REVolution

Take Me Out to the Sales Game

Featuring Ross Pomerantz

Episode 104

Mary: 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 Mary Blanks...

Alex: ...and I'm Alex Krawchick. 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.

Mary: Today, we're talking with Ross Pomerantz. If you're on Instagram or LinkedIn, it's likely you know him as THE Corporate Bro. He has over 300,000 followers on Instagram, 73,000 on LinkedIn, and nearly 23,000 on YouTube, he has certainly generated a ton of content since getting his start in sales back in 2013 at Oracle. He recently ran a poll on Instagram and at last count over 80% of his followers are quota carrying sales reps. We're excited to have him on to talk about his background, what he's learned about selling, and what, exactly, he thinks about marketing. It's a fun, lighthearted convo and I'm excited for you to listen in.

[00:00:18] Mary: Hi, Ross. Welcome so much to the podcast. We are super excited to have you on today. It feels a little weird to call you Ross, though, if I'm being honest.

[00:00:27] Ross: Corp is pretty much the default even in my family now. It's weird. Yeah. So my mom calls me other stuff, but we're not gonna go into that.

[00:00:36] Mary: Okay. Does everyone else also have like their family time persona or just you?

[00:00:42] Ross: I don't know. Probably just me. Ross is just when they're mad or when I'm actively not listening, they know it and then they think that'll change if I, They use my, my real name.

[00:00:55] Alex: So I wanna know what it is in their iPhones. Is it, is it actually Ross or is it Corp?

[00:01:00] Ross: I don't know. It's probably not Corp for, at least for my parents, I don't think my parents even know how to update a contact, so.

[00:01:05] Alex: Yeah. But your brother and sister must be Corp, right? It has to be.

[00:01:08] Ross: I think my sisters is like, is literally brother and, and like some emoji.

[00:01:14] Alex: But wouldn't that be, wouldn't that be competitive? Isn't that a problem with your, with your brother?

[00:01:18] Ross: Yes, but she's got very like, specific emojis for us. She's Gen Z. You know, What are you gonna do? I don't know what it's in my brothers. It probably is Ross. He's, he's not, I don't know. I have to ask him. Probably Ross though. If I had to guess.

[00:01:32] Mary: That would be good to know. I've never thought to actually ask my friends or family how they describe me in their, in their contacts. I may not wanna know, actually.

[00:01:41] Ross: Yeah, you might not. Well, I may not wanna know.

[00:01:43] Alex: Apparently it's generational. Yeah.

[00:01:47] Mary: So for my mom, it's nothing. She types the number in every single time. That's great.

[00:01:51] Alex: Wait, does she type it or does she actually rotary,

[00:01:55] Mary: Uh, she just, uh, eliminated the rotary phone last year. No lie. That's, that's actually a true story. So let's get started by diving into your background a little bit. I know you're the creator of Corporate Bro, but I know there's a lot more depth there. Like you've got Bravado in there, a ton of advisor roles. What is your day job and like, how do all of the other pieces fit in?

[00:02:17] Ross: I don't really have a day job. Every day is different jobs. I would say I am kind of the spokesperson, so to speak, for Bravado. So if I'm picking which company gives me benefits, it's Bravado. I spend a lot of time with them and was on their leadership team for a couple years and then kind of said, pandemic's over. I need to go back outside and kind of pursue this, this Corp Bro thing. I do a lot of writing, do a lot of brand kind of partnerships. I run a small little investment group called Corp Capital, so I'm doing a lot of investor pitches and us pitching them on why they should let us give them money and maybe I'll play golf one day. It's kind of a, it's a seven day a week kind of job, but it's at the hours and times that I want to do it, which is great. So if I wanna play golf on a Tuesday morning, it just means I'll have to work, you know, late that night. And that's fine.

[00:03:13] Mary: I see you playing a lot of golf on the Gram. I'm just saying

[00:03:17] Ross: I am playing a lot of golf. I, I took like six weeks off cause I was, I was shooting this, this little show, but I. You know, now that I'm an aging athlete, I still play very competitive wood bat baseball, and I'm starting to get beat by like the 22 year old, 23 year old recent college grads whose arms haven't been surgically repaired twice. And so I'm starting to

see my mortality and realize that, you know, golf may be the long term solution here. So I'm trying to get, get that in now and get good enough that I can you know, hold my own out there.

[00:03:47] Mary: I feel like Alex is gonna have to reply on the baseball team. We didn't tell you coming in that there's,

[00:03:52] Alex: Yeah, we didn't tell you so, so I also played college ball and so I'm, I have lots of questions for you, Ross, on the whole college and so now I'm much older than you. I'm 47, but it was about your age. I can't believe I'm saying that, that I actually stopped playing in the adult men's league here in Central North Carolina. So I'm originally from New York area, went to school at Rhode Island undergrad. And Yeah, it's, it's, I was, it was probably, I, I guess if I'm doing the math, you're early thirties, early to mid thirties, right?

Ross: Yeah. 33.

Alex: Yeah. So yeah, it was, it was almost exactly that time. I met my wife, I was 30 years old girlfriend at the time, and uh, it was probably about 32, 33. I just said, I can't do this, like six hours of baseball on a Saturday or Sunday anymore, sometimes both days. Um, so same thing. Wood bat, it was awesome. But then you had like the 18 and 22 year olds coming. And like you, I was a pitcher so you know, waking up super sore. I was like, are you still pitching?

[00:04:48] Ross: I'm so sore right now. I threw five innings yesterday and I'm just in, If you see me moving around a lot, it's, cuz my back is broken, I'm pretty sure. Yeah. And so I'm like arching myself cuz it just hurts.

[00:04:57] Alex: Yeah, it was, it was, it was almost like, you know, when we were growing up, you'd be sore Monday, Tuesday, but then at 33 years old I was like, I was still sore on a Thursday. Yeah, I was like that. That should probably not be happening anymore.

[00:05:08] Ross: Of course. Well also the trainers are wrapping ice around your whole arm. You're like on ice arm for 45 minutes at like the second you're done pitching and now it's like, Yeah, I forgot to ice yesterday. I guess I'll take nine Ibuprofen today.

[00:05:19] Alex: I remember, I remember one of my, one of my most interesting injuries was actually, and this is when I knew I was getting too old to play at that, at the level I was, I popped my hamstring, which by the way sounds terrible, but I actually felt better than it ever had. Having grown up playing baseball my entire life. And, and Mary, by the way, was also played college basketball. Mary's six foot one, and she played, uh, division one college basketball, six foot two. Okay. Sorry Mary.

[00:05:44] Ross: I'm glad you're glad you're sitting down and not standing next to me right now. So,

[00:05:48] Alex: So we have lots of really good, you know, probably sports stories, but the craziest thing was with the hamstring. So I popped my hamstring and it actually drained into my leg, into my calf.

[00:05:58] Ross: So then you had sick calves. [00:06:00]

[00:06:00] Alex: Yeah. Basically. That's right. All the muscle for my hammy went into my right, right, right, right. So I, I do have lots of fun baseball questions for you. At some point. I was actually thinking during this talk, I might give you a rapid fire of baseball stuff.

[00:06:12] Ross: I'm happy to talk baseball all day long. Yeah. My, my dad's a sports writer brought me up in baseball. We watch a lot of baseball. I usually have the MLB package. I have like eight games. Yeah.

[00:06:21] Alex: So who do you like?

[00:06:22] Ross: Braves from Atlanta originally. Grew up with Maddux, Glavine, and Smoltz. And so, um,

[00:06:26] Alex: so I shouldn't tell you I'm a Mets fan then, right?

[00:06:28] Ross: No, you shouldn't. Um, you shouldn't. We're gonna have quite a battle this year, soon when your pitchers don't break down like they always do.

[00:06:35] Alex: Well, yeah. Scher got kicked out of the game last night. He wasn't even pitching because he was battling with Angel Hernandez. Of course it was on.

[00:06:43] Ross: Everyone's battling with Angel Hernandez. Yeah.

[00:06:45] Alex: All right. So lot. Yes. Mary called it.

[00:06:48] Ross: Deep cuts, deep cuts. Yeah, yeah,

[00:06:49] **Alex:** yeah.

[00:06:50] Mary: Baseball, baseball, baseball. Anyway, so you mentioned icing your arm. So I was curious in your background, I saw Oracle out there and a couple [00:07:00] others. Did you like get your start cold calling out? Like what was the beginning of your sales role?

[00:07:06] Ross: Yeah, so I played a couple years of independent minor league ball and then like every washed up athlete ended up at Oracle, um, in a business development role, which I didn't know was sales role. So I showed up day one and went through two weeks of training.

We were doing cold call mock, like mock cold calls. Sales cycle, kind of like, you know, your classic Sandler sales training stuff. And that's kind of how it happened. I didn't, I didn't know, I didn't know sh*t about sh*t, like I just didn't know

anything. And so it just turned out I was in sales, found out, you know, that's it. So cold, calling it Oracle and progressed from there. Did the, You know, enter, uh, whatever SMB mid-market enterprise AE thing managed a little bit for.

[00:07:49] Alex: What were you selling when you were at Oracle?

[00:07:52] Ross: What wasn't I selling at Oracle? So I sold for a couple teams. I sold hardware initially, so that at least made sense. It was like physical servers and storage and so [00:08:00] forth. Then I moved into middleware, which going, I'm going to describe as we did back then is it's like the glue that holds various different systems together. It's like the piping that allows different things to talk to each other. That is a very simplified version. And then I sold database, which Oracle's known for Oracle changed its name to Oracle cause that's what the database was called. And it's so big and it's, you know, used by every, every Fortune 100 company. And you know, I don't, I sound like an Oracle sales rep again. Yeah, that's like they sell 65,000 things. That's why you have a sales engineer to come speak nerd for you. And you don't have to exactly know everything about it, but it certainly helps. Would've helped me more if I knew more about the technical side.

[00:08:41] Mary: Yeah. So from a sales perspective, working your way up, is that where you started to kind of be like, there's this whole persona around selling that, like I think back on seven years ago, that Corporate Bro emerged for the first time. Is that

[00:08:57] Ross: Yeah, seven, eight years ago. Well, so I actually, [00:09:00] I didn't realize that when you think back in time, you're like, What are all the things that set me in motion to do things that I do? Yeah. In seventh and eighth grade, in summers, I would go sell my aunt's salad dressing. Local markets. I would dress up like a, I would wear a suit, like a little weirdo, like a little serial killer, and go into like fancy markets with, she'd gimme whatever, 60, 70 salad dressings. I just couldn't leave until they were gone. Didn't have, didn't know what commission was, wasn't getting any of that. I was getting like, you know, 20 bucks an hour. So it was like, but I also wanted to have fun and be with my friends. So it was more like, how quickly can I sell these things and, and get out. Then I did a little bit of real estate stuff right outta school.

I was still trying to play baseball. I had torn my lat my senior year I was hoping to, was talking to with teams to get drafted and I tore my, tore my lat so that was kind of out and I was, I still wanna play baseball. I miss it. And I was doing like luxury apartment rentals in Oakland, right during Occupy, uh, Occupy Oakland. So it was like this big paradox, luxury building one block away from Occupy where there were gunshots and so forth. [00:10:00] Did that for nine months before I made this team and then played. So, but my tech sales really started at, at Oracle, like my true kind of tech sales. And that's where the persona. To answer your question long-winded version of answering.

Yes. It started at Oracle back when Vine was still a viable social platform, the six second videos. So one day it was just like, Turn to my friend. I was like, Dude, everyone here is a frigging corporate bro. Every single person at this place, and the rest is kind of history there. I just started messing around with Vine.

[00:10:28] Mary: Nice. So would your, uh, salad dressing, selling self be excited about where you're at now? Like would it be like, Yes, this feels right.

[00:10:37] Ross: Like, well, salad dressing, selling me is like, why aren't you in the big leagues? And then you'd be like, Dude, you're 5' 11" and you topped out at 89. So it was. He, He, I think he'd be happy knowing I'm still making videos.

Like I grew up making home videos. I had like the camcorder, or whenever my cousins would come into town or whatever, family would come into town. It was like, Sweet, let's make a movie. You know, you'd shoot a scene and then be like, [00:11:00] Eh, let's rewind that. Rewind the tape a little bit and then record over it again cuz you weren't like taking clips and arranging them. So you'd have these like random little cuts where you didn't rewind far enough, like of a previous scene. But yeah, I was always making home movies growing up, so I'd probably say he. He'd be pleased at this point.

[00:11:16] Mary: Yeah. That's cool.

[00:11:17] Alex: Do you still have some of the salad dressing?

[00:11:19] Ross: Do I have some? Yeah. I don't have any at the moment, but I usually do. It's called Live A Little Gourmet Foods. Everyone buy it at your local Andronico's Woodlands Market. Every fancy market ever.

[00:11:30] **Alex:** That's cool.

[00:11:30] Ross: But uh, yeah, that's my aunts, she still runs it. She's a chef. Runs a couple cafes,

[00:11:36] Alex: but I, I mean, that's awesome.

[00:11:37] Ross: Whenever family gathering, it's always, it's always her salad. Whenever we're bringing salad, we're bringing her salad dressing.

[00:11:42] Alex: So by the way, there's also nothing wrong with topping out at 89. That's where I topped out as well. So we, we shared that. I never got to that magical 90.

[00:11:49] Ross: I know, I, I, I only got it a couple times on swings and you just can't count it when they swing. I think you caught the bat speed or something.

[00:11:56] Alex: That was actually the bat speed. Right, Right, right, right, right. Yeah. Yeah. [00:12:00] So close.

[00:12:02] Mary: All right, so let's keep going with the team sport. So I don't know how much you know about what we do here at Klearly at a deep level, but we believe that revenue generation should be a team sport across sales, marketing, and customer success. And I see the smile happening already. You walked, you walked into the trap like you're here now.

Of course you're here now. So whether it's a baseball team or basketball team, I'd prefer basketball cuz I feel. It's okay. Y'all been down this, can you do basketball?

[00:12:31] Ross: Big time. My dad is technically an NBA expert. That's like what he does. He does, Yeah. Wrote books on Wilt Chamberlain and Celtics and Yeah. So I got that.

[00:12:39] Mary: Okay. So if revenue generation is a team sport, uh, with all of those kind of three internal teams part of it, who gets to play point on this team? Is it sales? Is it marketing?

[00:12:51] Ross: Well, it's not marketing. Marketing's coming off the bench when the game a blowout. Marketing's coming off the bench when it's a blowout. Get some playing time. [00:13:00] who's running point? It's hard to say. I, I mean, I guess, I mean, I could argue, I'm gonna say sales is running point. I mean, they're the ones like first contact, you know, if they're good, they're gonna bring in, you know, they're gonna get all the other guys involved, gal's, teammates involved in something. If they're good, you know, if they're just a, you know, shoot, first point guard, get buckets, you know,

[00:13:25] Mary: That's the worst. That's the worst

[00:13:28] Ross: you know, then that's how it is. But I, I guess I would say sales, they do need to move the ball around a little bit. If you're gonna, if you're gonna close, especially enterprise, complicated enterprise deals, I would say sales.

[00:13:38] Alex: Yeah. So how do they, how do, how should they know to move the ball around? How have you seen the ball moved around in your career?

[00:13:46] Ross: Well, I think they gotta know their limitations. You know, I, I think a sales engineer is gonna come in there at some point and, you know, take the ball for a little bit. I think, I think sales engineers are probably wings. Probably wings. I'm trying [00:14:00] to think who would even be, who would be a center. Maybe it's just the new era. There are no centers anymore. But, uh,

[00:14:05] **Mary:** there is that I, I'm getting ready to coach my daughter, Little league basketball, and I was watching some like junior NBA training camps to try to like get myself ready for some drills. I can't remember the, the coach now, he was basically like, you have to be able to run every position like there, it's positionless basketball now.

[00:14:22] Ross: Totally. And it is, I think. You still need some athletes in there who, you know, you get your Kevin Durants who are whatever, 6' 11" and can move like a point guard. That's pretty hard to, it's pretty hard to beat. But yeah, I mean, I think a, a good salesperson brings in a lot of different people, whether it is like leadership, whether it is legal, you, your sales engineering team, like marketing will often come in at some points. A good marketing team is great to have good support, is good to have, and you're not gonna win without good support most of the time.

Or you'll win less. I'll just, I'll say you can still win, but not as, [00:15:00] not as often, and not as at high A level. You're not gonna perform as at higher level, but if you're like an SMB rep and you're selling like, you know, little four figure deals, you don't necessarily need a ton of support.

[00:15:10] Mary: But you need coverage. You need the awareness out in the market. You need the coverage.

[00:15:15] Ross: No, I, It makes it easier for sure. It makes it easier for sure, but I think there's a lot of reps who don't have to bring in other people, get them involved, like first person involved. Obviously if marketing's out there doing, doing a good job and people have heard of your brands and kinda understand what they're, the reason they're talking to you, then certainly makes it easier to, you know, just take it to the rack.

[00:15:34] Mary: Yeah, so Alex and I are, um, potentially a little bit different. Both of us have been in sales roles as well as marketing, so I'd like to think that we could run a couple different positions, which is fun. I actually, I'm gonna go on record as having disagreed. I think marketing could be the point guard. Uh, and here's why. I know. Is that a deep sigh from you or Alex?

[00:15:57] Ross: That me, I actually, that was me. It was me. I thought they were more of like the [00:16:00] mascot, getting people hyped up, you know, I mean, we can get t-shirt gun, you know?

[00:16:07] Mary: T-shirt guns are the worst. I, I feel like marketing, at least today, we have to be able to know what's going on in the market to be able to position the product in, in a great way.

I think I saw something that you had done previously with Dave Gerhardt, who I'm a, a huge fan of, and, uh, it was a great interview between the two of you. I think you just relaunched it again in the last couple of weeks. Just knowing the market and being ready to do that, I think is a critical role. So you can then figure out where to go. And I was curious, like with product led growth and people talking more about the sales assisted buy in motion versus sales led, like yeah, the first touch could darn well be marketing coming in online now, Like, which I, I think does complicate the handoffs across teams in ways that teams aren't used to.

[00:16:58] Ross: Yeah, the PLG thing [00:17:00] is very interesting. I mean, I, you know, candidly, I, I, most people don't wanna deal with a sales person, right? Like, that's some sort of friction, everyone's defensive and they're like, ugh, this is, I just wanna see pricing on your website and buy it if I want to. So I think especially in PLG, you know, I think marketing is infinitely more, more obviously important in that situation. Not to say they're not in other ways, I think it's just more like if, if you're doing a good job in a, with a, a solid PLG motion, people are coming to you and ideally you're then converting them or upselling them and so forth.

So it is, I do think, and it depends on your product set, right? Like can someone onboard in a way that is easy and understandable. But I think I, I do think that is probably more indicative of where the future's going at some point, like I

do believe sales will consolidate in a major way and it'll be a few people who are extremely well paid, who are just really good at what they do. And rather than this, this [00:18:00] cultivated churn and burn sort of mentality that has existed for so long, it's, it's getting better. You know, it's just like all the VCs like, scale 'em up, we got 150 reps up, recession, and we're taking it back down to 50. And like, who gives a sh*t? Like that's, you know, kind of how it's been viewed for so long. And I think it's, it's changing a little bit slowly. Yeah.

[00:18:19] Mary: What does sales consolidation mean to you?

[00:18:22] Ross: I just think there's gonna be less, I think there's gonna be less people doing it. It's gonna be more specialized and it's gonna have more people are going, I think people are gonna respect it more. And it's like, if you can get three or four really good salespeople. I haven't yet, I have never met a salesperson who's been like, I'm just so overwhelmed with like, quality leads and running deals and stuff. Like, I really wish someone else could just take one of these off my plate. Like, I've never met someone who would genuinely say that. If salespeople, they're gonna be more clo like closer, specific, strictly closing, you know?

[00:18:53] Mary: Mm-hmm.

Ross: So many organizations, you're, you should be prospecting. I think the best reps right now are also prospecting at the same time. But, uh, when it [00:19:00] comes to that point, the negotiating the like, technical components of it, and they're gonna be using their sales engineer at the same time, but it's gonna be like a duo that can go in and, and lock down these seven figure deals at, at that level. And you're not gonna need, you know, Oracle's 15,000 sales reps.

[00:19:19] Alex: Yeah. So, So Ross, I think I'm probably recorded somewhere saying, I actually used a baseball analogy over the years where I've said, why can't we use data the way that we uses in baseball, which is for pitchers like you and I, were starting pitchers, but we should also have in the sales process now, maybe even openers, right?

We have the, the, which I separately, I'm, I'm from a baseball perspective, lot to talk about there. But in the sales process, I've always sort of struggled with conceptually why is the same rep doing the process all the way through? Why shouldn't it be like baseball where we have a starter, a reliever, and a closer.

And to your point, you're [00:20:00] starting to see that now with SE's, but you know, my, my sort of position on this is we should be able to use data to help inform much more of this moving forward. Not just who during the buying cycle, but also why, like which rep is actually going to be, you know, most beneficial.

Cause a lot of times you've probably seen sales processes go awry because the wrong person is in the deal at the wrong time. We're bringing in the wrong type of people. So yes, thank you for the, for the baseball analogy, cause I've also said that over the years it absolutely should be not just the same person going all the way through, but sometimes it might be.

[00:20:34] Ross: Yeah, I mean, I think we're getting more to a world of specialization. It's just hard, like when you're a young organization to bring you, you can't afford three different people to run a sales cycle. Like you need someone who's gonna come in and figure it out and kind of be a You know, the player-coach mentality who's gonna manage but like manage two reps, but also be on the phones trying to close themselves.

And again, it's, there's obviously nuance with the industries and the, and the product set and so forth and [00:21:00] acv, it, it's, it will be interesting to see like, cause I, I was originally very much like, why the hell do we have CSMs and account management? Like, what's the point of both of these at the same time when you've got your AEs too, Like It just seemed like a cost center to me for no reason when, half the time when an AM, could, and should and they're just not trained to do things that CSMs are.

And so as a rep, when when I was a rep, I wanted to keep my accounts cause I liked my relationships. I thought it was weird that I would pass off a relationship that I had built that was really good, that I felt like I could have triaged, you know, not that I wanted to do customer service. If it meant me renewing them at a higher level, f*ck yeah, I'm gonna go do that.

Like, and I, and then I can relationship sell a lot more than just an AE hunter going to try and break down the walls of these people who have no idea that I'm about to call. I don't know, that was a me thing. I just, I wanted to build a book and manage and stick with my book and, and still, you know, have some support in certain places. But [00:22:00] that one's the other side of it where I. like Why do I have to get that?

[00:22:03] Alex: That's, I think that's one of the toughest things today in the B2B process is like, where does CS fit? Yeah. I mean, we're, we're, we're seeing a lot of different, you know, evolutions of that recently. I've been talking to a lot of, you know, either CEOs or CFOs or CMOs or CROs, and it seems like CS is starting to roll up underneath sales.

Yeah. Which is an interesting, I, I don't know what the organizational strategy is. I mean, have you've seen stuff that works really best, especially in B2B?

[00:22:31] Ross: I guess I've always kind of assumed they rolled up through sales in some way, cuz they are, many of them are measured in kind of the like, renewal, upsell, whatever, cross sell kind of and retention numbers there.

You're seeing some now get measured on product maximization. At least half the time people buy a product, they use 5% of it, you know, and, and how do help them and the rest of their organization unlock the capabilities of so many of these [00:23:00] softwares.

[00:23:00] Alex: Mary and I, by the way, we're power users of Eloqua so we know, we know.

[00:23:03] Ross: Sorry, yeah yeah. God, I haven't heard Eloqua in a minute. But it, it's just, I don't, Yeah, I, I don't know.

[00:23:15] Alex: So is it not a team sport? Is it not a team sport moving forward?

[00:23:20] Ross: No, it always will be. It always will be. It'll just look, I think it'll manifest in a different way. So many companies are just inefficient in their, in the way that they do things, and they're also in the flip side.

So many companies are just asking people to do too much, and I don't, I, I, I don't feel like I have the right answer. I don't know. And I think it's very much a case by case kind of situation. You're just, there's just a lot of copycat going on that doesn't work for specific organizations. It's just like, Oh, that's the way it's done.

Therefore we should do it that way. So, I don't know. I think the best founders are kind of building their own process and where they sit with CS, whether they have CS and AMs do the same [00:24:00] thing or not. Like, it's totally a choice. So I don't know. I, I don't, I don't have the, I don't feel like I have the right answer.

[00:24:05] Alex: I don't, I don't think any of us do, by the way. I think that's why, that's actually why Mary and I and team and you know, other, we have this podcast. I mean, we want to be talking to folks like you. I think all of us are in the same position. Mary and I both have, sorry, Mary, I'm gonna date you, 20 years of experience, you know, doing this and so almost 50 years between the two of us, and we're like, okay. We talk to enough people where they're like, We know it's broken, but we don't know what the next thing looks like. So what we're trying to do is create more of a, you know, a platform of dialogue. This is not our product, but actually just the podcast in our relationships and our networking. For us to be able to sit down and actually have some frank conversations. We talk to enough people, and I'll say just CEOs for example, where they're like, I'm, I wanna blow the whole thing up. Meaning their whole go to market team. But they don't, They know it's not working, but they don't know what the next thing is.

[00:24:53] Ross: Yeah. Well I think that's also like, and this is a luxury too, I think, but like I think the creation of Revs Ops, or this like [00:25:00] focus on Rev Ops, unifying all three kind of CS, marketing, sales is becoming so popular.

[00:25:08] Alex: Don't forget product too now, right? Yeah. PLG, like, where's that fit in?

[00:25:12] Ross: Right, exactly. And, and I don't know, it's, it's this, and I'm gonna do a bad job of explaining this, but kind of where I see where the world is going, especially now that we're like not in offices anymore. So much of this stuff has to be less, like, less linear than it used to be because the world is less linear because now you gotta get to people at their homes.

Like it's not, they're not going to work every day. There are human beings like me. I'm sitting here in joggers right now, like I slept in what I'm wearing right now, and I put a hat on so you couldn't tell and like, you know, the reality is like we're human beings and, and it's no longer very much like hitting a direct like business function.

Like you need, you need to align the company with the human beings that work at it. And those functions don't necessarily represent your classic whatever [00:26:00] CS is or whatever sales is, or whatever marketing is, or product. So

like the ability to get to people and it's just much more fragmented. It has to be much more creative and much more human, which is so like what I'm saying is so like nebulous and cosmic in a lot of ways. There, there's nothing actionable what I'm saying. I just think it is much more difficult and, and much less linear.

[00:26:21] Alex: Speaking of act .. Wait, is somebody coming to get you right now?

[00:26:24] Mary: that I, I love this.

[00:26:25] Ross: Yeah. They'll never find me in this hell hole.

[00:26:30] Alex: Speaking of action, I was gonna say, I tried to buy that hat this morning, but it sold out.

[00:26:34] Ross: It did sell out. These, the, the hats are definitely the, the top sellers these days coming back in November though, it's so annoying to get these days. Okay, November, what's the date so I can put it on my calendar? I don't quite have the date yet

[00:26:46] Alex: and wake up at 3:00 AM like, I'm buying an iPhone. Click, click, click, click.

[00:26:50] Ross: It's always, it's always at least like 9:00 AM Pacific.

[00:26:55] Alex: Okay, but I did, I did settle for a Suckle hoodie? Yes. This morning.

[00:26:59] Ross: Well, the Suckle hoodies are [00:27:00] gonna be fire and people are gonna wonder where you got that. Once, uh, once the show drops.

[00:27:05] Alex: It's speaking of the show. Sorry if I'm skipping all over the place Mary. That's so what, what? What is the show like? When does it air, What have you figured out sort of the, the production and distribution? Strat, well not production, but distribution.

[00:27:16] Ross: Yeah. We're still working on that. So we kind of took a unorthodox approach in that. I was like, Screw it. I'm making eight episode, I'm making a TV show.

Whether or not it exists on YouTube or Netflix, uh, I don't, I have a preference, but I, I don't care. I like, I wanted to make this, I wanted to tell this story. I wanted to get out in the world. Our hope, like our, our tentative plan is to premiere it South by Southwest in, in March. So it's a while. It's, it's still a while from now, but we still have a lot of work to do.

We still gotta get into South by Southwest, which is its own, you know, elite festival. And it, it feels like it's the sweet spot though. It's like the intersection of entertainment and tech. Mm-hmm., like why would it not play there? Unless, of course it's horrible, which, you know, non zero chance. But the [00:28:00] plan is still to pitch it to, to Apple and Hulu and Amazon, and.

I have an agent and I have kind of that I have a, a foot in that world and whether or not people pick it up, you know, who knows worst case scenario, ends up on YouTube, gets good traction, like all I wanna do is get a second season. Like that's all my goal is. And, you know, I financed 80% of it through some of my advisory relationships, sales tech, Bravado, Scratchpad being the, being the two, and then I financed the rest of it.

And so the story is just about a, uh, sales team at a company called Suckle Series A. It only takes place over three days. It has your day one SDR. It has three reps, sales engineer, sales manager, and then a few kind of like ancillary characters. Your ceo, your East Coast sales manager who they're in competition with and some flashbacks.

[00:28:54] Mary: Marketing? Is marketing in there?

[00:28:55] Ross: I'm sorry. So shockingly, marketing does not make it into [00:29:00] this, into this show.

[00:29:01] Mary: Not even in the like credits at the end for like bringing in snacks or something to the crew.

[00:29:06] Ross: Like nothing. Not, not. So when we were writing it, we basically had to cut it as much as like make it as there was a world where I was, my friends were gonna be holding a camera and we were gonna shoot this ourselves.

And like we couldn't afford other characters. We couldn't like afford to do a bunch of different things that we wanted to do. We had this, we have all these episodes written that we haven't filmed that have marketing in it, that have like a sales trainer in it that have a whole East coast team of salespeople in it.

We have all these plans, but it was like we had to work with what we, with the budgetary restrictions that we had and the resources. So there's, there's references to marketing, usually making fun of them. Yeah, but there's never, we don't have a marketing character. Like I have marketing bits written for it, but I just, I couldn't make it happen.

[00:29:49] Alex: If, if we, if we help cross, cross promote this thing, I almost said Ross promote, which would be awesome. So if we, if we Ross promote this thing, I'll go with that, we gotta get, marketing's gotta get a mention in [00:30:00] season two.

[00:30:00] Ross: Well, I, I mean, marketing's getting a mention in season two. That's like, I have stuff written for marketing.

I just couldn't get them, I couldn't fit them into this one. It was a, you know, 40 person crew. I think we had 14 actors, actresses, five kind of main characters. And, you know, it's, it's pretty tight the episodes are, I'm gonna say 10 to 18 minutes long so they're not your typical sitcom kind of length.

And that was by design. We wanted people to, like, when we released it, we, I, my hope is that it's good enough that people are like, You know what? Screw it. I'm gonna watch all, you know, 120 minutes of this or whatever, it ends up being 110 minutes, and be done with it. It it, we shot it like a feature, like 120 minute feature versus a, a show.

So I wanted it to be not too long where someone might get bored and leave. I wanted them to get to the end and be like, Yeah, binge it. I could watch one more episode. Yeah, exactly. So we'll see. But it's, it's a long row. We still have many months of editing. Like I said, I [00:31:00] haven't seen a single clip. I, I've seen a single clip, but I haven't seen it fully.

The woman who's editing it is the daughter of Mike Judge who did Silicon Valley, who did Office Space, who did Beavis and Butt-Head and so forth.

[00:31:17] Alex: He, he's old enough to have a daughter that is editing your, Wow. I'm old.

[00:31:21] Ross: Yeah.

[00:31:22] Mary: Wasn't there an interesting, uh, tagline for Suckle as well?,

[00:31:27] Ross: There's, there's a few, there's a few taglines for Suckle, and it's why you let your data suck when it can Suckle. That's the, Yeah. Gargle data, spit out insights.

[00:31:38] Mary: That's, that's my favorite. Um, that's my favorite so far.

[00:31:42] Ross: Yeah. We were. That's probably the most fun I have writing. It's just like, what are stupid little taglines. Coming up with the name Suckle. I was like, this is, this is a Silicon Valley startup and you like would take it. We, in our pilot that we shot in 2019, we were, we were meat machine engineered automated technology and it was too, a little too on the nose.

[00:32:00] So we wanted someone that was just like a word that you're like, Yeah, I could buy this, but also a really stupid word and so Suckle was kind of just perfect for that. Yeah.

[00:32:06] Mary: I dig it. When I originally saw that, I think I shared it back with our leadership team, not as inspiration necessarily for our marketing, but, um, it, it, it feels very appropriate.

[00:32:19] Alex: No, I, when Mary told me, Ross, I, I legit, I was like, I thought it was serious, like dead serious. And I was like, That is the best tagline I've probably ever heard in my life.

[00:32:30] Ross: Yeah. So then good then when you succeeded, cuz it is supposed to be dead serious. And at no point in the show is anyone like, can anyone believe our name is Suckle?

Like it's just is. Yeah, like it's just a fact.

[00:32:57] Alex: [00:33:00] That's gotta, I never thought about post production how tough that must be for editing perspective. You probably have so much good stuff and you're like, it's just cuz get thrown on the floor, it has to get cut out.

[00:33:15] Ross: You have to be a, you have to be a savage, and realize that like nobody misses what they never saw. So you may miss it. It may be for you, but it may not work for other people. Cause it's like your own inside joke with a small subset of people.

And you gotta just, I, I would rather it move quickly and have people being like, d*mn, I wish this was longer than anybody being like, Yeah, no, like kinda start looking at their phone towards the end.

[00:33:36] Mary: I think you're actually just a really great marketer. I'm gonna say it like that's a, that's a new company that Alex totally thought was real. A great legit tagline. I think you're like Clark Kent and Superman.

[00:33:47] Ross: Like, I'm just glad there's something sharp enough here. Me, you're market to stab myself with.

[00:33:52] Mary: Your, your swag is sold out. I mean, you're, you're killing your marketing game, unless [00:34:00] someone else is doing it for you?

[00:34:02] Ross: No . I grew up wanting to be in Advertising. So I came up like doing advertising internships and right outta school for a second. I was working on like, got to work on a Superbowl ad and then I realized that I had to deal with clients that weren't doing things that I wanted to do. So I had like Rubio's fresh mex as an account and I had Ocean Life Insurance as an account.

And they were like, the only thing they wanted was Ocean. I was like, we just wanna whale come breach in the water, and then you say some stuff. And I was like, Well, that's every one of your ads. And they're like, Yeah, well this is dumb. Why? Why don't you, why do we do. I didn't say that. And then Rubios was like, Just talk about the guacamole,

And I was like, this kind of sucks. So then I, that's when I decided to not stay in advertising. So I think there's a little bit of that side that is ingrained in me. We'll call it the marketing side, but yes, I, I, I,

[00:34:47] Alex: Is it, is it fair to say Truly?

[00:34:49] Ross: Ross does. I've heard Corp doesn't.

[00:34:51] Alex: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, No, I mean, but, but back to the tagline, it's brilliant. Like Gargle insights, spit out data. We're laughing because that's, [00:35:00] that's literally what our company does, so it's just so, so funny in so many different ways.

[00:35:07] Ross: We've got the kid, there's a kid like drinking for a water fountain, fountain. It was really like little kid drinking from water fountain with that tagline over it.

It's like, does it totally make sense? No, but it works. Still stock footage, racially ambiguous kid, you

[00:35:17] Alex: know? Oh, is that a little kid? Yeah, I actually saw some of the videos. So that's a little kid in the banner on the wall.

[00:35:22] Ross: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Just a little kid. Drinking from water fountain doesn't mean anything. No, but it works.

[00:35:26] Alex: So is it, is it fair, Is it fair to say that like you're insanity from, I guess it was, uh, Oracle and Glassdoor were before gsb,

[00:35:35] Ross: right? Yep, yep. Yep. Is

[00:35:38] Alex: it, is it, is it that insanity being in sort of, I'll call it field sales that led you to gsb?

[00:35:45] Ross: Yeah. Yes and no. I think, I mean, candidly, I think I, I was kind of over it. I understood sales. I had no desire to be like, I had no, I had no desire to be the Steph Curry of sales. I really didn't. [00:36:00] I, I didn't care enough to pour everything into being that person. I was good. I was solid. I, you know, hit my quota, but I, I didn't give a sh*t about President's Club. I didn't give a sh*t about being number one.

All I was thinking about is like, what's the next video? Like selling it in and of itself, There is art to it, but it's, I'm gonna use another sports metaphor. To me, it's, it's pitching like every sales, no matter who you are, it has certain checkpoints you hit. Just like in, in baseball, you've got your separation, you've got your balance point, you've got your, like, your landing point.

It doesn't matter. Like if you have a cool wind up, you hit all those points. Same thing in sales, and I felt like I understood all the checkpoints. I felt like I could go to any other company, take me some time to learn the product, but I could run the sales call. I could do my thing there. I. I wanted to learn how the rest of a company was built and run.

I needed to understand some finance. I needed to be dangerous in account, dangerous enough in accounting, even though I suck at both finance and accounting, like I just, I needed more intellectual stimulation and that's why I wanted to, I just felt like I needed to learn more at that point, which, [00:37:00] I mean to say sales to me is the most important skill you can have on Earth, period. And everything else gets amplified. Everything else amplifies that ability. So I, I just wanted to know kind of more, That's why I went.

[00:37:12] Mary: I think it's good storytelling in a lot of ways, right? Mm-hmm., like that's sales to me in a nutshell, right?

[00:37:18] Ross: Yeah. And marketing. Yeah, It's storytelling. I think it's all storytelling. Being able to appeal to other very different humans. Doesn't always work. But yeah.

[00:37:29] Mary: One of the things you said to Dave Gerhardt that I was curious about, and going back to the tagline a little bit too, and the fact that we're selling to humans, you had mentioned that you feel like B2C or like the whole consumer side of marketing is much better than B2B?

I think everybody will agree. Like B2B traditionally is very boring and sucks. Like you've certainly embraced your own creativity. Like what would you say to other people listening like to maybe not take yourself so seriously and, and [00:38:00] have fun with it?

[00:38:01] Ross: I don't, that just like it genuinely just goes all back to, B2B is still selling to humans who like, have emotions and like they're the ones buying and I don't know. It, it feels it for a long time it's gotten better. It just felt like companies talking like robots, talking to robots and like the rest of us were just kinda like watching like, ooh, those are some interesting words that I don't understand.

And like I, I do think brand, like a cohesive brand is important, but I, I think all brands have to sound like a human, like build your human, build your personality, build all the things they would and wouldn't do. And I know people do that, but it still comes off as like very contrived. And I think humans are imperfect.

And I think brands need to be imperfect in some ways. And therefore to do that, you can be self-deprecating. You can laugh at selves, you can laugh at the industry, you can laugh at like your prospects. Honestly you can, you can make fun of your prospects and most of them, the good ones, they're self-aware enough to be like, Yeah, that's us.

A lot of the markers who watch my stuff, they're like, Yeah, no, we do that sh*t [00:39:00] just like the sales people. Like I make fun of, you know, as much as I support sales, like most of my videos are roasting sales in some way or talking about the, the, the dumb sh*t that we do. And so, I don't know, I think it's embracing imperfection, embracing the flaws, and talking to, to humans and that will resonate. I think comedy will resonate. Always, always resonate.

[00:39:18] Mary: Yep.

[00:39:18] Ross: But you know, there's just a higher likelihood you miss.

[00:39:20] Alex: Yeah.

[00:39:21] Ross: And that's the reality people miss. Brands miss, and that's OK

[00:39:24] Mary: Yeah. I think a lot of people are just too afraid to take the shot.

[00:39:27] Ross: And, And they are, They're terrified. They're terrified. They're terrified to just have me come talk to their company, just cuz I have the word bro in my name, like that in and of itself is already like, extremely risky for companies to, to work with me. Whether or not they have watched my work or, or not. You know, I get a lot of pushback on that. And

so, you know, there's, there's a reason that sales teams will bring me in cuz they're like, Yeah, we're trying to appeal to our people and they know that I talk to sales people a lot, therefore they're willing to take that risk.

I just think brands need to take their own, take [00:40:00] more risks. Mm-hmm. . So listen, So listen,

[00:40:02] Alex: I wanna do, I wanted to quick, Mary, is it okay if I do my rapid fire? So, so I've never done this before, Ross. So ready. But a lot of it, I'm gonna warn you, a lot of it's about baseball.

So, cuz we're gonna have a little bit of fun right now., so try to give your answers as as pithy as you can, as short as you can. Ready? All right. Why psychology in undergrad?

[00:40:20] Ross: It's important in every aspect of life, but for me in that moment it was about baseball.

[00:40:24] Alex: Again, you and I need to talk about that. Cause I was also psych undergrad doing sports psychology stuff.

What was the best thing you learned at Oracle?

[00:40:33] Ross: Best thing I learned at Oracle, Honestly, how to sell. That's what I learned.

[00:40:38] Alex: Yeah. I heard you say you had great managers throughout your career.

[00:40:41] Ross: I, I've been really lucky. I had never once had like a direct manager that I did not like. Mm.

[00:40:45] Alex: All right. Favorite baseball movie.

[00:40:48] Ross: Ooh, Ooh, Major leagues. Ooh.

[00:40:52] Alex: All right. I thought you were gonna go with Bull Durham here locally.

[00:40:54] Ross: I do. I do love Bull Durham, though. I do love Bull Durham. All right, watched that like a week ago.

[00:41:00] Quick, quick

[00:41:01] Alex: funny story. I, if you love Bull Durham, you'll feel the same way I did. So when I moved down here, I was able to pitch at the stadium on the, on the mound where the movie was filmed.

And that, like for my friends down here, down south, like that didn't, wasn't a big deal to them. Yeah. For me growing up in Connecticut, the fact that I was able to pitch on the mound where Bull Durham was filmed, um, and they ended up catching on that field as well.

why are pitchers always considered a lefty? Pitchers, Why are lefty pitchers always considered a little crazy?

[00:41:33] Ross: Cause they are, they literally are. Every time someone's, you're lefty, God, that Okay. The dots have been connected. It explains everything. Yeah. The dots have been connected. They just, Yeah. I don't know. We use a different part of our brain, I guess.

[00:41:45] Alex: I, but it's crazy. Like all the lefty pitchers that I grew up with, and I know with the exception of one, were always like, just a little bit, a little bit weird.

[00:41:52] Ross: Odd. Yep. Yeah. No, I, Yes. Facts. Yeah. . That's just how the world works.

[00:41:58] Alex: So, So I've [00:42:00] heard you say baseball is, is not intellectually stimulating. Mm-hmm. . And my question for you is, what is wrong with you?

[00:42:07] Ross: It wasn't, the game is. The most of the time the people I'm sitting with in the bullpen aren't, I think baseball is extremely intellectually stimulating from a, uh, from a pitching standpoint, it's all it is. And, but, but everything else outside of that, like the guys, like the conversation that I was having in the bullpen, I was like, What, what am I, what are we talking about right now, guys?

Right, Right. Like right. There needs to be a mo I've thought about writing a show about the bullpen. Just like life in the past, Just the conversations. The conversations. It's literally like, alright, let's how much big league chew can we wrap around, uh, some red man chew and then give to a guy with and how long, we time him until he throws up? Like yeah, like, you know, adult stuff, you know.

[00:42:50] Alex: Which by the way happened to me in an American Legion summer game.

[00:42:53] Ross: Yeah, yeah. And they would always give it to me cause I didn't chew. And so was I Like how long? Around Ross, I guess at this time.

[00:42:59] Alex: [00:43:00] That was the, that was the one time I tried to chew and it did not end well. Didn't end well for me at Coach's car on the way home.

[00:43:04] Ross: I'm just, uh, God, how much, Where are we at? Six minutes. I'll give you eight. Like I'll give you eight. I was a starter though, so I knew I wasn't pitching that day. If I was ever up that day, I was definitely not, not chewing. Yep.

[00:43:18] Alex: So, So what was it like being a pitcher, but your younger brother was actually the name with the name Win.

[00:43:25] Ross: I know, I know. It was always the joke, win and loss, you know, It was just fortunate that I was a much better athlete than him, so it, it worked out, It ended up working out. He does have a cool name though.

[00:43:38] Alex: Does he? He never played sports.

[00:43:39] Ross: He, he did, but he just didn't really care. Like we played high school baseball together for one year. I think he didn't play after that. He just didn't care as much. I mean, he's the guy whose like can't believe I play fantasy sports, that I like still play baseball. He's just like, Yeah, so, he's the guy who goes go sports. And it's just like, it's like you really waste your time like with something so meaningless to [00:44:00] society.

Like you're playing a children's game and you idolize these dudes making millions of dollars who are contributing nothing to the world. Yeah. They're like, yeah, kinda.

[00:44:08] Alex: All right, last last one, Mary, I promise. So I looked up your stats, Ross in minor league. You had five chances, I don't know if this was total for your career in minor league or if it was one season, but there was one particular line, line stat I was looking at.

You had five chances as a defender, as a pitcher. You had one put out, three assists and one error, and I'm dying to know, how did you have an error? Do you remember what it was?

[00:44:36] Ross: God, I'd have to go back. I, I would probably, so I have like a memory, like I remember everything I've ever done. I remember pitches like I threw in little league, but I genuinely don't, I'm gonna guess it was a pickoff and that might have gone down. A guy probably went over, I was probably like a, I did a

[00:44:51] Alex: Did you have a good move?

[00:44:52] Ross: Yeah, I, So I had like a No look Pickoff, but every now and then it would be a little, and like we had these first basemen who were just massive and like couldn't move for sh*t. So, [00:45:00] I, I, not to say I didn't air mail it or something, I don't, if it was a meaningful error, I would absolutely remember it. Like I remember cuz defensively, that was kind of my thing. I took great pride.

[00:45:10] Alex: I looked at your stats and I'm like, okay, everything's making sense. And then I saw the five defensive chances and I'm like, how did he have one error and five chances?

[00:45:18] Ross: Yeah. I don't think I would if it was a double, if it was a double play turn, I would remember that. Um, it was probably a pickoff cuz I would do a no look move from time to time. And that was, we're not always going to, not always going to pan out. That would be my guess. I'm now, I'm gonna go back and look at my stats and go find out where that game was. Cause I will remember the game if I go back and look at the box score.

[00:45:37] Alex: That's awesome. Replay. Well thanks for, Thanks for that. That was fun.

[00:45:40] Ross: Yeah, of course. Havent talked about baseball in forever. I could talk about it.

[00:45:43] Alex: Yeah. Well, we'll, you and I are gonna be talking about Mets and Braves for a few weeks. I have a feeling.

[00:45:46] Mary: Yes, definitely. Awesome. Well those are the questions we had for you today, but super excited that you were able to join us and we really appreciate it. I was gonna ask you, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about today that we didn't get to? Or that you wish we'd brought up?

[00:45:59] Alex: How [00:46:00] can we help you? What's exciting right now?

[00:46:02] Ross: I'm, I just feel like I need to get back to making more content. It's been, it's been hard to like sit down and truly write some stuff and was exhausted after the show was done. It was, there was like 14, 16 hour days every day. I don't know. Just, you know, watch, watch the videos.

If you like it, just touch the like button. Like, just touch it, you know, Like, that's it. The currency here is literally your thumb. Thumb, you know? It's all my friends, I, they, they, they'll like message me on a video and they're like, Dude, that video was fire. And I'm like, Well, did you like it? And they're like, Oh, like, like literally?

Like, like press the thing. And I'm like, Yes. And they're like, Nah. Like, I'm like, well, that's how people know to why that it's go like how the, the algorithm knows to like show you videos and know you can stop seeing them. That's how it works. And it's just like for some reason that That's it. That's it.

Cool. If you like it, press the like button. That's it. That's all. Yeah. Tell your friends, right?

[00:46:53] Alex: You got it. We can. We can. And then we'll buy some more Suckle swag.

[00:46:56] Ross: Yeah. Buy and then watch the show when the show comes out. Yeah. And [00:47:00] gimme your unsolicited feedback on what I should've done differently. Just kidding.

Everyone does that anyway. Well, thank you guys for having me. This was fun.

Mary: Thanks so much for coming onto the podcast, Ross. It was a lot of fun to learn more about your background and the real human behind all things Corporate Bro. We hope you'll follow along as we dive more into our sales use case here at Klearly and how we help sellers execute more efficiently and effectively.

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, 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.