

David Abrams: [00:00](#) Hello, hello and welcome to episode number 22 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. I'll be your host today as we bring on Mat Emmons, who is the VP of marketing at PicMonkey. Matt helps the marketing team tell the story of PicMonkey from business successes to new product launches. Matt previously served in executive marketing leadership roles for PopCap Games and EA Mobile in these roles. He was influential in developing much of what is now known as growth and funnel marketing. Matt received a master's degree in information systems and business administration and a bachelor's degree in international studies from the University of Washington. Matt spends time parenting, volunteering at the International Rescue Committee, teaching and helping special immigrant visa holders reconnect with careers after transitioning to the United States, and of course his favorite, knitting.

David Abrams: [01:09](#) And in today's episode, we go through the lessons learned from PicMonkey, from 3.4 billion images edited and over 450,000 subscribers that they've gained over the past few years. We talked about the importance of knowing your in depth customer persona and what that truly means for marketing. We'll go into the fundamental six digital segments you must understand to really understand user behavior and it goes so much beyond user experience. We also discuss how to use growth marketing teams to optimally solve problems the right way and the quick way. It's a really fundamental idea. I think he does a great job of explaining exactly how to do this and I think everyone should take note of this and of course, how to break through UX and create actual emotional user experiences that grow your business. And again, they're basing these creations on their own 450,000 subscribers and the 3.4 billion images it did. So they have a ton of data to help them create these amazing lessons. Now, Matt really brought an amazing, amazing topic and really does a great job of articulating this whole episode. Take the time to listen to this, make sure you listen to it a couple of times because he goes through some really, really cutting edge, very, very smart lessons that I think every SaaS company can learn from, so I do hope you enjoy this episode. Let's go ahead. We have a lot to talk about. Let's go ahead and jump right in.

Narrator: [02:46](#) This is the SaaS breakthrough podcast, uncovering what's working today in SaaS marketing by the actual SaaS marketers who are building companies day in and day out. Let's get started.

David Abrams: [03:00](#) Hey Matt. How you doing? Thanks so much for joining me today. How are you doing this afternoon? Yeah, excited to talk with you. Talk about PicMonkey, tons to talk about. Before we even get into any of the cool stuff we're talking about today, what you guys are doing, what's working at PicMonkey? I would love for you to talk a little bit about what PicMonkey is, who your competitors are, and a little bit about what you guys are uniquely doing in the marketplace.

- Matt Emmons: [03:25](#) Thank you. Thank you again. Thanks again for having me. PicMonkey is a photo editing and design platform. What we do is we help everyday creatives cut through this modern media landscape that we all have to contend with. We help people make impactful visuals that tell their brand stories. Marketplace right now has got a, it's telling people to go to pick a boys right there. There's obviously Adobe and there's Creative Cloud and that's one solution and it works really well. It works really well if you've got you know relatively flushed with your pockets and if you've had time to go to design school. The only other solution is really to cobble together your own workflow, of free ops, and that's where we feel that we come in. We are quick, easy, we're powerful. It's easy enough for your personal passion project, but it's sophisticated enough for your growing brand. That's, that's where we, that's our spot in the marketplace. That's what we try to deliver to people.
- David Abrams: [04:21](#) From a deeper level, just to kind of clarify that a little more, is there a specific like editing function that you guys feel that you really dial in on or you know, template types? Like I definitely understand what you're saying by being, you know, we're more on the side of the market where you don't have to do a ton of design or cobbled together apps, but what specifically would you say is the key winning unique selling proposition?
- Matt Emmons: [04:42](#) The thing that we're, we're so super good at is understanding that the workplace has changed. People have got to communicate visually now, there's not an option, but the creative tools have not kept up with the creative demands. If you're going to go kind of the design school route, you sit down to take care of this task as say someone who's trying to market themselves on social media and you immediately realize, geez, I'm going to have to go back and forth to Youtube I don't know how many times to try to learn how to do this basic design piece of work. Likewise, if you're on the other side and it's like, I don't know how to, I don't literally know how to use this. Then you end up in kind of a templated. It's like you can do it exactly like this tool, this free opt, let's be done, but you can only do it that way.
- Matt Emmons: [05:28](#) The thing that we do is right in the middle. How can we let you start from a photo editing area and go, wow, I can figure out how to edit this photo and this gives me so much more than I've been able to do with any of the free apps. Or you can start from a design perspective and go, look, this is how I want this to lay out. You know, these are the objects I want. These are the overlays I want, this is the texture or the feel I want to bring to it. This is the aesthetic. PicMonkey lets you go back and forth between either discipline in a seamless way and we call it "grow by design". You get better at this and this becomes a strength as you go forward.
- David Abrams: [06:02](#) That's incredible. Really, really powerful and I want to talk about in this podcast we will talk a little bit more about how you guys have, have really got there and derive this amazing, I guess user experience is one way to say it, but I feel like it's so much more than just UX and UI. But let's talk a little more

about when you joined, when did you join the PicMonkey team itself? Maybe what the company was like at that time and where is it now? It may even be pretty pretty soon.

Matt Emmons: [06:29](#) Exactly. I've been here not quite a year now and we like to say it's like the old MacDonald sign 3.4 billion images edited here at PicMonkey and we're, we're just now touching about 450,000 subscribers. (incredible) It is, it's real. I mean, it, it, it, it's a lot. It's a ton of powerful validation. It's like, hey, we're interested in what you guys are doing. Help us out here and that's what we feel every day. The trajectory of the company has been what you would expect kind of in SaaS context. We started out ad supported right back in the day. The idea that anybody could put complex photo editing online was amazing and we started out with ad support, right? That's how that worked is put it up online and get some ads next to it and everything will be okay. People will put up with the ads because the functionality is so amazing. That evolves into a freemium approach and now we find ourselves evolving into a full SaaS model.

David Abrams: [07:21](#) When you joined, were you already at the SaaS model or what was maybe the major pain points that you guys were facing when you joined and how did that evolve into an initiative?

Matt Emmons: [07:29](#) You know, it was right at that turn between freemium and fully into, hey, we've really got to embrace SaaS all the way now. Right? And, and at the same time, that's, that's a change. I'm sure we're gonna get to it, you know, in our customer personas and everything else. But it was exactly at that moment where we realized we're not going to be able to deliver our unique selling proposition. We're not gonna be able to express who we are as a company, if we stay with the freemium model it, it's too limited and there's too much we can do as we begin to work ourselves into this market that is so impacted by social media, by the need to communicate visually, and as we start to move up into, let's call it small office home office, and then, you know, in small business and eventually all the way into enterprise, we can't serve those markets if we stay in a freemium model, we've now got to go into a SaaS model. For us to get there that meant we really had, as a marketing department, we've got to understand the customer journey, right? We have got to get together on what are these people feeling right and who are they and what do we want them to do next? And this is where we sat down as a marketing team, and this is, this is kind of when we began to cut our teeth together and we did an exercise that we call "click by click" and it's just sit down and try to get, you know, with fresh eyes, see this site, what are we asking people to do? Click by click. How do you, how do you get literally move around and start to unpick that. And I don't mean some people go, oh yeah, we got that as a site map. Not quite, not really, right, nor is it. You can go to QA, QA has got that, you know, we can, we can generate it. But what I'm trying to get as almost like an emotional click by click, how do you feel when you move from one process to the other? And then when you think when you get to that part, you can say, Ooh, wow, what are the different people,

the different contexts? The different segments that are moving through this same process and that finally let's you stitch together the third partner. What I think of this kind of, these three super important kind of touched on, it's a life cycle chart, so if you know where you are in this click by click and you understand these segments, then what do you want each segment to do at each point? Right now you're finally together as a team going, but what do we want this person to be doing? You know what I mean? And once you kind of get that foundation down, then a lot of things that may have been hidden start to appear almost obvious.

David Abrams: [09:45](#)

I think there's so much to unravel in what you just said that was an incredible overview of just the brilliance that you probably brought to this team, but I want to kind of take a little bit of a step back and kind of understand each of these different segments. And first of all, understand, you know what? When you're going into a process like this, are you outlining like, here's the goal that we want to get? Here's the user segments that we want? Or are you just going in and saying, hey, we know nothing and we're blind to everything, we need to visually see what they're using or doing and using probably and then we need to backtrack that, ask them questions on phone calls to figure out who those people are and then try to find these different segments to map them into you. And is there like a goal and we want to have six personas, we want to have this or you guys, again, just taking all the feedback that you get because you're coming into a lot of data at billions of images made. How do you figure this stuff out from such a high level?

Matt Emmons: [10:39](#)

Yeah, it's exactly that process. I think there's kind of a, there's a couple answers here, but the first thing you're trying to do to get people in the room and you know it's, it's useful to go offsite and all this is, can we see it with a child's eyes? Can we see it like it's a first time because your customers don't come to this thing every single day. You know, some of them might be a segment do, but can you find a way, can you put yourself in a context when, when you can see it completely without coming to it with any experience, can you, can you stop seeing the trees and just see the forest? You know, can you sometimes we talked about having an emotional beer, right? Just all data. Let's try this again. When you do that, one of the things that it allows you to do is every marketing team's got a persona, you know, and they're defined sometimes, well sometimes not, but it kind of comes from that, that, let's call it, whether it's a cam assessment or a market assessment or however you got there, you have a sense of who your personas are, but the problem is these are often aspirational, but often they're supposed to be aspirational, right? It's the customer you don't have, the customer you're going after. It's the customer you seek to serve and the relationship you want.

Matt Emmons: [11:44](#)

We work, as you just said in a digital context and you have got a bazillion points of data coming at you, which one of them matter and that exercise we were just talking about it, click by click to get an emotional feel for what's going on, and then if he can do, we'll talk about segments in a second, but as

you get your segments figured out, then what do you want them to do? Super Powerful. So what we sat down and tried to do is look in any context, just generically, this is not even, this is not a PicMonkey thing. There's at least six fundamental digital segments, right? You've always got somebody who's brand new, right? This is somebody who's got to be introduced into the product or what's that first time user experience? Then you've got a segment of people digitally again, this is not a, it's not meant to be a persona, this is a digital segment, who are returning, right? You've introduced them and they liked it and they liked it enough that they came back a second time. Okay? Then you've got paid users, hey, these are people who already are a customer, you've got lapsed people, you've got former people who not only are they lapsed right, they're not even paying you anymore, and then you've got free riders. You're right. In every one of these businesses you've got a free rider. No matter what business you're in, you've got at least those six and every business is going to add a couple more in there that are particular to their business. We certainly have. What's interesting is that now if we think about, can I define those digitally and I mean algorithmically? Right, so if for some reason I think of this as a cartoon, right? If I reach onto the server, and I always see this as you're pulling that proverbial cartoon rabbit out of a hat by both ears. If I pull a session off the server, can I answer the question? Which one of those digital segments are they in? Because if I can, then I know what to do next. I know that new user has to be introduced. That returning session has to be converted. That paid user has got to be engaged and delighted, that lapsed user has got to be reengaged. A former subscriber has got to be reacquired and those free riders, you know, that special sauce. How do we get a free rider to see value, right? And, and there's all sorts of answers to that, kind of the poorest answer is well is discounted. Better answer is our, how do we get them to see that there's more here, how do we get them to extend the value, how do we demonstrate the value of what we do, but getting beyond the personas and ride down to, hey, there are always these fundamental digital segments, present in every SaaS business and what's our answer for each one? This is key to everything we're doing.

David Abrams: [14:22](#)

That is incredible. And you just did an amazing job of explaining that. It made so much sense to me. So what, like what are your, you know, the biggest ones that you go after? Do you prioritize, you know, current customers over the free riders? Like what do you guys do when you sit down? Because it's hard to sit down with, especially with a smaller team. Let's say you're a smaller staff and you're looking at these six segments and you're trying to understand like what do we go after first? How do we prioritize this? Because you only have so much time and so much resources. Where would you guys go first?

Matt Emmons: [14:51](#)

Yeah. To me once you the segments, now you can go see what, where do we stink? Where is the problem. What have we messed up? Right? Are we having a hard time when a new user comes in, what's the rate that a new user turns into a returning member? If I, if I see, I've got a problem there and I was like, ah, okay. This is where the issue is. If I can't get returners to

convert fine, if I find that paying people, the frequency between their sessions is diminishing over time. Oh, you know, I'm not, I'm not solving problems for them. If they're lapsing too quickly, right. To this kind of the, the Uber of the, of the paid people are just, it's getting more and more time's going by between when they're coming back. Now I got lost members. If, if I've got an overpopulation or an opportunity, have I got a bunch of former members from a different area of the company.

Matt Emmons: [15:34](#)

So once you understand these six segments and start to think about them that way, then you can, you can go look at it, right? And you haven't got to wait for somebody to come and go, ah, you know, you haven't got to wait for finance to go, here's the problem. You can, you can dip in and go, look, now I have a way of digitally understanding the footprints, digital footprints that my customer base is leaving behind. And it's like, ah, now I see. Here's where we're having a problem, right? We are not reacquiring these former members. We're, we're just, we're treating them as if they're new and we're ignoring this rich history we have with them. Oh, that's a problem. You know, let's not do that. Or we can begin to look at it and say, hmm, these new members are not coming back. I wonder if we're buying the wrong types of people. I wonder if our SEO is not tuned. I wonder if our SEM is a little bit too broad right now. You can start to tune those problems and start to figure out in a way that all the tools right now, you can get finance opening, IP helping you, you can get you know the entire tools ecosystem out there in the world to help you out because you've got. You can take that digital data and you can push it at all the people who can help you and discover these problems.

David Abrams: [16:38](#)

So first data consumption, look at everything from a high level, understand it. Then you move that to prioritization and then into actually marketing into the product experience itself. Bringing that language and first of all, what tools are you guys using to look at this type of stuff to analyze this data and turn it into a user behavior that then becomes maybe an in app message or an email or whatever type of mechanism you're using to talk to them?

Matt Emmons: [17:05](#)

We did. There's a ton of tools around here and look, we, we've tried them all and we try to be very agnostic about all the tools. Mode is huge for us. BigQuery is amazing. We do a ton of Google Analytics as well. We're blessed with a really good agency externally that can use all that data. Survey Monkey. Mailchimp, the tools, but here's where I'd go one layer deeper than than maybe just the tools to me and I feel at the beginning of my career I was really lucky to get connected at a conference with that old legacy of people who used to do the old snail mail marketing, the green eyeshade guys we used to call them and there was a guy who had written a book and it was just really influential. Um, what it taught me, what I remember is a residue of that is stay with things that are about recency, frequency and monetization, and I'd cite this, but it's literally lost to me where I learned that and what, what conference I was at when I picked this up. But if you can stay with variables that make sense and those categories, things that lend themselves to discrete statistics, then you're going to get repeatable results. If you start

kind of wandering off in the demographics or worse the psychographics or somebody proprietary algorithm to sort your users at it gets scary and it gets difficult to have repeatable results, but stay with things that are counting numbers were all the discrete statistical math works and, and you'll be able to bang out repeatable results, which is what you would you really want to be able to do throughout your career.

David Abrams: [18:46](#)

Completely agree. Yeah, that's absolutely right. And what about like when you take these, when you now backtracking out of these segments and you have all this out and you're starting to understand it and you get to that marketing level, what are you doing to then kind of understand the channels and then when you understand the marketing channels that are bringing in, let's say you're looking at one of the segments, which is new users are paid users I should say, and then you're breaking that down into per channel acquisition and looking at each of those paid users like usage levels in the APP. Is that kinda how you guys backtrack to then scale or double down on specific channels or um, you know, what do you specifically do there to figure out what's actually working in marketing?

Matt Emmons: [19:25](#)

No, you're doing it exactly right. The first way you laid it out. We drilled down until we find the problems, right? And we, we just, we keep, we keep drilling down in that way. To me, David, this is, this is what's so powerful about the technique, about, about this fundamental, understand their emotional journey, get them into segments and then in a clear way, have a lifecycle chart is that now I can use growth marketing, right? There is the SaaS, SaaS and growth marketing kind of almost developed hand in hand in the work that people are like I'm thinking of the Reforge group in particular have done a great job in codifying and defining what I really feel is almost a new discipline within marketing. And it allows marketing to participate in teams in what I almost think of as an agile sort of way. So all of a sudden you've got a growth marketing team that consists of a really informed marketer who who, who's digitally knows what they're talking about, and now you've got probably a product person on there and you've got, you know, an engineer in there. And then you got, you know, depending on the context, maybe it's a designer, maybe it's a QA person, but you've got this small team. It's going to be given a specific data defined task. And because you're, because you're working now with segments, you can really say this is what this problem is. This is how we see this problem. This is how the problem shows up on the servers. Okay, so now those guys can go and work and they can all say, hey look, here's what I think I see. Here's hypotheses that we can test. Let's go build those. Go grab your favorite AB testing tool now, is it Optimized? Whatever it is, maybe it's internal, right? Define your metrics again because you have a quantitative understanding of what the problem is and let's get to work right. Now you can actually really go after it.

Matt Emmons: [21:08](#)

Now, let's say, let's take the example you were giving. What if this is in an acquisition sense right now? We want to know how are we doing on finding prospects that are going to become new subscribers and what is their

rate of second use of the product, right? How do, how quickly, how well do they become returning, and maybe we've got a sub metric that says, how do you know? How often do we get lucky? And they just jumped straight from new to paid in one leap, right? Okay, so now I can construct those two things. The powerful thing that is going on is that you're focused on a segment, a defined problem, and you can start to let that team work on it.

Matt Emmons: [21:45](#)

It saves you from two problems that I think without kind of that discipline you see pop up all the time. First is you get kind of a false optimization, right? If you're trying to improve a gross average, it's really tough to do and you end up settling for, oh, you know, we raised this metric, you know, point zero one, okay, great, but that's not the kind of exciting results that we want to see in growth. When you divide the gross average by these segments and you focus on let's lift each one of those 10 percent, all of a sudden that doesn't seem (inaudible) all of a sudden that's not impossible. All of a sudden you're building a system that says, this is not actually one growth process. This is 10 little processes that have to happen to exist at one earl. Okay, now let's focus on each one and it becomes possible. You all of a sudden you can lift one by 10 percent and you can lift the other by close to 10 percent, and so you get an overall 10 percent effect. Instead of having just like, wow, it was really muddled. That was really average. You all only really got was, you know, point on one out of it. That's the strength of being able to use your segmentation. Have a marketer there who understands what's the emotional context I'm working on, and by the way, we're all agreed on what the action is down to a quantitative sense of this is what we want to have happen next for this second.

David Abrams: [23:04](#)

Do you have each of these growth marketing teams focused on one segment or do they kind of just revolve around a problem at a time and to each of these have, if they are segments like their own individual KPIs. So I totally understand what you're saying about like, okay, we have these granular difference maybe six segments. If we can raise each of them 10 percent, then we have an overall maybe 10 percent overall growth, which is a huge thing, but I love this idea of like breaking it down and easier to see, but how do those actually construct, because I'm trying to think from like from, from your perspective, it's easy when you have these smaller teams in these different segments, but if you are a small team or your medium sized SaaS and you have five people on your marketing team, you know, how do you attack those? Maybe it's individually going through and just one by one knocking these out. How do you typically go around creating that team?

Matt Emmons: [23:49](#)

I've always imagined it, David. There's almost this nirvana I have in my mind that it's like, I wonder if I worked for somebody, you know, like some major PNG, some PNG brand. I wonder if I could actually have a growth team per segment. Right. And just, I can imagine you can load them out there. It's like, oh, you're the new team. And I think it's a fantasy, right? I don't think it exists. I don't think it's a thing, right? We all work in this context of limited resources and so to me, one of the things that's magic is to me a growth



team that becomes perpetual is a problem, right? Either we will solve the problem and therefore we moved on by definition, which is what I want us to be happening, right? Growth teams should be putting themselves out of business at a regular basis. If they're not, it's like you're not getting results and we got to talk about that. Or like we're not trying hard enough or we don't understand the problem or something, right? But growth teams need to put themselves out of business, and so the way we look at it is, hey, let's define a problem. Let's put a growth team on it and some things start to happen right away and they do, and then we moved that, that team onto the next problem, whatever we as a. usually it's executive management at that point is going to what's the biggest problem? What's wrong in the funnel? Right? What do we need to be focused on this quarter? And so we move them around from problem to problem and we formed them up. What we really think of, I think this is more from a management perspective than say even a marketing perspective is the growth team is there to re engineer that process, having re-engineered that process we move them on because now we've got a business rule, a new business rule for the thing, but we just solved. Now let's move on to the next one that needs to be re engineered and we keep looking for what's the next biggest opportunity to put our growth team or our few growth teams on. Maybe we can spend up to three, maybe four of these at the most. But in most of the companies I've looked on, you know, maybe maybe this is different for, for some of the huge organization you're thinking of Slack or I'm thinking of Pinterest. Maybe they can have several of these. But boy, I'll tell you, for kind of a smaller medium growing company, the idea of even having a second growth team working simultaneously takes a lot of management skill. And by the time you get to three or four of them, that's pretty close to maximum.

David Abrams: [25:56](#)

Totally. And I think what you've really articulated so well is that by going granular on the, on the problems and really identifying this is our one problem, you guys have the autonomy, the time and the resources to problem solve as you need. But we're solving this one thing. It makes the KPIs clear, it makes the mission for everyone on the team uniform. So everyone is fighting the same battle. It's just clear, concise problem solving with unlimited experiments until they solve it. So it's, I think the biggest problem is so many people going to try to solve everything. They have a funnel problem and they're just trying to solve everything in there instead of breaking it into segments and solving a little pieces of each of those things at a time and making those incremental changes. And I think you've absolutely just said that perfectly

Matt Emmons: [26:41](#)

Exactly right. What I want to make sure, especially with the metric definitions, we want to fail fast, right? If we get in there and we found we can't move that metric at all, it's like, stop, we failed. What's wrong? You know, we're not addressing the right thing to get at the metric that was assigned. If we get in there and we are able to move it and it's like, Hey, we've done everything we can here. Did we get five percent? Did we get one percent? Do we make it worse? It doesn't matter. We got a result. Close it

off, we'll reform it. The other thing I think it's important is look, growth teams are powerful and right now, particularly in SaaS businesses, it's a coveted thing. Look Growth Marketing is the new hotness, right? And we try to rotate people in and out of that context, you want people to be on a growth team who aren't afraid of failing, who aren't afraid of, hey, we're going to make a big change here. We're going to tell people about it, but we're going to make a big change. Operating teams are exactly the opposite, right? Operating teams it's like, come on, don't mess anything up. We were trying as a usual, we're trying to wage risk, right? And get a result and the first thing you do is you don't make a mistake in that operating context, which is completely different. Steady as she goes, right? Don't mess anything up. Keep everything nominal. And so we like to, you know, it's a, what am I trying to say? It's a thing that we tried to do internally is we manage people, is to expose them to those different contexts and let them shine in each of those contexts.

David Abrams: [28:04](#)

That makes a ton of sense. I love that analogy of the operating team and the growth team. What do you think's been the biggest win for your growth teams? Maybe an acquisition setting or some other piece of the funnel that you guys have had to tweak?

Matt Emmons: [28:15](#)

Uh, you know, I'd like to, there's some of this stuff that's a little bit too fresh, but we've, we've been working through some things recently, uh, related to refund rate. I'm going to be, I need to be deliberately a little bit vague here, but we, we, we had some things like mah, something's wrong, we're not, we're not quite getting it right, and we did exactly what I'm talking about. We very specifically said this is the metric that we want to change and we formed up a growth team, put them on it and I mean this is, this is three weeks ago, and they ran their experiment. We figured it'd be a month long process, right, because you, you basically, we were experimenting the, we, we'd take a week to do the analysis and we'd go back in and get operating data for another week and then we and then we'd figure it out again as it happened. The team was super clear. We picked a good team. It was super motivated to get this done. They came up with, their first round of testing was for wide tests, right? They had control and they had four variants to go on and it was just, it was extraordinarily successful. Two of the tests did not move anything. It was going, hmm, okay that's not going to be a thing. One of them started to move it in the right direction and then we had one that was a clear runaway winner and it was like obvious we were able to call the thing off halfway through that cycle, we had got what we wanted to achieve. We were able to (inaudible) that the new control process and we were able to move on. It's a perfect win. It's not that you'd disband that team, but it's like, okay, put that one behind us. Now let's go, here's the new normal. Communicate that to everybody. Here's what we think we learned, you kind of do your retrospective and now we can move that team onto to the next problem and clearing that team so you can send them onto the next problem. That's the part where you know from the perspective of, okay, how do we manage our growth teams? Super Powerful. When you clear a growth team from a project, whether it was a winner or a loss, that's the moment of success

because now you can go try the next thing. When a growth team gets stuck, now you're in trouble.

David Abrams: [30:10](#) Yeah, that makes a ton of sense. It's almost like a celebration, getting them out there, win or lose, getting them out of that and saying, hey, we're onto the next thing. We're onto the next thing. And I love the idea of like having the culture of these growth teams is like, we can fail fast, but we just don't want to get stuck because we just have to either keep testing, win or lose that. And where do you see things for you guys continuing to evolve in 2018? Are you going to go continue the same path of just one by one, knocking out these small little things? Is it going more into acquisition? What do you guys do in here? Different.

Matt Emmons: [30:41](#) Yeah, there is. Now we're getting down to the, to things strategic and I think the best way to talk about this is, is in terms of let's talk about the digital understanding of our personas because I think this is where this is the path that we're following, right? Because now we're able to make that lead for it. We don't have to guess anymore. We can watch and it's like, hmm, we can begin to see a path. Here are the people that we are able to acquire at good rates and here's what they are doing, here's how they are using the new product and here's our opportunity to move them forward so that then begins to connect with our vision for the marketplace and what we see. We were talking earlier about work has really changed. People have got to communicate visually and these people are not designers and we've all got to contend with social media and these creative tools in the marketplace is pushing on them. They're unsatisfied. They're either too difficult or it's too cobbled together. Now, how do we accomplish this Grow by Design? I need customers to (inaudible) in field, I want to hear things that are, I don't fear this process anymore or I've gotten great results because now I know how to communicate visually. Hey, I found a way that you know, I thought I just had to put a logo on a pitcher, but now I understand that my sense of design, my aesthetic has grown. I didn't think I had an anesthetic. Now I have one. That's. That's the thing we love to hear. Ultimately what we're finding a way to do is take the work out of people's visual workflow. We're taking the work out of their sense of design. That's, that's our green light. That's our yes. What we think we know how to do and with what you're telling us that we're delivering. That's the path we go down. How do we. Now we can look at all that digital information and go, wow, these features, these products, these benefits are really communicating. Let's go further and faster down that path. These other things where we thought we knew what we're doing. You know people are confused. The message isn't getting through. Right? And so now that we have the sense of digitally, how do we understand these segments? Then how do they relate to our personas? Now we can start to quickly evaluate whether we're succeeding in the marketplace or we are not.

David Abrams: [32:51](#) So it sounds like now after all the hard work of the front end, the learning, the understanding the experiments is reaping the rewards and really dialing in from those big wins that you get from customers. So that sounds really

exciting. I would love to check in later this year and see how it goes and see if you're collecting all the amazing feedback that I'm sure you guys will because that sounds like you've gotten so granular you can only succeed with that and I'm really interested in hearing that, but due to time here, I do want to jump forward to our lightning round question. Just a quick segment here. I'm going to ask you five quick questions. You can just answer with the first thought that comes to your mind. The first good answer you can think of and that's a ton of fun. You ready to go?

- Matt Emmons: [33:27](#) Ready to go. Let's do it.
- David Abrams: [33:29](#) Let's do it. Alright. What advice would you give for early stage SaaS companies starting marketing today?
- Matt Emmons: [33:34](#) Digital segments. You've got to understand, you got to understand you have the people who are using your service at the level of a session, don't guess, no, and as much as possible do it with something that leads to accounting statistics, something that's recency, frequency and monetization base.
- David Abrams: [33:50](#) Love it and listen to this episode three times if you need to. We go through it all in this episode. What marketing skill do you think is vital for marketing teams to improve and build on today?
- Matt Emmons: [34:01](#) Yeah. What I look for when I sit down and talk with somebody as I'm looking for a blend of empathy and statistical skill, right? I can talk with a lot of people who are like, oh, well, you know, let me, let me go show you the confidence interval. Let me show you a Bayesian statistics. You know, let me get my Monte Carlo simulation out. Okay, but can you see through it and see that what I've really got is here, someone with their side gig work in late at night and they need to get this thing done and the more skill I have at producing these images and getting them lined up simultaneously for Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook, then that means I can get to bed sooner and that means I wake up fresh and that means my tomorrow's going to be better. That emotional feeling. Can you see that through the statistics? Do you see that at the end of the statistics as a person that needs to be understood? That's what I'm looking for.
- David Abrams: [34:48](#) Love that. The word empathy. I think it's so easy for marketing teams to look at numbers, statistics as just things on paper and you forget about the people behind the screen and that's amazing you look for that. What about a best educational resource you recommend for marketing?
- Matt Emmons: [35:06](#) Reforge? Get your folks into Reforge if you possibly can. Brian Balfour is just really doing a great job of, I feel like I spent most of my career doing what Brian has now said is, hey, this is growth marketing, here's how it works, here's the tenants. Here's, here's the main disciplines, here's the main skills you need to make it go. Here's how it has to be cooperative, which we all

know is true, but it's so difficult to achieve, right? The four Ps, product, price, promotion, placement, look at an engineering company. Product is almost always it's own thing, and if you haven't got an engineer along for the ride, forget about it. And Brian teaches how growth marketing teams get made and what the marketing component needs to bring to that table.

David Abrams: [35:45](#) Love that. Love that. We'll have to check it out. We'll put that in the show notes as well. Favorite marketing tool that you can't live without?

Matt Emmons: [35:54](#) Right now it's Mode. Here at PicMonkey, we have got a super strong BI team. It's just amazing and they get everything into BigQuery Forest and Mode is the, is the tool that is the tool that we use primarily to, to Query out of that. We use other things of course too. I mean, Google Analytics is right behind it and Google Spreadsheets are never far behind, but right now I'm super impressed with Mode. You can learn a lot with Mode.

David Abrams: [36:17](#) Nice. Well, I'll have to check it out. I have not seen it yet, but you know, just hearing you guys talk about it, it's got to be super impressive. What about your brand business or team that you admire today?

Matt Emmons: [36:26](#) There's, there's two that I'm really impressed with. Maybe it's just because it was just tax payment time. What Intuit has done over the years, remember how it used to be. You went to the post office and you got your forms. Now God taxes. Here we go again. Right now you go get a glass of wine, you sit down. It's like, great, here's a, you know, let's go talk about my money. Right? And I love how you use it and it remembers things from last year. Has anything been updated? I feel like you're sitting down, you're having a conversation with somebody who's got your back and it's going to take care of you to have that vision and to, to satisfy me emotionally from a process that is as miserable as paying taxes while those guys are doing something right and I've just always been impressed. There's always, you know, there's been this expansion of the idea of four p's that in addition to the four p's, you need to add on the process, the people and the physical records you get back.

Matt Emmons: [37:21](#) And when we talk about the people, what we really mean is, is, is how does that process get expressed? What's its personality? And they have done so much with what you think is just a bone dry process that really impresses me. The other that I want to mention, I bumped into just email the other day. I bumped into Litmus and the things that Litmus are doing to really change the direction of value flow in their industry impresses the heck out of me. Gone is a tool. You know, it's still there, but it's not their major business anymore. Where it's like, hey, check this email, make sure we didn't have any broken links or anything where they're really driving value in that whole sector and they're thinking about how can we address the whole enterprise with their entire email marketing capability is upscale and it's just their vision to bring that forward to the marketplace. Really impressed me. It's like, wow, somebody thought hard about this. Business has done a great job with it.

David Abrams: [38:12](#) It truly sounds like both companies, they're talking about a employee empathy and also a great deal of vision. Seeing where the product needs to be by knowing their customers, the marketplace, what they need to improve on. And it sounds like it's a continual process. But um, so yeah, I mean basically everything you've said in PicMonkey, it reflects that you have a very deep understanding of user experience and how important that is for every company to have their, their, their users understand the behaviors that they have. How do we make this better? And then the vision and probably the energy to knock it out over time. But those are some incredible companies. And, you know, man, I just want to thank you so much for your time today. It really means a lot to have you on the show. I know you're crazy busy guy. So just taking some time out of the day and sharing some of your amazing knowledge is incredible. So thank you very much.

Matt Emmons: [38:59](#) David thanks again for having us. Thanks for all your kind words. It's exactly what we're trying to do here at PicMonkey. We're working hard at it every day and, and, and we're, we're really committed to, to this task people have. How do I express myself visually in this world? That's exactly what we're trying to figure out and exactly what we're trying to bring home each day.

David Abrams: [39:14](#) Well, it's a vision you guys will continue to knock out I'm sure. Congratulations to you guys for the success you've had already. And you know, really excited to see what happens with you guys in 2018 as you continue forward. So best of luck to everyone there. And again, thank you Matt and we'll talk to you soon. Thanks again. Bye bye.

David Abrams: [39:31](#) That was incredible, Matt is truly a rockstar. Just talking to him and listening to him articulate through this call was amazing. I mean I really, my mind was blown into the whole thing and I wrote down so many notes. I've shared this episode with our team as well. You want to take away that growth marketing teams and bring that into our system and really we have to dial in on those six digital segment. I think that was a mind blowing moment for me, so I hope you guys absolutely loved this episode.

David Abrams: [39:57](#) Make sure you join us and hopefully Matt in the SaaS breakthrough community. You can do that by going to Demio/fb . That is to access our free SaaS breakthrough community on Facebook. It's a ton of fun, great place to be to learn and to continue networking with great marketers like Matt Emmons here. Really appreciate your time today. Thank you so much for listening to this week's podcast episode. Don't forget to rate us, leave us any comments or questions. This really does help us get this message and this podcast out to more marketing and education teams like yourself. Hope you have a wonderful rest of the day and we will see you on our next episode.

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