David Abrams: 00:03 Hello, hello and welcome to episode number 24 of the SaaS breakthrough show brought to you by Demio. The SaaS breakthrough show will be an inside look at what is working in marketing for SaaS companies today by the marketers who are in the trenches experimenting on a daily basis to grow their MRR and build amazing businesses. My name is David Abrams and I'll be your host today as we bring on Andy Baldacci, who is the demand generation lead at Groove. Now Andy used to be a former professional poker player, turned SaaS marketer. He's in a lot of great stuff in the SaaS industry and as I said before, he's now demand generation lead at Groove doing a ton of great things. Now in today's episode, Andy comes on to transparently share where they are in their marketing. Now, if you don't know, Groove, Groove is an amazing company, a company that truly inspired Demio all the way through our journey, especially at the beginning, a big inspiration to us as we followed them on their blog. They are the best help desk software for small businesses and over 8,000 teams trust Groove to help them manage online customer support. As I mentioned before, Groove has an incredible, incredible journey blog. They actually pioneered the approach of SaaS transparency blogging. They were one of very few SaaS companies who were really doing this a few years ago and their blog actually really took off, their growth exploded with their content and with their CEO and founders' unique way to get influencers to share their content. He talks about that on the blog. There's some really great content on there, but they hit a moment of reflection recently in the past year when the results of all that content marketing no longer match the input of they're putting in. They're putting in a ton of time for a small team, so they made the hard decision. They had to reflect everything, to stop what had been working so successfully for years and rethink it all. It's one of the toughest decisions to make as a CEO or co founder or founder of a company, is to take what's working and to just shut it down, but they looked at their approach and they're starting again now, and in today's episode we talk about how they are now strategically reviewing how they want to approach content marketing and the lessons that they're taking with their first blog into this new approach. We'll talk about the SEO strategy. How they are building separate content pillars and they're doing content marketing to attract their perfect target customer. This is an absolutely amazing episode. Andy comes on and shares a ton of great content information. You guys are absolutely going to love this episode. Let's go ahead and let's jump right in.

Narrator: 02:59 This is the SaaS breakthrough podcast, uncovering what's working today in SaaS marketing by the actual marketers who are building companies day in and day out. Let's get started.

David Abrams: 03:14 Hey Andy. How are you doing today? Thanks so much for joining me.

Andy Baldacci: 03:17 Hey, I'm doing pretty well. How about you?

David Abrams: 03:19 I'm doing awesome today. It's a beautiful hot day in Florida, but super excited for this podcast. You guys have no idea how amazing you guys are in the marketplace. How much or how many SaaS companies I should say look up to you guys as far as you know, the marketing that you guys have done, strategy

you've done your product, just the successes you've had. We've all really love to follow the journey, but for the listeners who don't know yet, maybe you want to give a little bit of a backstory about Groove, what you guys are doing uniquely. Guys are kind of a competitive, very competitive marketplace, which is support desks and talk about maybe the journey so far. What has it taken to get to where you are?

Andy Baldacci: 03:58   Yeah. So I appreciate that. And that's actually kind of how I ended up at Groove was just following along. And it was a company I'd always wanted to work with and, we can get into more down the road, but yeah, about a year ago I joined up. And so at Groove we make simple help desk software for businesses that have outgrown email. And our founder is Alex Turnbull and the idea for Groove came around at his first startup and they were in a similar position as a lot of other artists where they're just kind of using their email account to handle customer support and in the early days like honestly, it's not a horrible solution, but like as you start adding support agents, it just quickly gets out of hand because email is built for communicating one on one but not for collaborating amongst a team really.

Andy Baldacci: 04:45   And so they were at the point where they had something like four employees all trying to do support out of one inbox and it just was hard to keep track of what everyone's doing and things really started falling through the cracks, which especially when it comes to support, customers don't really enjoy that. And so when they looked for a better solution, all that they really found out there was kind of just those enterprise level tools that were way too complex for what they needed. Especially when they're just coming from an inbox. It's just practically no software and that doesn't even consider the price of some of those tools. And so in the end they actually had to go with one of those enterprise level providers and it was better than email. They were able to kind of keep track of things a little better, but it was just a constant struggle because it wasn't built for a company like them. And so a few years after that, the company that Alex and a few others had started was acquired by Constant Contact and Alex kind of as an entrepreneur wasn't just going to kind of hang out on the beach all day. I think he probably did that for a little bit, but want to start something else and that pain of what it was like to find sort of right size tool for a small but growing business stayed with him and that's where Groove came in.

David Abrams: 06:03   That's incredible. That's a really great story. So now that, you know, Alex had created this product, was there a specific strategy that he wanted to use to get it out there? I think that's such an interesting part of the story.

Andy Baldacci: 06:15   Yeah, and this was a few years back, probably five years or so ago, maybe four or five years ago when he first started and he kind of hit on the, the idea that, okay, what I'm going through right now is what a lot of other business owners and entrepreneurs are going through and I'm learning, everyone else's learning, so why don't I start sharing these things that I'm learning. One, it'll help me get some good advice, two I know we'll be able to build up an audience because this is content that at the time wasn't really out there. So Alex really just kind of

started the, what he called the startup journey, the founder's journey, and just talked about what was going on in the company and really embrace that idea of transparency, which today, isn't as rare as it was then. And so through that it really kind of snowballed and built up a good size audience of kind of the companies that we want to work with, the ones that we thought we could help the most. And that's really how things grew. There was never any money spent on paid ads. We don't have a sales team and never have, that maybe will change sometime in the future, but for now it's really just all been on the back of content marketing and just telling the story of what we've been going through, where we've messed up, what has worked in just everything in between.

David Abrams: 07:34 We're going to put a link to your blog on our show notes. We definitely want to show people what the transparent blog looks like. Obviously you guys were trendsetters in that space doing a transparent marketing so early and it was just such an amazing a breath of fresh air to see great content throughout. So if you guys have, the listeners here, have not yet read anything on the Groove blog, highly suggest you check it out. Really some amazing stuff. And you know, building on that, the content that you guys used, where did that take the company in ARR by the time you joined the company?

Andy Baldacci: 08:07 So I joined a little over a year ago and it was not too long after they had broken the $5 million dollar ARR mark. So I think the team was probably 10 to 12 people at the time. And yeah, that's right where we were when I came on board.

David Abrams: 08:24 That's incredible. That's so much organic, amazing growth from content marketing. So incredible. You know, incredible win for you guys. And what, when you joined, what was the major pain point? What was going on inside of the company at that time?

Andy Baldacci: 08:35 Yeah, so they're, they're kind of two things and the first is just sort of with the product. And when I came on board we were sort of at a tipping point where we realized that the code behind the scenes was just getting increasingly difficult to maintain and it was just slowing down development so much that there would be features that seemed on the outside, like they would be a quick fix or something easy to implement, but when our engineers would get in there and work on it, 100 bugs would come up when they went in and applied this one thing. And it just kind of seemed like fighting a hydra where you could just never really get ahead and so they really kind of had to go back to the drawing board and think about all right, what do we need to do to build a better foundation for us going forward so that we can move at the speed that our customers demand and the speed that they deserve to kind of keep our product at the cutting edge where you want it to be.

Andy Baldacci: 09:30 And so we are releasing a Groove 2.0 tomorrow and that's kind of the culmination of almost a year of effort there. And right now it's in private Beta and it's definitely been a long process but a good learning experience and that would probably be getting into that an entire episode of its own. But it's all been worth it. And we're excited to get that out there in the public relatively soon. But

more for this conversation though is on the marketing side of things with the content is we just kind of found ourselves going through the motions and it's one of those things where it's like content was working. That was really our only marketing channel. A lot of the brand we have built had kind of brought a lot of word of mouth growth along with it, but all of that stemmed from the content efforts and we were getting good results and we found that there's a point where growth did start to slow, but it was really hard to kind of just shake things up, let alone really make any big changes because at the time the marketing team was, we had one full time marketer, (inaudible) marketing and Alex, the CEO would help with marketing, would help with the writing, would help at all that, but that was just one of his many jobs and even for Len in any early stage growing startup, there's just so much to do. So it's kind of one of those things where we're getting results here. We have a lot we have to do. Let's just kind of keep this on sort of autopilot. We'll keep doing what we can do, but we're not motivated enough to put the efforts in there when there's so much else to do and we're already getting results. But we kind of got to the point where we realized that we need to invest in building out the marketing team so we could put more effort in because we felt like the quality was slipping a little bit. We're, we're still proud of what we've published, but it wasn't where we wanted to be in. Beyond that, we just knew there was a lot more we could do with content. So that's kind of where things were at when I came on board a little over a year ago.

David Abrams: 11:26 That's incredible. First of all, I just want to acknowledge your team for going back and having to rebuild the entire application. It sounds like for the 2.0 that's like, that's an incredibly hard decision to make. To look at engineering and say we have to basically start over. I mean hard decision. And I think the other hard decision, Alex had to look at it is a decision that a lot of SaaS marketing teams, founders have to look at, say are our results giving what we actually want or are we just going through the motions, like you said? So I mean, knowing that I read a blog post where Alex basically said, Hey, we are shutting off the content journey threads that we have been doing for the past, I think it was three, four years and we're going to be changing things here at Groove. What was that like and why did you guys choose to shut down the content engine?

Andy Baldacci: 12:19 It was one of those things where like you said, it was not an easy decision. We realized things needed to change, but at that point I, when I was hired, it was me and one other person who came on board to help with the content efforts. So there are three of us. There was me, Len and Allen and while the team tripled in size practically overnight, there was still just so much we have to do to, to not just make up for last time but just get things up to speed of where we thought they should be. So there was never. If we were to keep the blog going, which we did for a while, we just didn't really have the time to come up for a breath of air to say like, okay, let's take a step back and really reevaluate things. It, it just kind of, we were able to handle more stuff, but we weren't able to take the time to be strategic and we kind of realized that like, all right, we need to pump the brakes here so that we can actually take that step back in, start reevaluating what we're doing and really get to that why of, of why we're doing all this and what we're hoping to achieve.

David Abrams: 13:25 That makes a ton of sense and I think the why is so critically important and equally important. I think for the marketing team especially, was probably looking at like your customer persona and moving forward, are the marketing initiatives and the efforts that we're doing moving us in the right direction to attract, capture, convert the perfect people? And I guess that really starts with one analysis of who your target customers, your persona, looking at your customers that you have and then also if you're kind of ending this experiment, ending this initiative, maybe looking back over the past few years, you know, looking at the lessons that you can take forward it and maybe share some of those. What were some of the lessons that you've learned looking back over those things before you guys decided to take a step forward?

Andy Baldacci: 14:09 Yeah, so that's, that's kind of a lot of what happened right when I came in is everyone always talks about sort of doubling down on what works, but no one really says like what that actually looks like in practice. And we knew obviously content was working, but like what does doubling down on content even mean, to a lot of people, they just be like, all right, we'll publish twice as much or maybe we'll add some video in. But it wasn't that simple and we knew it wasn't that simple. So I wanted to work with everyone to figure out what it actually meant for us to double down on content. And one of the first things I did was just get on as many customer calls as I could, just kind of better understand who our customers were, what they cared about and how we could help them. And I won't say that like these were complete full buyer personas, but this was sort of like that MVP version of that and it really helped inform all of those decisions going forward. And so from there when you had a better idea of like, okay, here's who our best customers are, here's what their jobs look like, here are the kind of things that they're dealing with. We did realize that a lot of the content was geared towards people a bit earlier than that. And I think that's just kind of natural from when we're writing about our own experiences, especially on the founders side, is when we hear a much smaller company. We were writing about the problems of much smaller companies. But as we grew, we didn't do the best job of kind of bringing that message a bit more up market. In the early days we had a free plan which definitely helped kind of plant the seed in a lot of companies and as they grew they became paying customers.

Andy Baldacci: 15:44 But over time, like many of the companies realize, we didn't think it was the best business decision for us to be making once you have been more established and our content though was kind of geared towards people who would be the best fit for those free or just lower price tiers. And so it was just kind of being more deliberate about who we are actually targeting with our content and beyond that. Also looking at like, all right, once we get the right people in here, how do we actually present Groove to them? Because while it's kind of difficult to create content that gets found and gets consumed, it doesn't do you any good if the people consuming that content aren't actually a good fit for your product. And so that was a big focus of us. And then if they actually are good fits for the product, you have to make sure that they're aware of how that product can help them in.

Andy Baldacci: [16:38] And we have always kind of taken the approach of being educational, trying to provide value so we didn't want to be like, start spamming them with overly salesy messages and so it's just been trying to find some way to be more deliberate about showing the value that our software can provide them and just kind of creating what I would just call a more holistic content strategy rather than just kind of taping a few different pieces together and hoping people kind of flow from one step to the next, sort of through osmosis. It was really just building out that, a more deliberate funnel. So rambled a bit there, but hopefully that gives you some insight to the process along the way.

David Abrams: [17:17] No, it definitely did. And it looked like, it sounds like you look for gaps of opportunity for longer term strategy and success. Really, what I mean by that is you said, where can we bring traffic in, people to read our blog and then move them through the funnel to become maybe a trial or a customer and actually utilize this as a marketing resource instead of just the journey post, which sounds like an appeal to the wrong audience. That being said, maybe you can give some examples of what you guys are looking to do with that strategy because it's one thing to talk about, hey, we're putting together a comprehensive strategy and then suddenly anything it'd be like, here's why we've chosen to do this. Here's why we've chosen to do this. And I guess to add onto that question as you go through it, also, how do you do those longer term strategy things, but also keep in the voice, the tone, the friendliness, the brand that you guys have built and never go or not go that corporate route and totally lose your identity along the way.

Andy Baldacci: [18:15] Yeah, so there's a lot to unpack this. If I miss anything, let me know. But for, for the kind of where to go from there, it's, it's, we're not going to be getting rid of that journey content because that is core to how we've got to where we are today and just really who we are individually as kind of part of this team. That's something that we're always going to keep doing, but we want to do a better job of is talking more about what the problem, what problems, what lessons, what everything else has happening to our business as it is right now. And we're about 20 people and there's definitely a change in problems, in challenges you have to figure out when you get over that like 14, 15 person hump, you have to start thinking more about management. You have to start thinking more about process. And those are a lot of things that we're figuring out and we think other businesses at this point could benefit from. So we're going to keep having that really personal touch with that founder's journey content. But it's going to be about a kind of where we're at now. And then on the other side of things is, I don't like to call it like SEO content or even like conversion content, but it's the content that is about the problem closest to the needs of our ideal customers and that's all around customer support. And so we've had a support blog for quite some time now, but never really approached it from an SEO perspective. It was really more subjective in the sense that we've talked to our customers, we talked to our readers and just ask them what can we help educate you on what problems is your support team having and just what problems we saw on our own efforts as we were building out our support team, but we never really said

like, okay, like what are, what topics and support are people actually searching for, how can we better target those and give people what they want.

Andy Baldacci: 20:20   And so both pieces of types of content will live on the blog going forward, but for that support content for that more SEO focused content. The reason why I don't like to call it SEO focus is because a lot of people just have the kind of connotations around that that is just going to be really generic, boring content and it doesn't have to be and ultimately for us, we're not thinking about SEO like, okay, how do we rank for this keyword? We're looking at SEO as people are searching for these topics for a reason, what is that reason and how can we give them what they're looking for in a way that's still true to our brand, so obviously if someone is searching for something like how do I make my first customer support hire, that content is going to be written with a bit of a different voice than some of the startup journey content, but it doesn't have to be boring dry material, if that makes sense.

David Abrams: 21:16   It does make sense. I think you know, I definitely want to link to some of your posts when they, when they started coming out, if they haven't yet, and showcase how you guys are doing. I think so many people, especially SaaS marketers want to utilize the power of SEO and like you said, there's this connotation that SEO content is boring, it's keyword stuffed, you know, like you're just putting the keywords in there to just rank for this term. So you know, I just kind of want to dial into that more like when you guys go through this process, you're looking at maybe your keyword research and Google Adwords, or your keyword planning tool, and you're going through that list like, oh, these are good questions. How are you guys analyzing the actual, I guess you could call it like keyword intent. Why are they looking that up? Because I think that is the key piece here to create great engaging content. What do you guys specifically doing? Are you doing more research into that? Are you just doing like a deep dive?

Andy Baldacci: 22:06   So it's a tough question to answer because there's no perfect, amazing solution for this. And so it's something where a lot of companies in any space go after what seemed like the obvious big keywords with a ton of traffic and in this space and for us it'd be like customer support, customer service, those types of things, but like a huge percent of the people searching for customer service or trying to find like how they can contact Amazon to return something, like they're not actually trying to learn about what customer service is in all of that. And so as you try to dig deeper into it though and get two keywords with clear intent behind them, you get super deep into long tail keywords that don't have that much volume and are really hard to dig up. So it's kind of that tough problem where the things people are searching for in a high enough volume that will show up in things like Adwords or even good tools for SEO, like Ahrefs, things like that, that it's a little bit vague about what people are actually searching for and what will, what their intent is when they're searching for that. And so one of the best ways that we found is just to do the search ourselves and see what type of content is showing up and it's not perfect, because there can be some kind of herd mentality there where everyone is writing it from the same perspective

even if they're not actually matching the true intent, but Google's pretty good at figuring out what people actually want when they're searching for it. So the easiest shortcut we have found is just search for it and see what's out there. And it helped us definitely on figuring out the angle of how to approach this content or even just saying like, okay, this is something we don't want to really focus on.

Andy Baldacci: 23:46   And like one example of that, are customer service skills or customer service, job titles, things like that that you would think could be somewhat related to people in the customer support industry. But typically what those are actually looking for are, people are trying to find like different titles so that they can search for those jobs, they're looking for skills that they can put on their resume. And so there's someone who's like trying to break into kind of an entry level position in customer service or customer support rather than someone in the space who could at any time in the near future actually become a customer of ours. And so that's one of the ways where we've really been trying to nail down the intent, but it's not a perfect science by any means.

David Abrams: 24:31   Totally. But it sounds like you guys have a good at least filtering system to think again through the strategy of will this keyword intent then lead them to possibly becoming a lead or a customer in the future? Are there any other filters that you guys use? You had mentioned things like, you know, searches per month, search volume, you know, ranking like other articles ranked. Are there specific filters that you guys are using to find the right keywords, the long tail keywords?

Andy Baldacci: 24:57   So for the long tail keywords, that's something we're still kind of figuring out the real details of that, but a lot of it are just like trying to find the questions that people are asking because those are in my opinion and some of the more straightforward content to write, but also some of the more valuable because not everyone needs a 2,500 word guide on how to do something. Sometimes they just want a simple answer to their question. They kind of want like an FAQ for the common questions in their industry. And so Google, I don't know when they started doing this, but they have those kinds of things that, let me just type one right now. Like what is good customer support? Obviously that's not a great way of phrasing it, but they have this box shows up. This is like, people also ask and it'll have a bunch of questions in there with little snippets that they pull in from different websites. So you'll see right now, like how do you provide exceptional customer service? How do you define excellent customer service? What are the qualities of customer service? How do you deal with a difficult customer? And just kind of going through those, and when you click them, more will pop up. So like if you expand, how do you deal with the different customer, you'll then get some related ones like how do you handle a customer complaint and when you click on that you'll get more and just kind of going through those, for as long as you can without going crazy, does gives you a good list to start with. And for some of those longer tail things, while you can do some research like this, a lot of it does go back to kind of what we had hit on before of talking to our customers and saying like, okay, like what concerns do you have? What are you trying to figure out right now? Because while it's not going to be reflective in a search data, if enough people keep saying these are the issues that they're

having, it's likely that you'll get some traffic there along the way. You might have to kind of dial things in over time, to get the right wording in there, but that's not a bad place to go on a subjective level either.

David Abrams: 27:00   Oh, I love that. No, I love kind of taking the wording that your customers are giving you and utilizing that to actually go out there and create articles and responses for that. Let me ask you this next question. I think a lot of SEO content, hate to say it like that is obviously about the writing itself, the keywords, the long tail keyword research, keyword intent of the article itself. Well, what about what happens after that? Are you guys syndicating it out there? How are you then competing against other articles that are in this long tail keyword or you know, older articles? What kind of syndication or I guess outbound SEO is kind of the wording. I don't. I'm not an SEO expert. Are you guys utilizing on the backend there?

Andy Baldacci: 27:38   Yeah, so it's one of the benefits of taking kind of the more long tail approach and the reason why we're still gonna, I guess to back up a little bit, we're going to be going after keywords kind of from short tail to long tail and for shorter tail keywords, things like customer support training, those types of things are going to require much bigger pieces of content because they're broad topic. There's a lot of kind of nuance to them that have that you have to cover it all to really answer or give people what they're looking for when searching for those terms. For the longer tail, it's going to be a lot more, a lot easier to identify the intent. And so a lot of times the longer tail is actually more valuable because people searching for these specific questions, to these specific phrases, very often are farther down the funnel than when they're searching for the simple things.

Andy Baldacci: 28:31   And on the other side of the coin too is that because it is longer tail because it is so specific, there's not as much competition out there, on those topics. So for a lot of it, what it'll be is creating this content, making sure internally we're linking to it so that it's easy for Google to find it. I'm making sure that we're kind of following our on page optimization checklist to include the right elements on the page, obviously without doing annoying things for readers like keyword stuffing or things like that. But just making sure that best practices are there and beyond that in the early days it probably won't be too, too much. But what we'll then do is just kind of in, in reviewing our content, we'll see if some of these pages are getting traction in search engine. So Google recently updated what's called, the search console and it's a really powerful tool that gives you a ton of insights into what keywords pages are ranking for. What like what keywords you're on. Like the second or third page of the results for like if you get bumped up to the first potentially could get significant more traffic. It just helps you identify opportunities and just kind of taking an 80 slash 20 approach to it rather than trying to just across the board conduct all this outreach for every single piece of content we create. It's better to kind of set the base, see what's actually getting traction and then focus on those pieces that seem like they have the most opportunity and for that I'm sure there will be some kind of PR related outreach. Definitely not those like spamming a thousand people, with, Hey, I saw your post

mentioned this, here's a related link. Do you want to include in your article, not that kind of stuff, but just finding more value out of PR we can do around it.

Andy Baldacci: 30:21 And also just kind of on the other side of things, creating more linkable resources, just kind of creating different pieces of content that people will more naturally link to, whether it's customer support statistics and people are, whenever they're doing research on it, they're going to be looking for those types of things and can link back. That'll be kind of on the more scalable side of it, but for that long tail stuff, it's really just starting slow, seeing where this opportunity and then kind of doubling down where we think that it'll give us the most leverage.

David Abrams: 30:55 I think that's such a good strategy and I love the fact that you talk about focus on that 80/20 because it's so easy. You could write 100 blog posts, articles and they're not all going to be equal. They're not going to be equal as far as the traffic that you get back, the results that you get with it and even the one that gets the most traffic may give you the least amount of conversions to trial as customers leads. Right? So it's about reviewing those metrics. I love that. I love the idea of the organic sharing materials. The virality. I think infographics when they first came out and all the organic sharing that happened with, and you guys would probably still use really good infographics, but it's about giving that value. So I love that. And what are you guys most excited about now looking forward at this kind of new chapter in your story? You're going to still keep doing this journey thread. You're going to be doing this new strategic content, but what are you most excited for?

Andy Baldacci: 31:46 Honestly, for me, it's kind of, I'm just really excited to see what we're actually able to do when we start being more deliberate with our marketing. It's something where we've had a ton of growth to get us where we are today and it's on the back of Alex and Len and the rest of the team on their hard work, in building a great product in putting out great content. But we all know that there's more we could be doing. So I'm really excited to start doing those next few steps and just get all the pieces in place so that rather than, kind of going through the motions with things, we'll have a true kind of marketing machine in place. And it's something where I think there's going to be a lot for me personally to learn in getting there. But going forward, I'm just excited to see it kind of all take shape.

David Abrams: 32:35 That is incredible and I think so much of the journey of building a company is these stepping stones that you take, you take one step to make a journey thread, take another once you get to 5 Million ARR and you have to now strategically focus on how do we scale that to 10 and you can't just keep pounding the same piece of pavement every time. So I think lots of hard decisions went into this. I think you guys have done an incredible job. I would love to bring you guys back on in a few months and go through what has worked and what hasn't and learn those lessons. I think that's going to be so exciting, but this is a really exciting moment for you guys and I'm just proud of all your growth and success and you know, I'm really excited to see what's next for you.

Andy Baldacci: 33:11 No, I appreciate that. I appreciate that. And that's the thing is, I think we're gonna. We're gonna keep sharing all of this. So as, as we go along, as we learn more, as we fail more, which we will, we're still gonna, kind of keep honoring that, that core principle value, which is transparency and so we'll, we'll be more than happy to come back to talk about it and on our blog I'm sure we'll keep publishing updates and just letting everyone know how it's going there.

David Abrams: 33:34 Yeah, definitely do that. And you know, I want to, in the sake of transparency, I want to jump over to our lightning round questions where I just ask five quick questions to you and you can answer with the first thoughts that comes to your mind. It's a great way, a little quiz for you, a great way to get some answers. You want to get going? You want to do this?

Andy Baldacci: 33:49 Yeah, let's do it.

David Abrams: 33:50 Awesome. What advice for earlier stage SaaS companies starting marketing would you give today?

Andy Baldacci: 33:55 So for early stage, it depends on what kind of, how early they are. But the simplest thing in my mind is just keep things simple as don't complicate things. Is that, find a strategy that works for you and to do that, like don't jump from thing to thing to thing until something magically works, like you have to put effort into it, but find what does show some early traction and then just relentlessly test and improve to get everything you can out of that. It's kind of going back to that double down on what works and keep your focus. And I guess also on that point is in those earliest stages, most of what works has been like talked about on hundreds of podcasts and then thousands of articles and there's a lot of noise, but what you need to know is pretty much out there. So don't try to reinvent the wheel when you don't have a reason to, just keep it simple. And that's really what I would say.

David Abrams: 34:49 Love it. We're huge proponents of simplicity here at Demio and one of our core values. So I love that. What marketing skill do you think is vital for marketing teams to improve and build on today?

Andy Baldacci: 35:02 So, depending on how to go at this is first, like if it's like a true skill or tactic, I would say like it seems video is growing in importance and I can't imagine going to slow down at all. Something I don't have much experience with myself, but I'm gonna kind of start working on that. So I think that video does seem to be the future, but on a more fundamental level, one thing that's kind of like not, I don't know if I'd call it a pet peeve of mine, but one thing I've always noticed is that like content marketing is not new at this point. Most startups are doing some form of content, obviously with varying levels of success. But I think there's very few marketers out there, very few startups that can really claim to be like actual experts in what they're writing about. And it's one of those things where it's easy to go through the motions and kind of write what you think you should be writing. But if you're trying to sell to, especially in B2B, if you're trying to sell to a business owner who lives this industry, has been in for decades, potentially,

you're not going to be able to have an entry level writer create content that actually educates on much. You'd need to have someone who has been in that space who lives and breathes it as well. And that's something I don't think enough startups are investing in, is just developing that true expertise. I think if you can do that, you'll stand out as a marketer and you'll definitely stand out as a startup if you can keep executing on that.

David Abrams: Do you think that you can find those experts and also hire them? Is that something that you can do?

Andy Baldacci: So it's a balance and I think it depends on what you're trying to actually do. If you want to be like the true thought leaders and like be the guy or the gal on stage at major events and conferences and all of that, like that's definitely going to be a more difficult hire. And a more expensive one and one that's probably easy to mess up as well, but it can be done. But on the other side of it, it's that you don't necessarily have had to have the exact match in years of experience as the people you're trying to reach, but you have to have something, some way to truly give them value. So one good way of doing that is just being a really good kind of traditional journalist and knowing how to ask the right questions and knowing how to find those experts and get to the things that they're not sharing in other places or get to the answers that your audience really needs. And so it's one way of doing it, is cultivating that expertise yourself. The other is finding out how to leverage other expertise. So either way you're able to give your audience content that actually is valuable.

David Abrams: I love that. No, that's super, super helpful. What about the best educational resources you'd recommend for marketing?

Andy Baldacci: So I read a ton of books, and it's something where it's hard to pick one, but if I, if I were to like narrow it down, what I usually recommend to people is 80/20 sales and marketing by Perry Marshall and he comes from more of like a info product world, but he really just in this book, drills down, kind of the Pareto Principle, the 80/20 stuff, and just talks about the biggest lesson I got from it was just understanding two things. One is that prospects are not all created equal and it's your job as a marketer to do your best to attract the best prospects because for a company like ours where we charge by the seat, if we attract one person who comes with 100 seat account, it would take 100 of people with one seat account to match that in terms of MRR. But that doesn't include at all the added support costs of handling 100 extra people. So it's just finding, it's just looking at what you're doing, look at the results it's producing, just really dialing in on what will get you the most bang for your buck, where you're going to get the most leverage and that comes to the customers but also comes to kind of your own efforts and there going to be some strategies that you find and experiment with the marketing, whether it's specific blogs, you post on, specific podcasts you go on that are going to return 10 times or 100 times the results as another podcast or another blog or a different channel or whatever it is. And so it's really just being aware of just kind of the power law distributions that are going to show

themselves in kind of any sales and marketing work you do and just optimizing around that.

David Abrams: 39:32 I love that. That's a great book. Highly recommended you. We've talked about 80 slash 20 a couple of times on this episode, so really great suggestion there. What about a favorite marketing tool that you can't live with?

Andy Baldacci: 39:42 So it's, it's interesting like we as a remote team use a ton of different tools like we have Slack, we use, I live in like Google docs most of the day, um, but I wouldn't call it marketing tools and well I guess like the closest thing I could say would be Trello, because as a team we all work inside Trello and it makes it easier for us to just kind of see what everyone is working on and where the different projects are at. And like I personally have my own Trello board that's like Super OCD, like tracks, like all of my to do's, like everything that's going on in my own personal life. But kind of on that point, I don't know if it's like a specific tool, I don't want to say like everyone needs to use Trello, but I think for anybody marketing or outside of that, it's just having some tool or system to manage what you're doing and what your team is doing because it kind of, I'm someone who is very like process and system oriented. Just naturally if I don't have things written down, don't have balanced out, then I'll just get super stressed and I won't be as productive as it can be. And so it kind of just like boggles my mind how people get anything done when they just keep it all up in their head. And I think as a marketer, so much of your success and the results you get simply depend on executing day in, day out. Again, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. A lot of stuff has been done before. You just have to keep showing up day in, day out and putting in the work, learning and adjusting and without having some system for keeping track of that, I think you're just handicapping yourself. So I would just say whatever it is that helps you be effective, I think that would probably be like the best tool for, for me or any other marketers.

David Abrams: 41:26 Overwhelm is a real thing and it really can crush your ability to get things out. So love that idea of project management tools or some type of Kanban, something that helps you visually see and represent what you're going through- My last question for you today, what about a brand business or team that you admire today?

Andy Baldacci: 41:45 So there's so many, great startups out there that are now talking about what they're doing. So it'd be hard for me to kind of like list them all, but the one that to me right now really stands out, is really just a Patrick Campbell who's the founder and CEO over at ProfitWell, and they make a price intelligently as like their agency component, but they basically specialize in helping SaaS companies price better and getting better insights into their data, their metrics and all of that. And there's someone that like going back to that point before I made about like true expertise, they are the experts in SaaS pricing and like no one is anywhere close to them. And they've been doing an amazing job at sharing their expertise and their content. And it seems like the content has been getting better and better over the months. And over the years, and they've grown into, I think the last public number I've heard is over $10,000,000 ARR and they're

completely bootstrapped so it's working. So they're definitely someone, a company that I'm keeping an eye on pretty closely because they're just consistently putting out great stuff.

David Abrams: 42:53 Oh yeah, we follow them as well. It's just incredible material, incredible content. So that was a really great one and I just really want to say, Andy, thank you so much for jumping on with us today. You know, that'll wrap up our podcast, but we, we went through a ton of great information and again, just to go back to it, like I'm really excited to see what's next for you guys. How are you going to be balancing the SEO, the journey, everything else. So please keep us updated as you go through it. We'll make sure that we add lots of links here and our show notes back to your blog. We can showcase it along the way, but hopefully we'll be able to do a check in call here in the next few months as well.

Andy Baldacci: 43:26 Yeah, I'd love that. And thanks again for the opportunity. It's been great kind of just chatting about all this because it's been tough on our end of not publishing for a few months now and so it's been great to just kind of get back to our roots, so out of transparency and sharing all this so I'd be more than happy to come back on.

David Abrams: 43:42 Love that. Absolutely do Andy and thanks so much and we'll talk to you soon.

Andy Baldacci: 43:42 Alright, see you.

Speaker 4: 43:47 That was truly a special episode. I really want to do a big shout out to Andy and the entire Groove team for agreeing to jump on this aspect through podcasts and kind of go through the transparent look at what they're doing right now, why they went on this big new pivot in content marketing. It was kind of a big to do when they decided to come out and stop their content marketing journey blog, but it's so interesting to hear the approach that they took and really enlightening as far as what they're doing moving forward. Something that we're going to take away from ourselves to look at content marketing and how we can improve as well. So I hope you guys truly enjoyed this episode. Don't forget to give us a rating, leave a comment or question. Those things really do help this podcast get out to more SaaS and education teams like yourselves. Really just want to get this podcast to as many people as we can because there's so much great content from amazing speakers and if you want to continue this conversation, do join us in our free Facebook community, the SaaS Breakthrough community at Demio.com/fb So I really hope you guys have a great day. Thanks again for listening and have a wonderful rest of your day.

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