

Lansons Alumni Newsletter

Welcome to our inaugural Lansons Alumni Newsletter

Last year you were welcomed by Clare to become a member of [Lansons Alumni Group](#) as we wanted to formally bring our alumni together and strengthen the community. This marks the first issue of our Lansons Alumni Newsletter, a quarterly email that will feature stories, insights and perspectives from Lansons' alumni from the last 30+ years, upcoming alumni events and more.



Lansons Alumni Podcast | Episode 1

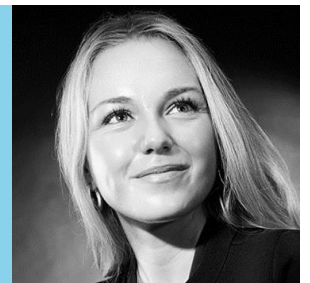
We are delighted to bring to you our first Lansons Alumni Podcast. The series will feature alumni that have inspiring stories to tell and an entrepreneurial mindset. Our first episode features [Sophie Lilley](#), Director of Munchkin & Bear Europe, an online retailer of luxe padded playmats and [Michelle L'Huillier](#), Founder and Director of Tom & Teddy, a father and son beachwear brand inspired by Australian style. Both are Lansons alumnae, in Sophie's case 15 years, and in Michelle's case, 3 years. Hosted by Lansons Co-Founder and Chair, Clare Parsons, Sophie and Michelle share their stories of launching and growing thriving online businesses and both the challenges and joy that comes with being entrepreneurs.

www.tomandteddy.com
www.munchkinandbear.co.uk

[Listen now](#)

International perspective of working life through the pandemic

By Claudia Guembe Lapetra, Head of Communications and Change Management, Iberia - Willis Towers Watson, Iberia



It all started on a lovely Monday morning around mid-March. Spring had almost sprung in Madrid and I was walking to work (yes, I walk to work, no more 50-minute commute on the London tube) with my café con leche in hand, thinking what a great way to start the week. Little did I know that that same week I would find out that a) the country was going into national lockdown, b) we would all work from home for the foreseeable future and most worryingly c) our company, Willis

Towers Watson (WTW) was being acquired by competitor broker Aon.

As you can imagine, when the news broke in the space of an hour, our organisation was halfway between shock, horror and hysteric laughter. Forget Covid, the company we had been fiercely competing against for years was now absorbing us (apologies WTW for not using our corporate terminology "business combination").

So, whilst most of you went home thinking, “great, I get to wake up at 9am and work in my PJs”, I was thinking... “SH*T, it is now my responsibility to keep everyone calm and collected, so I better start by calming myself down”. I guess this is the moment we all as comms practitioners wait for in our careers, an opportunity to prove that what we do actually makes a difference, and there I was thinking, “I just want to hide under the duvet”. But, instead, I rose to the challenge and spent that entire first weekend at home- while you were all learning to bake - thinking about my comms plan, at the time titled “*How to avoid organizational chaos in a time of global chaos*”. This was my opportunity to prove that leadership communications is critical to keep employees engaged and to maintain the unity of the business at a time of uncertainty. All while answering media calls from titles I hadn’t even heard of.

After multiple CEO videos, Town Halls, virtual breakfast meetings, employee pulse surveys, the launch of our wellbeing app and many more, we actually seemed to be doing OK...until we lost it somewhere between cocktail hour with the senior team and group workout sessions over Zoom... I mean, how many times does one have to see their colleagues in tight gym gear to realise this is not OK? I’m sure we are all glad to put that chapter behind us.

On the WFH situation, I thought it’d be a great idea to move in with my mum, not just to avoid feeling lonely during lockdown but to ensure I always had a full fridge. Little did I know that 3 months later, my mum’s house would be stricter than Guantanamo! Just for context, lockdown in Spain was INTENSE. We were only allowed to leave the house to buy essentials and exercising outdoors was not permitted. This meant my hyperactive mum found herself going to the supermarket on a daily basis and coming back with our daily essentials; chocolate, cheese and Rioja... (toilet paper was of course not an option).

So, by the second week we had drunk our way through my dad’s cellar, the house had never looked so clean, and our only human interaction was with the Amazon delivery guys, who must have been very amused when we ordered a cocktail-making set, a treadmill and 5 additional tons of Fairy Liquid. Oh, and last-minute plot twist, the Aon-WTW combination was blocked by the US Department of Justice so a year later I find myself exactly in the same place, still working from home for WTW, still haven’t got on the treadmill, but at least I moved out of my mum’s house.



Getting together

Lansons would love to host an alumni drinks in the near future but would like to understand how people feel about attending. We would appreciate you participating in [our survey](#) - it will take less than 1 minute to complete and will help us plan a memorable get together.

[Take the survey](#)

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter. If you would like to take part in a future newsletter we would love to hear from you. Drop us a line at alumni@lansons.com.