



PYROWAVE

THE COMMUNICATOR WITH 50 SHADES OF GREEN

Pyrowave presents to you a series of interviews with its employees in order to better know the faces of those who are the driving force of the firm. The star of the day is **Virginie Bussières, VP Communications, Marketing and Government Relations.**



Laura Ginoux: Virginie, you have been VP Communications, Marketing and Government Relations at Pyrowave for three years. What is your background?

Virginie Bussières: I studied in political science and communication at University of Montreal, then, a few years later, while I was working, I did an MBA. I started to work in a communication agency, then I joined a multinational company in the manufacturing sector, and I worked there for about 10 years. After that, I undertook a shift towards the environment sector. I worked for an extended producer responsibility company. Meanwhile, I started to teach public relations at University of Montreal. It is enriching because the theoretical education feeds into practice and vice versa. So, my career path is oriented by challenges and opportunities to explore new projects. About Pyrowave, I met Jocelyn during the G7 in Halifax and his inspiring values made me want to join the Pyrowave adventure. I was also interested in the environmental mission and the challenge associated with a technology startup. So, building the company's communications from the ground up and the idea of shining this rough diamond stimulates me.

L.G: What are the main challenges of working in a startup?

V.B: First, building credibility in our technology, and this was taken very seriously at Pyrowave. It means communicating about real results, at the pace of the technology development, to maintain our clients and partners' trust. Therefore, we must exchange and listen carefully to their needs, and the ones of the opponents or the sceptics, in order to give an adequate response. As the technology is little known on the market, the second challenge

is to document and disseminate the science behind our technology and its environmental impact, to be transparent in order to keep building credibility. The regulatory challenge is also crucial. We are moving towards a circular economy, but technologies are always a step ahead of regulations. We must collaborate with governments to lift barriers to innovation while meeting citizens' expectations. Communication is about mutual influence, especially in the environmental field where we have polarized debates and a kind of cynicism because of greenwashing. I like to say there are 50 shades of green in my work! It is really important for me to be open to different points of views, to listen carefully, and to keep in mind our values in case of doubt.

L.G: When talking about communications, people always think in terms of likes or published articles. How do you develop communications in a startup that conceives a disruptive technology?

V.B: It is true that strategic communications are more and more recognized as an approach to build trusting relationships. The executive committee entrusted me to develop engagement strategies with stakeholders. It might sound vague for some jobs that are more Cartesian, but in communications, our KPIs are both quantitative AND qualitative. For example, we measure the quality of the relationships over time, with the crises we avoided, the partnerships we had, and the good reputation we developed. We are aware that we cannot do it alone and that our partners are essential to build circular economy loops and to change our linear consumption practices.

L.G: In the last three years, the company took a big step. What makes you proudest?

V.B: I am very proud of our team! I learn a lot from the people I am working with, I feel lucky to have such stimulating and caring colleagues. Otherwise, there are professional prides, like when two ministers came to visit our plant, Mr. Fitzgibbon, and Mr. Charette, which was exceptional. I am also very happy that we have been invited to participate in a federal committee about export of Canadian clean technologies. We were one of the few startups to take part alongside leaders of the industry, which shows that we are recognized as a credible player. And obviously, I am very proud of our partnership with Michelin and our interactions with Japanese clients. Those are great opportunities to promote our technology abroad.

L.G: You are an inspiring woman, with a great background, a managerial position in a startup, you teach, you volunteer, you have two kids. What is your motto?

V.B: I love to contribute to projects, to make a difference, to give back what others gave me before. For example, between woman, if I can give a helping hand now and then, I do it gladly. For me, solidarity between women is really important, as well as valuing women because generally we are very humble with ourselves! Otherwise, I do not have a specific formula, except staying true to my values,

enjoying what I am doing, daring to dream, being optimistic, seizing opportunities, as well as exercising and eating healthily (LAUGHTER). Cultivating good energy and balance.

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Virginie Bussières

L.G: You worked in masculine and highly regulated environments, what advice would you give to encourage women to make their own way in those environments?

V.B: I would say to trust yourself, to dare, not to fear being told ‘no’ as it might happen and it’s okay, and to be true to yourself. I always encourage women in my team to present their own projects to the executive committee because it builds confidence in themselves and between the team members.

L.G: How do you see the future, for Pyrowave and for society as a whole?

V.B: I think that if we could better use our resources, and lead the way with our technology platform, it will be a step forward. When I joined Pyrowave, I discovered a completely new world of green chemistry, and it makes me aware of the impacts of chemical substances in our daily products, like lotions, shampoos, or cleaning products. Now I am even making my own lotions! So, I think people will become more and more aware and demanding about the impact of our practices on our health and on our ecosystems.

L.G: Aside from your passion for communication and environment, what do you like to do in your leisure time?

V.B: I am a mom, so I do lots of activities with the kids, hiking, skiing, cultural activities. I also do yoga, I go jogging, and I volunteer a lot. I like being in nature, it is a good way of recharging my batteries. And I like cooking too, during the pandemic, I tried lots of new recipes!

