

REvolution

From Legos to MarTech Logos and Beyond!

Featuring **Scott Brinker**

Episode 105

Scott: Okay, the good news is we're digitally transformed, however, now we need to get digitally good, digitally transformed is one thing, like digitally good, digitally great.. And yeah, it's probably, probably a long road still ahead.

Mary: Scott, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast today. We're really excited to chat with you and dig into all things marketing technology and beyond. I know you in ology for a long time as the creator of Chief MarTech and content creator and so many different spaces, and perhaps even more famously in my mind in some ways, the whole MarTech map and, and all of that as the creator.

Scott: Infamous, I think is the word for that.

Mary: Well, I, you know, I almost said that and then I was like, Nah,

Scott: I'll tell you. It's like, so you are the guy who's like causing me all that grief at night. Yeah, sorry about that.

Mary: You're the guy. 11 years later. Is that right?

Scott: Yeah, it, yeah. How time flies by when you're putting logos on a slide.

Mary: Yeah. Did you see that as like your career path when you were, you know, like 10? Were you like, this is, this is where I'm going. Logos. Yeah.

Scott: I was organizing like little logos in boxes or Legos, right, I started like organizing little Legos in boxes and I'm like, could anybody do this for a living? And apparently the answer is no, you can't actually do it for a living, but you can spend all your time doing it anyway.

So, it's my labor of love. The perfect thing, like if Mr. Monk, you know was working in marketing, he'd be like, oh, I wanna work on the MarTech landscape. Yeah, that's my thing.

Mary: That's awesome. You are also the VP of platform ecosystem at HubSpot. Like the Legos and logos don't keep you busy enough. Can you tell us a little bit about your role there and, and how it all comes together for you?

Scott: Yeah, It, it definitely is connected. You know, so as I was, yeah, in that process, you know, of like continuing to like map the MarTech landscape and we saw the whole industry growing.

One of the things that became very clear is we went from, you know, a few hundred products to thousands of products is, while all the innovation happening out in MarTech, is incredible. I mean, it, it's amazing what people are creating. You know, for marketers to really be able to harness those innovations, they've gotta be able to get these things to work together.

And that was something that quite frankly, you know, in the early days of MarTech was particularly bad. You know, the industry still, I think has further to go, but we're getting better, you know? And so for a while I was very much trying to champion the idea that, hey, this, this is something. Instead, the big companies who, for a while when they saw the landscape growing, their reaction was, fear, uncertainty and doubt of just like, no, no, no.

You don't want any of that other stuff. You just want our, get everything from us. Just buy everything from us and you're done. I'm like, well, I don't know about that. You know? It sure does seem like there's a lot more things out there to be built, you know, than any one company is gonna do, you know? And so I was really hoping, yeah, MarTech Company would come along and be like, hey, listen, we actually consider this a good thing, that there are all these people out here, and what can we do to work better with them.

And so when the HubSpot founders reached out to me and said that that's what they wanted to do with HubSpot and would I help, you know, put that program in place? Yeah, it was kind of one of those you had me at hello moments, of course. Like, Yeah, let's do this. Let's get this. So, turns out that was a much longer journey than I anticipated five years ago. But, yeah, very happy about the progress.

Hopefully you didn't negotiate that way, Scott.

I'm, I'm a wonderful negotiator. I'm like, as long as you let me continue to put little logos in boxes. We're fine.

Mary: Maybe this is a bit of an odd question, but how do you define ecosystems in this space of all of the technology and putting it together?

Scott: Yeah, it's, it's kind of a word that's only very recently entered the popular lexicon. Remember when I first joined HubSpot, they, they said, Okay, well, what title do you want? I said, Ah, well, platform ecosystem. And I swear I had people asking me, they're like, you mean like how the birds and the fishes and water?

I'm like, yes, but the digital world equivalent there. You know, I mean, I think the ecosystem very broadly, it's basically all the different companies and participants who are related to each other around, yeah, you know, in this case, you know, a platform like HubSpot, so that's certainly other SaaS companies that integrate with HubSpot.

It's solutions providers who are, you know, either consulting around HubSpot or you know, selling custom services. Frankly, it's customers in HubSpot who then become the super users who are part of a community and, you know, helping others. You know, there's strategic partnerships like, you know, the relationships we have with companies like, Google or LinkedIn.

I mean, all of these are, you know, part of an ecosystem and what makes them exciting as an ecosystem is it's not a hub and spoke model, right? It's not like, oh, well everything is HubSpot at the center, and it's just a direct line between each of those different folks in hubs. What makes these ecosystems really exciting is it is truly a mesh.

It is a web, you know, where it's like, oh, well there's a solution partner, you know, that's working with these app partners. You know, they're using this thing here and maybe they outsource to this other solution partner here and you know, they've got this deal of what they're doing with LinkedIn and it's just these combinations and these intersections are really exciting because you can really look at all of them as the building blocks that allow you to create.

Sort of this, the, the complete solution that any given company wants to get. So, yeah, it's, it's a really fun time. And this is, this is, this is the dynamic at HubSpot, but it, HubSpot is by no means unique on this. This is now almost across all of the tech space. People really become attuned to the fact that, yeah, pretty much every business is either organizing an ecosystem or participating in ecosystems as their go to market. So it's exciting to see it finally start to become a thing.

Alex: Scott, with all the ecosystem talk, I wanna see, can you pan your camera? I wanna see the whiteboard in your office. How crazy that whiteboard is going to be.

Scott: You know, this is the thing when we moved to the home from covid, I lost whiteboarding and it is, is maybe the single most painful thing for me because boy, I was one of those people like, yes, if you could just put me in a, not a padded room.

Well, I mean probably should be in a padded room, but you know, if you could put me in a room that was just solid whiteboard and my last startup, like we actually got the paint. Where you like paint the walls. And so every surface is like a whiteboard surface. That was like nirvana, you know? I mean that was, you made me even happier than putting little logos in boxes. So I mean like, yeah, how can you beat that.

Alex: There, that's that. I'm the same way, by the way. Yeah. I worked at, you know, SAS, SAS Institute here at, in Cary, North Carolina. And I'll never forget, when I first started working there, one of the operations folks came into my office and said, you know, what size whiteboard do you want?

I was like, well, what size whiteboard can you get? and that was a true, like, it was so funny the day that they delivered it because my colleagues were like, what is in that box? And it took up the entire wall, one of the walls in my office. I love that stuff too, Scott, so definitely. Yeah, but the ecosystem is incredibly complex.

I mean now, and it, it's just how do you manage it all? I mean, how do you keep track of all the things at, at HubSpot and, and you know, because it's so nonlinear and because there aren't these boxes where you're putting logos into, you know, how do you even keep tabs on all the things and how things are working together, kind of that mesh network.

Scott: Yeah. Well, I mean, again, part of what makes an ecosystem thrive is the hub at the center isn't, you know, basically having to directly orchestrate everything, single, yeah, like interaction that's happening within that ecosystem. That the ecosystem itself, Yeah, really it's a very distributed leadership.

It's, you know, a lot of partners connecting directly with other partners, and so, yeah, I, I think it's only fair to acknowledge like, you know, both our ability to be able to actively manage the exponential combinations of all the things out there. Yeah. It's just, it's, it's naturally limited. I think the, you know, the main thing we try and keep a good pulse on, frankly, is customer happiness.

Because ultimately that's the whole point of ecosystems is like, we want to serve our mutual customers and make them happy. You know, and so as long as you have like, yeah, customer centric companies that, you know, are very diligent about, like just continually instrumenting and like when they're hearing problems or, you know, Yeah, something's going wrong.

Or you see usage drops or you, I mean, in the app world, if you see people all of a sudden like uninstalling stuff or giving bad reviews, I mean like there are signals that if you're paying attention to it, you're like, Okay, yeah, something's not working here. Let's figure this out. Yeah. So, we, we do our best.

Mary: We're all doing our best, trying to stay on top of all of the things that are, that are happening constantly. I think one of the, one of the things that I was reading that you recently wrote on Chief MarTech was about digital transformation. And I, I can remember actually in one of the places that I worked in a pretty recent past, we had a campaign, it was the digital transformation campaign, and it feels like those have been buzzwords that have been around for quite some time. So is our transformation complete? can't we check that box?

Scott: Yeah. Well, yeah. Wow. So the post you were referring to is, Yeah, I was having a debate with someone as to like, where are we in digital transformation? You know, and I think, you know, the, I, I might be oversimplifying, but I think there was one view of like, No.

Wow. Look how chaotic things are and you know, there's all this stuff that could be better. And it's not like we just, you know, ask, you know, the HAL 9,000 to like, you know, please get me some more customers HAL, and it just, you know, happens. So we clearly have a long way to go before we're digitally transformed.

That's a reasonable argument. I think from my perspective. I sort of think of like, okay, how much of what is actually happening in the interactions between companies and customers now is either happening directly over digital channels or is being mediated over digital channels, or is being orchestrated behind the scenes, you know, by some sort of digital process now fully might acknowledge like those processes, those interactions, those mediations, they might need a ton of improvement.

You know, like, it's definitely where we're not at, you know, Nirvana. But I think if you take it from the lens of, well, actually pretty much everything we're doing is now somehow connected at a digital layer, then yeah, I, I'm, I'm gonna go out on a limb and say like, I think we're kind of crossing that horizon of saying, Okay, the good news is we're digitally transformed, however, now we need to get digitally good, digitally transformed is one thing, like digitally good, digitally great.

You know, what's that thing they used to have say with that book? you know, from Good to Great. It's like now we don't need to go from digital good to digital great. And yeah, it's probably, probably a long road still ahead.

Mary: Yeah, it that makes sense. I was, when I was reading that article, initially when I read the question, I was like, I mean, I'm gonna give us like a 40 to 60%.

And then when I kind of read through the list of the things, the more automation of manual tasks and thinking about how to pull some of it through. There were some really clear examples. I'm like, Yeah, I get, we have made more progress than I think it may seem on the surface. The thing that still plagues me though, and that I run into time and time again and talking with people.

The market is, we're still like very married to our spreadsheets. And the amount of time that we spend in spreadsheets is still high. I think 10 hours a week was something that you had seen in one of the marketing operations surveys out there. When you think about that from kind of a data and analytics perspective, where do you feel like we're missing some of that automation of manual tasks when it comes to, to data.

Scott: Yeah, that's a great question because I, I find myself on the fence about like, okay, well what are we doing in spreadsheets that we shouldn't be doing in spreadsheets? Okay, so if we're talking about like, oh, I have to get this data from one place, format it, and then export it to another place. I'm with you.

I'm like, nah, I should not be using a spreadsheet for that. Like, that that would not be, you know, the, the top of the tool chain for the data ops community. But if I think about almost, you know, we were chatting earlier here about like, you know, like, you know, those of us who love whiteboards. You know, this idea of basically having a canvas, it's very flexible, you know, for like a business user or marketer to like, you know, put together scenarios and like think about how they wanna like, you know, analyze things or map things out, or, I mean, I actually think that's, that is a legitimate use for spreadsheet I'm not sure we wanna get rid of.

You know, there's, there's sort of then these other tools, you know, that are sort of in between the two worlds. Like I think of things. Air table or Smartsheet or things like this where it's almost a little bit of a hybrid on one hand, it's a bit of, yeah, this flexible canvas for, I kind of want to define a process or a structure or some sort of, you know, thing that's, you know, very bespoke.

You know, to how my, team or my business runs, but I don't want to have to constantly be just doing manual stuff to it. I want it to, you know, be intelligent enough that there's some logic, you know, it inter it, it's, it's integrating on both, things that it's pulling in and integrating on things that it, you know, pipes out.

So, I don't know. I mean, what's the most painful spreadsheet task that you find that you wish you're like, Boy, I really wish this could just get Yeah, automated away.

Alex: Well, for me, I mean, it's, it's more finance. It's P and L, but out of a spreadsheet. But for, I'm thinking back to my marketing operations, my revenue operations days. I think one of the things that was most difficult for me and why I use spreadsheets primarily, Mary, and I'd love to hear your thoughts on this, is to get data out of a system, to be able to manipulate it the way that I wanted to do, you know, be able to analyze it.

I mean, that was the, the main use case to be able to export data and it would frustrate to me, no, me to no end when I couldn't export that data the way that I wanted to. And, and that seemed like an unnecessary step, kind of, to your point, Scott, like I should have been able to do that in the application that I was originally using, I should not have to take the data out or then combine data sources.

That's where the data engineering got really difficult. Mary, what about you? Now that you've had time to answer the question.

Mary: I put you on the spot, it was great. I, the combination for me, so like thinking about the combination of accounts and customers and like, I was just talking to a marketer a couple weeks ago and we were trying to troubleshoot something, like their 700 emails had gone out and we were like, well, what happened? And then it was like, well, we have to look here and then we need to look here. And then it's, it's more that intersection of data that I still find, especially from a troubleshooting perspective that we're doing within spreadsheets.

What else, Scott? Like are there other areas that you see kind of lagging, maybe behind isn't a fair word, but with still like the most room to improve from a transformation side?

Scott: You know, I think to me, and, and again, this is kind of, you know, like you're, you, you, you pay attention.

The things that you're paying attention to are the things that, yeah. You happen to then be like, oh, well this is where all my examples are. So I happen to be paying attention a lot, you know, this past year to what I've been calling almost like the reintegration of MarTech, where you know, the MarTech universe and the MarTech stack in many ways, in many companies sort of grew up in its own silo.

And arguably, I was one of the champions of saying like, Yeah, let market and go ahead and build its own stack and its silo, because to be honest, a lot of the times the rest of the company wasn't really ready to do what marketing needed to do, and marketing just couldn't be chained and still be able to deliver, you know, the outcomes that they had to in a digital world.

But the world has changed, and now the rest of the company is becoming, you know, very digital. And the most exciting thing happening to me right now is this, you know, almost like universal data layer that seems to be underlying underpinning like the entire company. Now it's in many companies, this is still very early.

It's, you know, very much in the emerging, But it's exciting. You see it coming together where, you know, we're now aggregating data, you know, into, you know, these data warehouse layers or these importantly cloud data warehouses, you know, from marketing, from sales, from customer support, from products, from operations, from finance.

You know, as you start to pull all this data together and then you're able to manipulate it, you know, well, certainly for a while now, we've been using that to try and like pull out insights, you know, and business intelligence, you know, products, data science things. If you're further into that.

But we're also starting to get to the place where, oh, as we like, identify these patterns in this more universal data layer, being able to feed those back into frontline systems so that, you know, marketing automations or sales engagements or customer support has access to that data in how they're actually handling interactions.

This is super exciting. It is, again, super immature, you know, for most companies. And so, I think it's a really exciting direction for the next, call it five to 10 years, you know, of marketing's evolution, but I think it's game changing. In fact, you could make the argument, someone might come up and make this, that really, that will be the watershed of quote unquote digital transformation.

Mary: But yeah, it's, to me, it's, it's, it starts to become how the teams begin to orchestrate together in a way that really delivers an outstanding customer experience as a united team versus each one in their own silo, with their own tech stack, their own processes, their own data. Like everybody's gonna come together to better orchestrate, I hope.

Scott: It's hard. I, I, I, this whole topic of centralization and decentralization. Yeah, it is always near and dear to my heart because it's like you're trying to find this combination as a company's scales. How do we both make sure everything is aligned and coordinated, but at the same time isn't like bottlenecks and constrained and it's just, it's challenging, it's scale.

And so like all these different, I mean, this is everything for, I mean, it's somewhat a technology challenge, but it's almost five times more like an organizational, you know, like management you know, process

challenge, and so yeah. Boy we could take a whole podcast and like barely scratch, the surface of all those topics, but it's, it's super interesting.

Alex: Mm-hmm. Yeah. One of the, one of the most challenging things that I've experienced with the data, and we, it comes back to the spreadsheet question, which was, once we get the data out of the systems, that's when I realized the, the way that we built the data in the first place was flawed. And that, that has been a real challenge for revenue operations professionals because we can't go to the vendors and say, hey, you need to wait.

You need to change the way that you've schemed this data. They're not gonna do that, obviously. So it's up to the customer to go ahead and re-engineer that data to be able to make it fit their needs, right. So they, you're right, Scott, this is really interesting point about data transformation, digital transformation.

That might be the, the sort of real inflection point. It's not just about data and aggregating data. It's about taking that next step and really engineering it so it can be take, we can take action on it. It can assist with decisions.

I mean, I'll, I'll just share with you it's, I guess, a little selfish, but with Klearly, when I started Scott, I realized that we had to, because I had been through it, I, I've been an operator for 20 years, I realized that we had to start at the end and work back.

And what I mean by that is with our company, and again, apologies for being selfish, but like we start with decision support. Like what is it that the, It's the why, right? Do you sound in cynic? Like why do, why are we doing what we want to do? And then from there we work backward and we think about, okay, what does the data need to look like?

And then we work backward from there. What data do we actually need in order to do that? And I think really over the, to be brutally honest, I think over the last 10 to 15 years, A lot of vendors, unfortunately, have taken the other approach. They've just continued to create data and then dump it on customers, and they expect the customers to actually figure out what to do with it, rather than start with the end in mind and, and, and work backward.

So maybe we'll do a separate podcast talking about that.

Scott: No, I think well actually see that's, you're making great case for, you know, ecosystem and like, you know, looking at Klearly is very much the center of an ecosystem that, hey, it's great to have all these other contributors bringing data together.

You know, but it's the Klearly ecosystem that actually helps people, like get a, get a new level of meaning and value out of that. Yeah, nothing against people who are creating data, but yes, that on its own, whether, necessary but not sufficient. Yes.

Alex: Oh, you just got me back to gmat. Ooh. I just had ptsd.

Scott: Sorry about that. . .

Mary: So how do you think about it from that human perspective? Because I, I agree. I'm I think about that a lot. Obviously, I have a background in all things enablement as well. So when you think about kind of the technology and data and transformation, have you seen any companies starting to lean in and how they're organizing themselves kind of around this, this ecosystem, if you will, for, for how to actually bring it forward.

Scott: Yeah, no, I, quite a few and I think, certainly things I can talk about publicly a bit are like, you know, the people who contribute to, the Stackies. For those listers who don't know what this is, every year I have this whole contest, invite marketers to put together a slide that maps visualizes how they think of their MarTech.

You know, different tools, how they're related. For the most part, this has turned into something where marketers design these slides in ways that goes far beyond like any actual utilitarian purpose. But it's all great and awesome, you know, and so it's been fascinating because some of those companies, you know, who have been contributing these slides, like they've thought really hard about almost looking at that stack as more of a platform itself, as an internal ecosystem.

And one of the companies, who's done that, is Phillips, right? And they've submitted Stackies, I think three years in a row. 2020, 2021, 2022. And so, yeah, you can Google stacks, they're all up there on the web for free

but, you know, the way they are thinking about it is how do we organize this as a, an internal ecosystem? You know of capabilities and when you talk with the folks at Phillip, Yeah, I mean the technology architecture is a piece of that, you know, but what really makes that ecosystem thrive, you know, is the intention of the enablement.

Like how do we think about empowering teams to take advantage of that? What does that mean? You know, certainly that's then a combination of, you know, everything from what we would think of as classic

training to like on demand resources. How do we provide, you know, support? Are there central teams that are able to help.

Is it fish for the person or teach the person how to fish? Do we give them like permission from a manager, managerial perspective? You know, the way we ultimately learn is by doing and when we start doing these things, we are all novices and beginners and we make mistakes. And you either have a culture and environment that like encourages that, you know, as a way to develop that, you know, learning and expertise or a culture that, you know, makes it very, dangerous for people to do that, in which case they just won't, you know,

And then like a year later people are complaining, nobody uses this stuff. Well, yeah, of course not. You're threatened to shoot 'em if they like used it wrong. I'm not touching that, you know? Right. And so, yeah, it's a lot of intentional, supportive, you know, how do we help a team, yeah, really develop new skills and new capabilities.

Mary: Yeah. And I think thinking about it through. Kinda that, that lens of the customer at the center of all of it. I, I feel like originally it was some of the, I'm not gonna totally blame it on tech, but even in the data that we needed to create in some ways to almost justify the contribution that we had as part of revenue, whether it was something like engineering our tech stack and processes around like a demand waterfall.

I feel like now it's almost with this customer life cycle. Do you see like the revenue technology landscape evolving to support more of that, like holistic buyer's journey from acquisition all the way through to retention, expansion? Like are, is the technology really helping teams think all the way through?

Scott: I think so. It's been, it's been interesting to watch, you know, this sort of blossoming of, you know, classic MarTech, you know, and then like in the past couple years, but seen a similar like blossoming around sales tech. You know, and if you look a little bit further down, you see actually the emergence of that happening in like customer success you know, tech too.

You know, nobody likes to celebrate economic downturns. But you know, I think one of the things that's coming out of like companies running into, you know, the current economic downturn is they're like, okay. Well, the cost to acquire a new customer is X, you know, the cost to like make existing customer happy and stay, you know, like maybe one sixth x Hmm.

You do the math, you know? And so I think, yeah, just it, it's, it's the impetus, you know, for people to invest, yeah, more energy, you know, in other aspects of the customer life cycle that do very much impact,

you know, revenue. But yeah, perhaps traditionally we always haven't as done of a good, of a job of like representing particularly from, you know, the MarTech or, you know, marketing world.

Mary: Mm-hmm. Yeah. So I'm, I'm curious, someone asked me this question there. What comes first when you think about how, how that comes together, collaboration, orchestration, automation? Is there an order of operations to those things? Does it depend on, what's it depend on?

Scott: Well, that's a really interesting, never had anyone ask me that. I, I guess I would say it has to start with collaboration. Like, I don't see how you can automate things that people can't even agree, you know, what they are automating. I think the relationship between automation and orchestration is a very interesting one because, you know, I, I've a lot of chats with people in the, like, enterprise automation space, you know, and one of the things that, you know, that that whole space is going through, for a while when people thought about automation, it was a very task-oriented view.

It's like, oh, I'm automating this task. You know? And when you think about orchestration, it's not about the individual tasks. It's about how do collections of tasks, you know, come together in some sort of larger process or some larger workflow, you know? And I think you're seeing that evolution happen. But yeah, again, moving from task automation to process true workflow automation, it's, it's just a more complex thing.

So I don't know if I, I was put on the spot. I would probably say collaboration. Think you have to orchestrate across, even if it's like manual. Otherwise, again, just stuff is in its own silo. And then, yeah, automation

Alex: So, so similar parallel question then is what are your thoughts? I'm gonna leave this very open ended cuz I want to hear how you respond to this. What are your thoughts on alignment?

Scott: I'm gonna steal a line from, you know, HubSpot's CEO, you know, they used to say, what was it? strategy eats something for breakfast and then there was this thing, oh, culture eats strategy for breakfast.

You know, but I think she's recently been saying like, actually alignment eats strategy for breakfast. I mean, it's like if you can't get alignment, you know, with teams. Particularly as you like, go beyond being more than just like one person, if you're a solo entrepreneur or creator and you're having alignment problems, you need to see a psychiatrist. But you know, otherwise, the moment you start having multiple people in an organization, like if you can't get alignment, nothing else matters because it doesn't matter what your strategy is, you aren't gonna actually be able to execute against it.

Yeah. I'll, I'll steal one other phrase cuz I, I love this one, so I keep wanting to spread it through the world is, and there's chain here, I am stealing this from Dharmesh Shah, yeah, HubSpot's, co-founder, CTO and he stole it from Elon Musk. You know, of this whole thing of like, you know, thinking about like, you know, vectors, you know, and this is kind of like a really techy thing, why both Elon and Dharmesh would, you know, get really geeked out about it.

Why? Frankly, I would then get geek out about it. But like, if you have these vectors mathematically that point in different directions, they cancel each other out. You know, if you're able to get the vectors that they're aligned together in the same direction, they're additive. You know, and this is actually, as geeky as it is, is a really clear metaphor.

You get these things that are, even if they're not perfectly, matched up, you know, it's like this wasted energy, you know, and it's hard, it is really hard at scale to get, you know, these together. I, I don't know that there's any company I've come across yet where I'd say like, they're perfect. Every single vector in the entire company is just in a straight line. But the closer we get to that and the more we aspire to that, it work towards that. Yeah. I think that's incredibly impactful.

Alex: Where are you seeing, you know, so, so I'll give an example. I was really excited a couple years ago, with regard to alignment. We've, we've talked about sales and marketing alignment over the years, but I was really excited to see HubSpot finally come into this customer success side of things, customer support side of things as well. Do you feel like customer success has, has equal footing at that table right now? And, and if not, why not?

Like why is it just marketing and sales and maybe less weighting is, is on customer success, especially given the macroeconomic conditions that you before mentioned?

Scott: Yeah, I think it's changing. I think it is fair to say probably for a lot of companies it's, it's, it's true. Like actually my impression is sales is always at the top, you know? And some of that is properly earned, I think. And some of it as we recognize that the customer journey is yeah, a much whole more holistic, you know, journey over-emphasizing the value of sales. You know, can be counterproductive as it, you know, just creates blind spots for you on basically all the other things that, you know, create value.

I'd like to think as an industry where we're becoming more enlightened about how all the pieces fit together. So I suspect some of that is just like legacy, cultural holdover, that just takes time, you know, mindsets sadly do not change as rapidly as, technology, but I, again, I actually suspect this moment of this

economic downturn. It's kind of happening at the exact moment that there's all this innovation happening around the technology for the full customer journey.

It's happening at a time where customers, you know, have become now not just, you know, used to, but really expecting and demanding great, you know, self-service capabilities across the whole, you know, journey. It's just, it's almost a bit of a perfect storm that if I were to say like, wow, you know, this next year could like really be a breakthrough year for yeah, customer success, does feel like all the factors are sort of coming together to say, Yeah, that's, that's where the action is gonna be.

Alex: Yeah. It's a, it's a great forcing function. I mean, I, I, I think, that's the way I think about it. you know, covid there, they're, during a pandemic, anytime during an economic recession, we have challenges, but they also help us innovate more quickly.

They cause that, that forcing function and CS I think, and now we're seeing product, right? So then there's like, even now product telemetry, you know, I used to call it, Scott, the three legs of the revenue stool. Now I've gotta put a fourth leg on there because I mean, product is, you know, it's just amazing.

Like the amount of data, especially for PLG focused companies, where the product is now going to be, you know, the leader inside the organization. Are you seeing a lot of the PLG stuff as well?

Scott: Yeah. Oh absolutely. Yeah. That's a really interesting thing. Boy, and now in the back of my head, you know, you're making me think. I could do this whole article about like the 12 different ways you could define digital transformation, because yeah, that frankly is another one. Like at the point in time that your actual product or service is this like digital led experience. I know it's kind of qualifying as, well, you are a digital business.

And it's amazing, like these very traditional businesses, you know, that are increasingly like now truly delivering digital products. Anyways, I'm, that's, going off on a tangent there. Yeah, I mean, PLG is huge. You know, I think this, again, talk about the perfect storm of a number of things. It's coming at exactly the same time when third party cookies and third-party data in general is basically pressured from so many different directions that it's, it's become clear if you're betting your strategy on third party data, you are, you know, on thin ice.

But as it turns out, actually third-party data was largely crap. It always was largely crap. It was easy crap to get, but it was largely crap, you know, versus like this first party data because we didn't have good data ops infrastructure as we were talking about. It was actually harder to get that data. There wasn't good ways, you know, to plug into that.

But now that we're developing that capability, the truth is that first party data of like how customers are actually behaving, you know, in their engagements with you. Oh my goodness. Like that's, you know, like, send me a sign, Lord. You know, what do my customers want? Big booming voice in the sky. This is what they want. They're telling you right there, So, okay. Yeah. Got it. Thank you.

Mary: I, I am curious, like thinking about you, you mentioned third and first party data. Do you see a place for second party data in these ecosystems? And how might that be like the next grail for us to get to in terms of sharing? It's, I don't, I don't think it would be as crappy as third party.

Scott: Oh, definitely not. Yeah. Second party, because basically it's someone else's first party data, and what you're recognizing is when you're in an ecosystem together, it's not that your first party data is mine because, no, it's yours, but the accuracy, the, the relevance of it, you know, or whatever subset of it, you know, has that overlap?

Yeah, I mean it's, it's fantastic. And in fact, yeah, this whole, you know, we talk about different ops, marketing ops and sales ops, you know, the whole function of partner ops and like both the tools and technologies and like processes we're using to like interface and manage ecosystems. It's going through an incredible renaissance right now.

And there's a whole collection of these tools now for everything from data clean rooms to like, you know, ecosystem account mapping tools. I mean, we're actually experimenting with some of this right now in my program, you know, at HubSpot where we can, with a large partner, basically, you know, at an account level, take a look where there's overlap between my customers, your customers, my prospects.

Your prospects, my open opportunities, your open opportunities. And then based on that, like be able to actually like intelligently, you know, reach out to people like, oh, we noticed you're a customer of this product and a customer of HubSpot, but for some reason you haven't actually installed this integration, this would be a great way for you to get more value out of these two tools.

So yeah, the second party data, and, and again, it has to be done anytime you're doing data sharing. I mean, even with first party data, after you be respectful of this, but second party data, even more so is again, you just wanna make sure, you know, we're respecting the wishes of the customer that we're being compliant, you know, with what we can share and what we can't share.

But yeah, for those in B2B marketing who are like account-based marketing fanatics, whew boy, the account level data that is now available out there, not individual personal data, but account level data. Yeah, there's so many great plays you could do on the second party data front.

Mary: Is there anything that's really exciting to, that that one certainly feels very exciting to me because I haven't spent a lot of time in the partners space, so my eyes are just kind of being opened to this, this potential in reality that can, that can happen.

Are there any other big emerging areas like that, that you feel like are going to be transformative in what's next for revenue teams?

Scott: You know, well you say revenue, so I guess I can't help but say I think B2B commerce is going through quite an exciting period too. I mean like, I think we can say B2C eCommerce, not that it does, I'm further that it'll continue to grow, but it is now. Yeah, it's rocking in the experiences and the way they're optimized now. Yeah. That is, that that whole world is, you know, doing really well.

B2B commerce experiences have been much more sparse, much less enjoyable of an experience, but there's clearly like enormous demand, like, you know, both from the buyer's perspective and from the seller's perspective. You know, like the easier we could make it for people, you know, to digitally self-service more of that. Yeah, I, I, I think it's a great opportunity and what's interesting to me about it is, you know, we were talking earlier about like, you know, well the sales people, they're the ones who actually closed the deal.

I got the sale. Cha-ching. But in a world of B2B commerce, now all of a sudden there are actually a whole bunch of plays that quite frankly, the marketing department, you know, is gonna be running, or even the customer success department is gonna be running. You know, that directly resulted in transactions. And so, yeah, you're not like, no, I didn't influence that sale.

I actually delivered that sale. Thank you very much. What do you say about that President's club? you know, so I think that, yeah, that, that, that's a really exciting time. What else is going on? I guess I probably won't yet get on the bandwagon of blockchain, web three not that I don't think that stuff is super interesting and it's gonna be incredibly innovative.

I just, I still think every time I dig into it, Yeah, this is pretty early, not, not quite seeing the value to like most normal people there, but you know, again, it's like one of those things where that will be five years from now, I am sure it's gonna be, yeah, just mind blowing.

Mary: I, I joined a webinar about that topic and I sat there and I tried to be fully engaged and understand how I would apply this to my world. And I was like, I, I can't, not yet, I'm, I'm not ready.

Scott: It's good to keep, keep an ear to the ground, keep an open mind, cuz yeah, at some point, right? This is how every innovation in the history, like it starts out as a joke. Like really you wanna like try and fly in the air like a bird, or you just like, you know, dumb as a rock, you know?

And then, oh whoa, hey, wow, that actually works and now I can jet off to Paris. Isn't that awesome? So yeah, and I'm sure it won't happen, but right now we're in the mode of like, are you still sure you can actually fly like a bird? A little skeptical about that.

Alex: I just, I love coming back to alignment, Scott, and, and you know, we, we at Klearly, we think of. And Mary has said it so many times this weekend. I love the way she says it, you know, revenue is a team sport. So first I want to know when you're gonna rename MarTech to RevTech. So there's, there's one thing.

Not that MarTech's ever gonna go away, but RevTech is here. Right? But, but what do you see? I mean, when you talk to people, everybody's talking about alignment. Everybody's talking about agility, lower case a. Everybody's talking about, you know, collaboration, just where are the biggest obstacles that you're seeing?

Is it culture? Is it data? Is it technology? Is it, is it the fact that a lot of people just don't even have time to stop and think anymore? Like, you know, with the labor shortage, what are your thoughts on the whole thing? We know it's, we know it's the right thing to do, but why aren't, why aren't we there yet?

Scott: Oh my goodness. Like you, you gave the laundry list, like all of the above. All right. Check. So one of the things I, I sketched one day that, has sort of stuck around for a bit is this thing I, very inappropriately called MarTech's Law. But you know, it's this idea that technology changes exponentially. Organizations, people, we don't change exponentially, we change, I, I hypothesize, we change more logarithmically, you know?

And what's fascinating is when you put those two curves juxtaposed on top of each other, like it becomes really obvious that you've got this thing that's growing really fast here and then the thing that's not growing as fast and the gap between them just becomes larger and larger.

And I really do think that is, the management challenge of the 21st century, because I don't think we're going to like magically turn people and organizations into exponentially changing creatures, you know? So there become, what levers do we have to address it, you know, and it's things of like, oh, well, deciding, being much more strategic about which changes we embrace versus which ones, you know, we've, we've decided which change, not the most relevant or important to me at this time.

You know, there's things about how do I make my organization, it's never gonna be exponential and it's changing, but can I change and adapt faster than my competitor because, you know, it's like that whole thing. Like, you know, hey, I don't have to, you know, outrun the bear. I just have to outrun, you know, the person next to me. And, we're good. You know? And so, yeah, I, I guess it kind of depends on like what level you wanna say, the challenge is we're trying to solve. Is it trying to solve the mechanics of how we become a more agile organization? Cuz there are, you know, like process and methodology approaches, you know, we can take to do that.

Or is it more even some of the underlying, you know, like just psychological things, you know, that speak to culture, you know, and again, this, the good news is this is a whole field of, you know, psychology and, you know, people who study cultural dynamics and organizational dynamics. And there are actually a lot of things you can do to make people feel more comfortable with, you know, what they do with change and how they can approach and how they can learn.

I mean, the whole field around like, you know, like yeah, digital learning management systems, an area that's perhaps tangential to MarTech, but you could argue in many ways, increasingly more relevant, you know, to what we think of as MarTech.

Like again, it's just like the problem list is kind of an all of the above. The solution list is also kind of an all of the above, but no, one of them I think is a silver bullet because yeah, it's just, there's so many dimensions at which this is challenging, and so where do you start?

Alex: We, we've, we, it's funny, I mean, the way that I think about it is we've, we've hit that inflection point where technology has certainly out passed out, out outpaced our ability to adopt it effectively.

One of the examples I use often is autonomous driving, right? So the cars could actually very likely drive themselves today. It's that we as humans are not prepared to actually adopt that tech. And I think one of the companies actually introduces it iteratively in a sort of stepwise fashion, one of my favorite brands is Volvo.

Every year, Volvo introduces a new step toward level five, so they're like level two, level three. Then it's level three, dot one, dot two, dot three. And I actually think Volvo does a very good job. They're very thoughtful. They have empathy toward the user where they're not shoving it down our throat. And that's it.

It is interesting though we have definitely hit that inflection point where the technology has outpaced our ability to, as humans to adopt it effectively, or comfortably.

Scott: Yep. I mean, the, the thing that I think is exciting as a, technology entrepreneur and why I still do feel, it's a great time to be, inventing things in MarTech is technology is again, one of those things too, that its impact on how easy or hard it makes our lives has a wide range. You know, and I think some of the things that get really interesting now are technologies that they're almost, it's almost kind of a meta level.

It's like, oh, you have all these other technologies you're using that are very complicated and hard for how you to manage, but I know what you wanna do, and I'm now creating a technology that actually does a lot of that work for you behind the scenes and presents you with something easier. and oh my goodness, do we love those things when we come across and we're like, yes.

Well, I get that, that that was actually easy to use. Thank you. You know, and yeah, given how much complexity there is on so many other things, like it's probably the hardest thing to come up with a great product that makes things simpler, but when you do that, like what a great opportunity, as an entrepreneur, you're like, yes, anything that simplifies the world, put some money on that.

Mary: That's awesome. So Scott, I have to ask you as we start to wrap up, I can't imagine what it would look like, to see your notebook of all of the drawings and doodles that you probably have for ideas that come. Do you keep a notebook beside of your bed? Like what are you dreaming about? Are you coming up with new articles?

The next best tech? Like what are you, how do you think about decompressing at the end of the day and, and keeping all this going?

Scott: Yeah, it's, yeah. Now I've got notebooks, I've got slides, scratch pads. I've got post-it notes. I know I'm going to, I'm gonna burn for like saying like, Wait, you're the digital transformation guy.

And did you just say post it note? Yeah. What can I say? You know, it's like this is the experience I have, I think is again, just like an echo of the same experience that everyone in marketing has, which is basically, there's so many exciting things that are happening now and that's wonderful. That's inspiring.

There's a lot to that. but there's just too much for any one person to like, you know, do all of it. And so, yeah, I'm, I am in the same boat as everybody else of like, you know, the list of things that I think is really interesting and, you know, I wanna learn is just growing faster than, you know, the hours I have available in the day.

And so, yeah, on one hand that's, you know, a little stressful, you're like, I really feel like I should be getting through more of this. Now this is, this isn't a time of abundance, you know, for innovation, you know, and marketing and the fact that you can only eat this tiny little piece of that abundance. Be grateful for it.

Mary: We all are human after all, trying to keep up with, with all of this going on around us. Thank you so much for joining us today. It was a great conversation. I could keep going for a long time.

Alex: Let us know if you need any more ideas for articles, Scott.

Scott: As soon as I finish this list I will give you a call. Yeah. No, but really Alex, great to chat with you.

Alex: Thank you for everything you do, Scott, for our community. We really appreciate it and you know, driving us forward. This is a team effort. And, it truly is. It's a truly collaborative team effort and we've enjoyed getting to know you over the years and certainly digesting all the wonderful information that you've put out. And, you know, thank you for taking time to chat with us today.

We really appreciate it.

Scott: Thank you so much. Have a great day.