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SPEAKERS

Julie Dick, Heather Woods



Heather Woods 00:01

Hello, you're listening to the SEL in Action podcast, the podcast where we explore what social and emotional learning looks like in educational and professional settings. I'm your host, Heather Woods. And today on episode six, we'll be talking to Julie Dick about her position and the skills that she enacts as a sales enablement specialist. Thank you so much, Julie, for joining us today. I'm really excited to have you here.



Julie Dick 00:25

Yeah. Thanks so much. I'm really excited to be here.



Heather Woods 00:27

So can you tell me a little bit about what sales enablist or enablement specialist does?



Julie Dick 00:35

Yeah, absolutely. So a sales enablement specialist is something that I really didn't hear about before I started in sales. Basically, what it is, it's kind of a whole bunch of little things. When I first started hearing about it, I thought it was a lot about training, mostly, you know, focusing on that, but there's also a lot of strategy behind it. And you're working

with different departments as well. So working closely with marketing and product about what you know, you're actually building and how to talk about it. So there's a whole bunch of little things. And it really does change, depending on you know, what kind of company you're with what their goals are, but you're basically helping sales get what they need, so they can be the most efficient and effective at their job.



Heather Woods 01:20

So what I'm hearing there is like, it seems like there's like a lot of collaboration and communication that's needed. So can you kind of tell me a little bit about maybe what that looks like on a day to day? You know, situation?



Julie Dick 01:34

Yeah, absolutely. So I'm still very new in my position, I've only been in the position for actually less than a month now. So it really is different. And the company that I'm at, this is the first sales enablement position that we've ever had. So we're also kind of building it together. And so so far, what I've been working on are some different projects that work with, you know, new individuals who are using our tech, but also helping, you know, other sales agents get a little bit better or learn a little bit more about the position. We have bigger plans in the future. But short term, what I've been doing is actually working on some training modules for an individual who's going to be joining us, they're an internal, an internal hire. So um, yeah, I've been doing a lot of training some of the shorter term projects that we have, but it's been a lot of adapting so far, because it's a pretty busy and there's always seems like there's something else kind of around the corner.



Heather Woods 02:36

Yeah. So it's really interesting. Like you mentioned, the adapting and kind of building this position together is like the company's never had it before. So I wonder like, what kind of problem solving skills are you facing? Are you like navigating as you go through this?



Julie Dick 02:52

Yeah, it's really interesting, I find, and right now, it's a lot of kind of prioritizing. So you know, I'm, I'm given a number of different projects. And it's like, Okay, what should be done first, but also trying not to leave things on the backburner, so they're forgotten about. And so I find for me, I'm having to be really organized and work on my organization, the position I was in before, I was working directly with our customers. So

you know, I was used to the position, I had a certain, you know, certain routine for my day. And then now it's very much things pop up. So you kind of have to roll with it. But then you still have to use the time that you have to get things done. And so yeah, I think for me, it's been working on that organization, but also figuring out how to be organized. It's like a completely different, different thing now. So yeah, it's been interesting. It's a learning process.



Heather Woods 03:52

So being organized, like how would you say that's changed? And like, how are you thinking about it? How are you learning to, like, manage all these new tasks and everything?



Julie Dick 04:01

Yeah, absolutely. I think, um, I mean, I think everyone, you know, when you start working, as you get more responsibilities, you start to just kind of, you know, you got more on your plate, and you just start to do a little bit more here and there. And so I think, for me, it's just using, I don't know, it's kind of using the skills that I've had before because like you, you know, like I said, as you move on, and you you do more stuff you and you do you you find what works for you, but then you kind of have to change it up each stage, right. So I feel like I'm at this new stage of, you know, doing this new position I've never done before. And so it's like you kind of just you have your certain skill set, but then you're starting a lot lower than where you think you are, right. So like, you have certain skills, they were great in your previous position. Now you're starting something new and so you really don't have a lot of that experience. So Right now for me, it's really about building my kind of what I have in my head is like a knowledge base. So getting really familiar with the projects that people are doing things that I didn't know about before, and then learning how to incorporate that into my day. So maybe finding things a little bit more quickly, or, um, you know, if I can't, for me, personally, I would have to organize something around that, right. So it's, it's about what I'm missing, but also then what I can fill in so that I can help the next person, whomever, you know, whatever position they are, and sales, the next person kind of find things easier or? Yeah, fill in those gaps, I guess.



Heather Woods 05:42

Yeah. So it's really, I think you highlight an important part about kind of moving positions, or like even getting a new job or something. There's like this whole new level of like, self awareness, and like, kind of re evaluating your skill base. You know, so you're talking

about, like, you're having to adapt and improve upon your problem solving skills and your organization skills. And I mean, it's something we deal with, I think, all this time is like growing up and becoming adults and like, moving into these higher positions all the time, right. But I also think, like, perhaps even related to, you know, everybody says that we're moving into, like, this gig economy, or, like, you know, it's not uncommon for people, you know, of our age, to or, like, even older to, like, have multiple careers over their lifetime. Right. And so it's almost like, there's always this opportunity for, like, building that self awareness and, and shifts and things. So it's really interesting that you brought that up, is there like something that maybe other than the problem solving skills that like, has really stood out to you in like, being like, oh, like, I need to work on this?



Julie Dick 07:02

Yeah, definitely. I find it's funny, because, um, you know, when you start Yes, it's, I guess, in this position, I'm going to eventually be longer term goals responsible for Yeah, like, filling those knowledge gaps, that kind of thing. Something else? Yeah, I, I'm just kind of thinking about what you said, Yeah. Like in terms of career changing, and that kind of thing. And, you know, using different skills, like, I never had a background in sales, like, my background was in psych, and I did counseling, and then, you know, I got a customer service job by fluke, and then moved on to sales. And now, you know, kind of building my career that way. And so for me, it's also a lot of just strategies that I've never been taught or that I've never really thought about, you know, we use certain strategies, but there's oodles of them, right? So I find for me, it's just kind of, you know, getting used to a different, almost like a different kind of language, right. So really, really learning more about sales as a as a job, but strategy, their management, you know, so it's really cool that way, because I'm learning a lot. But you know, I might be a little bit further behind than someone who's had tons of experience in sales, right. So for me, it's kind of catching up that way, as well. But it's been really neat. It's just, you know, trying to go with the flow, keep that canoe afloat. But yeah, just kind of going that way. But that's been something else too, just kind of making sure that I know, making sure that I know what's going on and being on the ball that way.



Heather Woods 08:47

Mm hmm. Yeah. And they think, like, there's a few things that you've mentioned that I want to like, roll back to a few times. But I think just keeping with this thread of like switching the the careers and everything. You know, there's this openness, and, you know, acceptance of your own knowledge, but then an openness and eagerness to learn, right, which I think is really, really key for that kind of mindset in approaching this, like you said, a position that is not something you went to school for.



Julie Dick 09:25

Yeah.



Heather Woods 09:27

And maybe later, we'll kind of round back to a little bit of the education piece and stuff. But yeah, I think it's really interesting, like that eagerness to learn. Would you say that that's like a skill that you've developed over time? Or just like, Is it something that, you know, once you started with this company, you kind of were very curious about, you know, the next thing and the next thing and this next thing? Or is it How has it been something that you've developed over like, you know, your education and time and whatever it might have been?



Julie Dick 09:58

Yeah, great question. I would say Something that I have developed over a longer period of time, like a, I think, you know, I think, way back when, when I started going into psych. And you know, I just really I think a part of that was I just wanted to know more about people. I'm, you know, very much a people person, I really enjoy working with others. And I think kind of as I went along, I knew that I wanted to stay with people and work that way. But yeah, I think it's always been like, I've always been interested in learning more. Because, you know, you're never, like, there's always there's always someone who's going to know more, there's always someone you can learn from. So I think it's really interesting to try different things to meet different people. I think a lot of the friends that I've had over my academic career, at least, and then my my professional career, have done a lot of different things. And so I've always found it really interesting. And the team that I'm on now, going from a different part of sales is very technical. So that's also something that I'm really learning I didn't I'm not I'm not I'm more of a feel kind of person. I'm not super techie. Um, so yeah, that's been kind of a big adjustment as well. But it's really learning a lot about what they're doing, what they're working on, but also just a whole different side of the product that we have things that I might not have learned about before. So I think that's been really interesting. So the long answer was that the short answer is, yeah, I think it's been something that, that I've kind of had throughout my life. And yeah, I don't, I don't see that changing anytime soon. Because I'm still curious.



Heather Woods 11:51

Yeah, and I think I mean, I've known you for a few years, say a few. But you know, I think in that talking about, like learning and open openness to learning, and you bring up the people around you, and I think that is definitely one of the skills that I've seen in you, and I think is really beneficial in sales. I mean, I have a background in sales from another lifetime. But you know, and I think that relationship building is so foundational,



Julie Dick 12:25
absolutely,



Heather Woods 12:25

you highlight a really important piece, that it's not just building the relationship with your clients, that's building the relationship amongst your team, right. And then that way, you can kind of have that support, and they're able to support you and learning this new thing is really, really interesting to say, See, how that kind of comes together? And how much you're seeing this in your own learning and building relationships and being around people. It's just part of who you are. I think, um, but yeah, I think, like, do you see that having an influence on your career trek trajectory? Or like, even from when you started with the company, like to where you are now? And maybe where you see yourself in the future? Like, yeah, I love that relationship building, you know, how do you see that being a piece of it?



Julie Dick 13:19

Totally. I think it's a huge part of it, to be honest, at least for me, personally. You know, I started Yeah, like I said, I started in customer service, I, you know, was just curious where I could go next, I really liked the idea of sales, because we were still working with some customers, but it was a little bit different. And then I started to get to know the team a little bit better. So I was like, you know, where can I go from here? What can I try? What would I be interested in and I was always interested in some form of training or coaching. And so the more I started to talk to my current manager, my new manager, and you know, he was interested in having a sales enablement position open, and so started to look into it. And it was a lot of different things, things that I hadn't tried before, but that I really wanted to, and then I think, working specifically with him, but also with my previous manager and my lead, you know, I tried to be in my relationships, you know, I tried to be dependable, reliable, so, you know, they would come to me with a problem or something to work on, you know, in terms of work. And I would try my best to solve the problem or to do what they were talking about. And so I think there really started to be more trust there

on both sides, you know, I could go to them if there was something that wasn't working for me, and they could come to me if they, you know, had any even feedback or constructive criticism or anything like that. But I think that relationships are super important, no matter where you are in life, so I think Yeah, professional relationship for you know, they can really they can really help in in kind of lighting the way of where you want to go, you know, like, I might never have heard about some of these options if I hadn't been open with my colleagues.



Heather Woods 15:07

Mm hmm. For sure. And so in building relationships, maybe taking a step back to like even building relationships with clients, and how maybe you're finding things now. I believe you're working from home. And so like, but the company you work for is a virtual company. Yeah. And so like, you've had to build these relationships with clients initially, when you started with the company. And then now like, you're not necessarily working in the head office, or whatever. So you're now working with your colleagues virtually? Like how have you seen that shift? How have you kind of negotiated that? Or what kind of skills? Have you seen shift maybe in a virtual setting? Then, like, if you were to meet colleagues or clients face to face?



Julie Dick 15:57

Yeah, absolutely. So we never really met clients face to face. So it was all virtual over the phone. And so you know, that that wasn't a huge shift. Fortunately, we were very lucky that way. But yeah, in terms of professionally, we have, we have our headquarters here, but we also have a US headquarters. So for a lot of my colleagues, even on my team, some of them are in the States. So we're kind of used to having some virtual meetings, right. And we've always been able to work from home a couple days a week. So that wasn't an enormous shift, but not being able to see anyone, right, like not running into people in the kitchen or walking by your desk, that's been a bit of an adjustment. And as a kind of more of an extrovert is, you know, you know, I really enjoyed that kind of interaction, you know, just seeing someone in your day or just being able to say, hey, having someone face to face. So for me, it's been really, it's been interesting, because I find I'm almost sliding more to like the introvert kind of end of the scale. I see it as a sliding scale, with, you know, different ends. But yeah, so I find it's really interesting, because, um, you know, I'm very grateful that we can work from home and I'm grateful that that, you know, didn't impact what we're doing. But yeah, it's kind of weird. It's it's definitely different. not seeing anyone ever, but I think our company along with so many others are adapting, right? Like, they're doing in different things. Zoom like crazy, you know, Google Hangouts, we use, you know, slack to communicate. So I don't know if I can

drop brand names or company names, but I did.



Heather Woods 17:51

Oh, it's all good. Um, but I think, is your organization doing anything? Or like, have you noticed anything that's happening to kind of facilitate those like water cooler, or like passing someone in the kitchen, kind of like discussions, like a more laid back place where you guys can still go and chat and kind of foster that social community?



Julie Dick 18:12

I'm finding Yeah, so we do, we have like a town hall every Friday. So virtually. And I know that some people have organized like a, an apres town hall that they go to. So they'll, you know, chat together that way. We do a lot of like, on my team, we do a lot of meetings. And so we'll do work meetings, we'll also have like social time we check in how people are during the week, I'll do virtual coffees with people, even if it's just, you know, 15 minutes of your day, kind of breaking it up and seeing them as you would. So I think there are certain things in place. And then in terms of the organization, you know, we're doing show and tells and some different things.



Heather Woods 18:52

So, yeah, you mentioned, like, you know, having the virtual coffees and, you know, meeting with people and having these social interactions, and, you know, judging from what I understand of your position now that you're kind of working with multiple stakeholders within the company, those things I'm sure must no doubt be, like, so important to kind of get a sense of where people are at and like a little bit of perspective taking.



Julie Dick 19:15

Absolutely, and I think for me, um, you know, it's just been such a weird time for everybody. And so, on a personal level, I was doing a lot of coffees with people just to, you know, check in see how you're doing, you know, it's just everyone kind of reacts to what's going on right now in a different way. But you're absolutely right, in terms of now this position. Yeah. Like you have to collaborate with a lot of different people and you can do tons, you know, via email or, you know, texting or whatever. But sometimes you just need to have that face to face. So, you know, we're lucky than in a time, like now where there's a lot of technology to support us, you know, it's just, it's I think it's great that a lot of companies

are jumping on that and being able to, you know, keep things going and even to to do really well. So, yeah, I think it's it's definitely different. But you know, it gets us by and do I miss people? Yes. Do I get my job done? Yes.



Heather Woods 20:19

Yeah, no, it's it's really interesting. And, and so I wonder, going back to kind of your education. So you mentioned being in psychology and counseling, are there skills from that training and education that you are finding, like, so critical in your current position in sales?



Julie Dick 20:41

Yeah, I, I have operated in sales a little bit differently, I find that really, I think being genuine is huge, whether it's with your customer, or with your, you know, your colleagues or your boss, I think if you're able to be genuine, but also show some vulnerability, I think that that goes a long way, at least it has in my experience. So I think that, that in turn, a lot of my training, of course, has been in, you know, being empathetic to people being an active listener, you know, you hear about that all the time. But putting those skills to use help every day, whether it's in your personal relationships in your professional relationships. So I think that those have made me become better at communicating. So I think there's, it's funny, I think there's kind of a fine line between, like, being a personal communicator and then professional, right. So like I said, learning kind of that more tech language, but then learning how to, you know, filter that through for maybe someone who's not so techie, that's going to be a huge part of what I do as well. So I think, yeah,



Heather Woods 21:56

yeah, I mean, so there's, like, you know, listening and having that empathetic, but like being in counseling, you also have that like lens of kind of active listening, and kind of engaging, you know, that way. So you're not like thinking multiple steps ahead, which in sales can be quite difficult sometimes, right? Like, you're thinking about, like, Oh, I need to pitch this, I need to, you know, do this add on, or whatever. And, like, get them interested in this sweet package,



Julie Dick 22:24

I'm glad you bring that up, because you're absolutely right, because then you're actually listening to what they want. Right? And that at the end of the day, is what's going to get

someone to, you know, buy in or purchase or just to feel heard, like, really? So yeah, you're absolutely right, is actually listening to what they want to see. I think that that's also helps me be pretty successful. I mean, I hope fingers crossed. But you know, I'd like to think I am but who knows? But yeah, no, I think that's definitely helped in my career trajectory. So yeah, I totally agree.



Heather Woods 22:57

And so if you were to kind of think about, like, key skills that like if somebody wanted to be in the position that you're in and do this sales enablement, and, you know, working with multiple stakeholders in the group, and organization, what kind of would those skills be like, if you were to kind of narrow down on like, Okay, I need to work on these three top skills to become a sales enablement specialist.



Julie Dick 23:24

It's tough, um, I will preface this for anyone listening by I still have a lot to learn. But in my, in my experience, I think that there has to be, I think you have to be aware of yourself. Like, I think you have to have a lot of self awareness, I think that you, you know, you pinpoint what you're what you're good at, and you, you roll with the things that you're successful at. But, you know, there's always going to be somewhere where you can learn and improve, right, so being aware of both of those is really key. And I think that prioritizing, like I mentioned, so you know, coming up with, you have to make some decisions, right? So I'm have good decision making options there. And so then you can decide what you actually want to work on what you want to do. And in that, I think as well being flexible, and adaptable, you know, I can have my day, you know, routine out and I can decide scheduled that for it. I want. I can have my day scheduled. And, you know, I can decide what I'm going to do. I can see it ahead. And then all of a sudden, I have you know, three meetings booked last minute and they're about, you know, competing priorities, but very important thing. So, I think that being flexible is also really important. You kind of have to roll with what you're doing. And I think that's, I think those are really in any, in any but in a lot of different positions. You know, in a lot of professional settings. I think those are just going to be things that will carry someone to do well.



Heather Woods 24:59

Mm hmm. Certainly. And so it's like, interesting because you said you kind of haphazardly ended up in this sales position, even though you're, you know, trained in psychology and as a therapist, and researcher as well, right. And so it brings up the importance of, like you

said, that self awareness and knowing your self and what you're capable of. And so I wonder, like those transferable skills, and so like, taking that and what you've learned from your training previously, your academic training, and then translating that into, you know, finding these positions that maybe you didn't even think were a possibility before.



Julie Dick 25:47

Yeah, totally.



Heather Woods 25:48

And so, I wonder, was there any, like, during that time, when you were moving into sales? What like, what was your thinking process? Maybe this is going back, like a while, because you've been in with the here position for a while. But, you know, what kind of thinking did you go through to kind of make yourself marketable to, you know, this kind of other industry?



Julie Dick 26:14

Yeah, great question. I think, um, yeah, like, when I went through school, you're absolutely right. I think like, psych and counseling really appealed to me, because, um, like I said, I liked the idea of, you know, learning more about people working with people, etc. So throughout my career, I've always wanted to kind of come back to that, um, but I think just kind of changing my mindset, right, like, realizing that there's not going to be there's definitely not one path coming out of psych, there's a whole bunch of different stuff that you can do. And I think, as I went along, I was like, Well, what exactly is that? What are some of the skills that I can use here a while I'm still working with people, I like that, I can still build relationships with people, even though we're not actually together, and we'll be you know, virtual over the phone, whatever. You know, I can still help people at the end of the day, that's, that's maybe the biggest thing, right? Is I really like the idea of helping people. And I think that still fits in my position now, because I'm actually helping my team members. And so I think those are some of the the things that I really like, to my core, you know, or that I, that I take with me. And so realizing that I could still do this, this different option that I never would have thought of before, still really appealed to me, because I could see what the value was for me as a person. So yeah, I think that's, that's kind of what what I liked about it was that I could, I could, I felt like I could make it my own. But it still felt like I was, you know, being true to what I wanted.



Heather Woods 27:53

Yeah. And I mean, just hitting me kind of now, which is silly, because I am a researcher, you know, your experience and doing research, like, I just see so many parallels in the problem solving, and like, you're learning new skills, you're learning about this whole new area of I mean, in this case, technology, and, you know, technical terms and stuff and sales stuff. But you know, like, I think being a researcher sets you up for being able to explore those and, you know, gather that information, synthesize what you're learning a little bit, you know, it certainly doesn't hurt. I think, know that. That's fantastic. Any other kind of like, final thoughts about like, different social emotional competencies that maybe you see, or think are, you know, pivotal to either shifting kind of industry or, you know, in sales, that type of thing?



Julie Dick 28:54

Yeah, I think it's funny, it kind of made me think of it when when, you know, you were chatting there, when you were like, I think it takes a lot of reflection as well. And I think that's really in any, any professional setting. I think, if you can, you know, take the time to think about what you're doing and what you want to do, and trying something new, while figuring out what it is that that you that you want or that works for you. I think if you can reflect on that. And, you know, come back to what it is that that drew you there and what it is that you want to try. I don't know, I think that could be helpful as well. Or maybe I'm rambling.



Heather Woods 29:38

No, I think I think that level of reflection is like pivotal to finding those opportunities that may be outside of what you thought, were the only possibilities like what do you do with a psych degree? Well, you go into counseling, you go into some sort of support work or right like human services. Some sort



Julie Dick 30:00

and then what do you do? it you know, what do you do if that's not the way you want to go, you know, you want something new?



Heather Woods 30:08

Yeah, taking that step back and reflecting on what you really like about, you know,

psychology or whatever your training was in think is such an important message to thinking outside the box a little bit.



Julie Dick 30:22

Thanks friend.



Heather Woods 30:24

So thank you so much for sharing. And thank you so much for joining us today, Julie, really appreciate it. It's so fruitful and interesting to kind of see where you're at these days, but also just, you know, learn about how these these skills and processes are working in a different setting that's outside of academia or teaching and, you know, that sort of thing. So it's very refreshing. And I really appreciate you taking the time today.



Julie Dick 30:53

Thanks so much for having me. It's a lot of fun. It was, it's nice to chat about someone who, you know, knows my background. And you know, it's nice to have that conversation, see it a little differently. So thank you.



Heather Woods 31:04

Thank you. Thank you for listening to the SEL in Action podcast with your host myself, Heather Woods. And today we're speaking with Julie about her experiences, and shifting kind of careers and thinking mindset about you know, what industry she would end up with in her educational background and then shifting into something, you know, that was a little bit unexpected for her. But then also what skills are really critical for making those shifts and being self aware. And then in sales, where she is now really looking at those communication and collaboration skills, building those relationships with clients and your colleagues to really excel and build those strong relationships. Thank you again, Julie. And if you're interested in furthering this discussion, feel free to reach out on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. You can find us at SEL-in-Action.com as well. Next time we will be chatting with my teaching team from the University of Ottawa, with myself and my team teaching assistants, about how we integrate social emotional learning and online learning settings for graduate students. Thank you so much, and we'll talk to you next time.