

David Abrams: 00:00 Hello, hello and welcome to episode number 49 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 Corey Haines, who is the Head of Growth at Baremetrics, a tool for SaaS and subscription companies to get the metrics forecasting and dunning they need to grow their startup. Previously Corey was the Content Marketing Manager at Cordial. Corey is a proud pug owner and nerd for all things growth marketing, entrepreneurship and software. Now I want to welcome you to today's episode. We took a little bit of some time off for the holidays for Christmas and New Year. We took some time to recharge and when we came back we had the really unique opportunity to talk to Corey and learn about his growth from Cordial to Baremetrics.

David Abrams: 01:06 Now he recently just got the position of Head of Growth and I was really interested in seeing what that process looked like for a great marketing hire to go into a great team. We love Baremetrics and what they're doing over there. We love Josh and the Transparency Movement, everything they're doing with open startups and all their blog content, all the education they do for our industry, so when we started chatting, we wanted to create something a little bit unique. We wanted to talk about Corey's background at Cordial and how he went from a new department to a growing marketing team. How he set that all up. We talked about the key frameworks that Corey learned and used to build into any marketing department, key things that you should absolutely know if you're going to be doing marketing, building a marketing team, or any of the sort in your SaaS company. We talked about how Corey actually won the job at Baremetrics to become Head of Growth. They had hundreds of applicants apply for this position and Corey was the solo winner. I wanted to know how exactly that happened. Then we talked about the exact skill set and languages you need to know to be considered for marketing jobs and what Corey thinks is the most vital skill that you have to have, and we talked about where Baremetrics is headed in 2019. I think it's really interesting what Corey is predicting, where things are going. This is a really powerful episode. You're absolutely going to love it, so don't forget to leave us a rating, comments and questions, any thoughts on the podcast in itunes. We absolutely love those things and it does help us get this podcast out to more amazing SaaS companies like yourself, but we have a lot to talk about. So let's go ahead and let's jump on with Corey.

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: 03:03 Hey Corey. What's going on man? So happy to have you here on the SaaS Breakthrough podcast. How you doing today?

Corey Haines: 03:09 Hey, great. Thanks for having me on.

David Abrams: 03:11 Yeah, I'm really excited. We started a relationship about maybe a year ago, connecting online and to circle back now and be able to learn so much from you on this podcast, it's really exciting. So appreciate you taking the time to be with us here. And for those of our audience I guess who don't know you, why don't you give us a brief background on yourself where you were working prior to Baremetrics, how long, what your role was, all that kinda good stuff.

Corey Haines: 03:37 Yeah, yeah. Thanks again for having me on. I'm a big fan of the podcast and listening for a while, so it's really cool to be on now and get to share my story a little

bit. So quick facts about me personally. I'm born and raised in San Diego, so I currently live like walking distance from our world famous zoo and Bobo Park. My wife and I got married last February. We have a black pug, so shout out to all the pug owners out there. So on the business side of things I last worked at Cordial, which was another SaaS startup here in San Diego and they're basically like a multichannel marketing platform for enterprise retail media brands. So they had clients like Revolve, 1800 contacts, Meundies maybe some of the more familiar ones, to send emails and text messages, push notifications, basically all the kind of retention marketing stuff. So we sold into like the VP of marketing, the VP of CRM, but then the end user is usually like an email marketing manager or retention marketing manager and especially because there is such a large kind of business, you know, made for really challenging industry but also presents a lot of unique opportunities. It's very (inaudible) kind of the whole Shebang. So I almost spent, spent almost two years there first as a marketing manager and then as the content marketing manager for the second half of my tenure there.

David Abrams: 04:56 And what, when did you actually join the company? Where were they as size, size wise?

Corey Haines: 05:01 Yeah. So when I joined it was basically the first marketing hire under our kind of inner rim marketing leader, and so just to get a little context where the business was at, the company started in 2014 and when I joined in 2017, I think I was employee number 12 and they had just raised their seed, their Series A. So they're doing between like 1 to \$2 million ARR at the time. And at the time it was basically like the founding team engineer, sales director, a couple of customer success people. So when I started, we were kind of just starting to do marketing before that was mostly all sales and existing relationships that they had from their last company. So our blog was nonexistent, no advertising, no marketing partners. It was basically just like PR and events, but that fluctuated a lot with, you know, different announcements or industry events throughout the year. So a few months after I started, they started hiring a product marketing manager and then slow, slow the team started to assemble. In my first year I did kind of the whole gamut of things. There really wasn't even a process for it, which we'll get into later. But you know, just seeing what worked, seeing what didn't work, just hearing back from the sales team what was producing for them. And then you know, after that I started dabbling in demand generation, lead generation and then eventually moved full time into content marketing, so creating for our blog, social media, all of our downloadable content, SEO, email marketing. Still involved in a lot of other kind of functions in the business, doing a lot of like copywriting, but it was mostly content marketing.

David Abrams: 06:37 Makes a lot of sense. That sounds awesome. And it's really interesting to hear like when you joined, when they hired, so they were just trying to make sales. They got to the certain level they need to, they raised money and they're like, okay, now we got to double down on a growth engine, bringing this marketing team that we need because they kind of just hit it hard with sales, their network events, like you said, all great strategies for early stage. So when you first came in, you're coming into the department that's not even made really, it's just kind of forming yet a blank slate. You're starting from scratch when you're just coming into that position, how do you know what to work on? How do you go about just prioritizing or systemizing what you have? You know, me and you have spoken before and we talked about frameworks that you've had to come up with to guide campaigns and experiments. So I guess talk a little bit about this process in particular.

Corey Haines: 07:26 Yeah. Yeah. So I mean to give a little bit of context, you know, when I started we literally didn't have anything going. It was largely sales driven. So me coming in, starting from a blank slate, you really have to figure out like what you need to do. So I've always been a big reader, listening to podcasts, audio books, and a lot of them started talking about mental

models. So I started getting really kind of into that, setting it, learning about it, and then I started getting exposed to some of the frameworks which are basically like mental models for marketing. I think the thing is about marketing is that it's, especially when you're just starting out or if the company is just starting out, there's a million things that you could do, but it's hard to tell what you should be doing, at the same time you know, it gets so complicated.

Corey Haines: 08:10 There's, you know, very technical at times. It's very broad at times and most I feel like most everything can be broken down and simplified into a framework that anyone can understand then you can use to filter and to make a decision on what you want to work on next. So it's really, it kind of gave me, as I was studying that and started with a blank slate, gave me kind of just a template or at least like a way to think about what we should be doing. So I started using and developing a lot of frameworks for like customer research and a framework for funnels. And a framework for copywriting. So I'll just name a few that had been really helpful for me.

Corey Haines: 08:45 One of the most fundamental ones for me was developing a framework for customer research and I have to kind of give props to Benji Hyam, Ryan Cope and Claire Suellentrop for really helping me out with this and you know, they share a lot of great stuff out there online. So I'm not gonna pretend to take credit for it all. But to get a really rich understanding of your customers, I feel like you can kind of, the one that I've developed, you can break it down to four different parts and that's who, where, what and why, which are short for like who are my customers? So getting really detailed, in the firmographics, the demographics, who they are, what kind of tools they use, and then where I can find and communicate with them. So whether that's online forums or the kind of behaviors that they do, if they search on Google or if they go through rfp's, where they hang out online, whether it's Slack groups, Facebook groups, et cetera.

Corey Haines: 09:39 What are they trying to achieve with my product? So this is kinda like the desired outcome that they're trying to do. What problems are they trying to solve for? And then why is my product the best solution for them? Then that really gets into the messaging and positioning of why you're different and what, how you can help them essentially. So if you really dig into that, get really detailed, it helps you get answers from the questions that you have already, like who's my customer - now you have a very detailed understanding of who they are and it helps you market to them because as a marketer you have to, have to know your customer really well, otherwise you're not going to know the right things to do. So I feel like this framework has really given me a very complete picture of everything you need to know about your customers. And you can get all this data, you know, through surveys, through phone interviews, email interviews, just talking to people in person. Hopping on a call really quick. Also interactions online on forums or communities, help centers. That's been a really foundational one for me.

Corey Haines: 10:42 Another one that I really like is Brian Balfour's product market channel model fit. So if you're not familiar, Brian Balfour it's kind of like a big growth guy in the industry, he worked for like Hubspot and now he has Reforge, but the first one obviously is product market fit and that's the one that everyone talks about and focuses on building the right product for the right market and then getting to a certain point where it's helping customers achieve their desired outcome with all the tools and functionality that they need. But there's also a few more that you have to have.

Corey Haines: 11:12 And one of the other ones he talks about is product channel fit. And that's essentially the growth stage of a company where there are signs or even like an established growth channel. But the thing is that the nature of your product determines the growth channels. And this is why some growth channels work better for companies in one industry than it does for the next. You know, you'll always, you'll almost never see an enterprise product grow with virality. And you'd never see a barber shop grow with LinkedIn ads, it sounds obvious the way I put it there,

but the lesson is to look for how a product fits with a channel and not how a channel fits with your product. And he also talks about model market fit, which is a match between how you sell your product and how your customers want to be sold to. So is it freemium or free trial? Do you show a demo and then negotiate or do you just go straight to a paid subscription, you know, understanding how your customers want to be sold to and then creating a model around that.

Corey Haines: 12:07 And then the last one is model channel fit. And so he explains how, how well of a method you're selling will do in that channel. So again, the channel doesn't really change. You have to fit to the channel. So figuring out how well your model matches to a channel instead of how well channel matches to your model. And usually it comes down to some metrics. So like a low average revenue per user and how low LTV products will require very low cost of acquisition methods, whereas like a high ARPU or high LTV product will unfortunately require very high CAC methods. So your model will probably eliminate options rather than inspire some new ones. But his, I've always come, you know, come back to that one as, as a great one and I'm going over a couple more, but stop me if I'm going on too long if you want to interject.

Corey Haines: 12:55 Another one I'm a big fan is a, is the kind of pirate metrics or the AARRR framework and it's really been helpful for me understanding the customer journey and where to focus on in a business. So I'm sort of developing this kind of philosophy for what I call bottom up growth and it's starting with activities at the bottom of the funnel instead of traditionally at the top because it usually working from the top results in like a leaky bucket kind of funnel situation where you designed a new website, you create a lead magnet, you hired an agency to run ads. But if you don't have an effective way to retain your customer base and generate word of mouth and produce revenue from those customers, then what's the point in bringing them in, in the first place? So everyone wants to feel like they're doing things that matter, which is usually at the top of the funnel like acquisition, like advertising, writing blog posts, or even coming on podcasts like this, but there's usually a very low hanging fruit or critical problems that you need to fix with a, what I call like the ugly duckling growth opportunities like pricing or like onboarding, educating customers, even upselling or cross selling customers, that really kind of give you, if you start from the bottom up, it allows you to build a very strong foundation and then you can go out and acquire the customers and trust that you'll be able to retain them and monetize them correctly.

Corey Haines: 14:14 And I'll skip the kind of growth hackers scoring methods and stuff because I feel like everyone's already familiar. But another one that's been really good for me and I just have to give them a shot is Robert Cialdini, his principles of persuasion. So I'll just list them, but you know, he talks about reciprocity, consistency, social proof, liking authority, scarcity. I feel like this kind of old school marketing stuff is the stuff that everyone always forgets about, but it's like so fundamental to being a good marketer, doing great marketing and even like taking an audit of your business, of your copywriting, the way that you present things on your website and using these kinds of principles and going back and interjecting this principles in there, can make a huge difference without like having to spend weeks or months on something. Just a few more I'll mention, the 22 immutable laws of marketing, Simon Sinek golden circle, you know, the start with why stuff. I still think swwt is a great framework, but those are just a few to name.

David Abrams: 15:17 That was a fantastic walkthrough of those. I absolutely love that. And we'll have to link to a lot of these different resources in our show notes. So for those of you that are listening, you'll be able to easily find those different frameworks. Is there a specific order that you go in? Because there's a lot of frameworks here. Are you picking and choosing based on the situation that you're in or do you just go through from start to finish in a certain order?

Corey Haines: 15:38 Yeah, definitely. Pretty much I would go in the order that I listed. So, you know, starting with Baremetrics about a month ago as of this recording, really started with

customer research. So understanding the customer, understanding how they're using the product. So it's going through, I have a full document on the who, where, what and why, and then moving over to kind of Brian Balfour's product market channel model fit and understanding, you know, it can be as simple as checking the boxes, but then also taking an audit of, well, are we in the right channels or do we have the right model for a market? Do we need to change our model for the market, for example, if we're going more upmarket into larger companies, enterprise, we probably need to change our model and offer a customer enterprise plan instead of just a free trial. And then working over to the kind of pirate metrics AARRR framework and understanding the funnel and the customer journey. Those are probably the three I would start with and go in that order.

David Abrams: 16:35 Makes a ton of sense and obviously it makes sense too that the first framework is the most important and strategic one because everything is then based on that.

Corey Haines: 16:42 Yeah, totally. Customers first. Always.

David Abrams: 16:45 Yep, makes a lot of sense. So you mentioned it before. You just got this amazing job over at Baremetrics. We completely love that company. Love Josh, had them on a podcast we had prior to this one. We know about that journey. He's been super transparent. I know you guys are huge on transparency and are just part of that startup movement, and I'm sure there's a lot of competition for that position because he's so vocal on Twitter and on social, but you got it. So congratulations first and foremost. But what do you think was maybe the key factor for you? I think it was pretty interesting to see the conversations on Twitter when you got the job as so many people were just excited but also interested in on how you got it.

Corey Haines: 17:29 Yeah, absolutely. So I feel really lucky to be a part of the Baremetrics' team. I've followed Josh for a few years and know the company really well. So it's, it's pretty surreal now to be a part of it. Josh and I actually haven't really talked about it so I'll give kind of my perspective. He might have some great things to share as well, but I think it's really important for marketers on growth role to be able to speak with a lot of context. So like I mentioned, I had been following Josh for a long time, so, I kind of already knew a lot about the company, about Josh, what they've done, kind of the struggles they had gone through. Even saw him poking around on Twitter, like what he should hire for, what people. I saw what people were saying and advising to him. So if you're able to speak with a lot of context, you know, it's one thing to talk about your experience and a lot about theory, but it's another to be able to almost consult with a company and you know, allows you to ask really specific questions to understand where they're coming from, if you know the product, you like, no one wants to talk with someone or hire someone who they feel like he doesn't know who they are, where they're coming from. And so, you know, obviously knowing the customers too, I was kind of where I wanted to be was working with B2B software founders and a lot of B2B subscription founders. And so, you know, since I was a fan of that I want to be, aspired to be one myself. I feel like it gave me a really good advantage of just being able to speak from their perspective as well.

Corey Haines: 18:53 And like you said, Baremetrics was really big on transparency. So I was really honest. I didn't have all the answers. I didn't pretend to single handedly 10x their revenue, you know, I don't pretend to be the smartest or the best. I think there's, the kind of the lesson is to know the company's values and to show them that you align with them. But also just be really honest, like no one wants to, it's hard to be trustworthy if you're exaggerating or if you pretend like, you know all the answers. I think one of the other things that kind of gave me a leg up possibly was being really thorough. So we had a lot of really lengthy email threads. I gave him a full mock up lists of growth experiments and hypotheses and everything. Kind of the full gamut of what we would do. So the more trust you can build and the less risky you can make yourself, I think the better you're better off you are.

David Abrams: 19:43 That's a fantastic answer. And as someone who does a lot of the hiring here at Demio and we went through a marketing hire, I think I even contributed to Josh's thread asking for feedback. I just love that answer. I think it's absolutely true. So true. You want someone who's willing to do the leg work early, who is interested in the values, who knows the customers, who can bring a new perspective but also matches like the culture that you're trying to, to build in that company. I think that's such a good answer. What about key requirements or just key knowledge things that you think a marketer needs today to maybe even be considered for that conversation?

Corey Haines: 20:23 Yeah, definitely. So I'm probably going to give a little bit of a different answer than some others, might not have heard a lot on other podcasts, but I'm not going to say that you need to learn how to code or need to learn how to do pivot tables or even that you need a strong track record. I might be a bit biased as a previous content marketing manager, but I feel like writing is so important. Writing for like kind of forces you to put your thoughts into words, edit yourself, to restructure things, to persuade and to do some really deep thinking. So if you can learn to write well, you can probably learn to be a great speaker, a great communicator, a great teacher, and especially when so much of marketing today is digital, writing is like 90 percent of what you do anyway. So it's such a foundational and key skill that it translates into other amazing skills that you need as well. And another one is, can't exactly be taught, but learning how to have empathy and put yourself in the shoes of someone else. It's probably one of the most important kind of soft skills of marketers. You have to know your customers inside out. You have to think like them, talk like they you. You have to imagine the pain and the problems that they experience. You have to understand how they make decisions. Another great one is a plug, one of my favorite books, How to win friends and influence people. It talks about the, I always remember this one because it's so simple, but he talks about the two ingredients to win someone over is to make them feel important and make them feel appreciated. If you can figure out how to make someone feel important and appreciated, you know you can get hired, you can get customers, you can generate revenue. No problem.

David Abrams: 21:54 Great answer. That's amazing. I think later in this episode we are going to go through lightning round questions and I was going to ask, you know, what do you think a vital skill for someone to improve on it, but I'm going to, I'm going to keep that answer because I think you just nailed it and I think that is so good. I have one question follow up question on that. Do you think writing means creativity or do you see writing as some of the strategic copywriting, like SEO specific content writing mindset or does writing also equal some of that creative juice that you sometimes need from a marketer?

Corey Haines: 22:28 Hmm. Yeah, that's interesting. I think it's both. Rand Fishkin actually just come out with a blog post, talks about optimizing for amplification. I think it is like the tyranny of optimizing for amplification. He talks about kind of this dichotomy of writing for Google and then writing for real people sometimes, and I know that a lot of content marketers, especially, again, a little bias coming from my experience, but there is a struggle between you want to be a great storyteller, you want to give examples, you want to give anecdotes, you want to, you know, sometimes it's not even used like the right grammar, just because you want to write the way that you talk at the same time, you have to be able to articulate yourself very well. You have to be technical, you have to be a great writer and the structure and the kind of the arguments that you make, you have to, you know, give a complete story. So it depends. I think it's both.

David Abrams: 23:22 Makes a lot of sense and I would totally agree with you. I think it's one of those hard things to balance and it really depends on, I guess, where you are in your process of your business and what your direct needs are. But I absolutely think that's so true. Now you

mentioned this before, you came back with marketing experiments you talked about, you sent some marketing ideas even into Josh. When you're going through an interview, what does it look like to bring experiments and how do you, how do you talk about them in a way that doesn't sound like you know everything and you can bring it all to the table?

Corey Haines: 23:55 Yeah, definitely. Well, if you think about it from the interviewers perspective, they're looking for as much detail as possible so, at least that's my personal perspective, that's what I would look for. So they want to know that you understand how to think about and run an experiment, they want to see examples of it. And like I mentioned before, I kind of mocked up this full list and it was basically kind of my thinking of like, show don't tell. I think it's really easy to kind of tell about, well here's what I will do, or here's a couple ideas or here's just like a brief overview of how I think about it. But the more detail the better. So give examples, explain how you think, explain all the factors that go into it. Explain how you pick a loser, explain how you shut something down if it doesn't work. I spent a lot of time, I sent, mocked it kind of all up and notion, heavy notion user. And so I kind of just explained like, look, this is just a bunch of ideas, they are not all going to be relevant. I don't know Baremetrics that well, but here's some of the things that, if I knew this or if I knew that, I could come up with X, Y, and Z, and then you kind of just list experiments, give a hypothesis, give a description, score it well, understand which channels and tactics, who's going to take, how long it's going to take to get to market. Is there a budget required? And then I would say just go at it, just go as far and deep into as possible. Look on the website, look for, you know, you can even see what ads people around by going to their Facebook page. Now there's lots that you can do to kind of ideate and brainstorm, but I just feel like the more detail you can do, the more you can show and not tell the better off you are.

David Abrams: 25:28 I love that and again, I'm thinking about what I was thinking going through that interview process and that's pretty much exactly what I wanted to see, that whole thing is what is the level of intuition, deep understanding because no two experiments will ever be the same and a lot of times when you're going through the interview process, you're talking to non marketing people, founders or managers or whoever it is, maybe HR people going through that process. So you want to be able to demonstrate knowledge without sounding too crazy, too over the top. How do you kind of balance that? That language when you're talking to them, you're telling them a lot but you're not trying to go too over the top. Is there a balance?

Corey Haines: 26:11 Yeah, definitely. I mean I think kind of most marketing roles are they have someone or at least most kind of head marketing roles, they're working with people who are non marketing people, so they could be a founder, could be a technical developer or they could even just be like a manager of sorts. So I think unfortunately in the past, marketers haven't really built such a great rapport or even like a great history with developers, or sales people sometimes. Just kind of like a tendency to ask for something without giving any reasoning or really context to it. So say for example, I asked one of our developers to add a little widget to our product to show like a notification for new content that we produce. I could say, you know, like here's the SPEC for the widget I want. And then a notification app, can you get this done by the end of the week? And that kind of makes me sound like insensitive and a little bit like an idiot honestly. Or I could say, hey, I really want to try this new growth hack by developing a widget and our navigation of our APP to show the notifications and new content. This will really help us generate more referral traffic. And get our CAC to come down. This is kind of like a bunch of jargon, so it's kind of like a balance between, you don't want to throw a bunch of jargon at someone, but you also don't want to talk to them like they're five. So I would opt to with something that's just very clear that doesn't use any jargon. So something like, Hey, I'd like to try something to encourage our customers to share our content and this could result in a lot more referrals. If we can reduce the cost to acquire a customer or something simple like this, you'd be able to get us a big win. I wrote out a quick SPEC. Do you think it'd be possible to do this with low effort? So like most other things in marketing, I think put

yourself in their shoes, talk like them, act like them, and be able to explain yourself without using a bunch of jargon.

David Abrams: 27:56 So true. The empathy part of that is, is so critical. And I think that last snippet, the way you would have talked to an engineer is kind of how you should always think, when ever talked to anyone in the team because I feel like everyone has that kind of lower level of knowledge about marketing like you said, some of them just say words like CAC and stuff like that be, it would be like, what is happening? Just absolutely no idea. And you and as a marketer, you've probably worked with engineers a lot because you're getting things developed, updated or in the product. So if you're listening and you're looking to get into one of these roles, one of the skill sets maybe you should look at is how do you communicate with the team? How do you speak to people about marketing without making it too complicated? So looking forward at Baremetrics, and specifically looking at this, like where do you see yourself taking Baremetrics? Are you looking at any experiments? Now, I know you're going through some of your frameworks right now, but, anything exciting that you're planning that we can talk about, maybe we can circle back to you in the future and see how they went.

Corey Haines: 28:56 Yeah, definitely. I think, you know, so we have a really a really exciting product roadmap. Actually, I was surprised when I joined. I was like, wow, this is actually, there's a lot on our roadmap so I think you'll find you know, in a few months, a year, like Baremetrics going to feel like nothing what's out there today. We want to create a lot of features that allow founders to act on the data and make smarter decisions. So I don't know if you saw in the last two releases in November, I think October, but released cancellation insights, which prompts churning customers with a short kind of questionnaire to understand why they're churning and then gives you opportunities to win them back. We also just released intros which connects founders with investors and acquirers. So, you know, that's just, have a really easy way to find and connect with great companies and then makes the introduction and then on the other side, founders get to choose, you know, who they share metrics with and then allows them to get introduced in just seconds.

Corey Haines: 29:49 There's a lot of product stuff on their roadmap for Baremetrics, but as far as kind of the experiments and the numbers where we want to go, we're going to be hyperfocused on revenue growth for 2019. It's again, it's tricky with kind of, especially since we're bootstrapped, we don't have any hard or fast numbers that we need to make, but the goal is within the foreseeable future to double the business. So as far as like where we're taking things, I'm really leaning hard on, and this is kind of aligning yourself with the company values and understanding where the company is coming from. But Baremetrics has always been big on transparency with, you know, the open startup movement, with you know, public numbers, revenue numbers, with the dashboards, will just sharing kind of all of the wins and losses, especially with Josh's founders journey blog and podcast. So we're going to continue to lean into that transparency, going to share a lot of our growth experience, what, like what I do. Case studies, wins-losses, post-mortem kind of stuff. Everything that we try, all the lessons we learned wins, losses, you'll hear about it.

Corey Haines: 30:51 As far as specific, some of the things I can share about, like in the near future, again I'm still working a lot of foundational stuff, but like I was talking about with my bottom up approach. I'm starting with experiments and kind of the bottom of funnel like revenue referral, so things like, and they're not sexy, but things like pricing, things like upselling and cross selling and things like increasing product adoption and making sure that we're fully using, you know, all their revenue sources that we have. Also the experimenting with some experiments around product referrals. So this is kind of one of the harder ones to produce in B2B SaaS, right. It's not like you have a Dropbox kind of product where it's like, hey, you know, share this and you'll get more data to use and you don't have to spend so much money, but you really just have to get



creative with it in B2B. So we have some fun ideas that we think are going to be shared where (inaudible) incentivized ways to create referrals. One of the big ones, I think that you'll hear about it. We're going to be working on, it's going to be our onboarding sequence. So onboarding being again, bottom of funnel, kind of activation part of the funnel there, but working on, on the wizard, on the emails, in APP messages. Again, it's hard to test for it because there's so many variables that go into onboarding, but we want to make sure that it's as flawless of an experience as possible and really optimize that to be a great experience for our customers.

Corey Haines: 32:14 And then as far as long term, you know, again, one of the things that I struggle with is there's a lot of a short term things that you can do, a lot of short term growth experiments, but thinking long term forces you to think bigger and you have to kind of balance both short term and long term. So some of the long term ones we're going to be doing are going to be a lot more around like CRO and SEO, personalization, a lot more content marketing, advertising, you know, taking a look again at like Google Adwords and you know, retargeting with like, display ads, even doing a lot of sponsorship of like podcasts or even small newsletters. So I think those will be kind of the ones that will hopefully we can check up on in a few months.

David Abrams: 32:58 That sounds good. And I think it is such a tough balance between the short term and the long term. And you mentioned a ton of experiments, so I'm assuming you'll use some of your frameworks to try to figure out which ones make priority over others based on that product fit like you mentioned before. One question that comes to mind, and this is a question that I have all the time internally, because we're also a bootstrapped company around the same size as you guys. You know, we have limited engineering resources, we have limited time in the day, when you're looking at these experiments and you're like, hey, we could do all these cool things with referrals or we could build a new upsell opportunities or changing our onboarding, takes engineering time. How are you knowing when to say I need to take you away from actual product development and real important foundational things of our product and I need to move you to marketing. When does that make the priority for you guys?

Corey Haines: 33:54 Yeah, I think it helps when you can quantify kind of the opportunity. So especially with things like, hey, we want to build a new integration or hey, we want to build a feature for a new market or you want to even make some upgrades to the products in order to serve a different kind of customer. You have to, it helps to really quantify the opportunity. So for example, if we were, if we were building a new integration, you can say, well hey, this integration, if it takes you two weeks, it'll be kind of a one and done. Obviously there'll be some maintenance. But once we had this done, now we have a growth opportunity of let's say a market opportunity of, you know, 500k new MRR overtime, or maybe it's a market cap of 1 million ARR and now you can say, well, you know, it puts some important sign because you can quantify it and the ultimate goal of businesses to grow and to generate profit. So now the engineer understands more where you're coming from. It's not just an integration for the sake of an integration, it's now the integration for the sake of growth. And so whether it's a feature or a new, a new product or if it's just kind of tweaks in their product, you can give some context of quantifying it in opportunities, reducing churn, activating more customers. I really empathize and be sincere. It's like, Hey, if you do this for us, it'll be really great. We can work on this together. But being able to, again know and argue the value of that thing to the engineer is going to be really critical for, you know, getting their time away from developing the product and in other ways.

David Abrams: 35:24 So you know Corey you've been giving gold through this entire podcast. All your answers are spot on. I love it. That was a really, really good answer. And I guess, you know, looking here into 2019, are there new challenges or things that maybe you guys are nervous for, things in the industry that might be changing from a marketing standpoint?

Corey Haines: 35:45 Yeah. I'm actually really glad you asked this question. This is something that I've been thinking about a lot. Wilson from Caught On Fire posted some sneak peeks of a blog posts he's working on about the end of the, he calls it the golden era of the digital native vertical brands. So it's, it's coming.

David Abrams: 36:01 Just read that yesterday. That's so funny you said that.

Corey Haines: 36:03 Yeah. He's coming from the kind of the ecommerce industry and in the ecommerce side of things, but he talks a lot about how a lot of brands had a first mover advantage. You know, there was a lot of breakthrough technology like Shopify and just a lot of kind of SaaS products that enabled kind of these digital native brands, low ad costs, and made for this kind of crazy growth and a lot of opportunity, but now there's so many companies doing it and these big brands come competing, ads are getting more expensive and growth is flat lining. And so I think that there's a similar or there's kind of, it's happening now or it's about to happen, something similar in SaaS especially, there have been a ton of breakthroughs in technology. There's so many startups and so many categories created. There's tons of VC out there, very low barriers to entry for anyone to start a business. But now we're starting to see a lot more challenges that are presenting, you know, they're being presented in the industry too. Especially marketers. Growth hacking kind of had its thing and is now almost like a curse word. Everyone and their mom has a blog and content marketing is probably at its peak. You know, social media is basically dead for most kind of SaaS companies, especially with the brand accounts. You know, Google, Facebook, Instagram, you name it, those are all those advertising channels are getting more and more expensive.

Corey Haines: 37:18 And a lot of, something that we really dug into at Cordial, was that there are a lot of companies now competing micro differences. They're not major innovations anymore. It's if you come from, if you, again, if you look from the buyer's perspective, you look at a category like marketing automation and there's like 7,000 companies that are all doing something very similar. So how do you choose which one is right? And with so many categories, so many solutions out there, there's even more companies niching down and creating tons of kind of point solutions that are selling for very specific use cases. So to get back to the question, I think it's both harder and easier to be a marketer today than it's ever been. It's going to be harder because there's no easy wins. There's no hacks, there's no, you know, there's not really any untapped opportunities out there, but it's easier because we're kind of back to the place where the barrier to entry is low and technology has made it really easy to execute a marketing. So the opportunity is to compete on things that are much harder to execute and measure, things like brands or things like customer experience, things like profitability even, things like defending the advantages that you already have instead of looking for new advantages. I'm sure they're going to be new strategies and new tactics, new channels, but for the most part you have to compete on the most fundamental elements again, things that used to be, again, like the old school kind of marketing things like trust and social proof and authority and brand experience consistency. So the challenge is that it's very competitive. Marketing is a, it's, it's harder to differentiate yourself, but the opportunities to go back to the fundamentals and compete on things that, that are a lot easier to defend in the long run like brands like experience.

David Abrams: 38:57 Well said. Well said. And I've definitely looked, you know, you can see this timeline of these different Martech companies popping up and this is just Martech, but just the SaaS kind of org board over the past five years and how intense the growth has been for people to come in to the SaaS space and start building these apps and the competition is so high right now and it's just about, like you said, doubling down on the long term things that really, really matter. Branding is so critical, but something that's overlooked because of the short term grow at all costs kind of thing. So they're just slamming in ads or slamming in new users but they don't build on the foundation that will ultimately be the winning force for them. So really well said. And you know, it

is definitely concerning to me. It makes me, you know, very nervous about the future. But also it's a challenge that we all have to accept and dig down on to do a really good job for our customers more than anything.

Corey Haines: 39:59 Yeah, I think, I think a lot of marketers maybe are like kind of daunted about, like well, what's the next big thing, or where do we go from here? Or what do we, what do we start doing it again? But again, looking back on it, like you don't have to look for the next big thing. Maybe there will be a next big thing. Like I said, there's always gonna be new channels and new opportunities, but I think it's an opportunity for marketers to get back to very fundamental things that are going to be more long term focused instead of short term.

David Abrams: 40:26 Exactly, yeah. We're kicking off a big for us this year, a big round of content writing, knowing that we're probably going to shut down some of the short term things that we have been experimenting on at the end of 2018 and just say we're in it for the long term. We're in it for the long haul. We want to create great content that people love. You know, brands that come to mind, Baremetrics, Groove, Wistia, Intercom, Drift, companies that have created these amazing brands but built for the long term. So I love that answer and I think it's great, but based on time, what I want to do is I want to switch over to our lightning round questions. We will only do four today because you kind of already answered the marketing skill already. Kind of went through that one. But let's go through these next four questions. I want you to answer with the first best thought that comes to mind. Is a fun little game. Ready to get going?

Corey Haines: 41:16 Yeah, let's do it.

David Abrams: 41:18 Let's do this thing. All right. What advice would you give for early stage SaaS companies starting marketing today?

Corey Haines: 41:24 Hmm. Definitely know and stay as close to your customer as possible. So know, you know, go through the who were what why framework, or any other frameworks that you can use for customer research, but know and stay close to the customer as well. Your customer is going to evolve and change, especially for early stage SaaS when maybe you don't quite have product market fit yet or you're still figuring out which you know, who are your best customers? Know and stay very close to them, understand their needs, be on the phone with them, send out surveys and know them very deeply.

David Abrams: 41:55 Love it. Such good answer. What about the best educational resources you'd recommend for learning about marketing or growth?

Corey Haines: 42:01 Yeah. I don't know if I can do one, but I'll mention a couple. As far as a book, there's tons of great books out there. Actually just read Seth Godin's This is marketing, so I'll throw that one out there. I think it's a great book for understanding, again, going back to the fundamentals of marketing, that book is amazing. It talks a lot about culture, a lot about buying behavior, a lot about what marketing is at its core. A lot of great, some courses that have been really fundamental for me, Growth Converts, Customers from Content course has been amazing for content marketing. Ryan (inaudible) million dollar marketer. He had me on scholarship and props to Ryan. That guy's amazing and that's probably like a, it's like a PHD in growth marketing, as far as some of the other things, a lot of great other resources, I would say just get involved in the community, follow marketing growth leaders on Twitter, you know, read Growthhackers, get into Slack groups, grab a coffee or a virtual coffee with someone. Get to know people because people, are, you know, they share a lot more than what they do on blog posts if you can talk to them one on one, I think you'll find there's a lot of value there.

David Abrams: 43:01 Such a good answer. What about a favorite tool you can't live without?

Corey Haines: 43:05 Yeah, I'm a huge heavy Notion user. It's literally my dream tool. So everything for me goes on Notion, to do, spreadsheets, documents, notes, Wikis, everything. So I don't know what I would do without Notion. I really hope that they keep going.

David Abrams: 43:20 Me too. We actually, we actually just signed up. We have our entire team now in there. It gets kind of expensive with your entire team, but it has been critically helpful. We moved a lot of stuff out of Trello into Notion is just such a good tool. So really good recommendation. What about a brand, business or team that you admire today?

Corey Haines: 43:37 Yeah, I really admire Drift, so shut out to DC and DG, I love those guys, David (inaudible) and Dave Gerhardt are, those guys are geniuses. They're super genuine guys. I met them this last September at the conference, you know, the company is doing all the right things. They have a great product. Seeking Wisdom is another great podcasts out there. So I really admire all the, all the people there at Drift.

David Abrams: 44:00 Great company. We had some really great people on from Drift on the podcast and would love to get Dave Gearhart on here as well and talk to him. But such a great company. Really great example of things that you had talked about earlier in this episode about the long term focus, the brand empathy, understanding, knowing how to talk your customer's language, all those things. They epitomize that. So just a great, great recommendation. And Corey I just want to thank you. This was kind of an unconventional episode for us, but I think this was a great episode, because we were able to talk about so much tactical things for marketers who are often a lot of the listeners that we have here, you know, looking to get into new positions, looking to maybe change how they communicate with their team or build those new frameworks as they transition into new areas. So I just want to thank you for sharing so much and being transparent like you guys are at Baremetrics.

Corey Haines: 44:55 Yeah, absolutely. Thanks so much for having on anyone out there you know, feel free to reach out to me on Twitter. You can email me [corey@baremetrics.com](mailto:corey@baremetrics.com) anytime. Would love to talk anything growth or career related. But I appreciate the opportunity again thanks.

David Abrams: 45:08 Thank you so much and we will talk to you soon.

Corey Haines: 45:12 Alright. Talk to you later.

David Abrams: 45:31 Well that was a great episode and I just want to say a big thank you to Corey for being so transparent and so open. It's one of the key values that Baremetrics truly has, and I appreciate him bringing that forward onto this podcast. We did this a little bit differently than normal. It's a little bit of a change of pace for this podcast. You know, typically we talk about specific experiments or things that are working, but we wanted to do here was take the real effort approach of a lot of our viewers like you, audience members like you who are listening to this podcast and wondering what they can do in marketing. So for those of you who are looking to grow their career or apply to new opportunities or to build into that head of growth or head of marketing position, this episode was for you. We really try to dive into the tactical, the tangibles of what you need to to win these positions, who do you have to become. What do you need to learn. I learned a ton on this. I really appreciate Corey for bringing so much of his own knowledge to the call and just sharing them with us all, and if you love this episode, again, please don't hesitate to go over to itunes. Leave us a comment, a question, leave us a review. I'd love to give you a personal shout out on next week's episode for that comment. Just do that on itunes. It helps us get this podcast out to

more SaaS marketing and education teams like yourself. It means the world to us. We put a lot of time and effort in the podcasts. We want to help our SaaS industry. We absolutely love being a part of it. You know, if you want to continue this conversation more, feel free to join us in our SaaS breakthrough community. It's our free Facebook group. You can go to [demio.com/fb](https://demio.com/fb) and you'll get a link join sign up, come speak to a lot of the guests that we have on these calls and if you want to get any more of the show notes, transcripts and resources that are talked about in the episode, head over to our blog [learn.demio.com](https://learn.demio.com). We have every single episode listed, all the show notes, all the guest information, everything that you need to continue your educational learning experience from this podcast. I do just want to say thank you so much for listening and we'll see you next week.