



REBRANDING AND REVOLUTIONISING WITH SARAH AND CLAIRE

13TH FEBRUARY 2023

CLAIRE [00:00:00] Nothing in this podcast is financial advice, and when investing your capital is at risk.

(Upbeat intro music)

SARAH [00:00:04] Welcome to the Obu podcast, a place for people who are changing what it means to be an angel investor. Where will talk into business owners who have taken investment and angel investors who have put in their capital, their wisdom and their networks to work to grow diverse founded businesses. The world of investment is changing and we're inviting you to learn how. Welcome to the Obu podcast.

(Music builds then ends)

CLAIRE [00:00:38] So in this episode we're diving into the story behind our new brand Obu – how we became lobbyists and successfully changed SEIS legislation to make investment more accessible for women entrepreneurs, and why we're taking the step to become a part of the 3% of fintech founders who are women.

(Segment music change)

So, Sarah, I'm going to come to you because there's a lot in the name and we're changing. We're moving from we are radical to Obu. Tell us the story behind the name.

SARAH [00:01:10] So it's been a really interesting process, hasn't it? Yeah, and also a really rewarding one because we get to work with our amazing brand team and we have to give them a shout out here because we wouldn't be sharing this new brand with the world without them. So we talked in the last episode about how we'd been on this kind of journey for the last four years of building this business, testing and experimenting and being guided by those founding principles of knowing we wanted to tackle a big problem, knowing that we wanted to build a scalable solution, and therefore that would involve technology. I guess one of the things we didn't touch on was the fact that you and I both have financial services backgrounds.

CLAIRE [00:01:52] Yeah

SARAH [00:01:53] So the minute we started to realise, hang on, we need to do something here about the way investment works, we knew that was technology, we knew that that would be financial services, therefore that would involve FCA regulation. But because of that corporate



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Start to move new
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businesses.

background, we weren't frightened by that. It didn't kind of put us off. But all of those things led us to: we are radical, has been right for the last four years. We've been radical, we've disrupted things, but actually it's not right for what's about to come next. Our proposition is changing, we're building a fintech solution. It didn't feel like we are radical, was the right name for that. But we also didn't want to lose sight of everything we've done in the last four. Like we wanted to have a nod to all of the people that had been with us during that four year period, our community. We wanted to recognise the Over Being Underfunded campaign where, somehow during that four years we found ourselves lobbying the government and asking the Treasury to make key changes to the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme. So it was this coming together of... we're now a fintech, we want to recognise the last four years, we want to recognise the success of the over being underfunded campaign. And importantly, we want to keep having an impact like we're over being underfunded, we're we've been underestimated. And suddenly Obu kind of just started to appear. It was like, We're over this, we're doing something about it. So Obu is a nod to we are over being underfunded, we're over being undervalued, we're over being underestimated. And we are out here building a fintech solution that is doing something about it.

CLAIRE [00:03:49] It's beautiful and also say will look great on merch. May I just say? Also an important marker, right?

SARAH [00:03:55] We will be getting those hoodies. Yeah.

CLAIRE [00:03:58] That's going to happen.

SARAH [00:03:59] So anywhere you've previously seen radical you'll now see Obu. Same people, same values growing a bigger team, a bigger movement and importantly bringing a financial services product to the market that will create positive disruption. And on that, share with everyone what is it that we're doing?

CLAIRE [00:04:25] What actually is Obu? I love that we are bringing a mechanism into the financial services ecosystem. So we have talked about and worked alongside incredible female founders who are raising investment. And we know still that only 2% of investment is going into the hands of women founders. And if you are a black women founder, 0.02% of money is seeing its way into your business, which is quite honestly. Frightening. On the other side of the coin, we have underfunded, underrepresented, overlooked founders on this side of the coin. On the other side. You only have 15% of angel investors who are women. Women are not talked to about angel investment. It isn't a conversation that they likely have with their IFA because it's not a conversation that's brought to the table. So we don't have a diverse angel network that will see the opportunity in those women founders and then bring the cash, the capital, the networks, the connection to them that will really help to supercharge their



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More better
businesses will
exist in the world.

businesses. And because we're over talking about this and we're over the research. As lovely as the research is helpful for us to understand it, we now need to build a mechanism to bring those two sides of the coin together to increase the population of women investors who are considering angel investment to bring more capital and importantly start to increase that 2%. That 2% has got to start moving. So we are building a financial investment platform that brings together women, founders, diverse angels and allies into the SEIS space, which is where we're going to start the platform out and start to move new money in a new way to build incredible, important businesses.

SARAH [00:06:17] It's so exciting to be at this moment, isn't it? It's just after four years. It is brilliant to be here. It's happening.

CLAIRE [00:06:24] Yeah, it's happening. What I find just slightly crazy and blows my mind is by the time we get to the summer, we will have an investment platform, which will be the only regulated investment platform designed to close the gender investment gap in the UK. That's nuts. Yeah, And also so exciting. I literally cannot wait.

SARAH [00:06:49] It's going to be one hell of a party.

CLAIRE [00:06:52] We'll be a bed by ten, who are we kidding? right. So we talk about and it's words that we've got really familiar with over the last six months as we've been describing this to investors, which is, you know, an investment platform for entrepreneurs and Angel. But really, Sarah, what does that actually mean?

SARAH [00:07:12] Okay. So we like its a bit like statements. So our platform will be a bit like Bumble. But for entrepreneurs and angels, as you've described on the one side of the coin, we want to increase the amount of investment placed in early stage businesses founded by women. So we will serve those entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs that are raising up to £250,000 using SEIS - on the other side of our Bumble coin. We will welcome existing angels who want to place their capital and their wisdom and their knowhow and their experience into those businesses, but importantly we'll also be growing that population. So people who have the capital, who have wisdom and networks and cheerleading and that they can also invest but who aren't being invited, as you describe to that investment conversation. So a bit like Bumble, but for entrepreneurs and for angels. So in terms of the technology that sits behind all of this, because we're very much about people, but we're using technology to solve this problem at scale to, as you describe, create that mechanism for these relationships to be developed. So firstly, it's that ability to create your profile, talk about your raise or talk about the investments that you would like to make. It's then adding to that the legal technology for actually closing



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opportunity is
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your rounds and your shareholder agreement and your articles. And then flowing from that, it's the community piece. So we don't want to be a platform for people who just want to get their round done and then that's it. Thanks very much. I'm off. Actually, what we want to do is support those entrepreneurs to be successful as they're building their businesses, but also support those angels to be successful as angel investors. You know, some of them might become board members. Well, how do you do that if you've never done it before? And actually, that community of people can really increase the likelihood for those businesses being successful. And a key thing for us with our platform is we're welcome in businesses that are profit and purpose led. So when we get this right, it's not only good in terms of closing the gender wealth gap, closing the gender investment gap, closing the gender board gap, I mean, we're going for it!

CLAIRE [00:09:44] All the gaps.

SARAH [00:09:45] It's also that piece of more better businesses will exist in the world. Yeah, and that's great for our planet is great for people. It's great for communities and society. It has an impact in terms of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, like those four years of slog.

CLAIRE [00:10:03] Yeah.

SARAH [00:10:03] It was so worth it to get to this.

CLAIRE [00:10:06] I have got goosebumps just listening to you describe it. I love it and I think a part of the changes that the mechanism the technology will solve are things that we have learnt from and borne witness to over the last four years. So the toxic behaviours, you know, ghosting. That happens endlessly in the investment space, the patronising feedback and the pats on the head that you get from, you know, come back when...

SARAH [00:10:35] Yeah.

CLAIRE [00:10:35] Conversations that you have with angels.

SARAH [00:10:38] Yeah.

CLAIRE [00:10:38] Where the power dynamic is, you know very much. I think founders feel as though all of the power sits in the hands of the investor. And actually if what we're trying to do is disrupt the ecosystem and bring new angels into the mix. The power should be shared, the opportunity is shared, the power should be shared. And so by creating a technology solution, the, you know, starts to shift the workload. So it's



not all on the founder to do the chasing, to draft the legal agreements, to follow up with the emails. If you can create technology that starts to solve for those problems, it allows people to connect with each other as human beings.

SARAH [00:11:21] Right.

CLAIRE [00:11:21] Which means that we all get to be fully invested in a business beyond capital

SARAH [00:11:28] Right.

CLAIRE [00:11:28] We get to have brilliant conversations, create new opportunities, because what we're not distracted by is second guessing ourselves, trying to figure out whether our pitch deck ever did land with that person or not, because you've never heard from them again.

SARAH [00:11:43] Yeah

CLAIRE [00:11:43] And we can solve for those problems.

SARAH [00:11:44] Right

CLAIRE [00:11:44] We can solve it with technology and take that away as a distraction, [00:11:49]make it quicker, make it easier, and allow people to come together as human beings who believe that each other has got something to bring to the table. [9.0s] And I think that's a really important value that we will build into the solution.

SARAH [00:12:04] Right?

CLAIRE [00:12:05] It's not a by-product of it's fundamentally baked into how the technology is built

SARAH [00:12:12] Right and it's exciting, isn't it? The. You know, we not only bring knowledge from all of the incredible research and data that is out in the world, but we bring it from building this business for the last four years. And let's be honest, from closing our own two investment rounds.

CLAIRE [00:12:31] Yeah, right!

SARAH [00:12:32] And because of how we designed and approached those rounds, we had a pretty good experience, as you described in the last episode. It was joyful doing our last investment round, but that's because we very deliberately. We avoided the toxic shit, right? Yeah.



CLAIRE [00:12:50] We did. Mm hmm.

SARAH [00:12:51] And now we can build that into this platform. Like, that's just all. Avoid this.

CLAIRE [00:12:57] Yeah, right. You don't have to put up with this.

SARAH [00:13:00] Right.

CLAIRE [00:13:01] That's the old way. There's a new way emerging. And what it does is it also changes where you and I are in industry. So all of a sudden, we are fintech founders, and that means we are just 3%. What does that mean for us?

SARAH [00:13:18] Yeah, it's a small number, isn't it? Just 3%. And we'll be talking to some of the other 3% during this podcast series. I think firstly we have to say it feels exciting.

CLAIRE [00:13:31] Yeah.

SARAH [00:13:31] You know, we get to learn with we get to collaborate with the other 3%. But importantly, we know we have allies in the other 97%.

CLAIRE [00:13:40] Mm hmm.

SARAH [00:13:41] So massive shout out to Tom at circa 5000. Like a great example of... We shared our purpose with him. He was shocked by the numbers.

CLAIRE [00:13:53] Yeah.

SARAH [00:13:53] And just was like, okay, if you're going on this fintech journey, let me share my knowledge and experience with you. That's just been invaluable over the last few months for us. So working with those other founders who are creating disruption is exciting. Working with the allies who will share their experience with us so that we can all come together and our purpose-led businesses are having a positive impact, growing and scaling as they as we want them to. But there's a flipside, right? Yeah. So we know that globally \$700 billion a year is being left on the table because the financial services sector aren't recognising women as an audience.

CLAIRE [00:14:37] Mm hmm.

SARAH [00:14:37] And so we're now rocking up and saying, this is our target audience, this is our prime audience, we're unapologetic about that and we're going to face



challenge, you know, Well, why do you need to develop a investment platform that's designed for women?

CLAIRE [00:14:56] Yeah.

SARAH [00:14:57] We're look, like, we've heard that challenge already. We know that through this process we have asked and we will continue to ask, why does it need to work like that? Why is the current system designed in that way? And we don't do that to be difficult, we just do that because we know that there is an audience that isn't being served very well at the moment. And if we can serve them better, that's great for our economy. It's great for innovation coming out of the UK because suddenly you've got a new wave of businesses that are being invested in. It's great for wealth generation, for that new population of angel investors. So we don't... We're not poky because we want to piss anybody off. We're poky because there is such an exciting opportunity here. So, you know, one of the amazing things about being a co-founded business is that when we get that challenge and we're having stones thrown at us, we can come back together as a founding team and just like we've got each other's backs and that fuels our own resilience. But actually just the excitement and the opportunity to work with other disruptors to bring something new to the financial services sector. Overall, it's just such a privilege to be here, to be working with an amazing team and to know that this year we will increase the number of diverse angel investors and we will increase the number of diverse businesses that secure investment.

SARAH [00:16:31] Yeah, that's it. That's the point, right? I can't wait. I can't wait for the platform to be released into the world and to continue to work alongside incredible disruptors, brilliant founders, incredibly supportive allies who just gift us their time and wisdom. There is change happening. There are so many organisations now like us in talking about slightly different things, but the wealth in the finance conversation is on the rise and that means that change is just behind it. And I am. I'm here for the ride.

(Upbeat music builds again)

SARAH [00:17:09] Joining us on the Obu podcast next week is Erika Brodnock. Erika is a serial entrepreneur. She's the co-founder of Extend Ventures and co-founder of Kin Hub. Our conversation with Erika saw us talk about the part of the ecosystem that is right for change, her own experience of raising investment, and a role that each of us can play supporting more women and more black women founders to build thriving businesses. It's a conversation that could have gone on and on, so we really hope you enjoy it too and hopefully feel inspired to take action. Join us then and visit Obuinvest.com to learn more about why reimagining entrepreneurship and investment matters.

(Music gets louder then ends)