

REvolution

Putting the market in go-to-market (GTM)

Featuring **Scott Vaughan**

Episode 102

Episode music: Get ready for the REvolution. It's coming to you now. It's coming to you now.

Scott: What happens when you go inside a big multi-billion-dollar company? Innovation stops. But what we have now, because the market forces have changed the way businesses buy and people buy and accounts and all these things, we're starting to see a lot of disruption come in and it's noisy and it's hard to sort out. That's gonna be the way it is.

Alex: Welcome to REvolution, where we dive into what gets in the way of growth for B2B revenue teams across sales, marketing, customer success, and beyond. I'm Alex Krawchick...

Mary: ...and I'm Mary Blanks. For decades, we've been talking about how revenue teams can work better, together. On this show, we talk about the opportunities remaining for teams to better align, evolve their approach, and reach new heights of growth both professionally and personally.

Alex: Today, we're talking with Scott Vaughan. His experiences run deep as a B2B go-to-market leader working at companies like Integrate, UBM, and beyond. Now, Scott's passionate about working with CEOs, founders, investors, and executive teams to help get them unstuck on the path to revenue generation.

Mary: Welcome Scott. Thank you so much for joining us today. We're really excited to have you on the podcast and wanna dive right into our first topic around the fast-paced go-to-market landscape. It feels like things are always changing and it's hard to keep up, you know, whether it's product led growth or dark social, there's something to always learn about.

How do you see like the whole landscape today and what are the top two or three things in on your mind?

Scott: Yeah, well, it's, it's a both an energizing time, an uneven time and an uncertain time. And that means it's a good time to really stake your claim. It's a good time to step back and, put your chips in the middle.

Don't try to hedge your bet, bet the focus, because of all these external factors that are happening, and the truth is that the way consumers, the way businesses operate, we continue to make the march towards digital, being able to use data applications the way we interact, all that's changing.

So if anything, now is a great time to not just make adjustments or do incremental work, but those things you've been thinking about betting on, now's the time to do it, because of the macro environment and also the maturity of the, the, where the markets, most markets are. Obviously those are market centric decisions.

I made the bank about four or five years ago when all the energy – you know, I made my transition from a marketer practitioner to a revenue marketer, during the heyday of marketing automation in the late, you know, 2007-10, cut my teeth that way, that, that know, that marketing was more than the, trade show, logo and brochure people.

Not that anything's wrong with that, those are still critical elements, but, that was very eye-opening to me. And being able to be on the front edge of that and learn and grow with a group of people and understand what that means to, from leads to pipeline, to revenue... which we're probably all exhausted of, at this point, but still essential elements.

And I focus my energy on stepping back and looking at markets, which I've always done, but now I lead with markets. What's happening in the market? How big is the market? What are the market factors? And that's, to me, go-to-market is what I've really banked my whole career... Now my, my work that I do, I've committed to that because I think that is the, the most critical strategic driver for a company, not for marketing, not for sales, not for product. But I think that's the thing that coalesces that effort. And I know we can get into it, but that's what I, what I think about every day when I work with, executives and teams.

Mary: When you think about the market and go-to-market, how would you define that today? I feel like a lot of people are shifting from doing what you're talking about and thinking about waterfalls and revenue. When you think about that bigger market, how do you talk to your teams and kind of orient them to your definition of that?

Scott: Yeah. First of all, I put up the, no offense, picked Gartner Forrester, put up that definition of, you know, xxx to sell your products. That's all wrong. there is so much, capital invested, \$360 billion or something over the last 15 months into markets. First of all, is there enough buyers to buy all this stuff?

And second of all, who are you selling to? Why are you selling? In, in some ways it may seem like back to basics, but the nuances are really, really important. And if you don't start with the market and the opportunity and what's happening—[clears throat] excuse me—not just the competitors, but the market from the buyer's perspective, from your account's perspective and understand what's happening, you can really go down rabbit holes.

Sometimes you're gonna hit the slip stream because you just have the right solution at the right time. You've done some really good things. But that's the 3% club. You know, I, I won't even say unicorns because unicorns used to be, wow, this is a really cool product at the right time, at the right place. Then somehow unicorns became how much money you raised, which is ludicrous, which also, frankly diluting, no pun intended, but diluting the power of the solutions that are out there.

So, go-to-market from my standpoint, is really focused on being able to understand the market, the market opportunity, the market requirements, needs, pains, gaps, challenges, and aligning them with your solution set, and then how you actually go-to-market: what products, what solutions, how do you build them, how do you price them, what channels you go through, how do you position the company, the solutions, the portfolio.

So much of that, and I have kind of a 10, very methodical, step approach that I continue to fine tune and go through over time about how to make sure you align around that, not just in marketing or not just in sales, but at the executive level and down, pull that down through leadership and pull that down through operating process, et cetera.

And by the way, then we buy technology. But yes, that, that's really the, the component that I've been focused on.

Alex: Okay. You just opened up Pandora's box. So, so Scott, this is fascinating. My question, quick question. Who's supposed to own that process inside a company—everything you just described, is that the CEO? Is it, I mean, I feel like there needs to be a single stakeholder.

Scott: I agree with you. Someone has to be the outright, champion. when I say champion, I don't mean oh, advocate, but someone has to say, this is what we're going to do. so that typically is a CEO or some board member or some C-level officer that then gets support from that group. It has to start at the top. This is not a bottom up, and no offense, I was that person. I'm a marketing manager, a director of marketing, and I go out and do the academic exercise and I go through, okay, our ICP is... you know.

Anybody can fill out a workbook or spreadsheet, this has to be the real work. You roll up your sleeve. You do, take the time. The last three I've worked on have been, six plus months to, to unleashing in the market. That doesn't mean you wait six months, by the way, but to really get the momentum and build the right components and get the company aligned and, and, and get into enablement, that's what has to happen.

Alex: Yeah. And how do. I mean, you've talked a little bit about it, but if you could talk a little bit more, what data do you collect in order to form those opinions? And it sounds like it's both qualitative and quantitative, but if, but I'd love to hear more about that.

Scott: Yeah, for sure. A thousand percent. If, if you, if you get too hooked on quantitative, you miss the disruption or the opportunity cause there's no data to tell you that...you have signals. So there, there are different degrees and it depends on your type of solution or product. If, if you're trying to break through and disrupt and say I just know there's a better way, we have to go from X to Y kind of shift. There's not, there's gonna be signals and indicators that are quantitative, but qualitative is, you're gonna have to be able to translate needs, gaps, missing components into value.

And you're gonna have to have some foresight. So you may have to look out the telescope a little bit, maybe out the windshield to the telescope, but you're gonna have to have a view. If

it's a more mature market and you're ready to disrupt in another way—by price or distribution or something different—then that in fact you can take a different approach, then you can use a lot more quantitative data with qualitative interviews and et cetera to be able to do that.

And then frankly, Alex, I know you and I have bantered about this offline before you, you, at some point you also, there is a layer of instinct and leadership and... that you have to drive. And, and that becomes, in my view, I call it this, the entrepreneurial spirit of that you're creating. And I think that's essential.

I'm not saying that's 50% or a hundred percent, but there's some layer of that, that you're committing to something bigger and a cause.

Mary: I'm curious how you think about, you mentioned enablement a minute ago, and, kind of, that entrepreneurial spirit. How do you think about seeding that all throughout the organization, you know, even beyond marketing, to help rally everyone around moving in this direction?

Scott: This is where you typically get the most pushback, Mary, as you probably put your finger right on the so, because, we're gonna do this and it's in a lab, right? Or it's in a group and they go do it, and then they roll it out and everybody... its big thump, big no, didn't really have impact. So there's a balancing act here.

You know, just like design, you can't do it by, you know, a thousand committee members, but you have to have a core team. You have to have that as Alex noted that you have to have an executive sponsor or sponsorship that's there. You have to have the right funding. You have to have a commitment that there's gonna be a better, smarter way.

But also you don't have to wait for the big bang moment. Just like any big project inside a company, you can begin to test it and roll it out. Take a small group or a region, some people that are really, more change management in their thinking and they want to bring it to market so you get real world feedback and you're, you're shaping it.

And of course you're never done, but enablement happens when you're at that point where you really feel like you've all the go-to-market components, you've been validating them, it's starting to seep into the organization.

Here's where many organizations go wrong. "We're gonna do sales enablement." Absolutely. Critical. I call that coaching and confidence. That's how I label what I, what I do when I've done in the past.

But it doesn't start there. It starts with leadership enablement. You get your core leaders, whether that's the C-team or your next level S-team or however you label it. And here is the mission. Here's where, what do, here's what we're doing, here's where we're going.

And you do coaching and confidence with them. You talk about if we're gonna make a change in the way we go-to-market through channels, how does that affect our legal language? How does that affect our invoicing? How does it affect our MSA in the finance department? How does it affect elements of the other companies? In product, do we have to then reconfigure some, you know, more accessible features, et cetera.

So it starts with leadership. There's town hall moments, and it's not like, "Ooh, we've been in secret, now we're gonna reveal this," like you do when you're gonna have a child or something, you have, you know, balloons, but you really, you really wanna be able to, seed that into the, into the company.

And then you can have a very, and I'll call it formal rollout plan that lasts for weeks and months, not days. Because it's continuous, depending on the level of go-to-market, if it's a refreshed or a shift or whatever that might be. And this is a constant process so it doesn't stop. "Oh, we're done, we'll come up next year and next fall we'll redo it again."

No, no, no, no. That we'll revisit how and if what needs to change. But we constantly want to be, like plants or anything else, we want to be nurturing and feeding it and, and keeping our costs qualitatively, and quantitatively, are we on track? What's the next opportunity? Are we missing something? Can we scale this more, and move over here and get rid of maybe this product line or this business, or focus on this GO more than that, or what have you. So it's a constant process.

Mary: Makes sense. I read something this morning that said, as soon as you're tired of talking about something, people have just started to really understand and we've talked about it seven times in seven ways, like all of the different pieces...

Scott: Best advice.

Mary: ...communication.

Scott: Best advice. That's human, what is it? Seven times you have to hear something or say... Absolutely when you're tired of it, and that means your market's probably just getting to understand it. Now, if it's your own language that you manufactured in a lab, probably is not gonna stick. So you're gonna have to say it 49 times, you know, the seven-by-seven factor, and then you're gonna blast people out of the universe and they don't want to hear from your, your company, your brand, or your people anymore.

But the, the idea that how much energy and time it actually takes is important. But when you hit it and people start reacting... And Mary, you're so, it's so ironic. I just shared this. I am in the middle of the seventh week of field enablement for, with a group, and you should hear the stories.

So instead of opening with the topic, we opened, like, "All right, what did we hear? What did we put to use this week?" And the stories now are building. "I had a breakthrough. I couldn't believe it. This is what I did, this is how it worked, and now here's what I am." And then there's a little bit of feeling, "What do I do next?" Right? That's what you want. You want that energy.

Mary: Yeah, exactly. You've talked before about the concept of connectors and catalyst. Do they fit into this story? Are those personas in this change management?

Scott: Yeah. And so just to recap, I, I think change management is what people get wrong so many times. I am guilty, I have my list of initiatives that I've messed up. But to me this is, back to, I think Alex's main point.

Yes, you need an executive who's fully driving and supporting and clearing roadblocks, arbitrating as needed. But if you don't have, connectors and catalysts in your organization,

it's very difficult. And some of those you have to pull aside and say, you know, lock arms and say, we're in this together and we're gonna figure this out.

And it's not all gonna be perfect, but you have to have those personalities and you know 'em. You'll go up to 'em in there just salivating to do something new, different, or that they see the opportunity as well. Well, you empower them and you put them out on the tip of the rocket ship and you let them go and you follow behind them or follow with them and do that.

So being a catalyst and a connector, is important. And sometimes that can be the CEO of that, but many times it's a couple of key people on the team, and then that just keeps cascading across. Now it's a, a team that's, that's maybe in, marketing or in customer success. You find those catalysts and connectors and they become, not just advocates, but they become a voice in someone that you follow. You bring two more on, and, and that's really where it starts to happen.

Alex: So, so, so here we are now. Now I want to talk about my favorite topic, Scott. So...

Scott: Okay. I am now having a little cup of jolt to make sure I'm ready.

Alex: Yeah, definitely get ready, speaking of rocket ships, so this has been, I mean, it's one of the reasons I started Klearly.

So first of all, I do wanna say, and I mean this very sincerely, thank you to all the good thinking that you've put out over the years. you are one of my favorites. If anybody listening this doesn't follow Scott Vaughn, follow Scott. Scott, I've told you for a number of years, your stuff was on my whiteboard behind me, for many years before Klearly, during Klearly. You have just excellent thinking—really, really, really good stuff. And one of your more, more recent articles really resonated with me, which was the one—get, get your front row seat for the race to be B2B revenue platform of record, right? And, and I'm sure you're smiling.

There's a lot going on right now in the market, and we've been talking about in this conversation go-to-market and change management. I completely agree that the tools are showing their age. I mean the tools, the people, the process, everything. But if I'm being honest, like we keep bolting on tools, technologies, you know. We, we keep calling things by a

different name. Why do you think we haven't had a material shift yet in the market? And I'm gonna pick on, I, I'll use Klearly, like, I'll, I'll pick on vendors. Why haven't vendors had that opportunity to really have a material shift in the market? Why do we continue to just do the same thing over and over? It's a definition of insanity.

Scott: Yeah. Well, that's how markets work, Alex, it's a simple answer. Markets are driven first by economics, right? What, what you have in our space is, I won't want to recast history, but just a little bit of perspective. So take ERP, right? ERP didn't happen overnight. Can you imagine what a Lumascape or a chart would look like for all the individual enterprise resource planning products?

It wasn't till about almost 20 years plus later that we started consolidating platforms, like SAP, for example, or Oracle, go down the list. That we actually had a category, even though most of those products and with, that became ERP did some, one application really well, and the, and the rest were half baked. It took another 10 years to get them working together.

So use that as a model. It's just a natural way that the markets work and markets work by funding, market works by customer adoption, and it takes some time for customers, we talked about change management, to absorb all this. It's a heavy lift to change out systems because it's not just systems, its people, its process, it's, it's draining.

It's like, forget this, I'll wait till next year when the new stuff comes out. Well, the new stuff comes out in bits and bites. And when you come out with the end all platform, that's not the way you go-to-market. To think you're gonna come out with an all built in one platform rarely works. You have to focus and solve a specific set of problems to get in the door to get bought, and then you build from there.

So another reason, things take 10, 15, 20, 25 years to play out. If you look in the, in the MarTech space or the revenue tech space, broader, we had the sales team that was over here... Siebel. And then we had, you know, SFA Salesforce Automation. Well, if we're honest, CRM is more for sales forecasting and sales productivity that has customer database. It's not for customers. And so everybody's been trying to iterate on that.

Marketing didn't have Jack, other than "Can I please get access to the CRM?" You know, and so what we ended up doing, creating our own little database and marketing automation, I'll use the term broadly, not just, you know, the marketing automation platforms as we know them, but what a leap it was.

We actually had data, we actually had reporting. We actually had leads. We could put content out. So that was the, that was the catalyst in the start and where we find ourselves: "Oh, by the way, the whole market blew up and the way buyers buy isn't what we told you. The salespeople don't have access."

So marketing has to play a bigger role. But I'm using the, these tools that weren't built for that. They were built to generate leads and get data about them and feed them, aka nurture, which, you know, translates as blasting most of the time. But let's just say that we're really good at it. And then that translates into, "Wow, the world just changed and we're all looking at each other."

But the good news is there are, the article was about that, we need to find a way to try to, how do you bring these pieces together? Some will be done internally through a really well thought out tech stack. Some will be, somebody will come in and, and, and bring the platforms together. What happens typically when the big dogs acquire, we felt it a no offense against Adobe or Oracle or Salesforce. They bought ExactTarget and Eloqua and Marketo. What happens when you go inside a big multi-billion-dollar company? Innovation stops. So that's a barrier.

But what we have now, because the market forces have changed the way businesses buy and people buy and accounts and all these things we're starting to see a lot of disruption come in and it's noisy and it's hard to sort out. That's gonna be the way it is. So the onus becomes much more on the, the organization, the B2B team. And that's why things like Rev Ops exist, right? I wanna come in and get a view, and I wanna look at the entire process and journey externally.

Then I wanna look at it internally, and I wanna look across the whole customer stack, not just one piece. Well, that's a lot. And some companies just aren't organized to do that. They do

budgeting by, this is marketing, this is sales, this is customer success. So we're gonna, we're gonna be in for this for a long time.

However, sorry for the long answer here. Here's what happens: \$360 billion gets floated in by investors because they love the SaaS and the recurring, revenue model. And we all love platforms now, so everybody's got a platform. Here come the platform wars and unintentionally, you've got sales doing marketing work through sales outreach and all kinds.

We've got marketing people doing sales work, and so we've got a really interesting play and there's some smart things going on that utilize, you know, machine learning, natural language processing, AI. So I think this next two to three years, I call it a positioning war because they don't have all those features, but we're moving the right direction.

In five to seven years, we'll have something that's not perfect, but that brings more of this together in a more buyer centric, customer account centric way. And I'm not talking about ABM by the way.

Alex: So I am not a patient person and I don't wanna wait five to seven years for that to happen. Yeah. How do we help expedite that? And I, but I recognize I'm being a little bit tongue in cheek, right? I mean, it's going to take time and I appreciate that sentiment. You're absolutely right. I mean, we're still talking about digitize the business. It's been 25 years now. 20 years?

Scott: Yeah. well, and then you have COVID as accelerator or lockdown, remote lockdown, remote workforce that, sometimes you need events, you need outside forces.

Alex: Force majeure.

Scott: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I worked in healthcare, this last two years. and I hadn't worked in that segment for a while in a drill down. And I was working with a, with a SaaS and services company, and somehow we couldn't figure out telemedicine for 26 years and in somehow six weeks, all of a sudden we can get virtual appointments. And so there's that and that, that's a whole different topic we can't tackle and... it wouldn't be productive.

But Alex, to answer your question, there's a couple things you can do. If I'm the head of go-to-market, if I'm a CMO, a CRO, or if I'm get lucky enough to get a great Rev Ops position, I make a value proposition that this is the time to change up what we're doing. This is the time to differentiate and streamline and we begin to bring these pieces together to have much more of a customer account and market centric view of our tools in our stack. And my case would be, we bought these six things over here. They do the same things as the marketing people, but we're trying to get our sales productivity numbers up you know, with a sales engagement platform and all it is, is another cadence tool to do outreach, and we're doing that with our marketing automation or whatever tools we're using, our ABM platforms and, and so somebody has to put some rationality—that's one.

As a vendor or provider or a services provider, there's a tremendous opportunity, one to make that case. But secondly to say, you know what, as a vendor, we're not the all end all platform. We do these things really well, and we work with these platforms that you already have. There's some of that, but it's in small print in most, you know, it's an integration play versus how you actually get the most out of the system.

So I'm not making an indictment. It's our reality. But these are things that companies can do. And if I'm working with vendors, that's what I would, that's what I advise, that'll really highlight your value to those other systems that they have installed and how they can make that, advancement by putting these pieces together.

Alex: So I can put you on the spot then on the record and say, if you were to take a CMO job today, you're going in and saying “It's time to change.”

Scott: Probably why in the last year I haven't taken an operating job, and, I am dating to marry, for the record, not personally, but a company or a business. Is when you find that CXO and board team that wants to take that next step.

In the meantime, you know, I'm using this time professionally to learn so much: the diversity of applications and use cases and technologies and strategies, to, frankly, rewrite my playbook and workbook that can get old. When you're in an operating gang and you know, all of our customers, all the people in our community that we work so hard together with, I'm a member of that community and it's a lot of work.

So I'm trying to learn and rewrite a playbook. I'm not sure I've figured it all out, but, it's advantageous when you can step away out of an operating role and you don't have that daily, daily pressure or weekly pressure of delivering against a number and a, you know, market share metric and awareness metrics and stuff that you, you know, it causes you to put your head down and you get blinders on naturally.

Mary: If you could paint the picture of the organization of the future to work together in this go-to-market way as revenue teams across Sales, Marketing and CS, like, how do you see that alignment coming together? Is it underneath a CRO? Is that the kiss of death for a marketer? Like what are your thoughts on that organizational design?

Scott: So alignment is pure BS. You can throw that out the window in my book. I write about this and rant about it because it doesn't work. It's Venus and Mars, whatever you want. There's different personalities that play different roles. So we'll try and do a line in, Ooh, everybody get the same line.

It's like, you know, your, your six-year-old kids trying to recess. Okay, everybody get in the line. Okay, 15 minutes later, get back in line. That doesn't work in my experience. I'm not saying it won't work for a period of time because it does, especially when you're crushing it and you've got the right product at the right time, and the company's growing, it all feels great. That's not alignment.

So to me, Mary, I think you have to step back and say, what kind of organization, based on our goals, our mission, do I want to create over the next 12, 18, 24 months? And it's not a forever thing. Do I want more of a market facing organization? Do I need more, be more customer centric?

And I'm talking about your go-to-market team all the way through product and ops and finance, so I don't think there's a one, oh, if we just put everybody under the CRO or CMO, that, that's goofy. You need to really, it starts again with the strategy and say we, because of the solutions we offer and the markets we go after, we're gonna build a product centric focused organization across the company.

That's gonna be our differentiation, that's gonna be our value. Or we need to be much more because our, our products are... we go into a company and then we expand we need to be a very customer centric, or account centric model. Or because so many of our products are bought through dis- distributed channels, we need to be a partner centric organization.

So, I'm sorry, I don't have a blanket answer. I, I did, a session not too long ago where I pulled forward different organizational examples of those, specifically how they would change your marketing organization based on that true north that you needed to put in place.

Alex: So it's, it's, it's perhaps not alignment, but maybe more, is it, you know, and I know you're a fan of the orchestration?

Scott: Yeah.

Alex: Have you seen any like really good examples out there of teams orchestrating well together? And, and I mean, that's the future in my opinion, So I'm curious, how is that working?

Scott: I, I have, and, nothing works a hundred percent all the time for every market and for every organization. But one organization got rid of the sales title and not by just title. They actually did account management. They acknowledged "We're not really, we're selling, yes, everybody's selling, but if we don't support our customers, and our model is once they get started, that's where all the magic happens." So they literally collapsed sales, marketing, customer success.

And they had orchestrated plays in motions based on use cases. They have orchestrated plays in motion based on maturity of the customer. So it's pretty cool and sophisticated. They've been added about 14 months and that to me was a breakthrough model, but it worked for them. It doesn't work for everybody.

If you need to go into an enterprise and its relationship oriented, that may or may not work. You may need to be more of a sales oriented at the tip of the spear organization that's relationship oriented in the way you build your organizational structure. But there is no one size fits all.

There's no answer to, because a CRO may be great at sales but doesn't know how to play chess in marketing. Or the opposite, maybe you do find somebody who has that and they can lead an organization. Or you have a president, lead an organization and the CEO do other things. So, I that, that's a tough one to, to kind of pin down to one answer at this juncture because I don't think that's reality.

Alex: Yeah. I'm also, I'm also really keen on what's happening with the product led growth organizations, PLG.

Scott: Yes. See, that's cool.

Alex: It is very cool. But to your point, it's not one size fits all, you know?

Scott: No.

Alex: So organizations, it's, it's, I, I've heard of some organizations trying to adopt it and I'm like, well that's an interesting, I don't know how that's gonna work out for them.

Putting all your eggs in that basket. I, I think it is, it isn't, when you talk about disruptors and things force majeure, things happening in the market, though, PLG is very, very interesting to me what's happening in the market right now.

Scott: But Alex, I think you can do both there. I said never, don't hedge your bets. Focus. So if you focus and you have the right product at the right price point and your UI and your experience truly is there, all those caveats. I think product led growth is an example of not the model, but a model. And maybe it's a model that you start, with your, you know, what we used to call freemium or the low entry where you go in through a couple of individuals or a small team and build out.

But much like, let's just pick product led growth. It's not a savior. Account based "fill in the letter" is not a savior. Intent is not a savior. These are ingredients in a go-to-market strategy that you can play. Mary and I have bantered about this before, but if you go into account-based marketing, you still have to be open for business. Wait, think this logic. Someone comes to your website and they're interested in having a conversation about your

solution, and you're gonna say, "Sorry, you're not on our account list. We don't have a process for that." That's ridiculous. So you, even if you go account-based strategy, maybe on your outbound or as part of your core, your, your website or process around digital, you still have to have some path for people to come in. And everybody, "Oh yeah, of course we do that." But then you go to the meetings and everything's about account based and you go, "Well, well we just, we got an ABM person over here."

You know, we have an ABM team. They do that, so you have to be really thoughtful about this and purposeful. And that purposeful comes back to what's your total available market? what, how do you fit? What problems do you solve today? What will you solve tomorrow? Cause you do have to lean into that, cuz sometimes you have to enter accounts and it takes 6, 12, 18 months to get momentum, not just to sell the first purchase, but to get momentum and get your, not just your solution, but your, your methodology and your way of thinking into the ethos of a company. So, yeah, I, I, this is a, this is a, that's why it's an interesting time right now, and I, I applaud product led growth because the simplicity of it. Wait, buyers wanna be self-guided. They want trial it first. They don't wanna rip out a bunch of stuff. Okay. Yeah.

Product led growth probably makes a lot of sense from an investor standpoint. It's probably lower cost over time and greater lifetime value, more profitability, which as we know gets rewarded in public markets and exits. So there this, putting this into your mix, if you have the right market and the right buyers at the right time, then I think it's a, it's a very viable strategy and an interesting one that I'm studying the hell out of.

Alex: Yeah. But it's, it's back to your point, it's disruptive and there's a lot of change management needing to occur, with, I mean, in some cases it's—

Scott: "Oh, sorry, marketing. We don't do those kind of campaigns anymore. It's in the product, right?" Someone flips a switch one day and everyone goes, "What happened to our pipeline?" Right? So you can't just transition into, Sorry, just move into product led growth and say, all right, we're gonna get our, it it's gonna have to be a, a planned phase. And again, I know that's obvious, but the enthusiasm all of us have, me included, you can get a little too, hyped and crazy that something's gonna be a savior. And, and the years of experience and scars and, you know, some successes along the way, tell us that has to be more of a methodical process over time.

Mary: Mm-hmm. as a clarity person, I have to admit, whether it's PLG or all of the other things, I like to think that our data can tell us what to do more or less of, and thinking about all of these different ways that we can go-to-market and thinking about having the teams orchestrating together—how do you see, not really the platforms, but really our data and our analytics helping support how we should be working together and delivering that customer experience?

Scott: Yeah, so I, I think where we've gone awry, and I, I'm in Acceleration Economy. It's a group and I'm an analyst in the digital and data space, which means I get to interview cool people and, and steal their ideas and learn from stuff and try to think about what all it means. Here's my own observation.

We got obsessed with data and the person with the most data doesn't win. It's how can you action buyer or account intelligence, say Mary, in our world, right? How can you action that and turn it into something? And this is not just insights. This, is this, “I learned this, what do I do with it?” and to me that's how you become a better and smarter. I do think, And I think you're going back, you like to put things in categories and there's nothing wrong with that.

In fact, I think simplifying, for communication standpoint and helping you focus on specific things will get you further faster, even though we know it's complicated. That's where making bets come into play. And, and then using then intelligence to handle the nuances to guide you. And I think that's one of the places we've gone wrong is we've collected a lot of data and we've maybe even built data teams who are extremely bright.

But I know I, the mistakes I've made is look at all the data and I go in spewing numbers and, but what does it mean? What can somebody do something about it that's working in, on the team, in the field with customers in the product? So that data culture has to turn into more one of intelligence, and AI's helping that machine, learning's helping that, that, that's a contributor so that there's processing going on. It's not all perfect, it's not all on point. It's still gonna take some time. But I think that will add to some of this moving from data to intelligence mindset that's going on in cultures, and within companies.

Mary: Yeah, it's like that blend of art and science in some ways. And I don't wanna feel like I'm being replaced by all of that data that's out there, but using it to help guide what I see happening in the markets and, and how to evolve strategies.

Scott: So use that healthcare analogy, Mary, just a very personal experience I just had. When we were interviewing clinicians and doctors, they're, "Well, what do you mean they're gonna read X-rays? That's what I do." Well, no, you want the doctors, everything in that world is how do we get, top of level work? That means I was trained to do this. I wanna spend 90% of my time on this. So what they wanna do is interpreting what that said, and translating that into, is where they wanna spend their time—what it means for patient care plan, what it means for preventative, what it means for being able to heal that person and get them on the right path.

That's a really big change, and I'm using that as an example. I know we're more in the revenue and marketing and sales space in that world, but take the same analogy. That's what's happening today, to try to more, think more about using intelligence in that way.

Mary: You spoke a little bit about kind of data culture there. The broader culture as a whole, like thinking about how to keep our skills up and stay on top of things. How, what skills would you kind of encourage us to lean into as we think about adapting?

Scott: Well, it really depends on what you want to do because there are specialists that are incredible careers. There are broad, I want to do new things. I want to be an executive over the whole thing. So it really depends that, that's a pretty wide-open question from that perspective.

For, for marketers, to me, the most valuable marketers come with three things, in the best case. The most valuable markers understand the markets and they understand their, I'm gonna call them audiences, their buyers, their ideal customer profiles. And they understand how to get inside their mind, quickly, and they understand and they're constantly pulsing that. So if you understand markets and buyers, you are, you have a significant leg up.

Sometimes Mary, that translates to domain expertise, which to me is missing in so many companies. I'm a good marketer, but I don't know Jack about, security endpoints. So not that

you can't make that transition. That's not what I'm saying. Just because you're in security, you don't have to stay in security your whole life. That's- No, no, no, no. That's not what I'm saying. But having an understanding how to go into a new market, like I'm gonna do some work in the government world, government technology. I worked at a city of Cerritos here in California, some 20 something years ago, in, in my last year of college.

That's my extent, other than interacting, but I know, and I'm plotting exactly how I'm gonna go do that homework, that research, and level myself up in 30 days on that audience, they're drivers, et cetera. And so you build a formula on how to do that. That's number one. To me, that's critical.

Two is that you're able to understand, even if that's not your job, to oversee it all or look at it, you understand the bigger picture of how customers and revenue is generated and how companies are built.

What's the core economic model? A lot of times as marketers, once you understand what's the economic model and drivers, that gives you such a picture. "Oh, if we just focus on this. If I came up with a go-to-market model and my marketing path and the channels I use should be this, because this is the economic model we're driving to."

And then third is, be known for something. Pick your, your secret sauce and you can have six of them if you want. You know, my thing is go-to-market, but at a point was, you know, I'm a chief market officer. I've always been that classically trained to have a point of view to understand markets. That's my shtick.

Can I drive revenue marketing? Yes. Can I do other elements? Yes. But, you can also get colleagues, work with them, or hire other people that have, competent skills. So those are three things I always think about a lot that maybe, that others don't think about.

I will add something, Mary, and I think I alluded to this, Alex, in a conversation we had, don't know, a year ago or something. What I learned as, as now getting to this point as a leader and executive across go-to-market teams is that I also look for products that don't suck. I hate to say that, but before you went for the people, oh, I used to work with that CEO or I worked with this head of marketing, or I, oh boy, what a great ops leader this person was.

And that may be the case because you get to learn a new set of skills. I get to build a tech stack from scratch or boy, I get to do a full customer experience thing. So that may be the right decision. But I will tell you, if I look back and if I had something to do differently, I'm gonna go where, like that product, that solution set, that market just makes sense to me.

And you know what? I apply all my marketing learnings and I will get the same experience to learn stuff, but I'm going into that machine, because when you have tailwinds versus headwinds, then you can do breakthrough marketing stuff. You're given some latitude; you're given some room to go do cool stuff.

When you're fighting every day—this is, Alex's favorite phrase, when you're fighting every day just to prove yourself and that marketing should exist, that's exhausting. How in the world can you unleash change management and breakthrough and disruptive, or even getting the business on track, build to go-to-market strategy, if you're constantly in a room in front of the Senate inquiry, right going, well, you know, these, this, \$2,400 we spent on this social campaign...? You know, I'm poking fun for purpose.

I, I live in the real world. I know you have to prove your value. You have to draw. I'll be the first to be accountable. Give me a number, give me all of that. But if that's your day or 50% of your day, how can you possibly ask your team, sales, marketing, or otherwise to do great work? It just doesn't make sense.

Alex: So I, Scott, I was on the phone the other day. I'm not gonna name names. I'll protect the innocent here. And it was the first time I had ever heard this: a sales leader, and I'm talking CRO level at a big company, said that their organization is seen as a cost center, not a profit center. And it was the first time I'd ever heard that. What's your reaction to that?

Scott: Well first I would take a deep breath, because I'm now in a better centered state.

Alex: Is it only coffee that you have in that cup? Do you have anything else in that?

Scott: Yeah, well, it's not too far off. It's five o'clock somewhere, I'm sure. But no, I would try to really understand the why very quickly. This is part of the maturing, right? Okay. “Instead of reacting, why, what, what, why a cost center? Is the model something? Is the market this

way? Is it low margin business? Is it through distribution, so it becomes more of a supply chain sales mentality, right?"

I would try to understand, but the first part for me personally or professionally, I would likely do some quick homework and likely hit swipe. I would probably move on because to me, there's so much opportunity out there as we opened our, our discussion with, there's so much opportunity that's happening. Some of its breakthrough and cool. Some of it's pretty interesting, some of it's complex.

There's so much to work on today if you're a marketer, and, you know, putting everything aside, July biggest, largest job openings. Yes, there are things, obviously the market correction is here, it's gonna be here. Inflation is a factor, but you're still seeing cloud companies not grow 47%, they're growing 28%, right? If you look at all the earnings and following, and the market's uneven, so you may have to pick markets that could use your skills. There's still tremendous gaps.

I get, as you guys do, as everybody probably listening here, gets a handful of calls a week. I need someone seasoned who can do this, this, and that. So that's the good news. So wouldn't it be better to take tailwinds versus headwinds where you can, and in some cases, there, there are people that love complex problems and are problem solvers.

They're change management and they disrupt in a different way. They go fix stuff and they get compensated for it.

Alex: Yeah, I, I—

Scott: So that, that, that's fi that's a viable role. but to me that's the, the exception, not the rule.

Alex: Yeah, it was, it was interesting.

Scott: If I'm talking to a younger me or any one of us.

Alex: I'd never heard it before, Scott, and you're a better person than me because I did react when I first heard that I did not take a step back. That was one of the first times I've heard that, if not the first time that I heard that sales was being viewed as a cost center inside the organization. You know, anyway, you're a better person than me. I knew that anyway. But this validates it.

Scott: Well because they've deployed product led growth in an account-based model and they're using AI to be able to solve that. So once they've figured that all that out, it's very clear that sales now is a cost center.

Mary: [Laughs] Nice.

Alex: That's, that's the second podcast that we're doing.

Scott: But, but I'm—

Alex: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mary: I'm really excited for the next podcast to dig into, career growth and picking up all of the experiences along the way to kind of craft where you wanna be in the future. I think that's—

Scott: Yeah, that... Boy, that Mary, that's something missing. And my personal satisfaction is doing the work, go-to-market strategy and activation. Probably the biggest part of the thing I've learned because people helped me and did it for me, that's 20% of my time is the, I'm gonna call it mentoring, but when you mentor, you learn as much about yourself as you learn about others.

And boy, you have to do it for a while, and then it's very clear the, the mirror gets held up so fast. “Wow, I just told him to do that. I'm not really doing that very well. Let me just check myself here and get back on track.” In all seriousness, that, that to me is the most important topic. Not just career growth, but career satisfaction, and being able to find, not work-life balance, but work-life integration.

So you can be your, you know, your full self-potential, whatever that. I don't think, you know, work life balance is a reality. I don't mean you have to be out of balance, but that's like sales and marketing alignment. Oh my gosh, how exhausting.

Work-life balance? “Well, hang on, it's three o'clock. I need to take some time off” versus, “Oh, Friday we've got, our kids play. Friday's out.” That's, that's my mindset. Or “I'm gonna do that, write that, strategy plan up on Sunday afternoon. But on Friday afternoon I'm going here.” How awesome is that?

That to me is more life, and that's work-life integration. I know all companies don't accommodate that. I know that. But if you can move to that model and find the type of companies and environments where you can do that, I think you'll find, we all find in this more advanced digital data driven, always on accelerated economy. We, we work and live in, That's, that's just a better.

Mary: There any other last questions or questions that you had hoped we would ask at that we didn't get to?

Scott: Well, we covered a lot of ground, and I'll leave it there. I, I just so applaud and I wish you, tremendous success. Both of you are very passionate.

You're very much a believer in giving back and, and building community around what you guys are building at Klearly. So I, I wish you luck in any way I can support you in helping get out the, the voice and the word of all the, I'm sure diverse people you'll bring in to share their lessons and learnings. I know that's how I change and learn.

Mary: Thanks, Scott, and thank you for listening. If you like this show, be sure to follow so you don't miss an episode.

Alex: This show is brought to you by Klearly. If you are ready to embrace revenue as a team sport - where all of your teams work better, together - visit us at [klearly dot com](https://klearly.com), that's K-L-E-A-R-L-Y dot com, to learn more.

Mary: Next week, our journey towards the B2B REvolution will continue with another great guest. Until then, I'm Mary Blanks...

Alex: ...and I'm Alex Krawchick. We'll talk to you next week.