

Alicia Ruemelin – Point of Pride Transcript

[00:00:00] **Alicia:** When I had to sit down and think about the work that gives me the most pride, a lot of things came to mind. I have so many micro points of pride that it was hard to choose, but it was a recent event that brought it all together for me. I got to plan a party to celebrate our 40(ish) anniversary. How many people get to say that?

[00:00:28] **Misty:** Hey there friends. Thanks so much for checking out our Point of Pride series. In celebration of our 40(ish) anniversary, Simantelites are sharing stories about the work they're most proud of that made a difference for Simantel, the client and perhaps most importantly, themselves. I'm excited to share this fun story with you from Alicia Ruemelin, our Brand and Marketing Director.

[00:00:48] She'll talk about a big milestone at Simantel and one of my all-time favorite celebrations at the agency, and that's our 40(ish) anniversary and Ish Fest. Alicia will also give you a little look behind the scenes of our own brand work, so give it a listen.

[00:01:12] **Alicia:** I've worked on a lot of really fun projects that have helped build Simantel's brand. But all the small points of pride that I've been involved with over the years built up and came out in this one monumental milestone for the agency. I got to throw a big party and we called Ish Fest. I'm Alicia Ruemelin, Brand and Marketing Director, and I've been building Simantel's brand for six and a half years now. To understand why this project was so impactful to me, let's start from the beginning.

[00:01:37] One of the reasons that I wanted to work at Simantel was because of the agency's reputation. The voice, the tone, the style, it drew me in and I knew this was the place where I'd find my people. It was clear that Simantel was doing big things and I wanted to be a part of it. Little did I know when I first started interviewing for a digital strategist position that I would actually be in the driver's seat of building the brand that had such a strong draw on me in the first place.

[00:02:03] After a few interviews and discussing with ownership where I felt my strengths were, I ended up hiring in as Simantel's Brand Manager instead. I spent a few years working with some of the most inspirational leaders out there, Susie Ketterer and Maggie Whalen-Misselhorn. These two previous agency owners were living the Simantel brand through and through, and they made it easy to work on an awesome brand like ours.

[00:02:24] So I followed their lead. Fast forward a couple years, Susie retires in 2018, and I was promoted to the Marketing and Brand Director. I had the title, the right team under me, all the momentum in the world. Then in 2021, Maggie retires. And I'll be honest, losing my two biggest supporters and champions of Simantel's brand voice made me a little nervous.

[00:02:47] I didn't want our unique voice and style to get lost in the shuffle as Simantel continues to grow and evolve. But just then we entered our 40(ish) year of doing business as agency. And what I quickly realized was that it's not one or two people that make up the voice, it's the collective of a smart, talented and passionate staff that makes Simantel, Simantel.

[00:03:09] And that became so apparent to me while planning Ish Fest this year. So let me describe the ish. At Simantel. The day that we came into being is a bit gray. Our founder, Jim Simantel, started work in 1980, but the business wasn't incorporated until 1982. So was it the day he hung his first shingle, the day he signed his first client, or the day he hired his first employee?

[00:03:32] Heck, we don't really know, but the actual day doesn't really matter to us because it's the decades of experience that makes Simantel unique. And truth be told, we didn't really have time to celebrate two years ago in 2020. So if you know us, you'll know that this just kind of feels right. So here we are in 2022 and all the plans we made to celebrate our 40(ish) year in business is starting to become a reality.

[00:03:56] And at the center of a year's worth of content is a big party called Ish Fest. To say that people love a good Simantel party is an understatement, and we put a hold on company gatherings for a couple years now. So we were ready to go all out. We put up banners on the light poles around downtown. We labeled our own beer cans.

[00:04:15] We even lit the bridge Simantel orange for crying out loud. After all the planning, preparation and last-minute details, the week of the party rolls around. Remote employees start arriving, internal events and workshops start kicking off and the excitement builds. On Friday morning, the morning of the party, I arrive early.

[00:04:33] I stand out front with our team as the street is being closed and barricaded off by a city official, the couches and the furniture are being delivered and the large four-sided bar makes its way to the center of the street. I think to myself how incredible that I get to be a part of this. How incredible that my company is willing to invest in celebrating their people and clients, and it's a top priority.

[00:04:57] To put it into perspective, I agonized over details of this event more than I did my own wedding day. The food trucks, the DJ, the napkins, the signage, the prizes and on and on. But it all paid off. The night went off without a hitch. The weather was perfect. The building was beautifully lit, and the orange bridge and the full moon glowed in the background.

[00:05:17] Okay, well maybe the napkins were printed wrong and maybe we ran out of our signature blood orange margarita, just a little too early. But our clients had a great time. Our employees were so happy to spend some time together in person, and the pre-pandemic buzz of normalcy was back. While the party was a lot of fun and I received nothing but great compliments, it honestly wasn't the actual party that made me proud.

[00:05:40] It was the accumulation of building our brand in a way that mattered to people. Getting comments like, "Now THAT is brand" and "That's next level" it made me so proud to be a part of it all. A part of why clients wanna partner with us and why talented people wanna work here. What a special role that I get to play in impacting our company culture, our recruitment and retention, our referral business and most importantly, my own sense of accomplishment and purpose at Simantel.

[00:06:07] I mean, how many people get to go to work and throw a party? Maybe Simantel is a little extra sometimes, but that's why I'm so dang proud to be a Simantelite. And through this process I was reminded that it's the people here that carry on the Simantel brand for what it's known as today. I've had people tell me that my energy's inspiring, but truthfully, it's this place and these people that inspire me daily.

[00:06:30] I love the Simantel brand and I truly believe in it.

[00:06:39] **Misty:** Thank you so much, Alicia, for all the work you do for Simantel's new business and brand. Ish Fest was one of my favorite events that we've had at Simantel. What a great opportunity to be together and connect with our clients on a level that matters more than the work we do. And I love how Alicia touched on the fact that building a brand is so foundationally important to who you are.

[00:06:57] Your brand can impact so many other aspects of the business. We have so many good stories like this to share with you as part of our 40ish anniversary celebration. If you haven't already, head over to marketingsweats.com and check out our very special season six where you can hear my interview with Alicia and other Simantelites sharing a behind the scenes look at work they're most proud of.