

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 029

Raw and Real - Behind the Scenes

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Announcer: Welcome to *Travel Agent Achievers*! The place to learn how to grow your travel business and have fun with it. Join Roslyn and her guests as they walk you through proven steps to a fulfilling and profitable business.

Ros: Hi, everybody. Welcome back to *Travel Agent Achievers*, a brand new podcast episode. I'm Ros, I am your host and today I wanted to firstly say thank you, for those of you that have been leaving me a review and subscribing to the podcast in iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, your favourite places, but also for those of you that have reached out and just sent a message over the last few weeks with what you've learned from recent podcast episodes, and also a number of our trainings.

So, thank you very much for that. If you haven't left us a review or you want to leave an updated one. Hopefully you love the podcast, please do so just go into [iTunes](#).

Don't forget to subscribe and leave us a review. I'd love to read and, you know, shout out to you in a future episode.

So today's topic is raw and real. It's a behind the scenes look at my own travel business. And also just to share with you what's actually been happening.

Now the reason why I have done this and I'm just diving straight into it is because you know me that I like to give you step by step actions and to give you the information so that it's really easy to digest.

But the reason why I wanted to do this is because of something that happened last week. I want you to know that I am in the trenches with you. So not only do I have *Travel Agent Achievers*, and I help and support and educate travel agents all over the world, but I also have my own mobile travel business working under a host provider here in Australia.



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And not only is helping travel agents, my passion, but it's also helping clients exactly like it is for you.

So last week, on Thursday, and I was really stuck with what sort of a podcast episode to put out. It has been a couple of weeks now and that is never my intention to keep you waiting because my goal has always been that you have something you can turn to each week.

Last week, I received two calls from my clients saying that they were pulling the pin and cancelling their 2020 groups.

Now, I have been working just like you since January with all of our clients to cancel and change and amend all of our groups, and I specialise in international group travel. So, it hit me though that these last two groups that would travel one for September one for October, they were pulling the pin.

I had already moved one of the groups from April to October, and with them deciding to cancel and to potentially move to 2021 but not knowing when they were going to do it. It really sunk in and it wasn't until a couple of hours after I got off the calls that hit me.

Over the last six months just like you I've been experiencing exactly the same kick in the guts and the phone calls and my team is really upset and I've also had to let staff go. I have experienced everything that you have. So, when I'm talking about these things, I'm coming from a place where I hear you, I am with you and you are not alone.

So the reality of it all actually hit me that that was all of my 2020 business. And I can let out a big sigh now because it felt like a real mess. Everything that we'd been working for, for the last 12 to 18 months had just gone and the reality actually sunk in with, well, that's it.

I don't have anybody now travelling for the rest of 2020. What am I going to do? How is my travel business going to survive?

Now I know it will. And I'll tell you more about that shortly. But for me, it was the reality that travel is at a standstill.

And because I specialise in international groups and travel and the groups are anywhere from 30 or 40 people through to 300 or 400, and we do everything. So we work with all the ground suppliers and hotels, we do all the flights. And these aren't just group flights, like I'm talking about individual booking and individual flights.

So it is a lot of work to do in the first place, but then to have to undo it all. And you know, it's a real challenge in itself. And I know that you listening to this as well, you've had to do it as well. And so my solution for last Thursday, and it was really looking forward to.



I was going out on a date with my husband and some friends and I haven't been out in a very long time. So I was really looking forward to just going out and having a bit of fun and, you know, enjoying a good meal with some friends and laughing and what that turned into was me getting drunk, and I don't normally drink.

So for those of you who know my backstory, I've never been a big drinker. I can't handle my alcohol very well. And even my husband, he used to work in the entertainment industry and he travelled with large bands all over the world.

I would go out on tour with him and I would call it my 'roadie summer camp'. I couldn't even handle my alcohol or keep up with any of you guys out there on the road. So, I was the librarian. And you know, the team and everybody out there really loved me for that. But at the same time, I couldn't keep up.

So for me last week, to just get drunk was probably a release. And it certainly wasn't very sensible, because that's not who I am that at the same time, it was probably what I needed to do. Because over the last six months, I've just kept it together.

Now I have had, you know, a few down days and I've been like you were, you know, it's like, what's next? What else is going to happen? And so Friday, Friday was right off for me. I had the biggest hangover, I realised that 18 months' worth of negotiations and contracts and working with all these clients was really gone.

The biggest thing was that 2020 was supposed to be my biggest year yet, myself and my team had worked really, really hard. And we had a lot of things in place that we were really looking forward to.

And everything just fell apart. So I felt it on Friday, I, you know, really had to think about where am I at and what do I want to do? And, you know, value myself and my self-worth. So thinking about, you know, am I okay? My fault? Is there something goes wrong with me, which I know is not right logic here.

I felt like there was a little of bit client rejection, and it was another kick in the guts. Now, it's nobody's fault. And it's certainly not my client's fault, you know, they can't travel. So, you know, there's no point in getting angry.

It's just the way things are in the world at the moment, and I accepted that a long time ago. It was just that it was an extra, an extra thing that I didn't feel as though I needed. I am also really lucky that I have a wonderful assistant, somebody who is absolutely awesome in my life and in my business and that's Mayette.



So, she's not only my assistant, she's my right-hand woman. She can put things into place when we talk about an idea. She's solution oriented, and an all-round all-star like. I absolutely adore her and my business wouldn't be where it is now without her.

Her background is in the airline industry as well. So, her technical knowledge and her tenacity to sit on hold for several hours and they get through and find solutions for our clients has been invaluable, and I couldn't, I couldn't do this whole process without her.

We put together a podcast episode so if you want to know more about how Mayette and I actually work together - [Episode nine of the Travel Agent Achievers Podcast, it's called Working with Somebody Else and Getting Help with your Bookings.](#)

She and I were actually together and in a hotel room and we put together this podcast episode so that we could share with you what we're doing. Her role now has really turned into the technical expert. So I can be working on other things. And she can be the one that is there to consult with our clients and get back to them to give them the full details of everything that is going on.

And she's very transparent. We are open and honest with our clients with what's going on. We act in our own integrity, but they also know us. When this all hit, we initially put out videos for our travel clients and just kept them up to date with what was going on in the world and in the industry.

And we educated them from a point where we could say this is what's currently happening. Videos that reflected - "This is where we're working towards. And we will get back to you as soon as we possibly can." We were dealing with hundreds of clients. And over the last, you know, four to six months, we've been able to keep in contact with them through email and these video messages just to keep them updated.

And mayette has worked behind the scenes tirelessly for months, you know, sitting on hold, just like you have as a travel agent, with airlines and suppliers to get the best possible deal for our clients. And I've worked at the front side of things with contracts and negotiations and with our clients as well. We've both done that, but really just to ensure that our clients were okay.

So Mayette and I have are an awesome team. And I know that as a mobile agent, or somebody who's working from home, you may not have necessarily had that, and it does depend on the size of your business, you may have had a staff let you down or, you know, turn on you or quit or you've had to let them go.

I know how incredibly tough this whole industry and the last six months have been for you. Because I'm



in it too. I've also had to let staff go and it broke my heart. So that's what's happened and the kick in the guts that I really felt.

So, what I'm grateful for, though, that in February, I redid my financials, to have a look at the worst case scenario with our cash flow. So if we didn't get these groups, and I only planned it out until September, I thought, gee, surely it's not going to extend past that.

And I will review it now and have done some extra planning over the weekend. However, I redid my financials so that I could look at the cost that I needed to save, where I could cut back. And what was my potential income moving forward. Because as you know, in travel, you may not get commission until somebody actually travels.

So I needed to do some projections there and close out files and look at, at really everything in the travel business with regards to our accounting. And I educated myself. I'm really grateful that I did that at the time. And I'm really grateful that I was able to look at least six months ahead and plan for what was coming.

I also had to let staff go, and it broke my heart, which I know for a number of you out there that have also had to let staff go. It's really tough. But in order to do that, and I had to make some hard decisions and I made them very early on it allowed me to keep the team that I have now.

And I kept the team that I have now to help me with sales and marketing and Travel Agent Achievers and a number of other things that I do. And also, to help me with the travel business side of things.

So, I knew that I needed to have a small, yet very mighty team who could help work through but allow others to go with grace, giving them an opportunity to find other work. And before things went pear shaped and I know that they're absolutely fine now, I also compensated them so that they were in a position that it wasn't going to be too scary for them right away.

I'm also grateful for my network, business mentors, the masterminds that I have in the USA and also in Australia, and the people that I've surrounded myself with.

I have learnt from a very young age after leaving school that education doesn't just finish it at the end of year 12. And that's it. I have always been thirsty to learn more. And I know that by surrounding myself with people who know more than me, or that are at the same stage as me, or even those that want to learn, is really important for my own business growth, too, because I can help support and nurture others, but I can also learn and implement as well.

And that has been something that I'm very grateful for. I'm also grateful for my family and friends, and that those that own their own business and those that are also employees because it gives you a



different perspective on things.

I've been able to check in with them, bounce ideas off them as consumers but also as friends and look at new ideas. And really just be able to have some fun and light in everything that's going on as well.

And lastly, I'm very grateful for my husband, Clint and my son Jackson, who's five. I can't believe we are halfway through his first year of school. My mom and my sisters, even though we're all over the world from each other, we connect on WhatsApp and we check in with each other almost every day.

So, their unwavering support, the hugs, the love, the kindness, and just being there to listen has been really important for my own mental health and emotional well-being as well as taking care of me, but me as a business person, too.

I'm super grateful for all of those things that I have done and really looked out for over the last six months. So even though things may not be so rosy in the travel business, right now, what is it that I'm going to do and what's next.

I know that this isn't the first time I've come across this situation. And this has now happened a few times. Sure, we haven't had COVID. And we haven't had the massive global pandemic. But it isn't the first time that I feel like all of my travel business is gone.

I had a mining oil and gas company that was one of my clients fairly early on in my mobile travel career. And they were an exceptional client. And I loved it because I was moving, 30 or 40 people at a time all over the world from all over the world.

And it was a challenge. It was exciting. But I was part of the group in the community of that one company to make sure that their team was where they needed to be at whatever time. Now with that business, things were also excellent financially. But they made a decision to move their head office to the US, and then move with that all of their travel as well.

So it was almost overnight, I lost my business. That was really tough. It took me a little while to bounce back from, but I was able to do that. I then when I fell pregnant with Jackson, I still worked all the way through, but once I had him, I didn't realise how much work it would be to have a child and run a business and be a working mum.

That was really tough. And again, even though I had clients that stuck with me through that time, I also had to let a lot of them go. And it was a challenge for me. But at the same time, I'm grateful for the opportunity that allowed me to have time with Jackson when he was a newborn.

So, I've experienced the tough side of things in travel before. And I know that we will get through this



time as well, the things that I have put into place, and the things that I have learnt over the last six months, and now setting me up again for the future.

Life throws curveballs at us. And it's whether we can choose to pick up and keep moving, or whether we throw in the towel and make a new decision or make a new path. And that is entirely up to you.

I was reminded of a story recently, Listening to Rachel Hollis when I was at a conference back in 2019. Over in the US. If you don't know her, she's a publisher and a professional speaker. Rachel Hollis, and she's got some great books "[Girl Wash Your Face](#)", and I'll add a couple of others to the show notes that she talked about during one of her talks.

Climbing a mountain as a business person. And if you can just imagine with me that you want to get to the top of a mountain. And as you walk through the jungle or the desert, or mountainous ravines, whatever it is, in order to get to the top, they will be curveballs that are thrown your way.

Rocks will come flying down at you, you might have to jump over a few trees, you might have to wade through water. There will be challenges thrown at you that you will look at and think this is too hard. But then there'll be other challenges that you look at and embrace and go, I can do this.

And it is about moving forward and continuously taking the momentum to surround yourself with people that will help you get through this time as well and help you as you keep working towards that goal.

You may question yourself during these times. And this is just another part of the process for us in business right now is questioning how badly is it that I want to get to the top of that mountain?

How badly do I want to reach that milestone in my business? And these are all questions that you need to ask yourself. But at the same time, I've asked myself this. Nobody ever said to me, business was easy. Nobody ever said as a business owner. It's a walk in the park.

And I remember this on a daily basis because I chose this path for myself.

I look back at why I got into business. And I asked you to question yourself, why are you even in travel? Why are you in this business? Is it further freedom, the travel perks, the clients, you want to help others do you love what you do like the reasons that your own and I know what mine are and I.

I love this industry. I love being in travel and tourism and hospitality like, that has been my essence. Since I worked at McDonald's at 14 and I loved it. I was the party hostess, crew trainer, manager. I just loved being able to help others. And throughout my career, that's how things have always been.

So now, I'm using this time to dig in, really. And I believe that as mobile travel agents and travel counsellors, whether you're here in Australia or anywhere around the world, you are in the best position



right now. Why do I say that?

Well, have a look at what's happened to the travel industry as a whole and shop fronts. Now, I'm not saying that it's the end of a storefront travel agency, I think that they still will be here. But I also know that as mobile travel agents, you are much more nimble.

And you will have an opportunity right now, to make a decision, whether you're in storefront, whether you own your own business, whether you are a mobile travel agent, you have the opportunity right now to make a decision.

Are you going to be the authority or the expert in your area?

When I say your area, it doesn't necessarily mean your specific location. I'm also talking about your niche and what clients you serve. Are you prepared to make a decision and stand up and be visible? And yes, that talks about doing Facebook Lives or videos or whatever it might be for you.

But it's definitely a decision that you need to make. It's also about choosing your clients and work on what you actually love doing, where we're in the best place right now, where we have an opportunity to design our future.

I want you to think about your competition. And as mobile agents and storefronts you know we've worked together the internet, remember when using the internet, you were able to start booking flights online or start using an aggregator to book a trip, like it was a real eye opener at the time to think, oh, no, we have new competition.

However, the travel agent remained firm and strong and clients still came to you to book their holidays. They came to you to book their group travel. They came to you to book their cruise. They came to you to book their business travel.

And I don't think that things will change, but it will come down to the people and your competition will be another consultant. And it always has been, you may not have identified it though. So think about the competition.

People are going to come and book with you, for you. Because they like you as a person. So now is the time to look at who you are, who you want to serve. What are you going to be the expert on? And how can you position yourself? What are you going to do differently? What are you going to do better? What are you going to learn more of?

So that when a client is looking online, or they're looking in a publication or a newspaper or something, they're going to look for somebody that they can relate to And if that person, and let's say there's three or five of you in a particular suburb, if you're doing marketing in a way that suits you and speaks to



them, they're going to come to you.

If your competition down the road is doing a different form of marketing, they may not necessarily get the same clients as you, but there will be people that relate to them. So, I've always said, there is enough business to go around.

People will come to you, because of you. And because of your expertise, because of your knowledge, because of who you are as a person, how you act in your own integrity, how you are helpful, and it could be in the small thank you letters that you write.

People will come to you because of you and who you are. So, what are you going to do that's different? What are you going to do that's better than somebody Else, what are you going to learn that's new for you, but could set you apart and set you up for a really successful future.?

I have just spent the last six weeks with an incredible group of travel agents, and they learnt the fundamentals of what it's like being a mobile agent. They've learned about clients, keeping existing clients how to get new clients and systems and setting them up to make your job easier.

Finance and looking at your numbers and tracking and measuring as well as the business setup sales and marketing. These travel agents now have a plan in place. This was our [Six Week Rebuild your Travel Business Programme](#) with Travel Agent Achievers.

Now these guys have got a plan in place now. They know their marketing moving forward. They know how to position themselves. They know what clients they want; they have things set up now on a structure and a plan in place so that they can be ahead of the game and start working on their own brand and who they are and how they're going to get clients in the future.

And I couldn't be prouder of them. I couldn't be prouder to be the guide on this journey. And I know that they're going to be big successes, in everything that they do. We're going to continue to work together, and I can't wait to see what's next for them. There is so much to learn. And as the support, cheer person, they guide their trainer, then I'm here to help navigate these waters.

I have spent many, many thousands of dollars over the last 20 years in self education. I've learned both here in Australia and also in the USA with some of the best business minds in the world. I've paid for the training, but I've also implemented it.

I've been part of masterminds. I've been taken out of my own comfort zone. I've been pushed to the limit. But I've also been educated to do better and learn something new. Everything that I have learned and there is so much that you can learn.

You can't implement everything, but that's why we Travel Agent Achievers, I have broken everything



down, step by step guides, worksheets, keeping it really simple and easy to understand and follow to help you succeed in the future. I am absolutely excited for what the next 12 months will offer us in travel.

I know that you as a travel agent know how to sell travel that is undoubted, right? You've been in the industry; you know how to do it. You know what suppliers you want to work with. You know what suppliers you love. Who has done the right thing by you, and what do you want to do in the future with them.

Now is the time though, to work on a plan, take your travel business to the next level, I want you to take action. And I encourage you to sign up for the programme before it opens again, so that you can also be ready when the travel industry opens and when you can book travel.

Some people are booking travel now. And I think that that's awesome. It's keeping an industry alive. Some people don't want to book it, some people do. And that is totally up to you. But you need to have a plan right now in order to become the expert and the authority for your clients.

So, make sure you also sign up for our [Travel Agent Achievers Accountability group on Facebook](#). So we've got a great group of agents in there and we are staying accountable. We're taking action each week and just getting stuff done. Because there is so much you can do.

This is our Facebook group. I'll have a link to it in the show notes as well for you. But it's about taking action. And now isn't the time to just sit back and think the industry is dead. It's also not the time to be thinking that your business is gone because it hasn't. And if you want to succeed in the travel industry, it's time to pick yourself up.

Get out of those tracksuit pants, put on some button-up pants as one of my girlfriends says to me, and actually get out there and start promoting yourself. You are the expert, and you are the person that people will come to, they'll come to you because of you.

We are at the forefront of an industry that needs to stick together. I've seen this over the last six months, I have seen agents from all over the world come together and support one another with cancellation terms and conditions and the technical side of things. I've seen this in Facebook groups with people helping one another.

So now is the time to band together in business and really just take action because that's what it's all about. We've got the Travel Agent Achievers Accountability Group and will be reopening our Six Weeks to Rebuild your Travel Business Programme very soon.

But I want you to join in. I want you to take action I want you to be there when things really blossom again. Now is the opportunity for you like me to really pick up and start moving again because you can



get through this time, I can assure you with that.

So that's it for me. I wanted to be real, roll and honest with you today. I wanted to show you that. You know I am human and I am like you. I do have a travel business that's also taken a hit and you know what, I will get through this. I will have my chance to grieve the loss, I will have my chance to support my team and work through a plan.

But now more than ever, I know that I will come through this stronger as I know you will too. So, I do hope that you join me on this journey. I do hope that you will jump into the Facebook group at the Travel Agent Achievers Accountability Facebook group, and that you join us on our rebuilding your travel business programme.

There is so much more to come. Don't give up now. Hang in there and know that I'm in the trenches with you. I've been here and I am experiencing the same thing as you are.

Don't forget to leave a [rating or review on iTunes](#) or wherever you're listening to this podcast. I love to hear from you. It'll help more people out there understand that as travel agents we can get through this time together.

And also if you've got any colleagues or friends in In the travel industry that are also needing some help and support right now, please direct them to the podcast or also to our travelagentachievers.com website where we have a ton of free resources, as well as some paid programmes, put stuff there to help you take action and really get moving right now.

Thanks so much for tuning in. I look forward to hearing from you and I will see you very soon.

