no idea of what the different roles in tech are. Yeah. So with that context, I stand by it's a good description, adding the context of them that video got taken to check Twitter, which is full of people who know a lot about tech.



Jason Knight 13:52

Or they think they do.



Darby Maloney 13:53

Yeah, they think they do.



Darby Maloney 13:55

There's way more than a product manager does. And it is interesting, because every place I've worked at product managers are expected to do different things just based on what your team

worked at product managers are expected to do different things just based on what your team needs. Yeah, it's not it's, I think lots of different product managers would describe the role generally the same and have different editions. So I do stand by it. And I also do agree that there's much more to it. And that was a very high level description.



Jason Knight 14:25

What is funny, actually, so one of the things I've asked on the podcast to a bunch of different guests, both big names and small names is to describe product management as if they were a barbecue, and that's again on the fly. And there have been a wide range of different qualities of answer to that question. So it's definitely not an easy one to answer for anyone. And I think it's just really, yeah, that really speaks to it like just, as you say, putting a phone in someone's face and saying to explain product management. But I think it's possible to win, but at the same time, again, I think from my perspective, Couple of the main beats but of course, you, as you say, put that out then for a non technical audience, for your friends and your followers, and then all of a sudden, it blew up. How long did it take that to blow up?



Darby Maloney 15:13

A couple of days. I posted it on a Friday and Saturday it took off Sunday and Monday is when it really was going like Sunday was I think the day I was the most stressed because I didn't know. It was like, you were saying earlier, I just was feeling the need to check myself and say, Did I do anything wrong? I don't know how my pelvis is. I don't know. I don't know if I've made a mistake. Yeah. How's my employer gonna react because I hadn't been to work yet. And so Sunday was definitely I think the craziest day but also two days about,



Jason Knight 15:46

And was that something that just organically took off? Or do you feel that that kind of got overly represented by maybe some big people retweeting it and kind of taking it to their followers and almost encouraging a pile on?



Darby Maloney 15:58

Yeah, I think it organically took off on my TikTok a little bit. And then I posted a response video and then an account on Twitter picked it up and put it on Twitter. And that's when it really blew up. So if it had stayed on TikTok, my audience is 74% women, it generally was positive with a few trolls here and there. And then yeah, once it got picked up by Twitter is when it really went south.



Jason Knight 16:29

Well, there you go. And of course, then you started getting a variety of crappy comments start pouring in. So I saw a bunch of comments of various levels of misogyny. And I'm sure that there's a lot of intersectionality, between different types of comments as well, like, they weren't

all just one type of comment. But do you feel that the feedback that you did get like some of the bad feedback, some of the negative feedback was weighted in any particular area, like, how much of it was aimed at youth being a woman in tech versus a woman in tech in a pool versus a female product manager in tech in a pool versus just being an easy target? Because you've put something out there and people have just got something to criticise. But if you've got like a feeling about the proportion of those things, or like what the biggest criticisms that came your way where?

D

Darby Maloney 17:14

Yeah, I think there were two. One was being a female in the pool in tech. I think a lot of the hate was she these two are under qualified for their job and ungrateful. Yeah. And then the other piece, I also think was being a young female in a pool in tech, I think there was an age aspect to it in an addition to the female aspect. And then the third amount of hate, I think, was just directed towards product managers in general. I think a lot of engineers had it sound, it seemed like they were engineers posting that had just a lot of beef with product managers, as a role and didn't think it should even be a job. So I think there were three main targets of the hate, but most of it was a woman, a young woman in a pool, they must not be qualified.



Jason Knight 18:09

Yeah. And I think I saw some that basically just implied that, well, hey, if you can do your job, we're poor, then it's not much of a job a and I guess, you know, I mean, ultimately, as long as you don't drop your laptop in the pool, I guess that actually, that's completely untrue. And I think it's also really funny, because so many work from home fundamentalists these days that are basically saying that you should be able to work from anywhere, and they don't want to commute and that they can do all the same work from wherever they need to be. And everything should be fully remote. At the same time, then you go on top, and you're like, Oh, hey, who I am. Here's here's remote, and they start pulling it apart. And I'm also wondering if you feel the same as I do, which is basically that if that had been a bunch of tech bow dudes, maybe raising around a Series A or something, and they all post some videos of them being all cool tech bow dudes that they probably wouldn't have got the same criticism. Just didn't you agree with that?

D

Darby Maloney 19:04

I do. I think there are people who just feel like, younger people don't take their job seriously. And I'm sure they still would have gotten some of that hate. But I don't think it would have blown up to the extent my video did. I also don't think it would have received any sexist comments to it. Yeah, so I agree. And I think the other piece that I would want to add to what we were just talking about before is a lot of people have a problem with the fact that we were two girls working in a pool, we must not be qualified, but if you look at tech culture, a lot of tech companies on their job descriptions promote work life balance, unlimited paid time off like, you know, and that's the company saying come work for us. We want you to work to live not live to work, even though does any product manager actually end up only working nine to five No, but but it's just interesting, that double standard of the whole reason people want to work in tech is because the culture is supposed to be so much more accepting, and we'll get your job



done. And that's all we care about, like, as long as your job gets done, the in between is up to you. We're progressive. We're a new type of work, corporate worlds. And so I think there's a double standard there as well. As soon as someone's then taking that flexibility and that, okay, you trust me get my work done. And then it turns negative, it's like, no, we don't we don't want that. Actually. We don't want you to do that. But we want to ... we want other people to do it.



Jason Knight 20:41

Yeah, no, absolutely. Double standards. And probably a little bit of fakery around the job descriptions as well. But you say obviously, that you had a hard few days. I mean, how did that impact you? How did that like? How did that make you feel? Broadly speaking? I mean, sounds like it might feel too good. But like, how would you describe those few days kind of mentally and emotionally?



Darby Maloney 21:04

Yeah, I think, Jenna, I mean, I've had a platform on tick tock for a while, and you get hate with that. But generally, my tic toc is not things that I've poured my heart and soul into, right? Like, my job is something I put a lot of love into and an effort. And so it hit me harder than hate usually does. Because I started to question Oh, no, like, do people not think I'm good at my job? Do people? Am I now not credible? As an employee? Am I now you know, and that really weighed on me? Not really what the internet trolls thought, but more. So what do people in my immediate life think now? Am I still gonna be respected the way I've worked so hard to be respected at work? Or is that going to change this and change everything? So that was, I think, my biggest fear, and it luckily, did not. My employer has been awesome and supportive. And luckily, my work has spoken for itself. But it's, you know, it's defined, but that I think, was the hardest part of, you know, I, as a woman, you come into the workplace, and you're generally put on a team of men. And I know that the immediate assumption isn't, this girl is going to be the best pm I've ever worked with, this girl is going to build the best product ever. You have to earn you have to interest you've prove yourself. And I don't think that's the case for older. And men, like older females and males, or just men in general. I don't think it's as much the case where you come on, you don't know anything about me, you've never spoken to me. And your first assumption is not going to be this is going to be the best pm I've ever had. It's it's just not, you know, so I have to earn it, you have to work a little harder to prove you're intelligent, reliable, good at your job and going to take the team to the best places. You can, you know?



Jason Knight 22:56

Yeah, and there's obviously a really common cliché. And it's only a cliché, because it's true that, of course, exactly as you say that women go out there. And they have to do all of those things that you say. So how is that manifested itself? Like, what are some examples of ways that you felt that you've had to do that, as a female product manager? As a woman in tech? Like, what are some of the things that you feel that you've had to do that maybe others coming up through the same career path that you maybe men, for example, wouldn't have had to do?



Darby Maloney 23:24

Yeah, I think one is specifically stand up for the engineers defend their time openly, if I hear them, you know, saying, Oh, I'm blocked by this, and I can't go anywhere, I will go out of my way to be like, I'm going to fix this for you. And I don't think the assumption is I can ever fix it. So they don't ask. And then proving that I will, you know, it's like, Oh, your blocks, let me unblock you. Let me go, like, talk to people and make this, you know, fix this for you. But that's usually something I just have to do and prove myself for the first time. It's not usually something that someone assumes I'm capable of. And maybe that's maybe that's just my personality that they're assuming it from, but I think it's a little bit more just, if they can't get an unblocked, what am I going to do? So, yeah, I think that's one and then another is just proving reliability intelligence. If you look at my tic tock, my personal life, you're not looking at that girl thinking, Oh, she's like, she's, she's gonna come in and be up early at work and keeping everyone on track and writing all these write ups working late like and and I think that's, that's subconscious. Something everyone assumes is that you can't be both and that's just not true. Yeah. So having to just prove, yeah, just prove that I can be both through just being reliable and loud and have their backs and protect their time. Just anything I think a good PM does.



Jason Knight 24:57

But it's interesting because as we said earlier, you do in the video basically, whether or not it's kind of false modesty or not, but you're very clear that the impressive parts of war, certainly what you see is the impressive parts of the developing and the designing of the products that you work on. And that you're there to pull it all together and keep everyone focused, like you say, now, that strikes me as the sort of thing that if I went out there, and no one would want to watch a video of me talking about put up management in a pool, but they're partly because I'd probably drown. I'm not very good swimmer. However, like, I imagined that that would, you know, in some ways, ticular engineer like they'd be quite happy to be described as the people doing the impressive stuff whilst you're there. Yeah, just doing the rest. Like, didn't you feel that, that people should have taken a compliment there?



Darby Maloney 25:45

Yeah, yeah, and, and that's one thing I learned from my mentor was the product manager. I want to clarify some things on that. Actually, I'm glad you brought that up, because product managers still do impressive work. 100%



Jason Knight 25:59

Oh, yeah. You don't have to persuade me.



Darby Maloney 26:01

Yeah. And I think that got lost in translation. When I was hyping up the team. However, I think good product managers. And a lot of the beef that came from engineers was from product managers who take all the glory, and who have their name, because they're usually the voice, the voice of the team. They're the ones on Slack, you're seeing all the new features posted by

the PM, you're seeing they're the ones are talking to customers and engineers are behind the scenes. And I do think nothing would be built without the engineers, they have such a specific skill set they've developed and I could not design a good product. If I tried. I was a Graphic Design Minor and learned very quickly, like you're just not creative enough visually to do that. Don't kid yourself, Darby. So there's all these skill sets that come together to make the perfect storm of a team. And as a product manager, I'm well aware that most people see my face. And that's the people internally in the company know, my face, the customers know my face, and they don't know the rest of the team. And that's a good thing. Because in some ways, because a lot of times engineers don't want to be in meetings, they don't want to have to talk to customers. But any product manager who says I did this, this is my work, is she's probably the ones that the engineers on Twitter have beef with, right? And like, yeah, I just Yeah, so it wasn't necessarily trying to discredit the work I do. But more so exactly what you're saying build up what the engineers and designers do, because I know that that gets clouded in tech in general, it's usually the product manager is the face of the product, when it's an entire team that makes it possible.



Jason Knight 27:42

100%. And hopefully, some of those engineers will listen to this or, you know, maybe even think about it a little bit after watching your rebuttal videos. But you did get a lot of supportive comments as well, especially after the criticism started, you start getting some backup, which is, I guess, nice for you to see. And I have to say that some of my Twitter buddies have asked me to, you know, give you their best wishes and their support, because I didn't know you're awesome. So that's no thank you. You can you can accept that from them if you ever pop onto Twitter and have a look around. But did you get any feedback? Specifically, that really cheered you up? I mean, you said, for example, that your work were very supportive, which is fantastic. But did you get any kind of online feedback that boosted you up even more, either from random internet folks, or maybe even from names that you recognised from the industry?



Darby Maloney 28:32

Yeah, I did. I mean, a lot of people were sending up calling out the sexism saying they don't see anything wrong with my video. That's exactly what product manager does, right? Yeah, I did have a few people reach out actually saying they originally tweeted against me and my friend, just saying this is a problem like laughing, joining in. And then after seeing the response videos, realise their mistake and their own, like subconscious sexism, that they were then participating in how wrong making a judgement of 62nd video was, I think that honestly made it all worth it knowing if even two people literally have changed their mindset from one extreme to the other is yeah, that then maybe that they'll do better next time and another girl won't have to go through it from them, you know? And then I've had several people on LinkedIn reach out, some people have said, Oh, I've shown your videos to my daughter's thank you for standing up for yourself. And so yeah, and there was one I saw in particular on Twitter that posted like, my response video, which I had been trying to get out on Twitter, and no one really was picking up my tweets about Yeah, and that one, this person that reposted it, it did well and it was reaching farther, and just saying anyone that had Has any opinions about her, this should just shut it down. That just feels great to know. Because that was the main thing I was worried about is my

credibility as a product manager was going to be ruined. And and so knowing that it wasn't and seeing that other people can see that I am good at my job from my responses was very calming. I think, and good to feel.



Jason Knight 30:22

Yeah, I mean, obviously, no one wants to go through a horrible few days of nonsense that you have. But I guess at the same time, if there's been any kind of positivity out of the back of it, then at least it's been somewhat net positive? Absolutely. But are you going to now do a lot more tech videos on your Tiktok? Or have you decided that that's enough? And you need to maybe go back to what you're doing and concentrate on a day job? Like, how much do you see this changing the sorts of content that you might want to put out there and sorts of ways that you might want to support the wider product community?



Darby Maloney 30:55

Yeah, I see myself still posting product videos on tech videos. I feel so passionately that girls, humans in general, but specifically, females can do anything they put their mind to. So I feel like if I were to allow this, Hey, it's completely cripple me. That would be against everything I believe in. So I want my videos to be authentic and entertaining. And so I'm not going to force it. But anytime an opportunity comes up to talk about tech, I don't plan on not after this, I definitely will still post it. So yeah. So there'll be more, there'll be more tech stuff.



Jason Knight 31:35

But I do have to ask the next time there is tech stuff, are you going to maybe lock yourself in a perfectly plain room with loads of books behind you to make yourself look appropriately smart and serious? Or do you think that it's not you and that you really have to give it that personality. And yeah, just play the ball as it lies type of affair.



Darby Maloney 31:55

Oh, play the ball. I think part of the reason that I love working in tech is the freedom I have to some nights, I leave at 3pm. And then I'm working till 11, you know, from seven to 11 at night. And that's something that tech encourages. And I also, it's something that I love. So I definitely will still be posting wherever I'm working. But I also do, I do also want tech to be taken seriously, I don't want to be someone that turns it into a Yeah, this isn't a serious job, I don't take it seriously. So that's definitely something I'm a lot more conscious of now is to make sure that any tech related posts I do still does show how it is a hard job, it is a job. And it is something you have to earn. It's not just easy to do. So there'll be they'll be both for sure. There'll be both, but I hope they still just come naturally and are authentic. I don't plan on posing anything to get a certain reaction.



Jason Knight 33:01

Oh, there you go put in a fake podcast voice unlike me. I think it is interesting. Now this whole

Oh, there you go put in a fake podcast voice unlike me. I think it is interesting. Now this whole thing around like what you just said around, it is a job. And obviously it is a job. We all know that. But some people were perhaps doubting that or doubting it, it was a very good job. But it strikes me as very peculiar that people think that either large successful companies are happy to just pay for wastrels to just hang around, or small, growing companies or maybe even companies that don't have much runway back to the airport, that these are somehow going to just have these luxury people sitting around paying them good money to do basically nothing. So I mean, I'm obviously a big fan of product management and product managers. And, you know, I will support them for as long as I can. But at the same time, just the very idea that people would just pay to have people sitting around, aside from in very edge cases. I just don't think that makes any sense at all.

D

Darby Maloney 33:57

Yeah, I agree. I reading some of those comments. I'm I was just thinking, even though I can't imagine anybody, paying someone to do nothing, especially to the fact that you think I'd be dense enough to post a video if I didn't think I did anything that's asking to get fired. Like that's asking to be laid off. But that was the assumption, right? Oh, these girls are so dumb, they're gonna get laid off. They don't even realise their mistake. Yeah. But also, if that was my job, just getting paid to do nothing. Sign me up. Where's that job? You know, where's if that job exists, and people are gonna pay good money for me to sit around? Oh, yeah, please send me the job application. I mean, I don't see the problem with that either. If someone's willing to pay someone else to do nothing. More power to them.



Jason Knight 34:48

Yeah. It doesn't really feel like that's you, though.

D

Darby Maloney 34:51

No, no, it's not.



Jason Knight 34:55

Alright, so a little sneak preview then of maybe the sort of content you could come out with Next. So given what we've talked about and what you've identified as some of the challenges that young women have coming up into product and proving that they're worth a seat at the whatever table it is that they're trying to get a seat at, what's your one piece of advice that you could give from your experience? And you know, whether that's experience from the video that we've just been talking about, or just your general experience coming up? Some kind of key piece of advice that you think that they should take into their early career and sort of help them make a big splash?

D

Darby Maloney 35:31

Yeah, ask for help. Ask for what you need. Ask for what you want. It's been an uphill battle. I

have cried in many meetings with people about things I think were unfair, right? I don't I don't know. I think there's, there's a fine line between being a victim and also speaking up for what you need. Yeah. So be aware of that line. But I also think a lot of women just take it, they take it and they're trying to move forward. They don't know how to express what's wrong, they're afraid they're gonna seem like a whiner or a complainer. And the only way I've ever gotten anywhere is communicating and saying, hey, I want this or hey, I've earned this. I either need, like, how do we promote me? Or do I need to be looking elsewhere? But speak up, you know, say what you need, ask for help. And if you are a good and valuable employee, people will help you and listen. So that would be my biggest piece of advice.



Jason Knight 36:27

No, absolutely. That sounds really insightful. And hopefully a few people can take that and run with it. But if those people want to find you after this and find out more about your journey into product or your ongoing career in product, or maybe give you some ideas for tiktoks or see if they get knocked down late on some secondhand poor toys, where can they find you?



Darby Maloney 36:48

I would say my TikTok is the best place... TikTok or Instagram. So either one of those ... @durbinmalonster is my TikTok and @darbsmaloney is my Instagram.



Jason Knight 36:59

Both of your different spy names. I will make sure to link that all in. And hopefully you get a few new followers or friends or whatever they're called on tick tock, as you can tell, I'm far too old for that sort of thing. Well, that's been a fantastic chat. And obviously really glad we could put this together and talk about what was no doubt one of the most interesting parts of your career so far, but hopefully, as we say, it's been kind of net positive in the end. Hopefully, we can stay in touch. But yeah, as for now. Thanks for taking the time.



Darby Maloney 37:28

Thank you for having me. Thanks for giving me a platform to speak up on and this has been lovely, so I appreciate it.



Jason Knight 37:37

As always, thanks for listening. I hope you found the episode inspiring and insightful. If you did again, I can only encourage you to hop over to <https://oneknightinproduct.com>, check out some of my other fantastic guests, sign up to the mailing list or subscribe on your favourite podcast app and make sure you share your friends so if you and they can never miss another episode again. I'll be back soon with another inspiring guest but as for now, thanks and good night.

