

The Job Hunting Podcast

Transcript 18. My Career Story

Hello and welcome to The Job Hunting Podcast. I'm your host Renata Bernarde, and in this podcast I give you tips, advice and I interview experts to help you nail your next job and have the best career: a career that ties your dreams and your life together, and not only pay for your bills but also moves you towards your goals and your aspirations.

As I said before, in previous episodes, my dream is for this podcast to be a one-stop-shop for you. If you are a career enthusiast and ambitious, if you are currently job hunting or keen to keep a finger on the pulse so that you're ready when you need to be, if you are a veteran professional facing career disruption and transition, or a rising star who wants to learn as much as you can to enable your future career progression and personal goals, well, this podcast is for you. Here you will hear from experts and professionals that came before you, are a few years or decades ahead of you, and have great stories and examples to share on how they have achieved their career goals.

Today I'll be sharing with you the audio of a recent Facebook Live Video, where I shared my personal career story. I started The Job Hunting Podcast on the 31st of October 2019, and on the same day I also launched a Facebook Page, @renatabernarde.co, a Facebook Group The Job Hunting Podcast Group, and an Instagram account, @renatabernarde.co If you are in any of these platforms you should find me and follow me, and also join the podcast group which is a private group designed for listeners like you. I have been slowly building up a following in these platforms and also find it really great to use it as a way to deliver impromptu presentations on topics that have been on my mind, and it's really great for me to address it and get it off my chest.

Talking about my career story is something really personal to me that has been playing on my mind for some time. I think it's something I'd like to come back to later in the future, I'll do that again, but I hope you enjoy listening to this first version. It's the very first time indeed that I speak publicly about my career and explains the ebbs and flows of it. I also explain my passion for career development, planning and coaching, and most importantly, my passion for supporting job hunters out there get the best outcomes for their future career progression.

But before we listen to my career story, have you joined my community yet? If not, you should! It's actually your community. Go to all the [ws.renatabernarde.com/join](https://www.ws.renatabernarde.com/join) and sign up. I will send you free webinars, guides and templates you can use, there are special things happening all the time, like free consultations with me, and I send you a newsletter every week with the new podcast and other special content just for my community. The link to join is also in the episode show notes, and on my Facebook page and Instagram account. So there's lots of ways that you can reach out and join now.

Ok without further ado, here is my career story for you. Note that this is an audio of a live Facebook Video. And in this particular video I filmed outdoors at a park, so there's some background noise, but I don't think it's too much of an issue. So I hope you enjoy it!

Hi, welcome to my Career Highs LIVE! So today the idea is to make sure that I start talking to you about my story. And it's due to the fact that many people ask me and also I think I owe you this sort of storytelling and this, understanding about why I've moved around and, and I think that there is a natural curiosity for many people. I think that's completely normal. I would be curious as well in understanding why I landed where I am now and what's great about it and not so great about it as well because not everything is perfect.

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But let's start from the beginning. I started working very when I was very, very young, much sooner than any of my friends and, people that I socialized with. In my home country, it's not very common to start working as young as 13, 14. Where I am now in Australia it is. My kids started working before just before they turned 15 and that's the legal age.

I was 14 when I started working part time, so not casually really part time after school every day. Monday through Thursday I used to work at this Scandinavian furniture design shop. It was really wonderful and the way that I got it was through making the relationship with the owner. When he came to do a quote for my mum and I asked him if he needed any help in the office and he asked, do you know how to make coffee? I said, yes. Do you know how to type? And I said yes, and the truth is I didn't, I didn't know how to make coffee or type, but I had a broken leg.

So we agreed to start a month later and it gave me time to learn very quickly how to make coffee. And then my grandmother enrolled me in a typing school (That's how old I am). And I did that and then I joined this company and I never made coffee or did any typing. So I thought that was kind of weird because I had prepared myself to do it. I had prepared myself for that type of work, but very quickly he asked me to see the clients that were walking through the door. There weren't that many clients that would come in because it was kind of a warehousy place. But, he didn't want to be interrupted when he was working on bigger projects or doing the furniture himself. So I used to see those clients and kind of triaged them and the big ones he would then see, whereas I would continue to see the clients that wanted smaller things.

So he wanted to keep all of his men busy, the treaties that worked for him, and, and he was fine to do smaller stuff. He just didn't want to be doing it himself because it kept him from doing the bigger jobs that he had. And he had some very big jobs, like entire restaurants, all the chairs, all the tables and all of that. So that's what I started doing at a very young age. And I designed a few things. So I, I was very cocky and very, you know, didn't really know I was that young, and I would talk to the tradies that were two, three times older than me and tell them what to do. And they would say, ah, that's not gonna work. And that's how I learned, you know, how to deal with people no matter what their backgrounds were, what age they were in, you know, be very, attentive and a good listener from a young age, I suppose.

And from then on, I never stopped working. I always worked. I always had my own money. I was, I was very independent. It drove my parents crazy at times because, having money meant I had more freedom than they probably wanted me to have. And, from that independence, grew this idea of traveling. I was a travel agent for seven years. I had my own business. I never not worked in any other travel agency except for mine. And I was always very keen to travel. That didn't happen quite as planned because I had kids very early and, having the travel agency and being given all of these benefits and fam (i.e. familiarization tours)tours, we are, we get invited to go to many different places to get to know these places and then sell them to clients.

I couldn't, because I was always pregnant, or raising kids. So my husband did many of those trips for me or, we would find a way for me to do them as well and I could send my employees that worked for me.

And eventually what happened was that I started working more and more with higher education, and offering higher education programs in Brazil, my home country. I started with

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exchange students. I didn't like that. It was a lot of responsibility, sending young people overseas. I also, Brazil is not a good market for undergraduate international studies, but it is a great market for masters, executive education and MBAs. So I didn't seek that. It came to me, you know, I had corporate clients that wanted to send their leadership out to learn English and to do their MBAs to prepare themselves to, for succession planning and that leadership for international telcos and manufacturing companies that have subsidiaries in Brazil, French ones, American ones and so on.

And that's how I started networking with universities overseas. This is before internet. So you really needed an agent if you wanted to know where to go, how much things would cost, what it took to be accepted to Ivy league, what was the return on investment from going to Ivy league to, versus another institution and so on. And that really brought me back to the fact that I hadn't finished my university degree and I really loved studying and I felt this urge to go back and I decided to investigate that. I was offered to go back to my university in Brazil. The Dean accepted my re-entrance in a way.

But by that time, I really decided I wanted to, study overseas and really try hard, as hard as I could to live overseas. My husband always wanted to live overseas. When I married him, I knew that, and I thought, okay, I think we can go, we can go to New Zealand. And he convinced me to come to Australia. I really wanted to go to New Zealand. And I agreed because he had always worked for very large organizations and he felt that New Zealand, especially in the late nineties, it wasn't very appealing for somebody like him who had always worked for European-American subsidiaries in Brazil. And he really thought, New Zealand was too small of a market for him. So we decided to move to Australia. I applied for eight universities and I was accepted very quickly by the University of Melbourne. I was accepted by all of the eight that I applied for. One, I think it was Sydney Uni did not accept me for the degree that I wanted, but accepted me for a different one, which was fine. But because Melbourne was the first and also, I really liked the idea of living in Melbourne, I quickly accepted that application and we started planning our move.

This was October and we moved. I moved with my two sons. They were six and three in January, so we didn't have a lot of time to get rid of all of our staff, sell the house, pack everything, get all the immigration documents, visa documents ready, you know, enrol kids in school. I enrolled my youngest in the kindergarten at Melbourne Uni and my oldest at a primary school in the neighbourhood that I thought was okay, but we ended up not staying there. And I just really wanted to tick all the boxes and be as ready as I could for that really big, you know, transition. And again, no internet and I can't believe that that's how we used to operate back then. You know, looking back, I think, gosh, that was so bloody hard, you know, to do all of those things without knowing much, without understanding much.

Internet was there, but it was early days. You couldn't really rent something over the web. You know, you could see the houses and stuff like that, but you had to be here to do things. So I was very lucky. I stayed with friends and I was very, very grateful to them, to welcome us for the first few weeks, three weeks we stayed with them. And then I rented a house all by myself. My sister came with me for the first two weeks and then she had to leave, go back to her work. And my husband only came two and a half months later. And the reason being he was a contractor to too many firms and he had to wind down all of those contracts and it took longer than he thought it would. And he didn't want to leave anybody. Oh, well he left me alone, but he didn't, he really wanted to make sure all of his clients were, engaged with new contractors. And trained as new people and all of that. And I completely understood and it was tough here for me with the kids, but we managed. We did okay.

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And what else? I didn't think I needed to study for three years. I really didn't. I thought we could wing it with the money from selling the business and, we would, you know, have, Andre would have to find work here, but I really thought we could stay for the entire time of my undergraduate degree. I was doing a bachelor of commerce, and it didn't happen like that.

Seven, eight months later, September 11 happened and there was an election in my home country just before that. And the exchange rate just collapsed. It was almost at par- the Australian dollar and the Brazilian currency at the time. And then it was like four times different. It was so different. And with the September 11 attack, my husband was working for an airline an American airlines, the United airlines in fact, and that airline was severely impacted. But what happened, in so many levels, including filing for chapter 11, which is similar to a bankruptcy. And he didn't get paid for almost five months, four and a half months to be precise. And that was just too much for us. I had to look for a job. There was no way. I did not know how I was going to manage it and what type of job I would be able to find because I had to continue studying to be in Australia.

I had the two kids. So you know, Andre was working for United. And away, a lot of the time in Chicago or other offices around South. It's South America, central America, and North America. And I was away. He was away a lot and I was alone a lot and I'm thinking, gosh, how are we going to do this? But I started applying for many organizations here. It was a terrible experience for me. I felt really frustrated, lonely. I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't have any connections and I hadn't really worked on them because I didn't think I needed to study. So I was really enjoying being a student and a mom. And that was enough for me. And quite frankly, it was a lot. So I was getting incredibly stressed and frustrated and Andrea was away. And you know, because of September 11 I didn't want to, he was already so stressed with work, I didn't want to add to that.

But I was thinking, well, he's, when he comes back, we need to start talking about going back to Brazil. There is no way. We need to go home and this is way too hard. It's not going to work. And that same week I volunteered with the university. So the university used to ask me to help them promote the university to agents, usually South American. So I was kind of helping them understand the international market. They weren't, I wasn't an agent for Melbourne uni. They didn't have a lot of, they still don't really, but they didn't have at the time, any sort of footprint in Brazil. And we were working together to sort of work on that, but they couldn't pay me. I was a student. And in Australia, unlike the United States, they don't really have this, habit or really policies around hiring students, and especially undergraduate students. In America it's very common.

So they were giving me vouchers that I could use in the bookshop as payment. And I was thinking, what am I going to do with this voucher? I'm going back to Brazil. I can't use it. I don't need to buy any more books. I'm going home, I'm giving up.

So I was really frustrated but I decided to go anyway. And in that specific event, I sat next to the associate Dean international for the faculty I was studying, which is the business faculty. And we struck a conversation and I really liked him and, and you know, he was very curious about my work in Brazil. And I asked him, do you need me to help you? Let me, I'm looking for a job. And he said, yeah, yeah, let's work together. And I was like, Oh, okay.

So he said something along the lines of drop by tomorrow to my office and, and you know, let's, let's talk tomorrow. So I prepared as if I was going to an interview. I dressed up but I remember I had gained weight. I was so worried I wouldn't fit into my suit and I, and I didn't, I had to kind of improvise something, printed out a resume, walked into his office and it wasn't a meeting. He

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basically gave me the keys to his office, all his passwords to his computer and said, okay, you're starting today. You know, this is the sort of things I want to do. Very simple things for now. You're just going to help me with research until I come back from my four weeks away. I'm traveling.

And I'm like, Oh ok.

So I was so relieved, and being paid as an RA, which is a research assistant, it's a great, you know, hourly rate, for somebody who has absolutely nothing. And I could work 20 hours a week and I managed to do 20 hours a week. It was where I studied. So there weren't, there wasn't no commuting or need to sort of go anywhere. And I could feel in all of my gaps in between my lectures with work so, two thumbs up. It was great. And it also enabled me to start building some friendships that I have until today. So I'm on a book club with three of the women that worked in that department and we are good friends to this day. I worked for them. I did research for them, I became, you know, a bit more involved with the research that was done by that department, manage them, supported them in a few projects and we became friends. Ah, so good.

Oh that first job that you get in a new country, you never forget. You're forever grateful. Really, really you are. And this amazing man not only helped me but he also helped my husband, he gave Andrea a little bit of work in Australia and that started building his resume with the work experience in Australia, which in Australia for the Australian market is really important to have that work experience. So we're really grateful to his support and help. And he, he does that for a lot of international students. He's PhD students. Are, you know, really value is a mentoring and support. Being an immigrant himself. He knows how hard it can be. So that was really fantastic, but there was no opportunity for me to grow in that university. I think it's also important for, a young professional in a new country to spread their wings and to try different things.

But I couldn't see growth. And I also thought it was very insular for me to study in a place, work in a place, and then just continue working there and never move out. So I applied for a job at a different university. It was a much better place where I jumped two levels in the sort of public system. That's how it works. So I was a HEW four, then I became a HEW five. And then I was trying to go for a HEW six at Melbourne, but I became a HEW seven at Monash. And then six months after I started at Monash, I was promoted again to a HEW nine. So in less than a year, I went from being a HEW four to a HEW nine that was like really, really great. I had already graduated from my undergraduate degree. I had some work experience about two and a half years by then and I was going to work at Monash and also do my Honours year at Monash.

The honours year in Australia is equivalent to a masters in the U S there, you know, it's like the fourth undergraduate year or the first in the postgraduate. So at Melbourne at the time that you would acknowledge it as the fourth undergraduate at Monash where I moved my honours to, so I transferred it, it was considered the first of the post-graduates. It doesn't matter, it's a master's and it was a thesis and in organizational behaviour, which I loved. I did it with a psychologist who then went back to university himself and he's now a doctor and we worked on stress team climate, positive psychology, everything to do with the things that I love, which is performance, how people perform, what impacts their performance in terms of the team climate and how they relate to others and also how they relate with their traits and their behaviours and so on. Especially at the rise of positive psychology in Australia back then in 2005 to 2008 when I was studying, it was a wonderful place to be. Lots of people were visiting Australia from overseas. Lots of great researchers

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and I was able to meet many of them and study under them and the workshops with them. So excellent, excellent time.

And from that point onwards, I had a great career. I was headhunted out of the university sector to work for an association. And that brought me into, marketing roles, public relation roles, relationship with government relation roles, lobbying. I moved to a think tank slash association, that I had always admired and followed. So I was really excited when they, when KPMG, they have a head hunting arm in Australia. They called me to, to go in for a meeting with the CEO of CEDA where I worked and I loved CEDA, I talk about CEDA all the time. It's one of the great institutions in Australia where you can listen to, you know, thought leaders, politicians, that's where the soapbox where they deliver green papers, white papers, speeches and so on. And I was the national manager there for a couple of years.

From that point I was again contacted by somebody, a former MBA student of mine. So at Monash I worked with MBA students for a year and a bit as a career manager. That was a job that I, I asked to do, cause I really, I knew it was coming up and I moved out of my HEW nine a job into that role because I thought I was going to just love it. I knew it and he called me and he said, look, there's this opportunity, CEO role for a small foundation, but very prestigious foundation. And I immediately thought of you. So he was managing their endowment at the time. And I said, okay, I'll consider it. And it took forever and you know, backwards and forwards. And finally, I got that role and I think it was a big growth spurt for me.

I had already worked with boards before at both CEDA and at the association, the professional association I worked, but reporting directly to a board as a CEO. Wow. That's a different ballgame altogether. So I was lucky that I, at the time I was studying at the John Kennedy school of governance and government in doing governance studies and preparing myself. So it was all kind of like, it helped at a good time. So I was really, interested in going back to that, sort of leadership role that I had as a youngster, as you know, the owner of my own business. But it's different when you're managing other people's dreams specially in the not for profit sector. And I eventually got myself a coach. Andrea, she was wonderful and that was, with the support of the chair and the board. And that's when I became in love again with Career Coaching through the way that, Denise and Andrea coached me and helped me, get ready for that role and then leave that role, when it was over. I was incredibly grateful to their wisdom, their advice.

I couldn't have done it without them. They helped me prepare for meetings. They helped me prepare to be resilient and confident in my skills and my abilities to support the organization and negotiate, deals with, you know, very large, much larger organizations. And I was forever grateful and decided, yeah, this is really what I want. And I remembered back then that we had a wonderful friend, family friend, when I was very, very young and she did my first Myers Briggs, which is a personality test. And my second, and she had helped me so much when I was young and I didn't realize it until then, you know, and that's when I reconnected with her. I visited her in San Diego and she gave me her book. She was retiring and she gave me her special book, which I have by my bedside table and I remembered all of the things she had said to me when I was growing up. All of the advice that she gave me and I'm like, wow, you know, this woman has been helping me and I didn't even notice. And I have friends in Australia who are career coaches. I have Sue who I helped to interview for, for the podcast and they have always been incredibly helpful. There's just this giving, you know, mentality and mindset of being always there for me when I needed them.

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And that's how I want to be to you, my followers and this public forum and to my clients, my private clients. And I felt that I had gained so much experience by applying for roles, by leaving roles, by, moving sideways to the top and dealing with all sorts of people and recruitment needs and head hunting needs.

And I started getting myself ready for that transition when I left my CEO role. I took yet another job because when you open a business, when you become a portfolio career person, like I am now, I have several channels that I operate under but they are on, it's my responsibility to find work. You need to get your lifestyle ready; you need to get your budget ready. You need to make sure that you can take that risk of not having a salary. So it took me another few years to get that and I had a wonderful job after my CEO role. I worked under a person that I really wanted to work under. I really wanted that job and it didn't work for as long as I thought it would. I was made redundant. And there is a big crisis in Australia with, higher education sector, R and D industry partnerships and the funding for both higher education and for R and D. So the road that we aspired to build didn't really eventuate after many political transitions and nothing really, coming to fruition in terms of the promises that were made. So it was good for me to leave. I was ready to leave. And after grieving, you know, a little grieving period, I was like, yes, this is exactly what I need to do.

I need to stop carving my own path, building my own business and doing my own consulting and developing the career coaching dream that I, that I've aspired to do. I just need to bring that forward because I don't want to take another permanent role. So that's where I am now. It's a long story and I don't want to go any further than this today, but we will have another session where I explain all the different channels that I operate. I have my business consulting arm, Pantala and I work with some wonderful people that I have found along the way of my career that I love working with. You know, Stephen who was my boss, Judith who was my right hand woman at my CEO role, Patricia, who is just an amazing creative and that skill is so needed in the corporate sector and a couple of business partners that I adore. I work with MindTribes with, which is all about diversity and inclusion and again, two people that I adore, Div and Vic Pillay and two people that I'm just so impressed to work with, which is Michelle Redfern and Mo.

I hope you enjoy this. Thank you so much. Enjoy your day. And you can join my community and I will send that podcast every week for you by email. Just press learn more on Facebook, on my Facebook page, and you will be asked for your email so that I can send you that newsletter. Every week. I curate articles, I find lots of good content and I send them to my community. And there are lots of little freebies and bonuses that once you join, I will start sending to you, um, over the course of the next few days. It's like three days of little emails from me with little gifts, and then you get the newsletters every week. Okay? Don't forget to do that and talk to you soon. Bye!