

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:05.0] DC:** It takes the right skills and the right innovation to design and manage meaningful print marketing solutions. Welcome to Podcasts from the Printerverse, where we explore all facets of print and marketing that create stellar communications and sales opportunities for business success. I'm your host, Deborah Corn, the intergalactic ambassador to the Printerverse. Thanks for tuning in. Listen long and prosper.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:32.8] DC:** Hey everybody, welcome to Podcast from the Printerverse, this is Deborah Corn, your intergalactic ambassador, and today, I am so proud to announce a new series here. It is called Out and Proud in Print and I'm so honored to have as my first guest, Kim Wunner from Kim Wunner Coaching and Consulting, a famous face now amongst the Girls Who Print community. Hopefully, you know, your legendary helpfulness is traveling further out into the Printerverse but thank you so much for joining me today.

**[0:01:05.9] KW:** Yes, thank you for having me here. I'm proud to be here and I'm proud to be recording this. After coming off last week, doing this incredible workshop with the amazing, strong, bold women of the Printerverse. So happy to be back and so frequently to spend some time with you.

**[0:01:26.3] DC:** Thank you so much. So today, we are launching a series about people in the printing industry who identify as what I refer to as the overall catchphrase as gay. That's how I was brought up, so that's the nomenclature I am going to use and hopefully, everybody out there can just understand what I mean by that and it will be cool.

So it is Pride Month and I really felt it was important, especially now, to spend some time and give some visibility to human experience. That's really how I just want to frame it. Part of that human experience is obviously, we have personal lives and we have professional lives, and sometimes, personal lives and professional lives do not work together, don't always work together.

Historically, there is, you know, as societies change, things change, but I guess what I'm trying to get at is that now, I really just wanted to you know, slow down a bit and get some insight and do some interviews with some people in the industry who are kicking ass, taking names, and just also happen to be gay and share coming-out stories and all of that.

So, Kim, your practice is actually focused on women and what you call LGBTQIA I guess, you go that far. Can you talk a little bit in – first, tell everybody what you do and then lead into why these two areas became a specialty of yours?

**[0:03:17.8] KW:** Yeah, absolutely. I love that you talked about the humanness of us, right? Because underneath, all of our bodies and our identities, we're all just human, right? There's a shared human and there's a train of thought maybe that even you know, that there isn't a gender to that, right?

Which I know, gender and sexuality are different but still like, there's just something soulful that we're just human. So with that, I'm a coach, I'm a consultant in business and leadership. That means that I work in three different ways. One is that I will work with people one-on-one with individuals in their self-leadership, right?

If there's something going on in someone's life that they want to change, I'm there, and that can be anything from visibility, that could be, "I want to be more organized, I want less anxiety, I want to start a business, I want to go for a promotion, I want to use my voice, I want more time in my day." You know, all of those things, and more.

So I work one-on-one with someone to work on those skills, for the leadership in their life, right? Their own self-generation. That means their ability to stand on their own two feet and do the thing, their want to improve.

Next, I go into organizations to work with their culture and their leadership. So that can be workshops, that could be coaching for executives, leadership teams, et cetera and then I'll also do public speaking. So I'll go to a conference, I'll go to an organization and speak on a topic in that world, so that is what I do.

On my background in marketing and communications, for a moment in time, for a few years in time, I worked for a commercial printer in the Philadelphia area where I used to live, which is how I got connected to you. I love working with Girls Who Print because it is a male-dominated industry historically.

We might say, it's you know, maybe a very straight male-dominated industry, or at least, that's how it's presented and that's changing and we're changing that. So – that we're hoping, right That's what we're trying to at least, with this podcast and others. So that's where you and I have joined forces.

The people I work with. Question number two. Women and I can go through the nomenclature of the gay community. I'm from the same generation, right? That was what we were raised with. So I work with that because I feel there are the issues we face in our lives, women and the gay community, where sometimes there's overlap, are similar and I have a lived experience in both.

So I think I can be of service and help people navigate those things and so we're talking about safety, we're talking about being our whole selves, we're talking about, having to maybe leave situations where we cannot be our whole selves for overcoming internalized shame, internalized fears, homophobias, sexism, all of that, right?

And so we come up against perceptions, we come up against people not opening the door sometimes, we're the only person in the room with that identity and so how do we navigate that for ourselves and others? So that was why I work with those two populations in particular.

**[0:06:31.6] DC:** Wow. I mean, first of all, thank you for all you're doing to help people in that manner. I mean, that literally left me speechless. What important work, so thank you so much for that. I'm literally a little speechless about this. I guess, I would want to dive a little deeper into this.

What, in generalities of course, what are some of the things that your gay clients come to you to navigate within all of those big, big picture topics that you mentioned? You know, obviously, without betraying confidence.

**[0:07:15.6] KW:** Of course, no, we'll talk in generalities. I loved, Deborah, when say you want to go deeper and have conversations, I kind of live in that deeper space and you have such kind of wise and sometimes radical ideas in the best way possible. Like we need radical, right? And so I love that.

So, the issues that my clients who identify as gay come to me with, one of the most prevalent is that authenticity in being my whole self. That's the biggest one and then how does that show up in the workplace? How do I marry that with life?

**[0:07:50.4] DC:** And that could be as simple as having a photo of your partner on your desk.

**[0:07:56.1] KW:** Exactly, exactly. You know, it doesn't mean – and we all have different expressions of how we are and who we are. So it doesn't mean you need to walk in, "How am I going to walk into a room and announce it?" Right? Yes. How do I have a partner? Do I have to come out every time I open my mouth? I don't want to, or maybe I do, right?

Like, how do we do that, and what if I'm in a workplace – that's the next most common one – that does not feel comfortable for me? Where I hear jokes, where I hear words, or people are just so timid that they're just kind of ignoring it, right?

Do I stay, do I go, do I change culture? You know, what is that for me? And again, that comes with – going back to identifying as your humanness – what are your values, how do you want to show up, and then, is your workplace going to be supportive of that?

**[0:08:50.2] DC:** So, just to put it on the other side for a second and this might be a radical statement but look at it from the other side just for argument's sake. Was that person authentic during their interview, you know? And if they weren't, then whose responsibility is it to, you know, I'm going to with air quotes say "protect them" in all the ways that – or respect who they are if they literally hid it, to begin with?

**[0:09:20.8] KW:** Yeah, great question, right? So, Deb, we are all evolving creatures and so in that scenario, maybe I interviewed or someone interviewed and hid who they fully were and a

few months later, they get there and they decide they don't want to live that way, and now what? You know, yeah, those are very real questions and right now, there isn't – I don't know if there is an answer for it, it's very personal.

**[0:09:47.5] DC:** It is personal. I mean, I haven't been, I don't think, any job interviews when someone said, "So are you married or..." but I don't know if straight women don't go through that, you know? Because maybe in some other -ism ways, they're trying to figure out are they going to have the baby in five, three years, or something like that?

**[0:10:06.2] KW:** That was the example I thought of, you know, a woman in a relationship to something that can change with how they present, right? And then what do they want to do, right? They might say that they want to go right back to work but once they have the child decide, "I don't" or "I want to do a hybrid" or something like that.

**[0:10:23.3] DC:** But the point is, it's still something that is being, whether admitted to or not, it's part of the consideration process. It's part of the company making an investment in that employee, you know? But other than that situation, I mean, unless someone's comfortable enough like, in a job interview – now I'm going on the other side, you know, of like, "It's none of their business, I was my authentic self in the interview. I just didn't mention that I happen to have a girlfriend," or wife or a husband because it didn't come up because it's nobody's business. So then, in that situation, what is your recommendation about that?

**[0:11:03.8] KW:** My recommendation then is, absolutely, no matter what, ask about the culture that you are going into. First, you want to know what the policies are, right? To support families, to support individuals in general, right? I mean, do you really want to –

**[0:11:18.7] DC:** Insurance.

**[0:11:20.5] KW:** Insurance, right. When I say policies, I'm talking about insurance, I'm talking about all the benefits that go along, right? If you are considering a family like paternity versus maternity, how I that covered in a domestic partnership? You can ask those questions and I personally will not want to work in a place being straight or gay or anything that didn't welcome and make it a safe and comfortable place for anybody, right?

I think that becomes getting very clear on what is important to you in the workplace you're going to be in, so you're asking about the culture and you're absolutely right, those things are very personal and they don't come up in interviews, I don't go with – I've never been in an interview and start talking about my partner.

**[0:12:02.8] DC:** No but also, just to address what you just said to be very, very fair, there are people that live in places where that's where they live and they're not moving, and if they do not live in – so they cannot make decisions based upon, "Am I comfortable here?" They have to make decisions based upon, "This is a job I have that I need to keep," right? So, just to be fair about that.

**[0:12:30.8] KW:** Right. So say in that situation, where you're at a workplace, you're good at your job, right? You could see yourself moving along but maybe it doesn't feel safe or they don't extend benefits. Then, that question becomes, if you have a partner, how are you providing for your family and each other in your own needs and safety, right?

If you don't, same thing, you're just asking those questions about yourself. It's a hard place to be for sure and it does really come back down to what are your values and how you can live. So if you have to be in a workplace, you find yourself having to be in a workplace where maybe those benefits aren't open to you then you find other ways to provide for yourself, right?

All the benefits you can get at work, you can do it on your own. They're available through independent ways nowadays, right? So you work a network. I would encourage you to find support, like the Girls Who Print, that can help you navigate those things but also like emotionally, and mentally support you in your life so that you aren't isolated and alone.

So there are other ways to find the things you need, you have to put some thought and be intentional kind of strategic into what that is and be clear on what you need in your life.

**[0:13:44.6] DC:** Right.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:14:33.0] DC:** I was going to ask you about how employers can make, you know, people interviewing them, feel comfortable or try to understand a little bit more about their culture and I think you really tapped into something really simple, which is just to go over the benefit packages, go over the holiday schedule, go over, you know? We like to have a picnic for this holiday, you know? And it lets people understand about, I believe, the management of the company.

**[0:15:02.1] KW:** Absolutely. That is a great way, is to explain what your culture is because that reflects the company's values, right? Another one I wanted to put out there for companies or anyone who might be listening are affinity groups.

Several of the corporations that I work with, they call them resource groups or affinity groups for different populations in their organization and do programming around them and support their meeting, like women's groups, and LGBT groups. One is gay parents, there's one for a large pharmaceutical that I'm doing a workshop for that is specifically for gay parents, right?

So that you're feeling supported and not only your role as a worker but your role as a human, as a whole human. I think that's what we really want to look for. If an organization offers opportunities to their benefits, through their bidding groups, through flex schedules, right? That's

a cool one. Hybrid options when it is appropriate to accommodate someone as a whole human, I think that's what we look for and that's what feels good.

So there's lots of ways, I think that is the best way in an interview and maybe also to offer to a candidate the opportunity to talk to an employee who is already there. Like would you – that's another. It's kind of radical and new but I've come across that, where in an interview process you want to talk to someone who works there, right? Like, "Are you happy? You know, what's your experience been with this?"

**[0:16:29.1] DC:** You know, you just reminded me of something else in the advertising agencies, we had a bunch of pro bono accounts and they were there. I mean, they were because that's what the agency or the giant conglomerate that owned the agency supported. So it is another way of just seeing things that can be supported when you are looking up companies that you might want to research.

That really doesn't have anything to do with size. Yes, if you're a big company, you could do pro bono for more companies but if you are a small company, start with one thing, whatever it is that you believe in and that's a great way of attracting people who believe and support the same thing that you support, which is I think a good start.

So, Kim, you mentioned that you had a daughter. It's tough out there now being a gay parent. I'm sure that is tough for your daughter in school. I read every day now that you can't say, "Read this" or "Say this" or you know, I understand you live somewhere that is not really like that but would be hard for me to believe that your daughter was completely isolated from what's going on in the world. I know this is an extremely personal question, but as a parent, how do you have those conversations?

**[0:17:59.1] KW:** Yeah, it can be a challenge. In my opinion as a parent and how I do it, my daughter knows she's loved. She knows that we're behind her no matter what and we love her and she has a fierce – I think a lot of kids do, have a sense of protection for their families and their parents. When she comes across in her life homophobic people, and homophobic opinions, I think this generation, this Gen Z, I feel like they're going to save us all.



She's got no time or space for it, she's like, "No, just no," and she just has nothing to do with it but that doesn't mean that sometimes it isn't – it might not be personal, you know? And it might hit her personally. So, we keep the door open in those conversations, we're talking about it all the time. She might also come across it in other friends, we live in a place where there's very diverse family structures and so she's got friends whose parents are gay or single or bi and all of it.

So, it really does become a bigger conversation about this overall acceptance and tolerance, right? Of diversity. She's absolutely proud of me but she's also seen the journey and she gets as much as a child does, as a teenager does – yeah, and really – it's so personal, right?

**[0:19:22.7] DC:** It really is and I thank you so much for sharing your story and I guarantee you it's going to resonate with somebody out there who doesn't know how to handle it or doesn't know how to speak to somebody about that.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:20:14.4] DC:** And so as long as we have this door open, I'm going to go one, you know, another door down the rabbit hole here and ask you to share your coming out story but also in regard to coming out to your daughter.

**[0:20:28.6] KW:** Yeah, okay. I came out a few years ago, so mid-40s and there is my age. Yeah, I came out then and that was a path of discovery for me going through my life mostly identifying as straight but there was something there that I just didn't speak to, maybe I pushed down. When I found myself divorced from my daughter's dad, I went through several years of healing and figuring myself out.

There came a point where I knew I wanted another partner, I was ready for that, and in that search, it was time for me to address this piece of me that had an interest in women that went beyond [inaudible 0:21:13] to really see what it was and that this was the time to do it because if I didn't, I would regret it. I didn't want to close that door, so I opened it, and at that time, I was on dating apps.

So, I only started to talk to women, I just need to explore and see what it was and I went on a few dates and talked to some women and realized, "Okay, this is definitely beyond just a physical attraction." There is something there. The conversations that were happening, the growth that was happening, the connections, which led me to my partner and she knew all that. She herself has been identified as being gay her entire life.

With her support and our relationship continuing to grow and just her love of me as a person and vice-versa, I had to tell people, right? So I told my folks and my daughter and my daughter's dad, those were the first ones. It was excruciating for me, it was not for anybody else. I told my folks and I was crying and they were so loving and understanding in like, "What do you need? We think nothing different of you."

Telling my daughter, there was also – I told her after I'd been seeing my partner for a few months. That was just a rule I always had across the board. I chose to not bring people into her life who I didn't know were going to stick around for a while. The school of thought on there is like the six-month mark and a decision that you're going to move past it. So, at that point, we had, so I just told her. I said, "I've been seeing someone and her name is..."

I chose not to make it a big deal like, "Oh, I need to tell you it's a woman, uh..." I chose to not do that and let her have her reaction and not set it up as something that she should have a big feeling about. She didn't. She literally didn't. She was like, "Okay, when can I meet her?" and

then we started to integrate my partner into our family and they started to develop a relationship. It really was that, and again, that's where I just loved this generation so much.

Telling her dad was actually pretty great. He kind of said he – not that he knew all along while we were together but in our years apart and him reflecting, he had an instinct that maybe that was what I needed, was a woman. He's very supportive, he has been – there was one point I was at a softball game of my daughter's and my partner's on one side and he's on the other, and I was like, "What reality do I live in right now?" but such a good reality.

It's such a good reality. That was the immediate coming out story. Again, super excruciating for me. Now that I live outward, you know, my daughter – my partner and I live together now with my daughter and I've relocated for that to happen. I am out every day. I am very visible in the community, I'm with my partner, I can't be any other way, I will not be any other way, and neither will she.

That is just not an option for me, I don't want to. So every day, it's orienting to, "Oh, this is my life." This is a life I never saw but, gosh, it is the most natural, the most abundant in how natural it feels is the only way I can put that.

**[0:24:33.9] DC:** Because you're being your authentic self.

**[0:24:36.8] KW:** Yeah.

**[0:24:37.4] DC:** And there's nothing more empowering than just being able to be yourself no matter what that is.

**[0:24:47.3] KW:** There is not, right? I mean, we talked about that even last week in the workshop, right? That the key to confidence is authenticity when you can be fully you because then you aren't in your head and you aren't second-guessing. So, I know that was most of the story, that's the story.

**[0:25:06.2] DC:** I mean, thank you so much for sharing it. My follow-up question, because it was later in life, you did have an entire career where you were married, you know? And now you

have a new person. So, I'm assuming that in many ways, you've come out probably hundreds of times.

**[0:25:28.4] KW:** Yes. Yes, hundreds of times. One way or the other. Especially within this industry with people I still know, which again, might be more dominated by a heterosexual male world, the people that I worked with were, so it's kind of funny to me because I just drop it. Like when we're talking and I say, "My partner" and "She" and I let them have their reaction like I am not setting it up.

I am not going back like, "I need to tell you something." I'm not just doing it. Like, no. They can have their reaction and I can gauge it and read the room but that's just what it is, right? So to me, that's just how it is. I'm absolutely not apologizing. If there are questions and then we can talk about it, that's okay but by and large, I haven't. Anyone from my life, I mean, most of the people in my life are from before a few years ago.

There's been some friends where there's distance or I've lost them, yeah, but okay, then that's how it has to be. I mean, it doesn't say it's not painful and that's not hard to reconcile but then it makes me question like, "Who was that person?" right? Because I have always considered myself when I identified as straight as being a fierce ally. Fierce ally. I've marched in marches, I've worked for Planned Parenthood, and I am all about positive sexuality and expression.

I always have been. Love is love, the whole thing, so who was that person, right? Anyway, yeah, but it does feel like sometimes I'm coming out all the time.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:27:31.1] DC:** So Kim, how can individuals work with you and also, companies who might see the value in investing in cultivating their culture and maintaining it at this moment in time?

**[0:27:47.8] KW:** I really love the word maintaining, right? So it isn't just like a splash and checking a box. So how is, A, to reach out to me, right? And just say it. So if that is a desire for an individual or company, even if it's just a spark and they don't know where to start, right? That is, send me an email, all right? That's at [kim@kimwunner.com](mailto:kim@kimwunner.com), I thought you might ask that next, nice and easy, right?

Just shoot me an email and say, “Hey, this is something we've thought about. I don't even know where to start” and then we go from there. So maybe it's a workshop, maybe it's looking at your policies like “Are your bathrooms gendered?” A great place to start, right? How do we change that but that also comes with how do you introduce that to the company? It is different than slapping a sign on the door, right?

You can do that but how are you going to have those conversations and what's that going to be and what are your policies going to be or how do we create a culture where it's okay for a gay family, for someone to have their partner's photo on their desk, right?

**[0:28:52.9] DC:** Or bring them to the company Christmas party.

**[0:28:55.6] KW:** And have it be comfortable and okay or not? So not for that you know we don't – how do we do all of that and so I think that's where we start and then we see at the company or we see for the individual what are you trying to achieve and how can we get you there in a way that's sustainable? In a way that is really transformational and, nine times out of ten, it's better than what you think is possible. It's even more possible than what you're even thinking of, right?

**[0:29:28.5] DC:** Yeah. I mean, it's like you know, there's that saying, "Happy wife, happy life," right? It's the same with employees, you want to have the most productive year of your life, happy employees. Happy employees who love what they're doing and love where they work and want to contribute to it because they love it so much they don't want it to stop.

**[0:29:49.7] KW:** Yeah and you said, I love that, you love it so much, you don't want to stop, and you celebrate that, right? That comes with letting people be promoted, letting people be themselves, doing the things that they really want to do, letting someone be their whole selves, right? And create a space where the work environment lets them bring that forward in the unified mission of what the business is, is everything.

You're absolutely right, it does not work well when employees are disgruntled and unhappy, right?

**[0:30:20.9] DC:** No.

**[0:30:21.3] KW:** When people are just miserable and sad, it's an energy suck, it's an energy drain, it's just no good, right?

**[0:30:28.1] DC:** No and by the way, there's evil people out there who tank projects and trash servers and do a lot of crazy things when they're "disgruntled." There's actually a word for it, you know?

**[0:30:40.8] KW:** A word for that and no one needs it to get there or want it and why would we want to work in a place that's –

**[0:30:45.2] DC:** No.

**[0:30:45.6] KW:** Like that and doesn't see the humanness, right? So we find places or we create them that are affirming and life-giving not putting us in survival mode, where we have to stay small, hide who we are, and not honestly be as happy as we can.

**[0:31:06.2] DC:** Yeah. Well, that is a perfect place to leave it. Kim Wunner, thank you so much. Everything you need to get in touch with Kim will be in the show notes. I encourage you to do so. Until next time everybody, print long, pride long, and prosper.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:31:24.8] DC:** Thanks for listening to Podcasts from the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com), we'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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