

## 'It's fear that stops men standing up. They don't want to rock the boat'

CAT MCGINN AND TIM BURROWES  
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Welcome to an audio-led edition of Unmade. Today we discuss why, despite much virtue signalling, the communications industry remains a hostile workplace for many women. Plus, a bad day for the Unmade Index as it slumps by more than two percent in a single session.

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## 'We're potentially recommending an agency where employees will be harassed, bullied or even assaulted'



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Today's conversation offers a depressing picture of how little progress the communications industry has made compared to other industries in making adland a safe environment for women.

The discussion, convened by Unmade's Cat McGinn, features Jasmin Bedir, Darren Woolley and Liam Walsh. A key question: are the industry's male executives putting career expediency ahead of doing the right thing when they see a problem?

Bedir is CEO of creative agency Innocean and founder of campaign group Fck the Cupcakes.

Woolley is founder of marketing consultancy Trinity P3. In 2022, he began to invite the bosses of agencies participating in marketing pitches run by his company to sign a statutory declaration on their "status and processes regarding workplace bullying, harassment and assault". It also asks agencies to confirm they do not use non-disclosure agreements to stop women from talking about their bad experiences. While most independent agencies choose to sign, "virtually all" holding companies have found reasons to avoid doing so, Woolley says.

Walsh has worked in a number of big roles across adland including running Facebook ANZ and Amobee, and national sales director of Fairfax Digital.

According to Bedir: "I see a lot of agencies literally pretending that they are so super diverse and or they're so in favor of gender equality and then I look at the gender pay gap.

"Agencies are so good at this ornamental window dressing. They're all talking the talk."

She adds: "I see little pockets of progress. But I think for a very long time this industry has been really good at virtue signalling and pretending that our houses are in order. Winning diversity awards and all these things that look on a surface level all good. But I think they're all artificially created and it's not really what's underneath."



Woolley: 'A deep moral responsibility'

One of Woolley's concerns is that when holding companies refuse to sign statutory declarations - instead sending through documents about their policies - he cannot be certain what he is recommending to his clients when he assists them with a pitch. "It means that every every week, every month that we're running another pitch, we're potentially recommending an agency where employees will be harassed, bullied or even assaulted. And how do I feel about that? I don't have any legal responsibility but I certainly feel a deep moral responsibility and ethical responsibility for doing that."

On the topic of virtue signalling, Walsh warns that the private conversations of some male executives in the industry are far less progressive than what they say in public fora. He says: "I hear conversations where men still talk about women and how they look."



Walsh: Male executives still discuss women's looks

Woolley warns: "I have to tell you it is fear that stops particularly men standing up even when they know something is going to be good for everyone and particularly the women they that they work with and and colleagues. But they don't want to rock the boat."

On the topic of why the trade press does not speak out more, Walsh reveals: "I've heard too many conversations where the person who pays for the ad has said we'll stop running ads with that trade publication for what they said."

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### Unmade Index slips some more

The Unmade Index - our tracker of the performance of the ASX's media and marketing stocks - slumped on Wednesday - dropping by 2.21% to 564.1 points, less than two points off an all time low.

The fall was triggered by a drop in the wider ASX, with the top 300 All Ordinaries losing 1.4% yesterday.



Ooh Media was the worst performing of the big stocks, losing 5.08%. Print and marketing house IVE Group lost 4.55% and Domain slipped 3.64%.

Seven West Media slipped by 2.63%, taking its market capitalisation down to \$285m, only just ahead of ARN Media which grew by 3.47% yesterday to a market cap of \$280m.

Symbol	Company name	Closing price	Daily change	% change	\$ Market Cap
NWS	News Corp Class B	26.33	-0.35	-1.31%	14,733,571,038
NEC	Nine Entertainment Co	1.67	-0.02	-1.18%	2,694,855,550
DHG	Domain Holdings Austr	3.18	-0.12	-3.64%	2,008,669,302
OML	oOh!Media Ltd	1.68	-0.09	-5.08%	904,320,955
SWM	Seven West Media Ltd	0.19	-	-2.63%	284,740,903
IGL	IVE Group Ltd	2.10	-0.10	-4.55%	323,359,245
A1N	ARN Media Ltd	0.90	+0.03	+3.47%	280,180,012
SXL	Southern Cross Media I	0.94	-	-	224,330,623
EGG	Enero Group Ltd	1.82	-0.04	-2.41%	166,251,235
ASX:MK	Market Ltd	0.19	-	-	60,984,790
SEG	Sports Entertainment G	0.23	-	-	60,892,110
VNL	Vinyl Group Ltd	0.08	-	+1.33%	45,961,393
PPL	Pureprofile Ltd	0.02	-	-	30,654,492
ASP	Aspermont Limited	0.02	-	-10.53%	39,658,503
MXO	Motio	0.03	-	-	8,296,265

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We'll be back with more tomorrow.

Toodlepip...

**Tim Burrowes**

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