THE MOBILE GROWTH HANDBOOK

2021 edition

feat. highlights from the Mobile User Acquisition Show

The Mobile Growth Handbook

Some helpful thoughts on the challenges of growing mobile apps, from the Mobile User Acquisition show. In-depth, actionable insights from the smartest folks working on the fastest growing mobile apps in the world based on 90 episodes and thousands of minutes of audio.

MobileUserAcquisitionShow.com

The Mobile Growth Handbook

“The future is here. It’s just not evenly distributed.”
- William Gibson

Every year has been ‘the year of mobile’ for about a decade now - and it often still feels like we’re just getting started.

I’ve been fortunate enough to see the explosion of mobile from the very early years. Thanks to our amazing guests on the Mobile User Acquisition Show, I’ve had a window into not just how consumer adoption has taken off on mobile, but also to see how practitioners like us have consistently pushed the envelope.

This short book distills the most relevant and impactful insights from about 90 episodes, and thousands of minutes of audio, so that marketers, leaders and practitioners can fast-track their development and understanding of the mobile growth space.

The playbook might change in 2021, but the principles won't - and we hope this handbook will help you see and internalize the timeless principles that you can adapt to your future plans.

There’s a lot in here - thematically organized into 11 sections. Think of this book like a buffet to dip into, rather than as a book you read from cover to cover. Come back to it as you face new questions - and reference the original episodes and transcripts for more detail.

Bon appetit.

The giants on whose shoulders we stand. Huge huge thanks to our guests and their companies, without whom this book would not be possible.

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SECTION 1:

APP STORE OPTIMIZATION

📖 Learnings from 200+ app store conversion tests – with Sharath Kowligi 🎮

Sharath Kowligi is a Performance Marketing Advisor. At the time of recording, Sharath was the Director of Ad Monetization at GameHouse.

Link to full episode

What really moves the needle in the app stores

There's a lot of evidence that shows that on the App Store, especially on the Google Store, the thing to look for and the thing to change is really the big giant thumbnail for the video and the icon.

Testing reveals the unexpected

He had this classic portrait that he had drawn almost as an in-joke, it was like an 18th century painting of a girl: a nurse in a battlefield helping a soldier. And when we looked at that icon, we were like: this is terrible, no one's going to like this, this is not the game at all, this is horrible; you're turning it into some random romantic novel when this is a very serious game, and all those things. And then when we tested it, it knocked it out of the park, and it took three or four days for the results to come back from Google, and it was easily, at least 40% better than this consensus candidate which everybody said was great.

Not testing is not an option

We discovered it because one person said something, the rest of us said oh this is horrible; and then it was, wait a minute, it costs nothing to test. If this is, and even if we're completely wrong, the cost of failure is super low. It's 400 people, 500 people, maybe a 1000 people who will see it and make a different choice. The cost of it is super low, even if we are wrong. And if we're right, we improve everything and of course then we go apologize to the guy who got it right by buying him a coffee.

Epiphanies take consistency

But I think what ends up happening is if you're sticking with a product and you're waiting for that one giant amazing idea there, you know, okay, this is going to make your career as a creative director or this is going to make your career as a performance marketer, then you're going to be waiting a long time. I think experimentation needs cadence, like we did a couple of hundred tests on this but, of course all the great companies in the world run numbers, dozens of tests practically every day. And the way to really approach it is systematic, it's to see what is the cadence rather than what is the big idea, because once you get in the rhythm of it, once any team gets in the rhythm of it, you get better at it.

You may be overthinking things

Whether it's in this kind of testing or another kind of testing, two out of three experiments end up with a result of no difference, even if you think that we're making two things that are completely different, quite often the audience just doesn't care about what we care about.

Find your own answers

Typically, in my experience, at least in the US, I don't see a huge difference between something that is a killer creative on Google being a total dud on iOS.

Having said that, everyone's got to test this thing out for themselves, because maybe a proxy landing page is better for somebody on iTunes and maybe just importing Google results to iTunes is better. But what I can say is once you run this experiment once or twice or even thrice, you'll have your answer. If you have a great killer result on Google and you deploy it on Apple and you don't see a bounce, you know that your Apple is different from your Google, if you see the same kind of killer bounce on iOS, you know, that you can disregard a couple of blog posts out there that say it's completely different, and that for you it's actually pretty similar.

🖥️ How to automate your team's organic & ASO metrics tracking — with George Natsvlishvili 👥

George Natsvlishvili is the Head of Organic Growth at Glovo.

Link to full episode

How to collect all data in one dashboard

All information was included in our ASO KPI dashboard from different tools like iTunes, iTunes Connect, Google Play Console, from different third party tools, like Apptweak or Sensor Tower or Appfollow as well. We try to pull all information in one landing page to increase the visibility of the process, to increase the efficiency of analysis that we are doing, and to automate the process.

Important KPIs

The most important metrics are first time downloads, conversion rates, and the conversion rate: people who are on the app product page versus people who download the app. Of course, we also look at the app rating details to see the trend of an app rating on a daily basis in this dashboard as well.

Why all the metrics should be in one place

There is the opportunity to look at which places you were featured on the App Store and Google Play Store. It is also very interesting to look to because this gives an uplift in traffic as well, so you can get an idea why traffic increased immediately. You shouldn't spend 1000 hours looking for different tools, to look at what you're going to do.

There are insights in the ratings

You can interpret the ratings, or if something's wrong with the ratings, or if you have a bug or something's wrong, you can immediately look on a daily basis. You can see if you have many 1 star ratings, you can immediately react and inform your developers that something's going wrong.

How to get to a high confidence level on your tests

I try to do repetitive tests, so if I do one test, and it's successful after one-two months, I repeat the same test to make sure that this is a winner because the confidence rate inside Google Play Store is so low — it's like 90%. If you know statistics, the lowest should be 90-95%. So 90% confidence is super low. To improve it, we are doing repetitive tests.

💀 Welp! Our revenues dropped 75% – and they were all organic – with Sharath Kowligi 📉

Sharath Kowligi is a Performance Marketing Advisor. At the time of recording, Sharath was the Director of Ad Monetization at GameHouse.

Link to full episode

The first metrics to look at for a 'hygiene check'

The main things to look at are ANRs and crash rates, because that's just basic hygiene. You want to make sure that the software doesn't crash in any app, whether it's a lifestyle app or game, what have you. It is, at the end of the day, software and if the software crashes, no one can use it.

How to understand qualitative feedback

I will also look at something like an aggregator for customer comments. And I recall that, when we started doing a lot of copywriting campaigns, it makes sense to look at reviews to use users' words and do your ads, that also it's really worthwhile to just look at a word cloud of all user reviews.

Diagnose not-so-great metrics on Android

If your organic to paid ratio isn't well over one - and if you're buying more paid traffic than having organic traffic in Android, I would say, something's up because the algorithm does a fair job. And on iOS, I would say it's probably good to have a one to one ratio, because if you have a good crash free application that does what it's supposed to, and what I mean by that, if it's a free app, then does it have good engagement? And if it's a paid application, does it monetize well enough? Have good user reviews? I would say both of those are good, broad metrics to look at.

Apple metrics can be somewhat opaque

Unfortunately, Apple doesn't give you the kind of insight in terms of – exactly here is where bad behavior threshold lies and point B is exactly where you are. And this is a much of an improvement you need to make. I would really enjoy having those kinds of metrics on Apple.

When to start paid UA while recovering from an organic drop

Paid advertising is probably going to be useful if you don't see an automatic recovery of all organic traffic at this point after you resolve these particular issues with the refund, the particular issues with the temporarily low 3.6 reviews – if once that's sorted out, rating doesn't automatically go up. At that point, I would say, okay, we don't have any major crashes. We've solved our refund issues, we've solved the review problem because that was also temporarily related to some other bugs. And now everything is cool for paid UA.

🤲 How to save $3mm in marketing budgets through App Store Optimization - with George Natsvlishvili 🌟

George Natsvlishvili is the Head of Organic Growth at Glovo.

Link to full episode

Which keywords do you focus on?

It's better to rank on a top one or top two positions on a lower competitive keyword and lower traffic versus to rank on 20th position on highly competitive keywords because you will not be visible and you're going to lose your keyword space.

The direct impact of ratings on conversions

So, there is a huge correlation between conversion rate and ratings. So people, especially the browsers who browse and who are landing on your app page see and scan your app page very well and their main focus is on your ratings.

The impact of 7%

We increased conversion rate by 7%, but in total our traffic is very large, so if we improve even 7%, you can imagine that it brought approximately during the short period of less than one year more than 3 million marketing budget savings for us.

The cons of a third party testing tool

I am not super satisfied with this third party tool because they redirect it to a fake screen. So the user behavior for our visitors shows that some of them think that it's connected to a bug inside the app. So we want to avoid this, and now we are focusing on testing on Google Play Store.

Testing is not a one-time activity

We retest our successful tests — that's the only way you can guess if the results are true or not. Also, we test before and after metrics, so we can get an idea.

Small changes can have huge impact

So we ask a person, as soon as he has a positive delivery, to rate our app. But the text that we showed on the popup message was super long, so no one wanted to bother reading the whole text. So we'd get a lot of "no" in this case. So, we just switched to a simple, one-line text, and it actually works much better. We increased our rating by 0.2 because of this text change.

Unexpected ways to get incremental lift

Many apps that you see think it is enough to be on the App Store or Google Play Store or other app stores, and that this is enough traffic that they get. But they are missing out on a lot of opportunities because there is a lot of other incremental traffic from web users that don't use the app or they don't like to use these app stores.

The benefit of hyper specialists

Instead of hiring new people and doing many of the jobs, we are focusing on efficiency and optimization. So, in terms of hiring an internal person, we have a highly qualified external person, so freelancers are working on ASO and SEO.

Automation is the key to cost efficiency

Everything is right here with one click, so instead of hiring a person to do this job, we ask our ad tech team to automate the process. For us, it's very efficient, it is one of the most efficient teams in our company because we have already brought more than 3 million marketing savings for the company with three or four people working on my team.

💫 How to improve an app's rating from 2.3 to 4.5 – with Mirela Cialai ⬆️

Mirela Cialai is the Senior Global Marketing Director - CRM, Subscriber Growth Retention at Zinio.

Link to full episode

Ratings can change dramatically overnight

So when we noticed that our average rating dropped so significantly, that's when we realized we had a problem. So we basically started reading each review that was posted after the migration. We started sending out surveys and we managed this way to identify the most frequent topics that the customers were complaining about, which turned out to be some of the features that were left out from the old apps. For example, the ability to delete multiple publications at the same time or the ability to download multiple publications at the same time.

How ratings affected paid marketing decisions

So we basically completely stopped doing any paid marketing during this time as it would've been a waste of our money. We all know that ratings affect the conversion rate from impressions to installs. Less than 10% of visitors that landed on our app page would have downloaded our app because our rating was so bad.

Identifying happy customers from in-app actions

When is a Zinio user most likely to be very happy with their experience in the app? And to this question, we came up with several answers. At the moment, it could be right after they made a purchase or after they interacted with the content by bookmarking an article or sharing an article or after several consecutive sessions in a very short amount of time.

The impact

In a few months we were able to recover and even surpass the average rating pre migration. So pre migration, our average rating was 4.2, immediately after post migration we dropped to 2.1, within a few months increased to 2.3, and currently we are at 4.5 stars. And also our app store rating has also increased, and now we are in top 20 within our category.

User segmentation to solve the ratings problem

You looked at 20 segments that were likely to be pleased with the app experience, tested app rating prompts on a small segment of these, and really doubled down on what was working.

How to prepare for ratings after a redesign

I would say, first of all, they should brace for impact because it's coming. I would definitely start by identifying the most popular features, sending a survey, finding as many channels as possible to communicate with your user base and your fans to alert them of the coming changes through all the possible channels: email, social, and in app. Also, offer instant and easy access to customer support so users can get a good response. Offer as many non-public feedback channels as possible. Try to divert the negative feedback from the app store and prepare for as many negative scenarios as possible.

🤙🏾 The non obvious benefits of icon changes 🔄

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Icon changes bring 'em back

For one of the games that I was working on, we tracked reactivations in our internal database. In other words, one of the key metrics we would track was the number of users who had lapsed or the number of users who had not been active in the app for over 60 days but had returned to the app in the last 7 days.

And then I looked at this data and made a correlation with when we change icons. I noticed that every time we made an icon change without changing anything in our product or CRM strategy, we would immediately see a very dramatic increase in our reactivations.

👣 What not to track while measuring the impact of app store optimization (ASO) ⚡

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Keyword rankings do not always result in traffic

For instance, if you look at meditation or fitness or weight loss – users actively search for these things. We weren't in those categories, we were a game. Consequently there were hardly any keyword searches that were relevant to our game. I mean, nobody is going to search for Match 3 games.

So even though these keywords are very relevant to us and even though we ranked highly for these keywords, it turns out, these were not resulting in any organic traffic.

🔢 How do you quantify the impact of App Store key-word optimization (ASO) activity? 🔑

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Do a pre-post analysis

The best way to quantify this is to establish an organic baseline for a specific country – and do a pre-post analysis while keeping paid marketing activity roughly constant.

SECTION 2:

UA CHANNELS

🤯 How to scale UA like a hypercasual game – with Matej Lancaric 🚴

Matej Lancaric is a User Acquisition and Marketing consultant. At the time of recording, Matej was the Director of UA at SuperScale.

Link to full episode

The key metric for hyper-casual games

The CPIs can be low, but the LTV is the thing we are measuring, and it's all about the margins between CPIs and LTVs. If your game has, I don't know, 30 or 40 or 60 cent CPIs, it's still the LTV that matters, and the margins you can generate.

How creatives factor into UA

But the creatives should be super simple and straightforward, very short and fast-paced, very immersive – obviously, showcasing the gameplay, but in a very important way. I think you already saw these noob vs. pro videos for hyper-casuals, and everybody does that.

Ad set structure for campaigns

We can have two ad sets, male versus female, or we can split the ad sets for age groups. So one group is 13 until 24, 25-34. So we have four ad sets for male in one campaign, and then – in one geo, in one campaign. And then, one geo, different gender and the same, actually, age groups.

The strategy for UAC

Let's take the UAC here, we are actually focusing on events, so I'm setting up the Appsflyer or MMP you have with the events, for example, how many ads were watched, so we are targeting 5 ads per player, 10 ads, 50 ads, 100 ads.

🔓 How to unlock the power of paid content marketing using Outbrain & Taboola – with Sandra Wu 📱

Sandra Wu is the Director of Growth at Himalaya. At the time of recording, Sandra was the Paid Content Marketing Lead at Blinkist.

Link to full episode

Why choose a paid content flow

The reason why you would choose a paid content flow with them is because it offers you an opportunity to capture people while they're in reading mode - so it's actually a perfect match with the content flow.

Images and headlines don't have to match

A lot of people ask me whether you got to make sure that the image matches the headline; it's not necessary at all. Because the people looking at these ads don't perceive it as one item. The image attracts and leaves almost no impression whatsoever on the person - and when they look at the headline, that would be their first impression of the product.

And that sets the expectation about what's going to happen afterward, and how likely they will be to convert after looking at this headline.

Qualify audiences by setting expectations

This is the concept of targeting through creatives. You're not just relying on lookalike audiences to find the most qualified traffic; you're relying on setting better expectations with people. And you do that through copy.

The extra step in the funnel is an opportunity

The most important thing is that you've got to make sure you have a good article or landing page to begin with. The way to do that is to choose an interesting idea that you can write 800 words about, which would do a good job of selling your app.

It wouldn't work if you have an article headline, or a landing page headline that sounds like a plain ad. It just doesn't do well, because people don't actually benefit from having that extra step in the funnel. And in the end, it only hurts you. So I would say come up with a really good value proposition that you can write a lot of content around.

Why you should match headlines to publisher styles

When it comes to actually narrowing down a good headline, I would say: try to mirror the style of the top publisher that you think you'll be advertising on. You can get this information on Outbrain or Taboola's websites—you can see what kind of publishers there are. Or you can even get in touch with them and say, "Hey, I'm interested in this market specifically. Can you tell me what your portfolio looks like in that market?" and do some research from there.

I'll give you an example: if I'm advertising in the US on Outbrain, I know that CNN is going to be my top spender. So I will keep the language a little bit more journalistic. But if I'm advertising in the UK, and I'm working with Taboola, I know that most of their inventory is tabloid news. So the language can be a little bit more casual. Even with Business Insider, I can keep the language a little bit more casual.

Sensationalism works

The one thing I do is add sensationalism to my headlines. It's not clickbaiting. Some people confuse the two. I use a lot of buzzwords. And I find that this is a pretty good way of increasing CTR, while still having qualified audiences.

For example, someone writes a headline that says 'Moms like this app'. I wouldn't write it like that. Because I've been in this industry for so long, I will never settle for such a plain headline. I would probably rewrite that 'Moms are praising this ingenious app'. It seems very buzzword-y but this way of dressing it up is actually pretty good at raising the CTR.

When to choose the content flow

I see a lot of apps going for the App Store flow, because it is much easier to get right. You don't have to hire writers to actually write articles, or designers to design a landing page for you. And also, I do see quite a lot of gaming apps going for this option. It really just comes down to the unique selling point of your app.

Like I mentioned before, you've got to come up with a piece of content that would benefit from having that extra step. If an app is plain and simple, and it's free—which is the case with a lot of gaming apps—or if it competes on pricing, then you just want to send them to the App Store as fast as you can. You don't want to have an extra step in the funnel, where you could lose people. So the App Store flow makes so much more sense, if that's your app.

But if your app is, say, high-end. Maybe it requires a bit of explanation, like, for example, Blinkist. It was the first of its kind, really, and it is so hard to explain what we do in one sentence or in 300 characters. Having this extra article or landing page made a lot of sense. It really got the buy-in from the users. So in that case, you want to go with the content flow.

You still need to sell

They'll say, "Oh, we don't know why our campaigns are so bad." And I would reply, "Okay, show me what kind of landing page you've used." And then I read it. I just say, "Where do you talk about your app? I've been reading this for like two minutes; I don't see anything about your app. No wonder it didn't work." Just because there's content attached to it doesn't mean that you need to suddenly switch gears and only talk about things that would be suitable for The Economist. You still have to sell your product. And don't wait too late.

💻 Thinking out of the black box to win with Google UAC – with Natalie Drozd 📦

Natalie Drozd is a Digital Marketing Expert.

Link to full episode

Your bids will influence placements up to a point

Your bids can influence where your ad will be shown. And if you bid higher, it doesn't mean that you will get more valuable users, it will mean that you will get more competitive options; which is more valuable for Google, not always for you.

Why YouTube conversion rates are lower

When you're playing a game and you need to get a rewarded video to get one extra life, you don't want to buy anything; you just need to watch this video till the end to get your extra life. When you're on YouTube, listening to music, or just watching a show, yeah, you're watching the show, you are not here for ads. That's why the conversion rates are lower. That's why the prices are higher, but the quality is not usually as good.

The ideal campaign structure

What I don't recommend is running different campaigns for the same event in the same location, even though people usually say that they are excluded because you're the same advertiser. From my previous experience, it didn't work. If you run, for example, 3 campaigns for the same event with different bids, only the campaign with the highest bid will work and you will not get very different placements.

How to set up non overlapping cohorts

For example, you have subscription, you have in-app purchases, you have ad monetization: those use case scenarios are so different that you see that those cohorts do not intersect. In that case, you can separate campaigns for in-app purchase or for rewarded ad watching.

Machine learning needs data to work

You cannot have 100 ad groups and only 10 installs per day because the system will not learn. What I always try to keep in mind, Google is machine learning not artificial intelligence. If you don't give it enough data, it will not learn. If you give it enough and create good circumstances, it will work well.

The cost of machine learning is tied to events

And that's why it's so difficult, for example, for games with monetization strategies with an in-app event of hundreds of dollars to optimise, just because it's not easy to find users who are ready to pay for it. Unlike Facebook, you don't have audiences in UAC, or on Snapchat where you can also get audiences that are localised. Here, it's on machine learning and that's its drawback; it learns, but its learning has a cost. And the more expensive your events are, the more expensive your learning is.

How to structure ad groups

I try to use semantic separation, breaking it down into different use cases, or tone of voice, or even the messaging I have.

I look at Google like a tree, and every ad group is a different branch. And you can offer different things in there, use different keywords in text assets, and also images or videos with different main ideas or main call to actions used as well.

It really helps because, according to what I learned, Google optimises its audiences in the campaign at an ad group level. And that's why we can see that sometimes CPI can be different on different ad groups. That's because for different creatives they find different people. Surprise surprise.

Testing creatives

So what I do is to test new assets in install volume campaigns on small budgets, because they are cheaper. And you can see if any creatives can get impression volume, because that's extremely applicable to videos. From 20 videos, usually only one or two get impressions, based on my experience.

Campaign changes only once a week

What I try to do is I make one change in one country, and I dedicate myself fully to this location. The next day, I'm working with a different country group. Let's assume one day I work with the US only: checking all the creatives that are going out; checking: is the bid enough? Does the budget need any changes? The next day, I'm working on Latin America, then I'm working on Europe, then in Asia. That means that all the campaigns have enough of my attention, and I give them enough time to optimise and to check if the new creatives are going to work or not.

100k campaign changes a day

Google runs different creatives on its own; it doesn't just change placement, it changes text. Sometimes it may happen after 100,000 changes per day, and you don't even know about it. And that's why you have to be patient and to leave it at least for a week to let the machine learning figure out if it can find a good audience or not.

😎 How to nail mobile user acquisition on TikTok – with Natalie Rozenblat 👯

Natalie Rozenblat is a Senior Performance Marketing Consultant at Phiture. At the time of recording, Natalie was a marketing strategist at Incipia.

Link to full episode

The structure of the ad on TikTok is very different

If you just click on an ad, it will actually pause the video. If you swipe up, it'll take you to the next page. It's kinda like you're scrolling through the feed. So again, I think it's really important for marketers and creatives to be familiar with how the organic content is, and it'll help draw inspiration for creatives as well.

So just swipe up, swipe left actually will take you to the App Store landing page.

How auto creative optimization can yield great insights

I think that with auto creative optimization, what helped us quickly identify creative and text copy that worked right off the bat was the combo to use in evergreen ads.

The challenge in getting spend on creatives

With the logic that TikTok has and how the algorithm pushes the ads, it's based on an eCPM rank, so it's your bid times your click through rate times your conversion rate, and it'll force traffic on those winners. The rest won't get any traffic.

Using ad tags to drive interest in the app

An example could be you have a game that has a new update that just went out. And it has a level that features ice cream, so you create an ad around this level, and you use an interest audience for food. Then use relevant ad tags like ice cream cone or waffle.

Testing aggressively reveals wins

What we've been doing is just looking through TikTok. You can search by users, top content, hashtags. So we've been looking at hashtags, and it gives you a number of views for each hashtag. And so we're finding ones with millions and billions of views and just loading them up. Anything that's remotely relevant that has more than a million views. We've tested a ton, probably over 20 different audiences, and so far we found one win with doing that type of relevancy with the ad interest and ad tags.

Some viral levers are surprisingly simple

There's this sound on TikTok that you can use that I've seen a ton of people doing with their content. It's something not even that crazy that you wouldn't think would go viral — something like a satisfying sound like someone cleaning their window. And it's like, look, that was just 1000 views right there. It's just so easy to go viral.

It is easy to get started on TikTok

We were starting to build an endorsement pipeline really of people to make these videos. If you can't find anyone or you don't have a budget to do it, just see if you have friends who are willing to do it and have them record themselves, and the TikTok video editor is super easy.

Best practices for videos

I think that their best practices are at least 9 second videos, max is 60. I just noticed that they updated their best practices for short videos to be between 9 and 15 seconds. For us, we find probably an average of 25-30 seconds that works.

Look beyond the established influencer pool

We've really just been reaching out to people who have funny, creative content with over 10,000 likes on a couple different videos. Basically their audition tape is their profile, so I recommend just DMing them, seeing if they'd be interested in making some content and working with you.

🗝️ How to unlock scale outside the duopoly – with Misha Syrotiuk ⛓️

Misha Syrotiuk is the Head of Growth at Huuuge Games. At the time of recording, Misha was the Head of Ad Networks and Programmatic at Huuuge Games.

Link to full episode

Your spectrum of DSP options

There's a relatively new type of self-serve DSP or self serve programmatic option available on the market. This would be very similar to Facebook in the sense that you have full control, you can make a decision where you want your ad to be served, on which audience lists, on which look-alikes, etc., which bidding options. However, the challenge here is that because you have all the control, you want to do changes very quickly and you may end up not maybe waiting enough time, or not plugging in the right algorithms.

Why look beyond Facebook and Google for ads

It's also good for the companies who probably have some limitations with Google and Facebook; for example, gambling is a highly limited area where media buyers cannot purchase media everywhere. In our case, we are social casino advertisers. We also have limitations on Google, in which countries we can purchase media; for example, in Russia, UAC is not available for social casino, whereas Facebook is available but it's rather limited in terms of inventory. So if we, as a social casino advertiser, want to purchase media in Russia, it's good to go beyond Facebook because Google is not available.

The programmatic learning curve

If you go on Facebook, for example, and you promote, as in our case, social casino games, Facebook already knows who is the right user. So if you upload another social casino game, Facebook knows what kind of user they had to show ads to.

If you go to the programmatic media space, unfortunately, they cannot use other advertisers' learnings onto your company, so they have to start from scratch, and the first few weeks there would be exploration where the main purpose of programmatic would be to lower the customer acquisition cost, or the CPI. Then once this is done and they are able to collect payers' information, they will start adjusting to modify the algorithms to acquire the right payers, not just the lower cost per install, for instance.

What really makes campaigns work

The creative is not the number one reason that a campaign will be working or not, but the targeting is something that would define whether the campaign and cooperation is working.

The importance of transparency

One DSP partner had purchased a few hundred installs from a publisher, let's call them ABC. The quality was great. However, the concern that I had was that this publisher was where a few friends of mine are working — and it doesn't serve ads, and they have a different model and so I reached out to them directly and I asked, "hey guys, did you change the monetization model and start serving ads?" The answer was no.

So I brought it up to our DSP partner which understood the case and took it up with the exchange where the installs were purchased from, and then we got charged back for the amount of money that we spent on this publisher, which then was fraudulent.

"Welp! I don't see my Google UAC installs in my MMP"

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Google's iOS tracking issue

Installs coming from search on iOS do NOT get passed back to MMPs from Google.

Expect underreporting

If you have search, display and Youtube ads, your MMP will pick up display and Youtube installs – but not search installs, so your installs on iOS are always likely to be under-reported.

⚠️ "Why we don't run Google UAC on smaller mobile user acquisition budgets." 👌

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Beware the learning phase

For small budgets(say $500 a day), Google's learning phase can take anywhere from three to five weeks before the campaign start to stabilize, before you start to see stable numbers, before you start to see reliable metrics coming back in terms of your CPA.

Learning comes at a price

That's really $14,000 spent just on your learning phase before your ROIs and your CPAs come within the range that want them to be. That $14,000 – $15,000 budget can be extremely high for most app developers.

🤔 5 reasons why Facebook's Automated App Ads aren't ready for prime time yet 🥑

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Creative opacity

You don't see which of your 50 creatives are doing well (while you have some performance metrics, you don't see for instance cost per unique purchase for each creative. You don't also see creative performance via the Facebook API or in your MMPs – you just see one single AAA ad with its performance aggregated, which does not help).

Hard to reverse declines

Once a campaign declines, it can be challenging to reverse – which creative caused the decline? What placement? You don't know – so you don't know where to intervene.

The win that wasn't

Indeed, one developer we know saw wild success with AAA – and provided a case study for Facebook, only to find out that performance dropped precipitously afterward and never fully recovered.

SECTION 3:

STRATEGY

"WTF does 'fix the product' mean?" - our 6 question checklist to assess UA readiness

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

These are the 6 questions we recommend asking:

1. How strong is our activation rate? (registration completion, FTUE completion, free trial %)
2. Are we seeing strong engagement for organic traffic? (session length, session frequency, session time)
3. Are we hitting retention benchmarks for organic traffic? (d1, d7, d30 retention)
4. Are we hitting monetization benchmarks for organic traffic?
5. Are we seeing strong ratings and reviews?
6. Are we generally free from bugs and tech issues? (crash rates, ANRs)

🌪️ Inside the storm: what the Coronavirus pandemic means for the mobile app ecosystem – with Eric Seufert 🎬

Eric Seufert is the founder at Heracles Media and Mobile Dev Memo.

Link to full episode

All the signs of a disaster

What is the economic impact of this? What could you compare it to? For me, it's like hurricane Katrina hitting every single metro area in the world all at the same time. Because if you look at what happened with Hurricane Katrina, retail was shut for three to six months, in a lot of parts of the city. The hospitals were overwhelmed or completely shut down. Everybody was basically unable to go to work. And so that's exactly what's happening now.

The cost of the pandemic

But what else is really problematic—if you've been following the sort of layoffs lists—Silicon Valley companies that are not in these verticals that are actually touched directly by the quarantine are laying people off. Why is that? Because they were running unprofitably for so long and they understand that there's probably very little access for the rest of the year to private equity financing, or VC financing. So they're just laying people off – they're shedding costs.

This is the time to be conservative

What I would say is just be conservative: within your assumptions, be conservative in terms of your models, be conservative in terms of your payback windows, be conservative in terms of your cash outlay, be conservative in terms of your budget distribution across channels.

The importance of being mindful of cash flow

Some of the smaller advertisers, they could be spending 500k, a million a month, but they're running on a credit line that has a 2-3 month window, and then they've got to pay their expenses back in a shorter time window than that. And if that credit line gets called, they're not in a good spot. So I think you're going to have to be very conservative. And you need to know when your cash is coming back.

🥇 Winning together: How to unify product and user acquisition teams – with Nebojsa Radovic 🤝

Nebojsa Radovic is the Director of User Acquisition at Zynga. At the time of recording, he was the Growth Lead at N3TWORK Inc.

Link to full episode

Why the explosion of casual games is at least in part due to different media buying strategies

All the changes that happened on the UA front made promoting mid-core games much harder in the last four years, and that's why casual is winning and all you see nowadays are ads for Playrix games or Toon Blast or Toy Blast — games that are significantly more casual. This is a byproduct of Facebook and Google moving to different types of buying.

How to respond to market dynamics as a team

Then when you work closely with the game team and see that something's not working, and it's really hard to promote a particular type of game, then both of these two teams can work together to either change the appeal of the game, improve onboarding, or go even deeper and build games that do really well on certain types of traffic or certain types of monetization.

As games age, you have to target broader audiences

What works on the UA front changes as the game gets older. Usually, when you start running UA for a certain game, you tap into the golden cohorts, and usually the performance is really good. As you start spending more money and more aggressively, it's really hard to maintain the same kind of ROAS goals, which is why you also need to change the way you approach the creative. You need to go after a slightly broader audience, and that requires a different kind of both product and UA strategy.

Understanding market trends while making a new game

I think when game teams start working on a new game, they need to understand what are the current market trends, what are the current creative trends, and whether the gameplay they're trying to build supports the theme they're using – and can actually provide them all enough opportunity in the market where they can grow that game and turn it into hopefully a 100+ million dollar game.

Effective teams do not exist in silos

We started working on goals together for the game team and the UA team. The goal for this month would be let's say, we're going to spend $5 million or $2 million. We would work with the game team to see what that would mean in terms of the revenue for that month.

We would start working on predictions and figure out what the daily targets are for that month. Then we would work together towards hitting that goal. I think that's quite crucial because games won't grow without UA teams, and UA teams won't be able to spend more money if games are not performing, so there is a virtuous cycle there. They can easily turn into a vicious cycle if things start falling apart. That's why the game teams need to consult with the UA teams and talk together and just understand, "Okay, how do we drive more users? What can we do to improve the UA performance?"

Managing expectations is key

I still remember the days when we would do a tier four incent campaign where you're paying half a cent for user, one cent per user, and the retention drops, ARPDAU drops, everything looks like crap. The game team just freaks out. But if the UA team does a good job of explaining and giving a heads up to the team that something like that is going to happen and what the impact on ARPDAU is going to be, the game team is going to be just fine. As long as the revenue is growing, they'll be grateful.

Retention is tightly coupled with UA and revenue

A lot of games have an issue where everything looks great in the first 30 days, but after 30 days, numbers just fall off the cliff. That's usually because of lack of content in the game or poor long-term retention. If people stopped paying after 30 days, that means the revenue stacking is not occurring, and that means that you have to keep your payback windows really tight in order to keep your campaigns profitable. That's why the UA team needs to understand what the retention profile of the game is, how the revenue stacking occurs and what it looks like.

Design teams also get insights from game metrics

In terms of design, UA design, and game design, one thing to play around with is because the game is event-based, and we have different characters in the game every week, can we design characters in the game that are converting while on the UA front? In order to minimize the friction that we talked about earlier on, can you improve the performance of your campaigns by finding specific topics and specific themes that work well on the UA front and have them in the game and vice versa? For example, we did some audience research two years ago, and we realized that people who play Legendary like heavy metal music, tattoos, and cosplay. Then we were testing those themes on the UA front in order to see whether the ROI is actually going to improve if we do that.

The role of the Product Marketing Manager

For larger companies and teams, it might be smart to have Product Marketing Managers mainly because one of the shortcomings of this approach is that you're really looking to work with a unicorn who can understand both functions really well, and there's not that many people who can do both things.

🎮 How to build genre-defining gaming studios - with Michail 'Mishka' Katkoff 🌈

Michail Katkoff is the CEO and co-founder at Savage Game Studios and Deconstructor of Fun At the time of recording, Michail was the Head of Studio at Rovio, and was still running Deconstructor of Fun.

Link to full episode

Art over presentations

The number two for me is always software and art over presentations. So in a lot of studios that I worked with, it was very important to show different types of presentations and calculations on how much money this game makes. They're almost valued in a way that if you come in you say like, listen, this is a billion dollar opportunity, we're going after this, suddenly your game becomes more important, even though you might not have anything, rather than a game that is having 10s of millions of revenue coming in.

So I first was adamant in the sense of software over presentations, but I've actually changed my opinion a bit and when I'm kicking off new games, or new studios, I always start with the art director, I think it's really important to kick off visual development, because not only is it able to portray your vision, but it's also able to encourage and inspire your your engineers because they all want to work on it.

Keeping it humble with competitor research

And there was this thing that I read about a Call of Duty studio, I think it was Sledgehammer or Treyarch. And when they originally started, every Friday, they would devote a full day of playing the games of their competitors every Friday, full day.

And when I thought about it, I was like, that's crazy. 20% of your time playing games. Yeah. And I was like, wait a minute, we make games. Like as I've gotten older, and I have family, I don't have time to play games at home. So it makes total sense to have everybody playing those games. And for them, it wasn't like, we're gonna have fun. We're gonna eat Cheetos and drink Coca Cola and play games in our underwear. No, no, they were taking notes that we're discussing. They're playing their own game. They were playing their competitors' games and being humble. It's being humble and seeing what the other ones are doing.

Telltale sign of disinterest

And one common characteristic with the unsuccessful games was that the team did not play their own game. And you can see it from that. Like if you're not interested in what you're doing, why would your player be?

Different strokes in a game dev team

So the artists or designers in that case were industrial designers, where they approached the problem in a way that they looked at details, and they started bringing the big picture up from a small detail to a larger scale.

With engineers, it was always: what is the most efficient way to do this? Not the best way but the most efficient way. And, with business people like myself, we approach everything based on benchmarks. Well, this game does this, this game does that. This is the market. You combine this and this together, you get this and this and by numbers, we're able to communicate very clearly to the upper management and usually through that we're able to kind of get the foothold even though the foothold might be wrong.

New elements can bring a fresh perspective

And genre defining doesn't mean that you create something that absolutely hasn't been seen before. If you think games like let's say, Hay Day, or Clash of Clans, for sure you've seen farming games before. Yeah, Hay Day was different. Yeah, it had different elements. But what really made it genre defining is it was first of its kind on the touchscreen device and it was really designed for it. And there were some cool elements that made it quite quite unique and that's how it blew up.

🎮 How to make superhit games by deeply understanding player motivations – with Paula Neves 🎲

Paula Neves is a Product Manager at Square Enix.

Link to full episode

Why AAA focused gamer motivation models need to be adapted to free-to-play

There is an axis that's fantasy versus realism, and another one that's builder versus explorer, and you would score your game on that axis. But that axis is very AAA, like fantasy realism – you can't talk about that in mobile free to play, like when you have all these match three abstract games. So a big part of my job here was to go back to hit the psychology books and say, how can I get this essence but try and transform it into things that make sense for mobile free to play.

Aligning team members' visions

If you use the taste maps, which is what I just mentioned, you have basically the four charts and you score your game against all the factors. And it's a really interesting communication tool, because we wouldn't do it together. If we were in the same game team, I would do it separately, you would do it separately and then we would, the main stakeholders would do that exercise, and then we would talk about it. Typically we would see very different very, very different results per person. And then I realize someone's vision for this is completely different than mine. So the first thing is that we align our visions of stakeholders, that saves so much time, so much rework and so much time.

There are many ways to approach pre-prod

I've done it where people would think on their own time and then we would adjourn in a four hour meeting to align everything because this alignment period is never fast, because you're ironing out the communication. I've done it in a way also that we took a week to do a workshop focused on figuring out the vision and the mission and everything for the game.

The way to overcome resistance

The best way to mitigate resistance is when you pitch something like this, you come prepared with articles, with things that will show people that it's not just me saying this will help us because these other companies did this, because I've done this in the past and look at the results that we had. So usually when I see resistance, I try to fight with evidence and data.

User testing is critical

We tell the team, "Listen, these are the archetypes we came up with or the personas or whatever word you want to use. Let's do two things. Let's run user tests and ask them specific questions and see how they're playing." But also something that really really helps us is putting in game surveys – and these in game surveys, they work in a way where they ask users about specific features.

Player analytics contain great insights

We have their user IDs, as well. So after we do that, we go into our analytics platform, we check their IDs, and see how they're playing the game and see if it makes sense with our vision of that archetype playing the game, and what they're saying that they're doing. So user research helps us throughout the whole process.

How to use UA to test archetypes

The way we like to approach this is to do appeal tests. What would a creative look like for persona A, for persona B and for persona C. So if persona A is more of a thrill driven person, we will look for the most thrilling features that we have or that we've currently planned and put that in the forefront in the video or in the static, videos are better for that. So we will do that for the different ones. We will gauge CTR, if the game is already in soft launch, you can gauge metrics all the way down to the IPM.

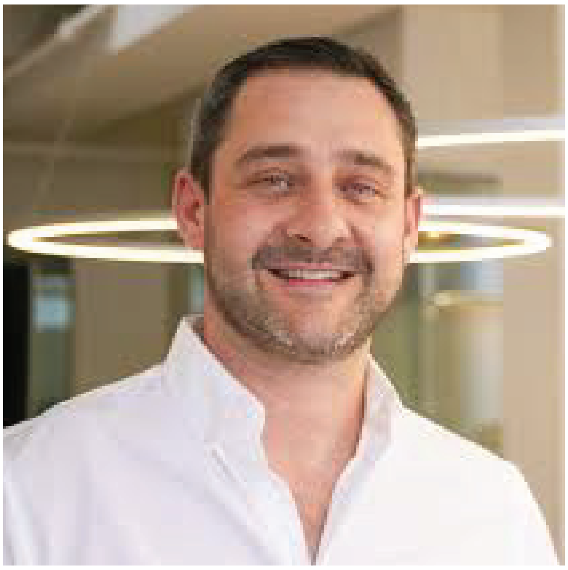
Validate expensive changes with models

And we detected that maybe if we put some specific social things in the game, where I could invite a friend and play directly against him and not just a random multiplayer that we had, we had a hypothesis that that would bring in that extra peer pressure and engagement that we needed for the long run.

So that was our hypothesis and we used the tool and the models to validate that, so we started scoring our game. And lo and behold, our game was pretty low in the specific social competition aspect. So the framework helped us before, because it was a feature that was costly to develop. So before we went all in, the model helped us validate: do users really want this? Is there really a need for this? Of course, at this point, you're also reading the user reviews. It was very clear to us after we scored the game, that there was a gap there. So an opportunity was there for these social features. We went ahead, we did it.

And we did it in the way that not only brought engagement but also you could literally invite people that didn't have the game installed. So it brought up virality together with it and it was like from day one we had a 30% increase in just organic users coming from that alone. It was already a pretty established game with a large DAU. But it was instant, the way it helped us. So it was a validation tool in that case.

💸 How to finance your app's growth without accessing venture capital — with Mark Loranger 📈



Mark Loranger is the founder of Braavo Capital.

Link to full episode

The one question every founder should ask

I think that fundraising is always contextual to what you're trying to accomplish as a business. For some entrepreneurs, they want to build billion dollar companies, so the earlier you can raise larger sums of money, the better off you are because you can attack a market opportunity faster. However, that comes with a major trade off. I think that's really the question that most entrepreneurs should ask themselves very early on in the process: what am I trying to build?

There should always be a Plan B

For entrepreneurs and app founders, one of your core responsibilities to your organization is to create optionality. Optionality means having different options for whatever the next phase of the business is, depending on the circumstances that you're in. Optionality in the case of funding is, what types of funding options are available to me, and how do I value those funding opportunities?

The dependability of B2B LTV

Particularly with consumer products, like apps, it's really hard to build a tremendous amount of enterprise value in the form of users because users generally churn out from consumer subscriptions. VCs love B2B SaaS because you hold on to users for years and years, and they actually get more valuable over time. It's difficult in consumer subscriptions to maintain those same sorts of increasing value on a per user basis.

VCs and virality

Obviously there's a few examples in the market of companies that have just come onto the scene and grown very rapidly — TikTok is one that sticks out in my mind. There's always a chance for that sort of viral growth to get VCs excited, but otherwise, there should be something really unique and some sort of long term competitive advantage you can create through technology or through some unique vision that you have for the business.

Venture capital brings its own limitations

I think the non VC path allows entrepreneurs to continue to have the optionality that I talked about before because taking a different type of funding, some non VC funding, doesn't limit your ability to take VC funding in the future. However, if you take VC funding early on, then you are forced down a path of trying to create a venture scale, which means billion dollar potential enterprise value, which is very hard to accomplish and most companies fail at creating venture scale.

Steady and moderate success is still success

It may be a great profitable business and you'd be very happy and successful and work four days a week. One of our earliest clients, their business grew really exceptionally. They bootstrapped, they got to a point where they're ready to take on non dilutive funding, and they've grown to 700 or 800k a month in revenue. They have a very comfortable work life balance, and they don't have investors telling them what to do. They can work on side projects.

Can you imagine that your business is making 600-800k a month, and you're working on side projects because you've just built a profitable, fundamentally sound business with a good product and good marketing. That's not so bad. In a worst case scenario, if you want to sell that business, that business has real value. You don't have to sell it for 100 million dollars to be really successful because you haven't sold any of your business along the way.

Bandaid vs. cure

Even if you do take venture capital, or even if you expect to take venture capital, taking a different form of funding that's non dilutive can extend the amount of time that you have between funding rounds or until you need to raise money — it's runway extension.

How to use wins to fuel scale

If you have really quick, early growth on a particular UA channel, in my mind, the best approach would be to leverage your receivables because those are growing really quickly, spin it right back into that platform, and see how much it can scale.

Venture debt is not an unalloyed blessing

The biggest challenge with venture debt is if you raise it, it'll be a big number. They'll throw out 5 million to you or 3 million to you, that's if you have enough equity in the books to support it. You may not be able to spend all that, and then you're committed to a larger chunk of money that you have to pay for that you couldn't spend because you weren't able to scale into that opportunity. That's risky as well.

Lower risk during iOS 14

My recommendation in this case is similar to what I said earlier for a company that's just starting to hit some scale with a new ad platform or a new UA channel, but doesn't have any certainty that it's going to be successful in two months. It's the same situation here, which is, I would be careful to rely on making really long term commitments to whatever plan that you had previously and to whatever assumptions that you took into your modeling previously.

100+ page documents, source code printouts and more: how to crack international expansion – with Josh Burns

Josh Burns is the founder of DigitalDevConnect.

Link to full episode

The case for starting with what you know

One of the things I see companies do of all sizes, is try to think about all the different markets in the world when they're building their game and trying to make a game that will resonate everywhere, which is in my perspective, sort of impossible to do.

I think in the end, there are some games that do resonate globally, but that was never the intention. My feedback is always focus on building the game for the audience that you understand best – if that's your local market or targeting a specific user or a certain type of gameplay, focus on that, get that working really well and then you can start to think about how you expand internationally.

One small step to going global

For the smaller developer, the best and most accessible first step and maybe only step is to translate the game. Make sure it's for markets where they don't speak English or whatever your main primary language is; make sure it's localized and localize the apps or pages.

Why China remains an untapped market for game developers

If you look at the top grossing games, you look at the top public companies in mobile gaming, most of them do nothing in China, because it's just too complicated to deal with. Even though it's the biggest market in the world, they just don't want to deal with the hassle.

In terms of the process, in the last couple of years, the government basically said that every game that is released in China needs to have a ISDN, which is essentially a license code, a license to be live. So, as part of that process in the recent past, the amount of information that you have had to submit is quite significant. So on the one side, the volume of information is very high. You even have to print out the source code of your game.

Bureaucratic red tape can be interminable

You submit everything, they review it, they're like: no, there's still an English word in here, you can't have any English words; or oh there's a skeleton that's taboo you can't have that; or this is real blood or something. So, then there's back and forth processes that just take forever, and then you're waiting to go in the process. For a foreign developer, the other complexity is that you can't actually even participate in this process.

Complexity and competition in China

I think the one thing I will say is that over time, the number of companies interested in publishing foreign games in China has declined. The market has become more competitive. The complexity of releasing any game has gone up. The market was always competitive – and then you throw in this crazy regulatory process, the bar has just increased, for those that still want these games because there's the minimum effort is so high now to even release anything.

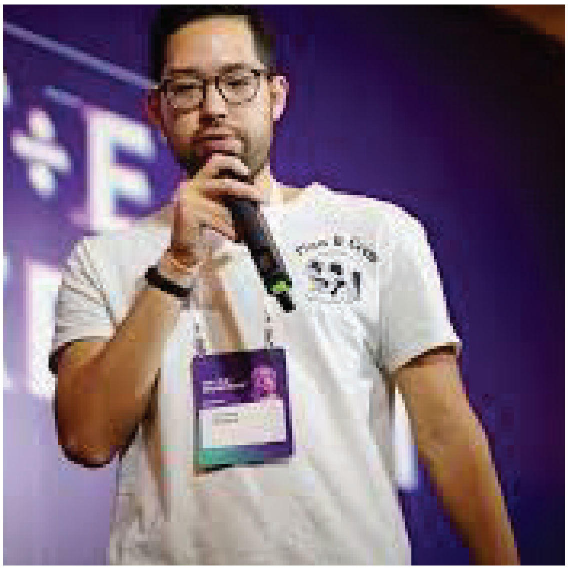
The reality for games that make it big in China

The key takeaway is just having a realistic sort of perspective on the potential of your game in China, because people are like, oh, China, it's the biggest market in the world. I'm gonna hold back and do all these complicated things, like talk to Tencent and Netease and whoever. And we're going to have this crazy launch and do all this stuff and the reality is that that's for 0.1% of games.

SECTION 4:

LAUNCH

🎮 How to start a game studio with a $500 budget – with Kentaro Sugiura 💸



Kentaro Sugiura is the founder at Evelong Games and former Head of User Acquisition in APAC at BoomBit.

Link to full episode

How to compete with a classic game

The classic games don't have many differences between an indie developer and a big developer because the game is very simple. Just imagine Solitaire on Windows 95 and Solitaire on the latest Windows, there's not much difference in terms of gameplay. So, this is good for me because I don't have as much resources, and I'm not funded as well.

Hiring developers for a classic game

For the typical Sudoku project, I was looking for my developer on freelancer.com. Basically, you can post a project, and some people post some offers for you. I post a description of what kind of game I want to make. For me that is Sudoku, so I don't need to explain it so much. And I also put some of the references, so I asked the developer to play these games, and tell me that it is possible to do that or some of the functions, what they can do with the budget.

Building from scratch isn't the only option

If you want to make classic games, I think that it doesn't matter whether you make the app from scratch or you buy the app from sellmyapp.com because the game is very simple to make.

Simple yet effective strategies

I'm defining some geos which have a reasonable CPI and also easy to climb up to the top 1 to 3 ranking in the puzzle category. So, my idea is that I try to maximize the organic traffic and decrease the eCPI in the sub selected geo.

How to prioritize metrics

I'm not optimizing the campaign towards the CPI because with CPI, if we ran an incentivized campaign, we can go really low. I'm optimizing actually cost per day 7 users. For me, the most valuable users are people who stay in my game on day 7. Based on internal game metrics, if people stay to day seven, it's going to be profitable.

Testing changes with game genre

With hyper casual, you have to try 10, 20, 30 concepts that you go to the next level to production. I think it's a little bit difficult to do it by yourself. You should have a team to do that.

Making the leap from marketing to development successfully

I think a lot of people are saying that having a game or game studio is difficult maybe because there's no skill or they don't know how to make it. I know a lot of developers working on a game, but I have never seen a marketer working on their own game. As I described before, it's not difficult. Just go freelancer.com, post it, and we just did the very minimum initial investment, which is very affordable.

🤔 How to hit the No. 1 rank on the iTunes app store – with Nadav Ashkenazy 📈

Nadav Ashkenazy is the GM at Supersonic Studios.

Link to full episode

There is a formula for marketing the right title

If you pick the right title, and if you are making the right choices and correctly optimising both creatives and CPI, you should get a significant amount of installs and then find yourself at number one or two or three or even seven or whatever is possible.

Quality is the key driver of organics

Today, the main way to get a bigger portion of organics is the quality of the game, and less because of its place in the charts. I would say that today, the K factor purely because of the charts, wouldn't be more than 5% or something similar. The rest, 20-25% or whatever you get, depends on the game. I assume it's coming from virality and not from its place in the charts. It used to be 20, 30, 40, 50% from organics, that's not the case anymore.

How to evaluate a game for potential success

We're looking at the game itself for the retention, play time, game characteristics and potential to add rewarded video. And we estimate the potential LTV of the game. And then we see if the game can generate significant profits and scale.

Top 10 is not the goal, it's a byproduct

What we actually do is we are not trying to estimate what will take us to the top 10. We're trying to estimate and to make sure that we are not spending money that is not needed. So to answer that first of all, once we decide to go into global launch, we are optimising everything toward profit, not toward the placing the charts, maybe it will be number 40. Maybe it will be number one.

If it is number one, my risk is that it could have been number one for a much better higher margin, and pay too much.

It is important to be responsive

Once we are optimising the UA on a daily basis, we are looking at day 0… many times day 1, day 3, but a lot of day 0 because if there is change in trends, we want to react as fast as possible. If monetization drops because X Y Z, we don't want to wait until day 3 cohort and find out that we lost money for 4 days when we are already ready to react on day 0 once we see the day 0 was lower than what we expected.

The growth manager

In Supersonic, we have a title growth manager, who is the owner of the title for both supply and demand, ad monetization and user acquisition. He is the full owner of the title, so his responsibility is to take this title that was picked, designed and improved in our gaming hub.

🙌 How to get your app featured on the Apple iTunes store – with Steve P. Young 🏆

Steve P. Young is the founder and CEO at AppMasters.

Link to full episode

The difference between featuring on Apple vs. Google

The difference between Google and Apple is Google is more algorithm based and Apple is very editorial, so they want to see a beautiful app. So, I think if you're a game, what I say is, it's easier to get a new game featured than it is an updated game unless you're one of the big game publishers out there.

Time your request right

There's a form called appstore.com/promote. You should fill out that form. On that form, Apple usually recommends 6 to 8 weeks before you launch. If you're a non-game, then it's 6 to 8 weeks before a big significant launch.

Cold emails still work

When you cold-email somebody, it is very important to know a little bit about that person. What we do is we do a lot of deep research to try to figure out what commonalities the client, the app developer, has with this app store manager. So a specific example is in October, a client of ours, we found a person, we did everything, we came up with 5 different subject lines, but he changed the subject line to "from one Midwesterner to another" and he talked about where he grew up and how he found out that's where she grew up, and they made that relation.

US and international app store managers

Now, if you are in the US, you have to know that the international people, they usually have one app store manager or a few app store managers for the entire categories; but for the US, there's different categories, there's actually app store managers for games, there's app store managers for different categories.

App store managers share

They always say, I want to be featured in the US – I am like, don't worry, if you reach out to somebody in India or anywhere else, Canada, they're going to forward it on to the rest of the countries.

Google uses an algorithm

What Google would generally do is based on some of the metrics, like your retention, your growth, your crashes, they're going to probably just feature you.

How to showcase your featured status

I think the best way to capitalize on it is obviously add it to your screenshots — having social proof in your screenshots. I have stats that say, "Look, they do improve it," we've doubled downloads for some of my clients just by adding that screenshot.

Use WWDC to pitch your app

What I try to do, now speak to more on the WWDC side, which is the Apple conference, is I try to meet with all the app store managers. There are workshops that you can sign up for through the app on a day out, and you try to meet with every single app store manager that you can.

3 Three steps to a killer soft launch – with Matej Lancaric 🚀

Matej Lancaric is a User Acquisition and Marketing consultant. At the time of recording, Matej was the Director of UA at SuperScale.

Link to full episode

First, ensure you have no crashes

In the technical phase of a soft launch, you're looking at mostly a crash rate or an ANR rate – everything that blocks people from playing the game. We just need to be 100% sure that people can play and play well.

Putting onboarding under a microscope

In the retention stage of a soft launch, it is really important to measure the tutorial completion rate, besides the classic retention rate 1d, 7d & 28d – the onboarding flow of the user and measuring each step from the flow to check if there is not any problem which might cause people to drop out.

Quick results on Google Play

I started to do soft launches on Google Play. Why? Because, I don't want to wait two days for Apple to review the game. Basically, the game is live on Google Play in a couple of hours.

Monetization tests are expensive but beneficial

In the monetization stage of a soft launch, you would need 10,000 users for a month or 20,000 which can be obviously pretty expensive. But this is the time you can prepare for the global launch and then you are budgeting or trying to allocate some budget for a global launch, so you need to be, not 100% sure, but 200% sure, even more. So you don't want to waste the money. That's why obviously the monetization stage will be the most expensive, but you can definitely benefit from this stage.

Soft launches are just the beginning

One mistake that people make is they think that soft launch can be done in one month. Because they think: we did everything needed in development. And now we just launch the game in a couple of countries and do some iterations. And then the game is ready for global launch in one month.

But well, definitely not. I mean, you still need to be in this soft launch for three to six months to see how the players or the cohorts mature. There's still a lot of things you need to test like creative testing, testing the new UA channels—there's tons of stuff you need to do before going global. Yeah, and you just can't do it in one month. That just can't happen.

Kill your darlings

We need to speak about the other side, not only going global but also you have to sometimes kill the game. Because if you don't see your KPIs improving, and you're stagnating on the same numbers, then it's just better to kill the game right away, because you are missing out on the opportunity of creating something better and something else.

SECTION 5:
CREATIVE

✏️ How to set up a high-impact creative process on and off Facebook – with Danika Wilkinson 🧪

Danika Wilkinson is a product marketer at Social Point.

Link to full episode

What to look for when testing creatives on Facebook

So, when it comes to creative testing outside of Facebook, we're specifically looking for what creative has the winning IPM; what creative has an IPM that is the same as or higher than our current control.

Whereas on Facebook, basically what we're doing is looking for what creatives are terrible; what is absolutely terrible that we want to eliminate. Anything that is okay, or really good—if you're lucky—but anything that is just okay, we see that as a low risk to push into live campaigns. Because, at the end of the day, if you are doing creative testing in an MAI campaign, you don't know how that's going to perform when you push it into an AEO or VO campaign.

If you have an extremely low IPM, below 1 or maybe even below 2 on an MAI campaign, it's pretty safe to say that if you put that into an AEO campaign or VO campaign, it's not going to take off; it's not going to work. But if it's okay—it's not amazing, but it's not bad—then it's a pretty good candidate to move into your live campaigns.

The importance of considering all metrics together

We also make sure we don't become too IPM-blind; that we don't let focus on IPM and CPI—these really high funnel metrics—take away from everything else post-install. So it's important to always be looking at your retention, looking at your LTV, and thinking: 'Okay, if my retention might be a little bit lower than what I would like, I may want to include more gameplay into my video.' or 'Maybe if I want to increase the LTV a little bit, I might play around with adding some more casino-style elements, like coins and currency and that kind of thing.' And that might be interesting to that segment of players, for example.

Why tacky, ugly creatives work

We started to think: "Well, why do these ugly, tacky creatives work?" We started to investigate, and we realised the target audience that we're going after—the best audience for us—they're also really into casino games and Solitaire, which are games that typically aren't the most beautiful. They tend to have a lot of flashy graphics and block colours, and things that are going on. And therefore that kind of ad is the most attractive to that kind of user.

🖊️ Why ad copy is critical for mobile UA campaigns – with Erich Detert 🏃‍♀️

Erich Detert is the Client Solutions Manager at Facebook. At the time of recording, Erich was the Sr. Performance Marketing Manager at InnoGames.

Link to full episode

3 types of ad copy

I've essentially broken down the types of ad copies that I use into three types: clicky, representative, which would be on the opposite end of the spectrum compared to clicky, and balanced ad copy, which would be a mix of the two.

There are use cases of all types of copy

Ad copy that is often more clicky has shown higher CTRs for us, average to lower CVRs, and less engaged users and early churners. But most notably, I've seen up to about 20% higher CTRs for clicky texts in relation to text that is more representative.

It is important to consider down-the-funnel metrics too

With ad copy that is more representative of the product, we do tend to see lower CTRs, however higher CVRs, and higher engagement rates post-conversion, as these leads generated are more or less pre-qualified leads.

The ad copy rule of thumb

In my experience, the more wordy the text, the lower the clickthrough rates and higher the cost per acquisition.

Longer ad copy has its place

One of the longer ad texts that I use is 18 words long, but it has one of the lowest clickthrough rates, and we generally see significantly higher CPAs: like upwards of 30% more. But we do see good ROAS with these ads as well, because these texts are a kind of like a pre-qualifier for us.

Different types of copy, different results

Generally, I would say clicky copy, you know, will help you generate more awareness for your product, drive more traffic, whereas representative copy will help you deliver more on the pre-qualified leads.

Video ads are a different ballgame

Ad copy in video ads, in my experience, hasn't shown as significant of a difference, as it has with still images unfortunately. In tests that I've run, I've seen up to about a maximum of 5% higher clickthrough rates of using more clicky language, and less than 5% higher conversion rates when using more product representative but still persuasive language.

🏆 How to create story-driven ads that drive massive performance – with Gonzalo Fasanella 🎮

Gonzalo Fasanella is the Chief Marketing Officer at Tactile Games.

Link to full episode

A different approach to creating characters

The story was always serving live-ops. So if you had a new character, it was always because it was a live-op, a daily reward or something that was needed for the game, in terms of the economy of the game and to serve some purpose like that.

So what we thought is that we didn't want to do that; we actually wanted to do a game that was more like a mobile series; have something in between. Ours would be a series, a show and a game. And we started to do characters that would serve the story.

What users think about ads

One of the things we did in the beginning, was understanding how annoying the ads could be. When we were asking users about how do you get new games; we were discussing with the people in focus groups—most people would say that as soon as they have an ad in front of their faces, they would just put their phone down, wait for 30 seconds and look at it again.

Funny or cute aren't the only emotional reactions

We thought that everybody—well, most of the competition was trying to do something either funny or cute. And that would be 90% of the ads that are out there. And then you had the ones that were just about showing the game or the metagame, and it doesn't have anything—it's not constructed as an ad, it's just a lot of elements put together. But for the ones that tried to do something, or send a message across, it was either cute or funny.

So what we said is that we needed to explore other types of emotions. And that could be anything: that could be sadness, or it could be anger, or it could be anxiety, could be anything. The only thing was to try to do something that was strong—a strong emotion—but not only a positive emotion. Just any type of emotion that we can trigger through an ad.

It is critical for everyone to feel ownership

Every time you put an analytical guy that is a media buyer and has a business-oriented profile, with someone that has a creative-oriented profile, together in a meeting, and they have to discuss about what video to do next, what to iterate, the guy with the data behind pitching, with the ability to pitch, the ability to convince people, will tend to win 99% of the conversations. So everybody will start doing what the UA person wants to do, which not only doesn't bring very good results all the time, but it really diminishes the morale of the person that needs to develop the videos, because there's no ownership for that person.

Keep the metrics simple

What we did is we created a single tool where you can see a couple of KPIs that are the most important. And when I say a couple, it is literally a couple. We try to digest that data in a way that is very accessible for anybody's videos. So they can see overall what videos are working the best, in which operations, etc. So they can get more granular in understanding.

Virality shouldn't be a goal

Many people ask: "What do you do to go viral?" The only recommendation we can have for anybody asking that is just don't think about it. Don't look for it. The more you look for it, it surely will not happen.

How to automate the UA processes

Everything starts from having a reliable lifetime value, a machine learning algorithm that you can trust, of course, and then being able to develop systems that pivot around the lifetime value of a user and to do things like, for instance, uploading bids automatically, to do things like upload creatives in bulk in a single place. And of course, you want to have the ability to not use too many user interfaces, so they don't have to go through many dashboards.

And then we also automate the monitoring of things. Like we automatically decrease bids, if we see that the publisher is really bad. We have a lot of sets of rules. We developed something that we call—not very humbly—Super Bidding, which automates the whole process, and we have super bidding that is automatic. And then we have something that is semi automatic. So we have a set of logic rules that you can use in order to set a strategy for your bids. And then you have a fully manual version of it, where you could use the UI and people just can go and set up a bid.

😆 How to improve your team's creative hit rate – with Gabe Kwakyi 📍

Gabe Kwakyi is the founder and CEO at Incipia.

Link to full episode

How the creative hit rate is defined

We define the creative hit rate as the percentage of creative assets that end up becoming a hit divided by the total number that we're producing.

Identifying a hit creative

You see that hits also hog spend, you'll see all the spend starts to go to this one asset. When that happens, and it pulls away from everything else, you know you probably have a hit if you're looking at daily and even hourly trends.

The formula for a great creative

Some of the things we have found are that they're very engaging, they have a really good pace to them, they very quickly start to bring animations or eye catching items to the very front of the asset. A lot of them have the phone and the profile in the ad itself. There's this idea of what we call visually satisfying or some element that not everything is moving across the phone and changing at the same time. It's kind of cinemagraph style, where there's just a smooth, single focus visual that's moving like you're scrolling through items. Those are a few things that we've seen produce hits so far.

Building a foundation for the production of hit creatives

One of the things that we changed was making sure that the building blocks that support producing hits are in place so that we're focusing there rather than going straight for: let's achieve a certain hit rate percentage right now, as that's a very big change.

Who owns what targets on a team

Art directors and really, the marketers – they own the 'what' that is being produced, and the designer makes it come alive. We figured that placing the hit rate with the art directors and marketers was more of a successful outcome. For designers, we want to be able to produce a certain number of concepts or once we find a hit, especially a Grand Slam hit, produce a certain number of iterations within a certain timeframe, so that we can extend that lifetime as long as possible.

The way to discuss brand considerations with clients

We've had a lot of discussions with our clients informing them a little bit more that we're focused on hits and generating scale creative assets. These are some of the things that we really need to do, so we need your support to help us push the boundaries of what branding is okay and we're okay with the fact that there are boundaries and there is guidance — that's the purpose of the branding team. We want to have discussions around where we can innovate, and getting guidance from brand teams is one of the most important things for us as well as working with clients and building allies with them and getting them excited about testing new things.

👏 How to build high-performance creative teams – with Alice Guillaume 👯

Alice Guillaume is the Senior Director, Marketing Operations at AppLovin.

Link to full episode

Playing beyond fun and games

I love this word "play". It doesn't mean just play the game, which we absolutely do, but really playing to understand what it's like to be immersed in this game. So what are the emotions you feel when you're playing this game. What are the gamer motivations for liking this game because it really varies from a match 3 game to a puzzle game to a mid core game to a hyper casual game. They're so different. And the way you approach those creatives to make that feeling come out and engage users is very different.

Connecting creatives to emotions

Players have specific motivations for playing specific types of games. An example could be if you are drawn to story based themes, why is that? Maybe if you love the narrative, you love being immersed into this other world. You love developing this character – or maybe you love puzzle based games. And what you were motivated by is completion-ism; you love completing tasks, managing your resources, feeling accomplished.

Those are drivers of why people come back and play. And so if that is a motivation, then we want to bring that out in the creatives.

Directed creativity yields results

We give specific directionality on what to brainstorm on. And that's super important, I tend to find a lot of brainstorms are very open ended because we want people to express and to be free and that's all wonderful. However if it's too vague or if it lacks direction, it actually results in vague ideas and poor results or unintentional results.

So for example, a directive could be: this is the top performing creative, it is falling short in that the click through rates are really really strong, but our drop offs are too high in installs. So we need to find a way to iterate on this creative that maintains right the level of click throughs that we have, but we need to boost install rates by 50%.

How to gauge a market before launch

The game may exist or may not be fully completed yet. We put that content out in the market. Then we take a look at how much volume you can get and at what price. From there you can start to understand how large our addressable market is and how likely you are going to be profitable based on your ability to pay for users.

Ads aren't always about the game

What I've noticed is that for hyper casual games, we do see more creatives that convert really well are very popular, and are not necessarily tied to some super rational hypothesis driven approach. It could just be a simple video with a funny caption on it or has nothing to do with the game. In those situations, I still believe there's a reason. The reason most likely is just that it's fun, it's entertaining and people want something fresh to look at. And in those cases, they don't really care if it's not relevant to the game. They'll try it anyways as the cost of the download is pretty low.

The future of playable ads

I do think the technology that goes into playable ads will become more sophisticated. We do see more people playing around with analytics, even dynamic serving and even optimization of playable ads real time.

🙆‍♂️ Why you need to protect your brand in a relentlessly performance-focused world – with Adam Hadi 🌎

Adam Hadi is the VP of Marketing at Current.

Link to full episode

The silent yet solid impact of a brand

I didn't even recognize it at the time, but I look back on that and I recognize now how within that vertical how important our brand was. We were able to brand ourselves Topps, which in the world of trading cards has this really strong impact. And, even though nearly all of our marketing was direct response focused that brand actually really helped us.

Why hyper casual games don't need to bother with branding

There might not be a single vertical in the world in which brand is less important than hyper casual games. You need to think about a number of factors: I'd start with just basic human behavior. I don't need to trust a mobile game or a casual game to download and install it. Trust is really not why I'm installing that app. And there are no major friction points.

These games are optimized to be completely frictionless; maybe not to even require a registration so much as for me to give them my name before jumping in and engaging. There's not a moment where I need to be like, wait a minute, do I really want to do this? It's a pretty seamless process. And also, it's just human behavior, in terms of when we make the decision to install a game, nobody's ever seen an ad for a hyper casual game, and then decided three weeks later to install it.

Striking the right balance

If you're spending $10 million a month on performance marketing, you could really benefit from some brand marketing to support that. But if your budgets are a lot more modest, then it doesn't make sense to have some huge brand marketing budget, when nobody's going to see your performance ads. And so, again, especially in our case, at a more modest scale, it's just totally integrated. We're not talking about two completely different things here; it's integrating our brand and making sure that our values and the message that we're trying to deliver is still being delivered through our performance ads. And we're not going down this route of performance over all else which over time erodes your brand.

Branding mistakes are expensive to recover from

What you thought was tremendous growth in those two spaces—this is not talking about five years ago, unlike 2015—but everybody hated FanDuel and DraftKings. And like some people hated them because they use DraftKings, they lost some money and they heard they cheated or something. But everybody hated them because of their ads, and that's an example of how you totally eroded your brand in a way that's really hard and really expensive to recover from over time.

Simple but critical

It's astonishing to me how few people will spend millions and millions of dollars marketing a product and literally never once speak to an actual user on the phone or in person.

How to in-house playable production – with Michael Jessen

Michael Jessen is the Product Marketing Manager at Socialpoint.

Link to full episode

The shift to making playables in-house

One vendor was faster than the others obviously, but the heavy price tag was something that always came back. With every vendor, the price tag is roughly between 3 and 5k for a playable, and then you don't even know if it's gonna work. So what do you do then?

We have a team that is developing tools for the company in house, so technical tools for different kinds of teams, and they're creating software within the team. We decided to take and do a test and get two people involved in an in-house project for making the playables in-house.

Templates based on game mechanics

Each game has a different kind of template, and every template has different kinds of mechanics that are based on the game. We have a word game that has some swiping elements. We have Dragon City and Monster Legends, which have more click interactions on the playables and different kinds of fight mechanics. So every game has its own templates.

Managing the creation pipeline effectively

We start testing these on several networks and DSPs. Then if we see there is a success or we have a good IPM, we roll out more different iterations of that. This can be changing of characters, changing colors in the call to action, or different placements within the playable.

There is a one-time set up process for compatibility

The playable itself is programmed like any other game with code. In terms of the outputs, like every network, or every DSP that we're working with – they all have different requirements in terms of their coding and the way that the HTML file is because that's the output file that a playable needs to have. This is something that we manually had to build as custom exporters for every partner in order to comply with their requirements. This is something you set up once.

Metrics to track for playables

For example, let's say one playable has five interaction points before a user goes to the store. We see for example, that after three interactions, we see a massive drop. From that moment, people don't click on the ad anymore, so we can say "Okay, what's happening?" and what's maybe different on that third specific screen part and interaction that we see people drop out the most.

This can be maybe the Call to Action button is placed in a weird corner, and we put it on another corner or instead of making the color green, we make it orange. Different kinds of things that we test, and then we see that these conversion rates from one to another are actually going up again, and then we know "Okay, this was therefore the reason why people were dropping out." Then we go to the next, and that's how we can optimize the playable experience.

The benefit of a contiguous user experience

What we saw there is, if I put a concept A video and I put a concept B playable, the whole experience and performance is not as good as if we would put a concept A video and a concept A playable. So, if we make the whole experience from video to interactive end card in the same kind of style with the same kind of characters… then the user going through a whole process, eventually going to the App Store, and downloading the game; then, in-game, getting the same experience as they saw on the playable, that works best for us.

💃 5 key elements for winning with TikTok style creatives ✌️

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

1. Winning creatives are creator driven, narrative driven, character driven.
2. Creatives on TikTok are movement driven, and music driven.
3. Portray primary emotions.
4. Exaggeration is good.
5. Raw, unpolished, unfiltered creatives win.

SECTION 6:

MONETIZATION

📜 A brief history of App Store monetization – with David Barnard 🛍️

David Barnard is a Developer Advocate at RevenueCat.

Link to full episode

There was no freemium in the beginning

So Steve Jobs said, famously, free apps are free. And so there were no in-app purchases allowed. He was like: "We don't want our customers to be tricked: downloading a free app, and having to then pay. So free apps for free." You can monetize via ads if you want. But free apps are free. And paid apps are paid. And that was it.

How Apple's chart design influenced app pricing

It didn't matter if your price was $30, and you got 1000 downloads, or your price was $1, and you got 1000 downloads. Whoever had the most downloads showed up the highest in the charts. That to me is just the perfect example of how the market wasn't free and that Apple heavily shaped the market through those seemingly inconsequential decisions.

David's early attempts at marketing apps

I would do experiments with paid marketing. I did one where I paid a $30 CPM to Macworld magazine. And I forget exactly how much I spent, but it was I think it was a grand or two and it drove like $100 in revenue. Because they had to pay upfront with no free trials, there was no way for people to get a sense of the quality of the app before ponying up the money— so when I was doing paid advertising on a paid app, the numbers just didn't work.

The downside of data ubiquity

Well, there's a ton of companies operating in the shadows that have developers installing these SDKs that are building these shadow profiles on people. You have no idea who they are; you have no idea what data they have. And if they're installed in multiple apps on your phone, there's so much that they can triangulate about you and your behaviours and your location and everything else.

Why apps like Flighty are enabled by the subscription model

Another great example is Flighty. It's a friend of mine who built that app. It's a flight tracking app, and it is phenomenal. And he couldn't have built that without a subscription model. His data costs are insane, because flight data is really expensive. But because of the subscription model, he was able to build an incredible tool for people who are flying all the time.

How an app can have subscriptions & consumables

And what's really fascinating to me about Tinder is that, not only are they using the subscription model, but they have consumable purchases in there. I think we're also at the beginning stages of subscription apps figuring out how to better monetize the true fans, who would excitedly spend hundreds of dollars a year in the app, not just a $20 a year subscription. And I think we're going to see that more and more. And you've already seen that shift in the last probably 5-10 years.

📈 How to improve your ARPDAU by 30%+ by optimizing your ad monetiza-tion waterfall- with Jorge Canga 💸

Jorge Canga is the founder and CEO at Kaizen Internet and the CMO at eGoGames.

Link to full episode

What is ad mediation?

Ad mediation is basically a piece of software that mobile app developers integrate within their portfolio of games or apps. And it is used to manage and optimise all the ad inventory by creating a competitive environ-ment where all the ad networks or supply partners compete for impressions in order to serve the advertisers' campaigns.

How ads should work on mobile

The difference between a programmatic ad exchange and mediation is how the ad impression is served. So we know the programmatic ad exchange theoretically should have all the supply partners at the same level. And then the ad request by a user comes in so all the partners receive the request. So they say, do you want to bid for these users in this format, in this country, bla bla. And they say yes, this is my bid, this is my bid, this is my bid. So, the system takes these in real time, and the bidder is more profitable for the publisher. In the mobile app industry, it is not the case because nobody's doing it right or has a perfect system.

The clear case for multiple ad partners

It is recommended to have a wide variety of partners. There's a lot of documents where they list who is the best for this format in these countries. So depending on where you have the traffic from, you should integrate one or another.

Why optimization is often done manually

It could potentially be done algorithmically. The thing is that not all the partners are prepared for these algorithms or algorithmic buying. So, the only logic behind it is the technical capability of the supply sources. But it is important, now that we don't have header bidding working fully. We need to take advantage of the waterfall because it has a direct impact on the revenues.

Having multiple ad partners lets you maximize the value from each ad impression

It's a way of forcing the supply partners to give you what you want. Because if you only have one partner, they can give you whatever they want, the first campaign, whatever. But if you force them to hit a target, I mean, they can or cannot, but if they hit it, it's more revenue for you, usually than having it be automatic. And if you repeat this process with all the partners, you are maximising the revenue that you can get from a single ad impression.

Why ARPDAU is the key metric for ad monetization

I would rather see the ARPDAU as a key metric, if we talk about ad monetization, because eCPM or fill rate per se, doesn't mean anything. So, maybe a 1% fill rate is; you could say it is low. But if you have 1% fill with an eCPM floor of 2 million, that could be a lot of money instead of having a 2% with an eCPM floor of 20. Because you will be getting more revenue. And the metric that you should look at is the ARPDAU instead of the fill rate and the eCPM.

Tie in your monetization strategy to your genre

If you have a game with a small content pipeline, the recommendation would be try to be as aggressive as possible with the ads, because otherwise you won't monetize the users as well. Whereas other kinds—let's say we take hyper casual versus an RPG or a real time strategy—hyper casuals, due to the simplicity of their mechanics and their content pipeline, they cannot afford not to show ads or not to be aggressive, because otherwise, their user acquisition won't be profitable.

A fine balance

It is trying to analyse what the impact of the intrusive ad formats like interstitials and banners is – do they hurt retention or not? And what are they producing financially in exchange? So let's say if you lost like 3% in d1 retention because you're showing a lot of interstitials or your interstitial frequency is really high. But in exchange, if your ARPDAU is 30% higher, why wouldn't you be even more aggressive considering that you need to find the balance between losing retention and making more money.

⚡ How to capitalize on the native ad opportunity – with Bozo Jankovic 🎮

Božo Janković is the Business Development Manager at GameBiz Consulting.

Link to full episode

Connecting ads to game content

There has to be a more natural fit between the brand and the game. So that led us to have Farmers Insurance, offering to insure your crops in Farmville. Or, for example, Century 21, which is offering real estate in WeCity, the city building game.

Leveraging the game's natural ad spaces for native ads

So you will have natural advertising spaces within the game like billboards or TV screens, and you will show ads there, but you will not directly work with the advertiser, but you will actually have an ad tech partner – so an ad network that works either with brands directly or their agencies or DSPs.

How to evaluate if the game is a good fit for native ads

The first thing I would do is check if my game has these native and natural advertising spaces already, where I could show these ads. So think of billboards, pitch side ads in sports games, racing tracks and racing games and so on. And even if they are not implemented, so you don't have to have them, think about: could I add these easily into my game without jeopardising the user experience?

Location location

Because we are in such an early stage, demand and fill rates are going to be extremely low outside of tier 1 countries. So if you don't have users in Tier 1 countries, or you don't have a significant number of users, then again, native ads will probably not matter for you at this point, but things will change.

How demand is tied to content

Demand is unlike rewarded video and interstitials where most of the demand is actually coming from our fellow gamers and other gaming companies. In this particular case, demand is coming from non gaming brands. So it's usually consumer brands with which ad networks are working either directly or through agencies or through the DSPs. That's in terms of what kind of ads they can expect. In terms of fill rates, I would say that in Tier 1 countries, the fill rates tend to go around 20%, which is much lower than what you're used to getting for rewarded videos and interstitials again, but it's an entirely different beast.

The upside to having unrelated ad content

It's not all necessarily about the revenue impact, it's also about the user experience, which is nice. Yeah, they fit nicely and basically you're diversifying your portfolio with in-game ads that are not only gaming related, so it has some benefits to it that are not strictly about the new revenue stream.

Being mindful of placement

You need to make sure that you're implementing things the right way, so you don't end up in a situation where there are a lot of accidental clicks if the ad is very close to the area where a user would click because he wants to play the game.

SECTION 7:

HIRING, LEADERSHIP, GROWTH TEAMS

🏫 How skilled coaches can help underrepresented leaders break through ceilings – with Holly Chen ⚒️

Holly Chen is the founder at Ceiling Breakers and a growth advisor.

Link to full episode

BLM shook everyday life

But our world changed in 2020. The Black Lives Matter movement really got me to have more honest and open conversations with people around me about race and gender and identity and topics that I used to dance around for political correctness or for the fear of accidentally offending someone. And what I realised is that there's a much broader systemic issue faced by all underrepresented groups.

In our own ways—people of colour, women, LGBTQ and immigrants—all have experienced conscious and unconscious bias. It's a larger issue here versus if we improved our communication skills then everything will be great, but it's a systemic thing that we all are very familiar with, and we all know the feeling of being the "only" in the room.

Being the "only" in the room

I've talked to a few black engineers and engineering managers. They mentioned about being the only black engineer, and not to say the only black engineering manager, in the room. And how is that feeling? We just don't necessarily always see a C-level executive being people like us.

Theories of leadership in practice

I love to read about leadership and growth. I used to think that I know a lot of this stuff, but realised that it is one thing is to read books and intellectually understand something; it's another thing is actually at the moment of being triggered, of frustration, or confusion actually. It quickly changed how I feel and how I react, and be effective at the moment.

Questions that trigger epiphanies

At one point, I was struggling because there are just so many of those requests. And I see my team working so hard and working over time, so I was worried about my team. And then the story I had is that not every request actually justifies the effort that we were putting in. So I talked about this with my coach, and then she asked one question: “Holly, were you being open and curious? Or were you being self righteous?”

I was like: “Oh, I was asking people to justify these requests. I was being self righteous, versus being open and curious to learn how this actually drives the impact. I would stay on the surface level versus actually working with a person to understand what they’re trying to drive; and how do we actually create a creative solution. Not necessarily just to take the request and do it, but also think about the best ways, the most creative ways to achieve that goal.” Just one sentence: my whole attitude changed.

The trap of correcting a stereotype

For example, someone from the pilot programme mentioned that: “Oh, I never really fully embrace or accept my Asian American identity. I try not to let people notice that I’m Asian American. I want to fit in; I want to just be one of the people, and hopefully they can treat me the same.” In order to fit in, we deny our identity and who we are. And where else does that denial show up in our lives? Yeah, even recognising all these denials that we give ourselves, I think there’s implication on a lot of other areas in our lives.

The zero-touch interview process for hiring super-stars – with Brett Nowak

Brett Nowak is the founder at Liquid & Grit.

Link to full episode

Removing bias from hiring has been a byproduct of a low-touch hiring process

We're really just optimising for finding people who are very diligent and excellent at the job that we want them to do. And also to remove biases from the hiring process, which has been a wonderful byproduct of the process. And we don't even know the sex of the person or the demographic or background or really much about them—other than they're very good at doing the thing that we are planning on having them do.

Contextual hiring process sets expectations

These tests are not like: "How many balloons fill a box?" or some random question. They're very specific to the thing that they'll be doing. So if they're an editor, there'll be editing; if they're an analyst, they'll be analyzing; if they're going to do data, they'll be downloading spreadsheets.

And then when they fill out their tests, they're going to respond into a Google form. We have all of the candidates in a spreadsheet. And we can compare their results to each other, which is really great, because we're not just talking about one person in a vacuum. We're actually opening up their spreadsheets, opening up their answers and comparing one to the other to the other. From there, we have about an 85% fail rate for each test, so we get down to 2-3 people.

Optimize for the traits that are necessary

We actually don't give a lot of instruction, because at our company we don't do a lot of hand-holding. So we actually want to see how you respond to that. And we do say it's okay to ask questions, but it's sort of intuitive what questions are the right ones to ask.

The ones that end up getting the jobs are the ones that say: "I googled this, and you didn't really specify this, so I found out about this on another website. And you have this wrong. So I fixed that." They go the extra mile.

Experience isn't an indicator of ability

We have found that experience does not predict ability in our company. We do not say that you have to have any experience, but we do find that if they're going to be an analyst then knowledge of games really does help. And we generally don't find people who don't know games and then are really good at the analysis part.

But, for example, we've hired editors—and I've gone through hundreds, hundreds of editors, and this is outside of games—and the two best editors I've found have no experience editing. One is a lawyer and the other one just happened to respond to a Craigslist ad. Our lead analyst worked at a grocery store before this.

Great candidates have one key attribute

What I haven't really stressed is the importance I found of finding someone who's diligent. Diligence is a skill or trait that you've taught yourself or you've been taught before. And that's not something I can teach. And so we really optimised to find diligent people; the gaming stuff is a lot easier to teach somebody.

Attitude cannot be taught

If someone comes to our company, we don't believe that we have the ability to shape that person; that person is probably shaped at this point in their life. We're just going to be able to teach them skills.

Remove randomness from hiring

The great thing about this process is I don't have to really tell you who is a great candidate, because you can compare every single person's response, they're getting the same exact question. And so when you go into your Google Sheet—with Google Forms, when you respond, it goes into a Google spreadsheet—you compare every single candidate's responses to the same exact question, which, again, removes the bias of somebody going in interviewing somebody, asking a set of questions, another person asking a random set of questions, another person, etc.

Why choosing candidates becomes easier

You're now comparing apples to apples to apples. What we do is just the same question. So you just open up those tabs, and you can see them so clearly. It's obvious that this person's graphs just jump out at you and this other person's graphs just don't.

We all have hidden biases

We hired someone named Jordan, and I didn't know if it was a man or woman. Speaking of biases, I assumed it was a man. And when I saw her Google image, it was a woman. It's just amazing how easy it is to be biased.

Quality is everywhere

My lead writer—I've never seen his face, and he's worked for me for a year. This is a very important person in my company. He went to an Ivy League school. I found him on Craigslist. He is amazing. He's just incredibly smart.

My head analyst; she's just one of the most incredible people I've ever worked with. Ever. And I've worked in San Francisco and Silicon Valley, and all that good stuff for a long time. So the quality of people you can find on Craigslist is just astounding, too.

👏 What people of privilege can do to drive diversity in their companies – with Cassie Chernin ⚖️

Cassie Chernin is the Director of User Acquisition at Scopely.

Link to full episode

Acknowledge that privilege exists

For me, it started where I started understanding the privilege that I had. I started understanding that not everybody had college essay classes when they were growing up or a SAT tutor or all this crazy stuff that I had that got me to the point in which I got my first job. It happened a couple years ago when I started really educating myself on understanding my privilege.

The way to be an ally

For me, it's taking each piece that you find in your privilege and then saying, "Okay, someone doesn't have this. What can I do to fix this?"

How culture fit can be shorthand for racism

I think culture fit is another way to be racist. Going back to when your first day of work, in your interview, you're going to get along with someone who has a similar background to you. I'm always going to be able to chat with someone better who experienced the same things that I experienced. So my back and forth, my, you know, that flow that you want in a culture fit is always going to be better in someone who is like me, but that doesn't create diversity.

Agreeableness is a barrier

For me, women feel like they can't speak up because we still have this ingrained societal expectation that we're supposed to be this agreeable, quiet person. Then at the same time, men expect us to be this agreeable, quiet person. For me, it's coming from a long standing expectation of women to act like, "Oh, I agree with you. I'm going to take your notes, and I'm going to schedule your meetings. And I'm going to do this."

Amp up the volume

Women need to be loud. I don't want to change people's personalities. I don't want to say that you have to change your personality and who you are, but I do think that we need to be louder.

It is important to change expectations as well as perception

My recommendation usually is that it's not just on women to change how we approach a conversation. It's about men's expectations in that conversation.

How to make voices heard

The way that I would go about it is talking directly to them — "I wasn't at this conversation. When did this conversation happen? Why are we having conversations then? And how can we make this more equal?"

The reality of being a woman in the workplace

Last year, I held a Women in Mobile Summit on one of the last days at MAU. We went around the circle and almost every single person had an inappropriate male story to tell from the last 3 days.

Work-life balance

"Work hard, play hard" is another catchphrase made by white men. I'm sorry. I actually prefer to have a work life balance — treat yourself well and do what you feel is right. That's my reality.

👨‍💻 How to hire the best – and disman-tle systemic biases against black, Latino & brown folks in your company- with Anish Shah 👨🏾

Anish Shah is the founder and CEO at Bring Ruckus.

Link to full episode

The language of bias takes many forms

You circle back to really think about what about them is not a culture fit, and within that process, it's very easy to see why they weren't. And it's not exactly fair, why they were left out of these processes.

Founders want familiarity

What I've learned from the level of executive hiring that I've been working on for quite a few years, that what founders look for in hires is themselves.

I think everyone who's at the founder level just wants to hire themselves over and over and over again — whatever that might entail.

There needs to be a conscious step towards inclusion

I think certain people who are in power need to understand that bias a little bit better and be able to harness and utilize that power they have to step outside of their bias and say, "Well, hey, no, we're going to bring in some people who don't just look like me, speak like me, and so forth."

Openness to being better is critical

There's other founders we work with who I think are good at listening, and they're good at asking questions. They're good at asking — "How can we do better? What can we do?" Then I know at that point, I can say things like, "Well, hey, I looked at your LinkedIn," and "Hey, I've met a bunch of your team, I've noticed that they all sort of fit a certain profile. Optics really show that there may be a little bit of bias within your process, and it's just something for you to think about. And if you want my help in figuring out how to improve that and making it not just a number on a spreadsheet you're going after, like a D&I number on a spreadsheet, I'm happy to help."

The biggest bias can be the least obvious

I think the big one that gets left out consistently, which is, I honestly think is frequently worse than ethnicity and gender, is age. I would say across the board for all of our clients that the age discrimination is much deeper than the other two.

Culture fit is not redundant; it just needs to be redefined

When I think of hiring, I think of it as people hitting three buckets to be really well qualified for a job or that they will come in and do a good job. I think it's some level of a mixture of expertise, energy and attitude.

The energy and attitude portion is kind of a culture fit thing as well. If you just get the sense this person can do the job, they have the energy to do it, but they're just going to hate it every day — that's gonna spread. So I don't think culture fit needs to go away, it just needs to be bucketed a lot more intelligently.

Acknowledge the bias

First off, having that mindset of the world is against me and is disenfranchising me, there's truth to that. If you don't come from this exact sort of mold, and very frequently we're born into the mold, there's nothing you can do throughout your life to fit that mold. Don't think that you're being a Debbie Downer — you're being real.

An important tool to combat bias

The number one thing I think that's going to help grow your career is networking. Reach out to people who are part of your community — your ethnic community or community of what your career expertise is, whatever it is. As you start having conversations with these people and letting them know that you feel like some of the biases have gotten in the way of your career, I think the more networked people that you meet will say, "Well, hey, I know this company, who I think actually would like you, and you're not gonna deal with this same situation again."

🤝 How to hire superstar growth leaders – with Anish Shah ⭐

Anish Shah is the founder and CEO at Bring Ruckus.

Link to full episode

Superstars are rare

You just have such a small pool to choose from of people who've got the background of building up popular companies, of running all the channels, of really having that level of muscle memory. So, if there's 100 companies trying to hire 40 people, what do you do then?

The stark difference in company cultures

Within a big company, you can rain down a little bit of terror on the employees below you, and you can get away with that. Within a startup, when you do that, it really demotivates people because you need to have that passion in there. So it can not only set back your traction, but it can also set back your culture, and it's just really demotivating the people on the ground floor who are doing all the day to day work.

How not to incentivize people to join

So these days, when I'm really trying to convince the best people to join one of our clients, I don't go out there saying, "Oh my god, you're going to make millions off this equity." It's 2020, nobody's making millions off equity anymore. It's not 2009.

What matters to growth superstars

I really pitch them that, “Hey, look, meet the CEO, make sure you grow a good relationship with them; and look, I’m letting the CEO know as well that they need to take care of you.” These are the 3 or 4 pitfalls that I can foresee happening in the role potentially.

An often overlooked opportunity when hiring

You might go to a company’s careers page and they all look the same, you have that same team photo where everyone’s throwing their arms up in the air and everyone says the same things about themselves that every other company does. But those pages are really an opportunity for you to differentiate yourself, not just look like everyone else, don’t just look at every other company and try to emulate it. Figure out what’s super unique about you and what’s super unique about your culture and dive into it.

How a band of volunteer marketers help drive political change – with Cassie Chernin

Cassie Chernin is the Director of User Acquisition at Scopely.

Link to full episode

Why state-level elections matter

We tend to forget and we tend to spend so much time focusing on the federal election, that we forget that the state-level elections are so important, and actually can often do more damage to our day-to-day lives than the president. Our state level officials in the US have so much power to impact our day-to-day lives.

How federal elections can eclipse everything

A lot of times, people running for federal positions have gotten a lot more money. They are deemed a lot more important, and they're in the limelight a lot more whereas the state elections have to fight a little bit more for money. And so, a lot of what we do is fundraising and trying to showcase why you should donate a little bit of money to our candidate, so that we can fight the good fight.

Fundraising can change the course of a campaign

So we have KPIs just like any other performance marketing campaign. So we have specific open rates, click through rates and fundraising goals that we set ourselves based on historical performance, and also what the candidate is looking to hit. $3,000 to $4,000 for a candidate could be a huge change in their trajectory to be able to run ads, and to get voters out. It could be the ability for them to rent a bus to go to the old folks' home to get these people to the polls.

Data analytics can unearth incredible insights

Jeff Leach, who has raised a majority of their money through PACs, and only has 203 donations that are under $200. Meaning that individual local people are not donating to Jeff Leach. On the contrary, my candidate Lorenzo Sanchez has over 12,000 individuals with under $200 contributions. So this shows—I think that's one way you can say: "Hey, looks like you're appealing to the people. You're doing a grassroots campaign. You are appealing to what the people are looking for." And I think that's a great indicator.

SECTION 8:

iOS 14 STRATEGY

🥽 MGS Deep Dives IDFA: The unseen forces behind Apple's IDFA policy changes – with John Koetsier 🍎

John Koetsier is a columnist at Forbes.

Link to full episode

Why Apple seems to be against ad tech

I think Apple thinks that ads are bad for user experience, and also that ad tech is at best negative, at worst dangerous.

IDFAs are liable to misuse

So in 2015, the FBI actually went on to a plane on the tarmac, and arrested a Chinese national. He was about to take off for China, and he had a thumb drive in his possession which was full of IDFAs. He'd previously worked for Machine Zone and quit days earlier. So there's lots of possibilities here. And of course, this was before the whole China-US massive blow up: Cold War, economic war, all the things that are going on right now.

The dangers of trackability are well documented

The New York Times showed us, I believe it was in December 2019, how easy it is to track a member of the Secret Service, who is presumably travelling along with the President. They are going to various areas in Florida, where the winter White House is; the White House, and other places like that in New York City. So you can actually track people really, really closely. And you may not want to do that for me or you or just an average person, but you may want to do that for somebody who is part of an entourage or somebody who's super famous or something like that. So there's some power in misuse of IDFAs.

Why Google and Facebook care about advertising

Google is essentially an ad network; Facebook is essentially an ad network. They both do many more things. But if you look at where their money comes from, that's where it comes from. Anything that weakens them, anything that makes advertising less successful, less lucrative, less obvious as a business monetization strategy is potentially good for Apple, because all the big tech companies are frenemies.

Why Apple isn't motivated to help ad tech

Apple doesn't make money when an app publisher monetizes via ads. They don't get any of that revenue. They make 15 to 30% on in-app purchases and subscriptions. So you do the math. I don't think that's a primary reason for the change, but it's definitely one of them.

Google and Facebook are motivated to find solutions

Apple has an ad network; Google is an ad network. They have to build solutions that still work for their ad network. I think personally, that they'll probably do something around differential privacy. And they'll probably group people into 1000- or 5000-person cohorts or segments that can be targeted. You know, the reality is that every marketer wants granular data, but almost zero marketers use totally granular per user type data. So there's probably an in-between solution here that'll make the ad tech space much safer one for privacy, and still allow ad publishers and mobile marketers to do what they need to do.

Opposing trends for privacy and ad tech

I think the "secular trend" here is towards privacy. And let's just be honest, this is the opposite trend that we've seen in ad tech, which has been to more and more tracking, at a more and more granular level.

🗓️ A brief history of device identification – with David Philippson 💭

David Philippson is the CEO and co-founder at DataSeat.

Link to full episode

Raison d'être for MMPs

In 2011 or so, there were then these huge deduplication issues — ad networks counting their own homework or marking their own homework and charging double. That was what was happening in 2011: multiple SDKs. Then, the client and the advertiser were actually often paying twice — two people for driving the same install. That is the dynamic that actually then led to the rise of the MMPs.

The UDID

The UDID was a Unique Device Identifier, so the acronym itself is a good description of what it was. It was a persistent ID per iPhone or iPad, per iOS device. Because it was persistent, it could be used for attribution.

There have been lapses in the identifier continuum

Then there was this bit of a No Man's Land period because it wasn't that UDID was gone and IDFA was introduced. There was a long period of I think 6 to 12 months where there wasn't this persistent identifier replacement.

Why opt-out IDFA didn't have a huge impact

I think that remains the dynamic with IDFA is that few people knew how to reset it. That was also the same with limited ad tracking — few people obviously or intuitively knew how to opt out with limited ad tracking.

There was a workaround for LAT

Limited ad tracking actually backfired because those users were targeted even more and some were still tracked with fingerprinting. Some of these dynamics have led to Apple's most recent policy change, so that "do not track" really should mean "do not track and try to target them even more, and then track them with fingerprinting."

iOS 14 will be seminal

The effects of iOS 14 on apps is enormous. It's significant. It's huge. It's affecting nearly everyone. Why? Because nearly all user acquisition, nearly all campaigns are a form of retargeting. This is the difference between what was a more web based world and what app is.

What our industry has grown up doing is taking device IDs from all advertisers. putting them into a device graph, and bidding via UA on what you know about the device. So even UA prospecting in-app is a form of retargeting — you're targeting someone because you know something about them.

Data sharing in mobile marketing is unprecedented

When I speak to some desktop professionals, ad tech professionals that aren't familiar with that, they look at me with shock and say, "What? Everyone's sharing everyone's data?" Well, yeah, some people put their head in the sand and pretend it hasn't happened. Some people say, "Yeah, we know it happens. We're addicted to the performance and the ROAS is great."

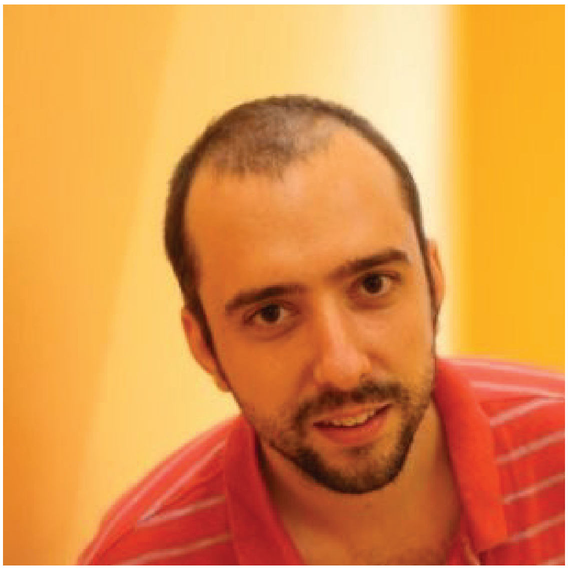
The future of app advertising

What you actually have to do to train a machine learning algorithm on contextual - you need to run budget over many publishers, 24/7. What you're looking to do is to identify patterns — am I getting my installs from certain publishers, at certain times a day, at certain times of the day, at certain hours of hours a day, certain days of the week, are they on WiFi — all these many variables within the bidstream. When you start seeing conversions, you'll then start being able to predict what variables lead to my conversions, and that is contextual targeting. That is the future of app advertising.

Who will feel the effects of iOS 14 most

A potential challenging sector will be hyper-casual where they get the majority of their downloads from very specific targeted advertising then they monetize the majority of their inventory through behavioral demand. So if behavioral demand is how they monetize, that drops off the cliff, the eCPMs will drop and the ability to acquire users as well.

🔭 How to navigate programmatic advertising in a post-IDFA world – with Pau Quevedo 🤷‍♀️



Pau Quevedo is the Lead Programmatic at Goodgame Studios.

Link to full episode

Why self-serve DSPs have found it historically challenging

The main driver of performance nowadays, in my opinion, is the device graph that partners have. So for self DSPs, as I was mentioning before, it has been historically really hard for them to create a device graph compared to the managed services. And that has been one of the main challenges actually — making self-serve work.

Key difference between managed and self-serve DSP

In the self-serve, what they do is that they have machine learning tools that actually take data points made from your own campaign. They model those data points in order to estimate conversion rates or a CPA, and then they bid accordingly to that. That would be the main difference.

The self-serve ones don't use the device graph because they don't profile the IDFAs like the managed do.

The bidder

There's another solution, which is the bidder. The main difference with the self platforms is that with the self serve platform, you will get an algorithm that has been trained by the different advertisers that are advertising on this DSP. Whereas if you go to the bidder, your algorithm will only be optimizing and getting knowledge based on the data of your campaign. That is the main difference between them.

Models will change post-IDFA

The way that it's going to be now is that until now we have had these machine learning models in which they told us "Oh, in the bidstream, you get a bid request with 150 keys, 200 keys of information." And then we model those. But we know that the most important piece of information was the IDFA, which was the deterministic information. We knew something about this IDFA, whereas all the other ones, although they are deterministic, because it's an iPhone, the likelihood that the iPhone user will pay is a probabilistic one.

The challenges of an in-house system

The truth is that I find a very, very, very small number of advertisers that actually are running at scale UA in a self-serve platform. It's really hard to find them unless there are those that are having very strong IPs. But for all the others that are in pure DR Marketing, DSP in housing is a real challenge.

Compare with context

David Phillipson says it's not that you fail when you run self serve DSP. The problem is what you compare it to. We are comparing it to Facebook — we are not going to be there.

Types of keys in the bidstream

The important thing would be if we are now shifting to an ML environment where they are going to be modeling the bid stream data, you want to have first of all that they are listening to as much data as possible. That means the QPS, the queries per second, that the DSP is connected to. How many bits are they listening to per second, and you want to have as much as possible. Secondly, you want them to have all the other advertisers that are similar to you so that they have algorithms that are trained in similar advertisers to yours.

Questions to ask a DSP

You can ask them questions like, how often do you refresh it? What kind of a regression model are you using? It can give you some insight. Or how many keys are you actually modeling? Or how do you go from the install to the payment? How do you move down the funnel? How does your algorithm take that into account? Some of them go event by event, some of them what they do is they aggregate the different events, and they blend them. You can ask those questions, but the most important one until now has been is it user level data or not? And that will probably go away.

Types of keys in the bidstream

There will be stuff like what device it is, what brand it is, what's the size of the screen. How many megabytes of RAM do they have? Even how much space would they have left on the phone? Depending on the vertical, you will be interested in different ones. Let's say you're in the food industry, you might be more interested in the location exactly — the GPS. For gaming, particularly, we're interested in the device, time of the day, publisher. We model around 6 or 7. That's what I've done until now. I found it to be not that much, I would have hoped to model more. The more you can model, the better, but around those 5 or 6 are the ones that we've been doing.

Solutions for a post-IDFA world

So in the web environment, they are coming up with 5 solutions. One will be to go back to contextual. One will be first party data. The other one will be working out some sort of SSP DSP collaboration, and we can make it to actually pass more data that we can actually mix and match. I heard there are similar approaches in the mobile vertical, I heard about that.

Then they have the panels, which I'm not very familiar with. It's more for big companies. Then they have that Google recently announced that through ML, they're able to sync when an iOS conversion has actually taken place, they can actually attribute that through ML.

Advertisers bankroll content

There is one fundamental thing in the industry, the internet industry, and that is that content is being paid for by advertisers. I don't care what happened with the IDFA — that is something that is there. People are not willing to pay for content. They're willing to see ads instead of paying for that, so if we agree that that's like the gravity of the whole internet, that will apply here still.

That means that if I want to make more money out of my content, I also have to work on who is watching that content. How do I classify them? This will also mean that bigger companies will have a bigger shot at it. We know from the web that all these news companies, now they're making a big umbrella, so they can have all the first party data united into one. They can do their retargeting, and they can do the selling in a much more efficient way.

🤔 The mysterious LAT, and how to tame it – with Thomas Petit 🚀

Thomas Petit is a Mobile Growth Consultant.

Link to full episode

What Limit Ad Tracking means

We call this LAT, which are the letters that are the acronym for Limit Ad Tracking.

That's an option that both Google and Apple have enabled for users to do for many, many years. But it wasn't really communicated broadly, where basically, you would have to go to the settings yourself and activate the option, which leads to your advertising number or IDFA to be wiped out to zero. So sometimes we would call the LAT cohort the IDFA zero cohort – it is pretty much the same thing.

LAT and Facebook don't mix

There is a very little known fact is absolutely critical: Facebook has decided to never show mobile app ads to LAT users. And because the LAT cohort is say approximately 20-30% of the ecosystem that means a huge amount of your potential audience is never going to see ads on Facebook and Instagram.

The conundrum of LAT in Germany

One country is a complete mystery to me: Germany. It seems that, culturally, they are more privacy conscious. They talk a lot about how they don't want to be tracked by Face-book, and the laws are stricter still. It's a big topic of conversation. But then you look at the LAT rates in that country, and they're much smaller than the rest of the European countries, which I can't explain.

Assessing how LAT affects apps in different verticals

Another one is linked to the vertical. I often give this example—because I think it's the most extreme—of VPN apps. These are people who are a lot more likely to be conscious about privacy. And in that particular vertical, you can see insane LAT rates; moving from the 20% average and getting to 50-60-70%. So if you're only advertising your VPN app on Facebook and programmatic, you're in big trouble because your audience is very limited.

Teenagers and LAT

The cohort of teenagers between 13 and 17: 100% percent of them are labeled in Apple Search Ads with LAT on, because Apple doesn't think that advertisers should use this data, but they still allow other networks to see it.

Are Android users becoming less privacy conscious?

There is a very bizarre trend on Android: that it's moving the other way and the rate has gone down. Now it's very much of an iOS-specific problem. Well, firstly as Apple Search is only on iOS, but with the LAT, in general, the Android rates would be around 2-3%.

I've got a bunch of theories, but I don't have a lot of evidence to show why this is. And it's very weird because a few years ago, Android used to be like iOS, at 15-20%. And it's gone down to 3%, which is very bizarre, to say the least.

How LAT affects bids

As soon as you said you wanted users to be over 18 years old, Apple would stop showing the ads to LAT on users. The problem is a lot of advertisers have done that. And that puts a lot of pressure on the LAT off users eventually, which is a lot more expensive. Obviously if your half of the market is only bidding on that pocket of inventory, that pocket of inventory becomes more expensive.

Segmentation based on LAT

What I do now is I have three groups: I have new LAT off, returning LAT off and what I call the open group that has a bit of everything – new, returning LAT on, LAT off, that one is the most shaky one but I have really good results in these three ad-groups as a part of my strategy.

How to use organic metrics to understand Apple Search metrics

The other thing I invite you to do is actually start splitting your organics into organic LAT off and organic LAT on, on your internal systems, because you want to understand if the behavior differs.

So you don't understand the Search Ads user because organic comes as a whole and it's a lot of different behaviors: maybe it's featuring, maybe it's search, maybe brand search, maybe it's virality. It all contributes to this bucket, but it gives you a rough idea, and secondly what would be the quality of LAT on.

Then you could measure the behavior of this cohort of organic and against search ads.

How to use econometric models to supplement SKAdNetwork for mobile measurement in iOS 14 – with Brian Krebs and Anthony Cross

Brian Krebs is the founder and CEO of MetricWorks, and Anthony Cross is the former Head of UA and Data Science at Big Fish Games.

Link to full episode

Why IDFAs are important for incrementality testing

BRIAN: For example, incrementality testing, without a big pool of IDFAs in order to take an audience and randomly split it between the control group and a treatment group, you are not able to run the randomised control trial that is the basis of incrementality testing.

Finding answers to what-if scenarios

BRIAN: What if all this spend, all the impressions, all the clicks, all the marketing activity from a particular media source, or particular country, or a particular creative, and any combination of those at any granularity is gone? And then the model tells us, well, this is what would happen, your overall installs would decrease by a 1000. Or your overall revenue, day seven, would decrease by $100. That represents the incrementality.

The difficulty of running interrupted time series tests

ANTHONY: It's always hard when you've got a campaign running, it's clearly making you money, and then you turn around and say: "Look, we're gonna stop this for a month because you want to do some testing!"

Weighing the opportunity cost vs the information gain

BRIAN: You have to be able to quantify that balance, so that marketers can make the best decisions for them:

- So what is the information gain if I run this experiment?
- And what is the likely opportunity cost based on how much money that I'm historically running through that set of traffic?

Using multiple, interconnected models for best results

BRIAN: The naive approach is training one model to predict with all those factors to predict installs, and then whatever that model says is the install incrementality you allocate proportionally the revenue and all the downstream events. That is not a good way to do it. Because some media partners' campaigns, countries may be giving you a lot of incremental install lift, but give you almost no revenue, or other downstream events.

So you want to look at training separate models for each individual event and cohort day.

Zeroing in on incrementality

BRIAN: Some marketing intervention happens at some specific time period and you measure the actual observed impact of that intervention. And you measure the expected impact if the intervention had never happened - we call that the counterfactual and then that could be based on a control group. You pause German traffic, but you don't do anything to Italian traffic; Italian traffic would be the control group.

Or it could be synthetic, where you use something called causal inference to synthetically build a counterfactual or a baseline in lieu of a real control group. And you simply take the actual observed effect against the expected effect, without the intervention of the baseline. And that's your incrementality right there.

The minimum scale for calculating lift

BRIAN: When you are a new app—which is probably the only type of title that would be out there buying on a single channel—then more than likely you don't have significant organic demand so that you have to worry about the incremental impact of a channel.

How to drive web-based user flows for your iOS 14 user acquisition – with Colette Nataf

Colette Nataf is the founder and CEO at Lightning AI.

Link to full episode

Prepare for the worst

The worst case scenario is we've lost all tracking; we have no data; MMPs don't work at all; we can't use any dashboards anymore; everything looks like it's organic. It's a mess. In our case, we're preparing for all three scenarios(best, worst and something in between) — obviously, we're hoping for the best, but we do want to have solutions in our back pocket in case it's something in between, or it really is the worst case scenario, and all the tracking is gone.

How an app runs ads without any tracking

This app we work with doesn't have the Facebook SDK, they don't have an MMP—they need to do things flying blind and figure out ways to understand attribution without that power.

So this is really my example of the worst case scenario, because they're already operating in that worst case scenario world, where we don't have any attribution at all. What they do, and what they've found as a solution, is that they run Facebook ads on mobile devices, but to a landing page on mobile web. On the landing page, the user enters their phone number and they're sent a text message with the link to install and download the app.

A good time to test the waters

I think that if we assume iOS 14 is going to roll out in January—January is historically the lowest CPM month, so it's a good time to be experimenting; which is great because we have some flexibility as marketers.

How retracing our steps may be the way forward

When I started advertising, broad was a crazy idea. We were like: "Why would we launch a target that has no targeting? That's crazy." It wasn't even that long ago that these ideas were brand new. So it's a little bit of a step backwards, but sometimes you have to go backwards to go forward.

Setting up a text message based flow

What you need to be able to do is take the parameters in the URL—say it came from this specific campaign, this targeting, this ad—and feed that into your database and connect it with that link that's coming through the text message. So you need really: a personalised link in that text message, you need to have their cell phone number, and you need the URL parameters and all that needs to feed in somewhere into a database.

There will be a diversification of channels

So let's just assume that prices increase by 50% on Facebook to get an install. So what that means is that now Facebook is no longer the best option, and a lot of these other networks that people have said are interesting, but aren't a big chunk of the budget become a lot more competitive. So things like Snapchat, TikTok, definitely; maybe even UAC increases budget.

Marketing will need to include engineering and data science

Marketers are great at a lot of things, and we've become really good at reporting analytics, but that is very different from becoming a data scientist or data engineer. And the truth is that if we're going to have to pair data together from three, four or five different sources, that's where you really need a data person on your team. You'd not want to be putting that together and deal with lookups and pivot tables. We're all on Macs, and I think they would all break.

🏫 How IDFA changes in iOS 14 will impact retention and engagement strategies – with Andy Carvell 💍

Andy Carvell is the co-founder at Phiture.

Link to full episode

Analytics tools don't need IDFA

The analytics tools, customer engagement platforms, or CRM, and maybe A/B testing frameworks use what are called scoped identifiers to identify users. They would typically have an SDK in the mobile app that would assign an ID to a user the first time that they see that user, and then they know that's the same user when the user is back again. So in the case of analytics, whenever the user is back in the app, they're sending events, they're sending this ID along with it. And the tool or the platform—whether that's internal or a third party solution—will use this tool-specific ID to identify that user. And there's no reason why those tools should be using the IDFA for that.

IDFA was always problematic as an identifier

But even before iOS 14, we saw people opting out of the IDFA. So it's not a good universal identifier to be trying to track every user anyway.

There are alternative universal unique identifiers for analytics

You might pass into some of these tools what's called an external ID or a kind of a universal identifier, to say: "Well, this is actually user X and this is Andy, Andy Carvell." In this case you can pass in that information associated with that user and say: "Hey, this Amplitude ID number 34 is Andy Carvell." Now how you are identifying Andy Carvell, it's kind of up to you in your system as a publisher, and some publishers will have used IDFA for that. It's also not a great idea for that, because it's not a cross platform identifier. Some systems would use, for example, an email address as a unique identifier, or a phone number, or just a generated unique number that's not the IDFA.

IDFA doesn't affect deep links

So regular deep linking, which we would use all the time with things like push notifications, and in-app messages, and possibly emails, to link people into a specific part of the app or specific screen or feature; kind of like a web hyperlink, you get people to where you want to put them rather than just opening the app. These would typically implement a direct deep link. So basically a standard URI schema, a universal link, or key value pairs, which the application can parse, interpret and direct the user appropriately when the app is opened. Now that won't change; none of that is affected by iOS 14.

Deep personalization will go away

Let's say, you're sending someone a fairly high value, referral incentive, like a $50 voucher or something. And that's embedded in this deferred deep link, then you want to be really sure that you've got an exact match, and you need a deterministic method. And that's not going to be available.

Geo campaigns will only work with explicit permissions

Geofencing is not going to be possible, from what I can see; at least not without getting exact location targeting permissions, which again, is going to be a lot tougher, because you have to ask for those explicitly.

An example would be Burger King who ran this awesome campaign, where they were geofencing users who went within a couple of hundred metres of a McDonald's store and offered them a free Whopper or something. You won't be able to do stuff like that anymore.

CDPs will recover

If they're federating stuff out to retarget people on programmatic ad networks, then that's a use case which is going to be gone. If that's your main use case for your CDP, then, yeah, clearly there's an issue there also for the CDP. But I think one of their advantages as platforms though, the CDPs I'm talking about, is that they are so multifaceted. And they have a very broad range of integrations across many different types of use cases. So I think their whole purpose is to make you more adaptable and more flexible. So I think they'll be fine.

Timing is key for opt-ins

One is to ask people to opt in for stuff like this at a sort of a happy moment. When they've just had a really good experience, you can infer that they really love the app, and hence, it's a great time to ask them.

Priming users for an ask always works

What I found to work better is first of all, using a pre-permission. It's basically an in-app dialog, which you control as a marketer or as a developer, where you ask the user: "Hey, would you like to opt in for this?" And you can test, of course, with that different benefits and things to optimise the click rate. And when people say yes, then you show them the system dialog, which Apple only allows you to show once.

⚙️ How to design a conversion value framework for succeeding with SKAdNetwork – with Kevin Bravo 🗝️

Kevin Bravo is the co-founder at 2nd Potion.

Link to full episode

How does SKAdNetwork work?

SKAdNetwork works by calling a function that is called registerAppForAdNetworkAttribution(). And so you use this to basically tell Apple: "I want to attribute this user. Can you check if a signature is here? Did he click on a specific ad? Do you know where this user is from?" If Apple can find the signed ad—if they can get back the signature—they're going to start a 24-hour timer.

The information received from SKAdNetwork

If you look at what Facebook is going to get back—because they're receiving the signal; it's going from the device to Facebook—they will have a postback. It's just an API call with some data attached to it. So you'll get a network ID, if it's a first install or a redownload, a campaign ID, an install signature, and also the source where the ad was displayed.

Privacy has led to ambiguity

This postback that you sent from the device is only sent once per user per install. And there is no way to tie this postback to any specific user. Because there is no timestamp on the install, there is no user ID, and you can't attach anything else. It's just one signal; Facebook knows, okay, there's been one install.

There are limitations to the postback

And since you don't have a time of install timestamp for the postback, it means that every time you call a big conversion value, you are making it harder for you and for the network to understand when the install actually occurred, because you cannot delay the moment of the postback being sent.

The structure of the postback

It's not only a numerical value; it's actually a binary. So it's one value between 0 to 63 is actually a set of six binary digits, so either 0 or 1. And so what you can do is split the binary and say I'm going to use 3 binary values for progress events, like level 1, level 10, and so on. And the other ones for purchase events, like in-app purchase or even ad-based data.

Two important functions of SKAdNetwork

Both the functions registerAppForAdNetworkAttribution() and updateConversionValue() can only be triggered from the app on the device. But yeah, you can trigger them as much as you want.

Predicting LTV using touch points

So you have banners, interstitial rewarded videos, and then also in-app purchases, you have a mixed model. In this case, what they were doing was they were defining a weight for each touch point, so a banner will be maybe worth 0.2, and interstitial will be 1.5, and so on, and then they count how many touch points the user has for each. So if he saw 20 banners and 10 interstitials, then they have this weight, and they can calculate the overall value. And then it goes into buckets of predicted LTV, and then they have the conversion value.

How to account for geos in your conversion value tracking

Geo: again, in the postback, you don't have geodata. So there are a couple of ways you can get geo and location. First one is that you have your campaign structure, which is based on that. So for example, you are going to have different campaigns for each country, or just pockets of geos based on performance. It is structured in your campaigns; one campaign is for a specific geo.

📐 How incrementality helps measure the true impact of marketing spend — with Maor Sadra 📈

Maor Sadra is the CEO and co-founder at Incrmntal.

Link to full episode

Why it's easier to come up with your own attribution model on the web

If you own uber.com, you would know the traffic is coming to uber.com, you can analyze it, you can come up with your own attribution model based on your user behavior. On mobile, it wasn't the case. When the app stores were launched, there was no real way to get any tracking done.

Why last-touch attribution is flawed

And to give a hundred percent credit to whoever just tapped the user last, especially in our industry, it actually created an ocean of fraud. Because if you're a fraudulent publisher, and you know that you just need to tap the user before there's an install, and sometimes that's five to ten bucks for a single install, it becomes a very easy system to actually manipulate. And it became quite messy.

How user overlap can stymie multi-touch

Because you have these behemoths that are self-reporting, the amount of overlap you're gonna see is close to 100%. As long as you have a product that is mass-market, everybody's gonna touch the same users. So, no one talks about the reach anymore, but Google and Facebook, they have the same reach. Amazon has a pretty significant reach as well. And so, when all of them are basically claiming, well, we show the user an ad, we generated the install, you have a little bit of a challenge to actually try to even apply multi-touch.

The reality of marketing

Marketing is not deterministic. I wish it was, but it's not. And often, we want to tell ourselves that it's very deterministic. We know exactly what generated or caused this install. But it's not causality that we often know. We know correlation.

Use incrementality testing to optimize spend

And if you think offline, Coca Cola and Nike – great examples. They run a campaign for a set limited period of time, for two weeks, four weeks, eight weeks. Then they stop the campaign and rely on panel reporting, survey reporting, and sales reports. They rely on reports in retrospect to help them reevaluate what was my media mix: did I actually see an increase in sales for the product that was advertising?

How to prepare for a post-IDFA world as a marketer on iOS 14 – with Eric Seufert, Thomas Petit, and Nebojsa Radovic



Eric Seufert is the founder of Mobile Dev Memo, Thomas Petit is a Mobile Growth Consultant, and Nebojsa Radovic is the Director of User Acquisition at Zynga. At the time of recording, Nebojsa was the Growth Lead, NSP at N3TWORK.

Link to full episode

Wait for things to settle down

ERIC: As an advertiser, if you're building your infrastructure, you want to build it once, you don't want to build it 6 times or 8 times to accommodate these short term solutions. I think, as an advertiser, you probably just think about, "Okay, what can we build that's gonna withstand the test of time here?" I think, just from a pure efficiency of resources stand-point, you probably want to be focused on the longer term solution versus a bunch of short term solutions.

Attribution was never perfect

THOMAS: What we believe with the deterministic solution, we had a lot of people believe that this was attribution. It's partly fallacy, attribution is very complex. That's why when you look in App Store connect, and Apple is telling you that 70% of your downloads are organic and then you look in your MMP and it's 30% organic — something is wrong here.

What takes the place of payer profiles

NEBOJSA: Publishers that have a lot of payer profiles, the impact of those payer profiles will diminish — it just won't be as big as it was before. So it might make more sense to work with a publisher that's really good with technical UA, understands incrementality, understands how to do a probabilistic distribution as Eric and Thomas talked about than the work with a publisher that has a lot IDFAs that they could retarget because that won't be possible anymore.

iOS 14 has larger goals beyond privacy

THOMAS: I argue this is one of the big reasons Apple is making this move at the end of the day because they never liked the ad monetization system, but also because their goal is to grow the services category. That goes through selling more search ads, but that goes mainly through selling an IAP– search ads are 1 and IAPs are 100. So I think pushing people towards IAP and subscription is one of the goals behind this change.

There will be efficiency challenges

ERIC: If the efficiency drops by 20%, you might not be able to spend anything because you're no longer able to target those high monetizers, and you're trying to average out their contribution via 5% of a broader pool of people that you're onboarding versus now where Facebook is able to increase that representation. And it's still really hard to scale.

This is not the end for advertising to iOS users

Thomas: I had this comment on LinkedIn recently, somebody saying, "No, everybody's going to switch all their budget to Android." I don't think that's gonna happen for the main reason that iOS users are just spending so much more.

Subscription models are more dependable

THOMAS: The fact is a majority of subscriptions happen on day one. That will make reporting a little bit easier because you can extrapolate, in a slightly more reliable manner, your day 1 events to LTV. Also, because subscription doesn't have this whale structure of revenue, and pretty much everybody pays the same.

Work with what is available

NEBOJSA: My proposal right now for the team and for some other people is basically to build a solution that will just ask for the IDFA of payers where then you would be able to share the revenue and payer information with the platforms and potentially create a workaround that way. So it might not be 10% it might be 20%, which is enough to get just the IDFAs of high value users.

📱 How mobile measurement will work with iOS 14 in a post-IDFA world – with Gadi Eliashiv 🤓

Gadi Eliashiv is the CEO and co-founder at Singular.

Link to full episode

How fingerprinting works

Fingerprinting is based on IP and user agent, it is more susceptible to fraud, it's less accurate, the windows have to be a lot shorter. But that's basically a pretty simple technology that everybody has. The challenge with that, and we have said this from day one, is that we don't think fingerprinting is going to pass the Apple test.

No stable IDs

We had one of our customers talk to Apple, and they said no to fingerprinting. Basically the first time they said no, and they said something like, "If you could use fingerprinting to derive some stable ID, even if it lasts for two minutes, that's off the table."

Workarounds still need approvals from Apple

There's an idea called attribution hash that suggests, "Hey, if we can get access to the IDFA on the device and combine it with the IDFV and kind of make a hash, then only send that hash value to the server, that would basically mean we're not leaking the identifier, and it would stay on the device." The challenge with that is it means that Apple needs to do us a favor and give us the IDFA. That means, it's unlikely because they just killed it very publicly. Why would they have an appetite to give anyone that access again?

A fine balance.

The challenge is that there's a tension between preserving privacy and giving the advertiser flexibility. The more flexible the mechanism is, the less privacy friendly it will be.

SKAdNetwork is not standardized

The first thing is that there is this notion of conversion value in SKAdNetwork that enables you to pass some form of a user value back to the ad network, so that they could optimize. That is completely non-standardized. For one advertiser value 17 could mean one thing. For another company, value 17 could mean something else — maybe something bad.

Setting up a framework

What we try to do is say, "Here are some standard models. If you want to get ROAS reporting, let's use the conversion value, the 6 bits, to encode how much revenue, maybe ad revenue or IAP revenue, your users generated." Maybe we want to capture also, how many days has it been since the install? We're trying to come up with all sorts of reporting because eventually advertisers would like to see some ROAS. I guess challenge number one is how do I govern conversion values in a standardized way?

Data can potentially be manipulated

There is a challenge right now where the way the SKAdNetwork has been proposed is that the postbacks go to the ad network. In some of the data, these postbacks have been signed by Apple, which is excellent. Some of the data has not been signed by Apple such as a conversion value. Also, you could say that the device that's sending the postback, the geo of that device, is also not signed, it's just sent on the network. So you can see what country the user came from. If it's not signed, it means that the ad network could change it. I'm not saying they're evil, but what's interesting is, all it takes is one bad actor to disrupt the trust in SKAdNetwork. Think about what it means, it means that an ad network will report their spends, the number of installs, and their ROI — that's insane. It's like they can do anything, they can just report that it's all whales.

Non-standardized processes can be problematic

I've seen people in the past try to build some of these things in house, and it always eventually fails. It sucks. One person wrote it, he leaves the company, they're stuck. It's not standard, it falls behind, etc. So I don't think this is any different. There's been examples of companies who built their own MMP stack internally, and it would have a lot of holes, it wasn't really smart, and it had fraud, etc. I think it's gonna be the same thing, but just different because you will still need to figure out: "How do I receive all this SKAdnetwork data?"

MMP still have a part to play

In a way, I think advertisers will still kind of hire an MMP. They'll say, "Hey, I need to figure out all this mess. Please be my technology provider," which is how you buy SAAS software.

IDFA is an organization-level change

We talked to some folks whose upper management doesn't even know it's coming. It's like, "Oh, yeah, my technical team will solve this IDFA issue," but they need to understand it up to the CEO level.

First movers have an advantage

There's these stories whenever a new channel comes out, and those people are early adopters, and they enjoyed really low CPIs and just grew their business really well. I'm sure it's going to be the same. Some will adapt quickly and will take the advantage, some others won't.

Expect a learning curve

The smartest folks are figuring out: what changes I need to do to my stack? What is the new reporting gonna look like? Let's say that I use the conversion value to encode revenue for the first day or two, can I even rely on my buying patterns? So they audit every one of their games, and they're trying to figure out — can I live with that kind of reporting? They're trying to figure out: how should I encode my conversion value? They're talking to us and other people to figure it out because they'll need to have a way to transmit that back to the ad networks. That's the preparation they're doing. They're auditing scenario by scenario.

🔮 Back to the future: How pre-2016 UA strategies prepare us for a post-IDFA world 🤖

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

Pre-AEO, we just optimized for installs, even for the most whale-driven games. We bid for installs – and knew that some percentage of those would translate into payers, and some percentage of those payers would be whales.

It's still present in networks like TikTok or Snap that have CPMs that are a fraction of Facebook – simply because they are primarily going after wide audiences and optimizing for the lowest cost installs

💯 How to maximize IDFA opt-ins with thoughtful user consent flows 📱

This episode was produced by the RocketShip HQ team and narrated by Shamanth Rao.

Link to full episode

1. You can only ask once, so you do need to choose very carefully.
2. You can and you should serve soft prompts.
3. You can still customise the Apple-provided prompt.
4. You can choose not to show a prompt at all

SECTION 9:

GROWTH ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

📱 How Slack reversed a declin-ing mobile growth trajectory on mobile by setting upcross-channel attribution - with Holly Chen 💬

Holly Chen is the founder at Ceiling Breakers and a growth advisor.

Link to full episode

Mobile isn't sexy in B2B

So mobile typically, almost is like an adopted child in a lot of B2B products. At Slack, we saw this from both macro perspective and the local perspective.

Challenges faced with mobile

We also recognise there's a lot of challenges in mobile, especially for B2B because typical-ly the traffic is lower volume, in comparison to desktop. Typically, for B2B we see about only 10 to 20% of overall traffic was on mobile platforms, and even lower percentage for conversions. And typically the quality of mobile traffic is also lower than desktop because most of the conversions will happen on desktop. And it's also harder to measure – with the mobile touch point versus a desktop touch point, it oftentimes is hard to connect the dots.

The difference between desktop and mobile growth rates at Slack

At Slack, around 2017, we saw that the new team creation from mobile declined, but at the same time, our desktop team creation experienced a really high growth rate. So we thought, well, this is not necessarily normal - we were expecting, if the market demand was increasing, both channels should be increasing, instead of one increase and one declining.

Start with the unknowns

So we first laid down all known questions we wanted to answer and secondly, define success metrics. What do we want to achieve from this programme? So what we determined was we do want to drive top line growth with mobile acquisition channels, but with a realistic CPA for this effort.

Mobile multi-touch is complex

One of the key challenges for mobile is the difficulty of connecting all the touch points across devices until the conversion and the activation. We revisited our goals every three months and six months to see the impact of our work.

Transitioning gently into multi-touch attribution

The easiest way to start looking at this is to look at your Google Analytics report, there is the path to conversion report and there's multi funnel report. Google also has the attribution model comparison tool, which we found really helpful to initially validate some of our assumptions.

How to combine multiple sources of data

What we found is that the walled garden is becoming smaller and smaller and tighter, it's harder and harder to use a black box attribution model outside of our internal data warehouse. So what we did was to use our app server to capture the raw data points. So for desktop, we used the DoubleClick suite, DCM (DoubleClick Campaign Manager) as an ad server. And then for mobile touch points, we use our MMP - and these send raw data points to our internal data warehouse. And then using email addresses, we connect the dots between the converted users in order to apply the MTA (Multi-touch attribution) model on top of it.

Recognizing that multi-touch attribution isn't perfect

So multi touch attribution is not perfect. It is one of the approaches to measure the effectiveness of marketing and sometimes, MTA can be arbitrary. So I would recommend combining MTA with incrementality studies and really understand the incremental and true value of your touchpoints. Ideally, you can run incrementality studies by channel, so you know the incremental value by channel and new methodologies like ghost ads that came out in the recent years.

The importance of agility

Revisit your model and how it works every, I would recommend like 6 months or 12 months, because your user composition and behaviour may change. Especially for a fast growing company like Slack, our users' preferences or their behaviour could be changing very fast every 6 months or 12 months. So, as marketers, we need to be nimble to adjust our approaches.

Tactical changes when mobile is secondary

We shifted a lot of our efforts from purely top of funnel top line growth to really understand the cross device impact. So for example, if someone downloaded a desktop app and didn't have a mobile app installed, traditionally we only had email or in app notifications, and we started to experiment with the retargeting efforts to these new existing users. So over time, we did adjust our approach.

⚙️ How to build your own algorithm to drive UA performance with rewarded video networks – with Warren Woodward 🎞️

Warren Woodward is the co-founder and Chief Growth Officer at Upptic.

Link to full episode

Where algorithms' loyalties lie

There were a lot of questions from the audience and the engineer kind of stopped and said, "there's one thing that you guys should understand about the basic nature of the algorithm. Before anything else, it's going to make sure that it spends your money. Once it meets that, it will see if it can meet any other goals."

The endgame of UA automation

What we are trying to do is, take a really great UA manager's day to day work, codify it into a set of rules, and then build scripts to run those rules.

How build data to rule out guesswork

When you start buying into a source, you have an exploratory bid. And then as you get data on individual placements, you move towards having a bid by placement. And you can set rules to develop when it moves from one to the other and using a system of weighted averages.

A stepping stone to automation

Use the APIs available by the ad networks, or even just to create an automated CSV that you send to your account rep and say, "here's your daily bid changes, please enact these changes."

Why optimization for programmatic is critical

If you just launch without any sort of optimization process in mind and one of these rewarded pools of inventory, you're probably going to lose a lot of money. And this is because of the breadth of sub IDs and networks. Now take that and magnify it by a factor of another several thousand, like several orders of magnitude, that's what you're dealing with when you go into the programmatic space.

🗃️ Unboxing the black box: moving the hidden levers that drive programmatic performance – with Beth Gilmore 🤖

Beth Gilmore is the Senior Director(Demand) Fyber At the time of recording, she was a marketing consultant and founder at The New Department.

Link to full episode

How to understand the parameters that DSPs account for

Each DSP will operate with an exchange through the open RTB spec. And this specification will provide hundreds of various data points to the DSP about the device, the app, the user, and if the marketer can have these really interesting in depth conversations with their DSP about what parameters the DSP is taking into consideration with their exchange integrations and what data points they're not taking into consideration and why they aren't taking those data points into consideration - and how they weight those data points.

There's a health check process

So coming from the exchange world, we would go through regular health checks with our DSP integrations to make sure that there was low latency, for example, because there could be instances when a DSP is bidding on an impression and that impression would drive an install for that marketer, but they ultimately lose the auction because they didn't bid within the allotted timeframe that they needed to.

The lifecycle of an ad

There could be a handful of events that the ad transacts across in this life cycle that requires it to successfully end up showing to the user. So it'll involve – when the ad is loaded in the system, the marketer uploads the campaign and the creative, then when the DSP bids with that creative into the programmatic auction, when they win the auction, then the ad is loaded potentially in the background of the app, then when the user has time to see it, then the ad is shown. And so through that whole lifecycle, there could be many reasons why it doesn't make it to show to the user.

Placements impact performance

Typically publishers will be able to siphon off inventory based on high performing ad units or lower sessions within the user depth – and they'll usually siphon the highest value inventory to direct sold ads, direct sold advertiser clients.

Then a DSP will never have access to that high performing inventory because they've already sold it. And sometimes DSPs typically will rest in the middle or longer tail subset of the publishers inventory and so being a savvy marketer you ask your DSP, do you know your placement within this high performing publishers' waterfall – this is absolutely going to drive higher performance.

Understanding session depth

So session depth will essentially indicate where the user is within one session of the app. So, for example, if I open up a music streaming app, and within the first 10 seconds of searching for music, I'm prompted with an ad, I will absolutely be more engaged with that ad than after I've been listening to music for an hour. And so it's really important to be able to identify where in the session the user sees ads, so that you can make sure that you're connecting with them throughout the right point in their session and attention span essentially.

Taking the leap: how to get started with automating your user acquisition – with Colette Nataf

Colette Nataf is the founder and CEO at Lightning AI.

Link to full episode

How to think through a process before automating it

The very first thing that I started doing was thinking about my own process. So for me, it was understanding the steps that I'm taking as a human and as a marketer every single day, and which of these are repetitive and which of these need to have some kind of actual human intelligence behind it.

Automation is the logical next step

And if you have a process, you know the process, you've done all the hard work at that point. And then you can really hand it over to a back end engineer and they should be able to give you something where you can basically like press a button or it just runs at a certain time during the day and it works.

The importance of LTV in optimization

If I were a marketer, and I had a magic ball of what is the one thing that I would want to fix that is gonna make the biggest difference, it really in my mind is LTV predictions and sending back those lifetime values. I think it makes a huge, huge difference in optimization. And also it allows you to work with the Facebook algorithms instead of trying to run against it.

Use early signals to direct automation better

If you can predict potential conversion rates based on some kind of early signal on your website, or in your mobile app, and then send that value back to Facebook, you're probably going to be a lot better off; you'll be able to fake it with more events.

Determining lead score off unconventional data

This is something that we do with B2B SaaS companies in particular – they'll be able to predict lead scores based on the email address of a person. They look at your company name, and then they figure out what's the potential lead score based upon the information that we can ascertain from the company. And so bigger companies tend to have higher lead scores, based on their industry, etc.. And so they're actually sending that value back at the time of email submission, because if we waited for purchase, it would sometimes be six months, so there's just no way.

Data Science is the future

I think the best thing that you can do to start educating yourself is really understand how you think about data, how you think about numbers and how you think about these processes, because I don't think it's super important that marketers figure out how to avoid and circumvent the engineers which is what I did. I think it's more important that you really understand the processes behind it and the way that these people think. Because the more that you understand how to communicate with engineers and how to communicate with data, the better off you're going to be.

Creating correlations among interests

So they'll know my audience likes Game of Thrones. And we search different social media sites for people who are talking Game of Thrones and then we'll search their public profiles to see what else they're talking about. So that allows us to make correlations and analyze those correlations to predict that somebody interested in Game of Thrones is also interested in whatever – cats.

And people interested in cats are interested in dogs. And so we can put those together into a data set. And then essentially, what's happening is that we're rapidly testing those audiences. And we're trying to understand, are these things actually a match? Or was it kind of not? Was it a swing and a miss?

When audience insights can inform product ideation

It gets really exciting when people can take away something about their audiences and really know and learn from that. And we work with a skincare company and their best audiences are people interested in travel. But, you know, they were able to take that, they make different creative for people interested in travel. And they put that all together and build out a better brand from that. And now, not only, are you extending your audiences, finding new users, maintaining low CPAs, but you're actually able to affect the final outcomes from that. So, I think it's really exciting when people and computers can work together.

💭 How to model out an app's DAU– with Eric Seufert 👥

Eric Seufert is the founder at Heracles Media and Mobile Dev Memo.

Link to full episode

The reason to have a quantitative system for app growth

If you think about a growth team that isn't managing growth to some standard or some projection or some business requirement, then they're just doing stuff right there – just bringing new users into the app or to the product – but without any kind of eye towards a business objective.

The core objectives of a mobile growth team

So, if you think about what a growth team does, it is really two things. One, it exploits some set of channels to acquire new users, and it optimizes those – that's the ongoing thing. And then, it builds towards some models or some expectations of revenue growth.

Using user behavior to predict revenue

When you break that user base out into atomic units, which are users, you can group them in ways that help you understand how those groups are going to make money, and how the revenue is going to change over time. Also, how those groups are going to decay and shrink over time just as the natural sort of via gravitational pull of retention – retention decay.

How to think about granularity

I think the way you do that is to determine which of those dimensions are actionable from a user acquisition standpoint. Because if you think about this exercise as a way to come up with an imperative for UA, everything about this exercise is basically telling me how many new users that you bring into my target. So, the whole point of this is to tell me, “hey, I need this many users tomorrow, this many users the day after that, all the way through to the end of the month to hit my revenue target.” That’s my user acquisition roadmap so to speak, that’s my user acquisition imperative.

Scientific targeting

Now when you predict these user bases out by groups, you can be strategic about, “well, actually I only need to acquire this many Facebook users to find out how they monetize and retain versus acquiring as many users on Google because they retain and monetize worse, I can get to my goal.” You know, with this shorter path, going with the higher quality users is probably going to cost more, but you bake all of this into a broader P&L model, and then you just get certain scientific results such as how you break this out and optimize the composition.

SECTION 10:

VIRALITY

🤩 100 million+ installs with zero paid user acquisition spend – with Anette Staloy 👀

Anette Staloy is the Chief Marketing Officer at DirtyBit.

Link to full episode

Tweet to win

We asked the players to tweet about #FunRun for a chance to win coins in the game. And the funny thing is that we can read about all the best practices and everything, but there wasn't even a share button or a button for Twitter. So people just went to social media and tweeted about #FunRun to win this, and then we saw that the number of downloads doubled in a day, and then it just doubled again, and doubled again, and then it went viral.

How nostalgia created virality

On Thanksgiving in 2018, we went from the office on Friday evening, and in Norway Thanksgiving is not that big a deal, so we were just going home as we would on a regular weekend and then we saw something happening on the servers, and we thought there was a mistake, some errors or something going on. But it was just installs. There was a tweet from someone who remembered a Thanksgiving where everyone was playing Fun Run. So the tweet was retweeted 150,000 times within a few hours and then we started trending in search, and this was totally unexpected, especially because this was 2018, the game was quite old already.

Remember the humans on the other side of the app

In our office, we have one wall designated for fan art that is also meant to remind us to look up from those spreadsheets and analytics just to see that these are the players; this is what they like and they make memes and videos.

The importance of bragging rights

So we make sure that every week we have posts. We try to engage the player community; we also have ambassadors in game, so we recruit ambassadors from time to time. They get their set of special ambassador equipment since in this game you can have different characters and you can dress them up in all sorts of cool swag, and people do that, it's customization of their character, they don't run faster; it's just for the customization and for the bragging.

The path to paid UA

So when we reached 100 million downloads—I think it was 2017—we started talking to a lot of studios, especially in Finland; and we saw that comparing downloads, we were doing great; but when we looked at how much money we make on each user, there was a lot of room for improvement. And then we started also trying out paid UA, setting up some campaigns and it was very clear to us that we have been very mild on the monetization, scared of scaring away the users, so we could push it a bit more. So then we shifted the focus as well, because up until then the main goal was to increase the user base. So by doing UA and then building our own internal processes for that, hiring an analyst and doing some internal work to set up that, we have grown our paid UA, but still organic installs account for 80% of our daily installs.

Inflection: breakout growth in the midst of the Coronavirus crisis – with Selcuk Atli (CEO) and Harsh Kher

Selcuk Atli is the CEO and Harsh Kher is the product manager at Bunch.

Link to full episode

Who are these users?

We started seeing a surge of Italian users. Yeah, a whole bunch of users started coming to the application. And like a common question at the office was like, who are these users?

The power of nostalgia

We're a team of 16 people who grew up playing LAN parties and Nintendo with our friends. So you play Mario Kart, or you play Counter Strike. And a lot of the fun is the feeling of being in the same place, yelling at each other, or basically making fun of each other and having that camaraderie.

The unexpected side effect of rapid growth

It's been crazy to kind of blow through the free tiers or low paid tiers of a lot of the analytics tools that we use. But the nice thing is a lot of these services offer programs to high growth startups to reduce the immediate rush of pain that you can get from having to pay for these things.

Does continued virality result in worse users?

Normally as your app is going viral and getting a huge influx of traffic, you would expect a drop in frequency right? Maybe because we're a social network that is solving a significant problem, our frequency and retention are going up as traffic is growing.

Social interaction cements gaming behavior

You see lasting behaviors in multiplayer games that are behaving as social networks. There's a reason why people still play League of Legends. There's a reason why people still play Minecraft and Clash Royale. When you think about these real time multiplayer games where people experienced games together in real time with their friends, they're essentially social networks in their own regard. That's why people have been playing Minecraft for so long.

Game-changer

It's almost like when people are talking about product market fit, a lot of people change their products to fit our market. It looks like the market changed to fit our product in our case.

SECTION 11:

RETENTION, ENGAGEMENT & ONBOARDING

🥇 How to win with user onboarding – with Samuel Hulick 🚀

Samuel Hulick is an user onboarding consultant and the founder at UserOnboard.com

Link to full episode

The case for simplifying onboarding

Rather than trying to slow them down and take them on a 20 step tour around all of your favorite new features of your product, instead just focus on creating ways for the user to feel like they're in control, and they're making the decisions and the choices and facilitating that as much as possible, rather than dictating how the workflow will proceed.

Speak to relevant user motivations

If you're signing up for a bank, you will be able to understand how funding your account is really going to be relevant. But, answering questions about whether you're a terrorist or not might seem unrelated to your current motivations. And so, one thing that I would recommend is to front load the experience with as many steps that are highly relevant to what they're doing as possible, so that they can feel like they're making progress on the thing that they actually care about, that's driving them through that whole process to begin with.

Why highlighting user benefit is critical

My biggest recommendation is, with any sort of user friction, or any request that you make of the user, is to just make it really clear how it's to their benefit, and how they're better off by having done it. And if you can't make a really credible case for that, then you're going to have a really hard design challenge because again, your whole workflow is powered by the user caring enough to do it.

Sugarcoat the pills

I have an analogy where if you have a dog that needs to take a pill, you can try to hold its mouth open and throw the pill toward the back of its mouth and then keep its snout closed until it looks like it's swallowed. And then a lot of times it'll just spit it out and it's all slimy and you have to pick it out on the floor and it's just as big hassle - OR you can just put it inside a meatball and the dog just eats it up.

So when you're asking for sensitive questions like: what's your birthday, if you can wrap it in the meatball, say 'help your friends provide well wishes or gifts' or something along those lines, or 'what's your phone number so people can find you more easily,' or even things that maybe don't sound super enjoyable, like linking your bank account to another bank, so you can fund your new account.

If you can wrap that in the context of why somebody is better off for having done it and tap into that motivation, then it's just a question of figuring out the right interface which is not nearly as difficult at that point.

Segment on user behavior, not characteristics

You're referring to different user segments based off of the kinds of people that they are, rather than the kinds of things that they're trying to do. And so that's one thing that I would tease out early on, if I was in this hypothetical meeting. I would say: do we really want to focus on moms and dads because those don't give you a really strong clue into what that person is trying to do and what their motivations are, which is what I keep coming back to here.

And so you from my standpoint, I would say what is it that moms are trying to do, what is it that dads are trying to do – and how are those different, and let's start calling those segments by that name rather than by their colloquial person based name.

Optimization vs. going nuclear

The one thing that I would recommend more than anything, and this might come as a bit of a surprise is to to really pay respect to the onboarding that is in place, even if it's not something that you designed.

My recommendation would be to value the onboarding that's already in place and use that as a really valuable source of insights as far as conversion data, retention, things along those lines. Like at the beginning when we're talking about the sequence of steps that people have to go through in order to to attain value. Let's see how that's currently performing in your current setup. And let's make some targeted and surgical changes based off of where we see the conversion numbers point to the most attrition, or the better conversions and wanting to double down on that or things like that, rather than just tearing the whole thing off – and just hoping that in one big guess, you get it completely right this time, whereas in the past that wasn't the case.

Let numbers be your guide

Early into my career, I would come in and, and be able to pick out points where I was like, ooh, this is terrible. This is confusing, this is gonna be tripping up users. And then I go and look at the data and it says, like, the complete opposite picture, or I'll talk to the designers – and they'll say, oh, yeah, we hate this. It's the grossest, clunkiest thing. But we can't come up with a split test that beats it or things along those lines. So instead of really getting down into the micro details on a part that maybe isn't playing a very big role in the conversion process anyway, I really like to look at the numbers and use that to set the overall strategic context, and then dive into changes from there.

How Call of Duty eased their users' learning curve

I recently heard that the Call of Duty multiplayer, I think it was maybe their mobile experience specifically created a whole pre designed environment where people would be joining matches after creating their account – brand new players joining the combat game environment, and when they would first join new matches, they would be matched up with what would appear to be other live players who would just totally annihilate them if that was the case, because for people the learning curve is very steep with that game.

But instead it was just you know, taco 67 or whatever, just fake names on bots who were all deskilled very heavily, so that the right person would have time to actually get up to speed and then if I'm not mistaken, the bots that they would experience would actually ramp up the competitiveness as the person's skills accelerated, until they got to a point where the person would then be released out into the wild, but they'd already kind of leveled up their actual skills before just going in and getting totally waxed.

Getting users to segment themselves for a better experience

I remember last year, I believe, hearing about a guitar playing app for Android that was looking to work on their retention and early conversions and things along those lines and they implemented a simple interactive questionnaire at the beginning that just basically asked: is this the first time that you're picking up a guitar, or do you already know some chords, or can you play skills or things along those lines, and just by letting people slot themselves into categories, just very high level categories, they were able to direct people directly to the areas of information that would be most relevant to them. And, they saw their conversion retention numbers take a significant uplift from that.

🌼 How to use live ops events to extend user LTV – with Claire Rozain 📈

Claire Rozain is a User Acquisition Manager at Product Madness.

Link to full episode

Welcome pushes are important

I have seen, in the past, the huge differences between a user that didn't have a welcome push, and a user that had one. I saw around 40% don't come back if they don't have this notification.

The ideal notification frequency depends on the app's genre

If you are a news application, for instance, 3-4 times a day is okay for push notifications. But if you are a game, once a day or less is really good. With news, you have something that is really important, because you want to be up to date. But sometimes, with a game, you just don't want to come back because you're busy and you have some other things to do. So you have to find the right time, the right moment, and also the right frequency.

User segmentation is critical

It's really important to segment with the view of who is in your application, for instance, or mature users who have spent money in your application. Maybe you don't want to put really big marketing pressure on a user who is already spending a lot. You don't need to engage him. So depending on all these criteria, I think you really need to segment your strategy.

Activating dormant users

So when you had an inactive user, you had to make them active without churn, which is like a maze, because if a user is inactive, they don't always want to be active. But it's really important, because since iOS 11, we all know that if you have a dormant application, iOS can delete your app automatically. It's a feature. So the first thing to see is inactive players and active players; it's the most simple thing to do.

Rewards need to be finely balanced

You need to balance the advantage you give and what you already have in the game, because at the end of the day, if you give a lot of currency, it hurts the economy. And if you give nothing, it's the opposite.

Mass messaging is risky

To speak about the mistake I saw – some apps just send, for instance, a push notification to the whole user base, which will be terrible, because we will have huge churn and lose a lot of users.

1 The first 30 days – how to improve your early retention – with Miray Alanlar 🤝

Miray Alanlar is a Senior Product Marketing Manager at Maple Media. At the time of recording, Miray was a Mobile Product Marketing Manager at Mozilla.

Link to full episode

Why you should frontload the value prop

What I've seen as a successful experience during my time at a small gaming studio and Snapchat and most recently at Firefox, what drives more value to our business is providing users with immediate access to your value prop.

Taking a holistic view of onboarding

Extended onboarding is the concept of using the power of your own channels to connect users and leverage them with push in app, an email based on where they are left.

A happy mistake

So instead of sending the test for certain user buckets, that push notification was sent to an entire user base. That was really funny. It turned out to be the most successful campaign on our mobile engagement team. Because you wouldn't think that, just one keyword, thank God it wasn't a funny keyword, it was just a single product name that drove users' attention. So even dormant users, they came back to our app, they opened the app.

The push notification as the last ditch effort

And for the lapsed & dormant ones, churned and like, you don't really have faith that you can bring them back. That's where you have to use the power of push notification, because you don't have anything else.

They won't open your email, they won't check out your app and to see the really cool in app messaging. You can test different times like early in the morning, late afternoon to see if they are actually engaged with the pushes at of different times.

What not to automate

If you have a high uninstall rate as a result of any of your messaging/channel related campaigns, you should not be automating that.

🚀 4000%+ engagement lift from early tests – the superpowers of in-app messaging – with Andy Carvell 😎

Andy Carvell is the co-founder at Phiture.

Link to full episode

The immediacy of in-app messages

With in-app messages, not only are you only able to reach active users, but there's also another dimension to it which is how these are actually triggered: typically you would trigger them on a certain event.

That event could be app open or it could be that you pop up or display this message right after a user has done a certain action or when they land on a certain screen.

How to quickly improve conversion rates

You can really iterate very quickly on your conversion messaging, your value prop, the benefits that you are pushing, and get a very measurable and quick feedback loop in terms of what's working, and really improve your conversion rates.

The power of attention

I think you have to think about what an in-app message really is at heart. As I said, it's a small interaction with the user. It's actually overriding the user experience while the user is literally got the phone out and they are looking at the screen, so you already got their attention. In other channels, of course, notifications and email, you are hoping to somehow get their attention at some point. There's a sound effect; hopefully they check out their messages, or maybe they are going to read through their email inbox later, but these notification channels, they are about trying to redirect attention. With in-app messaging, you already have the user's attention. With that great power comes great responsibility of course.

Maximize the opportunity

When you get somebody's attention, you could then direct them to another part of the app; you can deliver them a very segmented, very personalized message; but at the end of the day you are getting up in their face and you are showing them something, so it better be valuable.

The right time to deploy reengagement messaging

Just with a fairly basic model which wasn't AI prediction or anything like this, we just looked at the whole user base and we mapped out: if we would contact people and try and get them back into the app, how many days should they be inactive?

If we contact them three days later, they are less likely to come back than if we contact them after one day. We contact them five days later, they are even less likely and that will always be the case, where you see that drop off, but what we wanted to look at was: what is the right frequency to try reactivation or reengagement messaging?

In-app messaging is easy to set up

If you are really on a budget, I think even Firebase supports in-app messaging now. If you are really on a budget and you are just starting out building a simple app, it's a good place to start. And it's still a bunch of functionality which is quite helpful to developers.

And then in terms of low-hanging fruit, where to start testing your first messages, I really advise working on the onboarding flow, you can do this thing called adaptive onboarding where you just target, figure out what are your key features, your key experience in the app, things that you would want any new user to go and experience that you see are tied to better activation rates.

📶 How to supercharge your retargeting ads with automated personalization – with Lomit Patel 🏃‍♀️

Lomit Patel is the VP of growth at IMVU.

Link to full episode

Identifying highest priority users

If somebody has installed the app but hasn't registered, that is a high priority because, until they register, we can't really do any of the other things that we want. A big part of the focus is really the first seven days.

Other metrics sometimes supersede ROAS

ROAS is definitely the key variable that we try to track, but based on which segments we use in retargeting ads. For example, when we're targeting people that have installed the app, but haven't registered, there's no point really looking at ROAS at that stage, there we're looking at the conversion rate to getting them to become a registered user.

Understanding incrementality

When we look at the ones that we're targeting on the DSP or on Facebook, we always try to run a control holdout group. And then, so generally what we do is when we look at the holdout which are people that don't get exposed to any of these ads, how do they end up behaving or how do they end up monetizing versus the ones where we are paying, and that's how we look at the delta to come up with our incrementality.

The Mobile Growth Handbook

"May you live in interesting times."

The playbook is going to change in 2021 - with widespread privacy related changes afoot.

But we don't have to not learn from history - there are giants whose shoulders we can stand on, to internalize principles and strategies, even if the day to day tactics get disrupted.

Our hope is that you'll take away and internalize the best thinking on mobile growth - and apply it to your own work in 2021.

Join us on this journey in 2021 at the MobileUserAcquisitionShow.com

Thank you for reading this book