

[Transcript] My First Million / #41 - Dating app that has an admissions process like Harvard

All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now, HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell, and they break down why these pitches were winners or losers.

And each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find another bite on whatever podcast app you listen to, like Apple or Spotify or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

What's up, guys?

Sean here.

I got a couple of announcements for you.

So we'll start with a little celebration.

We crossed the one million download mark, which is amazing in just, I don't know, six months that we've been out.

So that's kind of incredible.

Didn't think it would get this far.

Obviously, you got a long way to go.

In the words of Dr. Disrespect, we're all the way at the tippy top of the mountain, but we're only halfway up.

Okay.

So a couple other announcements.

We've been doing these brainstormers, me and Sam from the Hustle, and they've been a lot of fun to do.

Plus, I think it seemed to be the favorites from listeners, more so than the interviews even.

So we actually are going to do what most projects and startups should do, which is follow the demand.

So those episodes are the ones that get the best feedback.

They get the most listens, and they're the most fun to do.

So we're going to double down and do more episodes of that style.

So we'll still bring in awesome guests who can tell us about their company and how they did it.

But in fact, we're going to invite them in instead of saying, hey, tell me your life story.

We're going to spend the time with them saying, hey, okay, how did you do what you do?

And what else do you see out there?

Brainstorm with us.

And it'll be more casual.

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And I think it'll be interesting to see what really smart, successful people who are, you know, they're operating their company sometimes for 10 years, but they see all kinds of other opportunities that they can't go chase.

And they have this list of ideas that, you know, they'll never get to.

And so I want to see that list of ideas.

I want them to come share that on the podcast.

So going forward, we'll be doing more episodes like the brainstorms.

Hope you guys like that.

Okay.

So those are two, two announcements.

And then this episode is with Amanda Bradford from the league.

The league is a dating app.

She built this app because to solve a very simple problem that she was having, she would match with somebody on a dating site, like okay, Cupid or match or Tinder or whatever.

And before actually going to meet the person in real life, she wanted to know, is this a real person?

You know, does this person, is this person who they say they are?

Do they have a job?

You know, what I want to kind of know about this person beforehand.

And she wished that the dating sites would sort of vet the people in the dating pool, but they didn't.

They just wanted to grow at all costs.

So they didn't care.

You can make as many accounts as you want.

And so she created a dating app that would vet people.

It has an admissions process, sort of like you're applying to Harvard, but like cool company and it was a fun conversation.

So hope you enjoy this episode.

This is probably going to be the last one like this, or at least on a regular basis where it's, hey, it's all about our guests telling their story from, from sort of start to finish.

And going forward, we're going to be doing a lot more brainstorms with me and Sam.

Hope you guys like that.

One other thing, the Facebook group is popping off right now.

I think I just approved 100 members to get in.

So if you go on Facebook and just search my first million, it's called like my first million startups investing and side hustles.

And it's basically just a community of people who are hustling to make, you know, get businesses off the ground and make their first million.

And I like it.

I don't even.

I'm in there as a participant.

Some of the guests from the podcast are in there as participants, but it's just a cool

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community of listeners.

Okay.

That's it for me.

Enjoy this episode.

Thank you for getting, getting us to the one million mark.

And yeah, we're only halfway up.

So you're here.

You, we, I don't even know how we got connected.

I think we got connected on Twitter.

Yeah.

I'm not, you're one of my few Twitter friends.

You don't have that many Twitter friends?

No, I was one of those people that started and only followed a couple of different people that were in industry leaders and so I don't have like regular friends.

I make all my friends on Twitter.

In fact, I told Sam this, I, um, once a month we'll just host a dinner just of people I've only known through Twitter.

I'd never met them in real life and those have become some of my like good friends now.

But that's like Twitter tea party.

Yeah.

That's a good one.

Yeah.

We call it the Twitter dinner, but maybe Twitter tea party is better.

Um, okay.

So Amanda, you're here, uh, you're the founder of the league.

So we're going to go all over the place in this conversation, but let's start by giving people a sense of who you are, what you built and what, what makes it interesting.

So, so give us the rundown.

So I created the league, which is a dating platform now a community really, because we, we do actually work for single and non-single people like, um, at this point, most of the users are single that use the league.

It's so first and foremost, it is a dating app.

Um, and the concept behind it was really focused on designing it for career oriented ambitious people that didn't have a lot of time on their hands and didn't really want to play a game of Angry Birds every time they wanted to go on a date.

So it was for the people that didn't like, well, you know, those dating apps were so gamified and they're all there to drive engagement numbers through the roof.

And then, you know, a lot of them were doing advertising revenue models at that time.

So they were really incentivized, almost not to help you find a date really to help you just keep swiping.

So I just felt like it was so much time to even use these dating sites and most of them were really bad.

And the people I met, it wasn't so much even that the people on the dating apps were bad.

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It was just the, the way it was designed was not designed for efficiency at all.

And so I felt like I could just redesign it.

And so I started thinking about it and why are framing it.

And then I was graduating business school and I decided I might as well just try building it.

And at least it could work for me.

So you started this back when, uh, how many years ago, five years ago and fast forward to today, give us a sense of how's the business?

Is it big?

Is it small?

Is it just getting started?

You know, like give us a sense of scale of the business so we can understand you started there and how far has it come?

Well, yeah.

I mean, for a sense of scale, we started in San Francisco with 419 users.

So and that was November, 2014.

And so fast forward at this point, we're well over a hundred thousand daily active users and we're in 70 cities.

We just launched Singapore, Mexico City, Australia.

So we're now officially global.

So we've, you know, but we went really slowly and carefully.

Like we don't have a Snapchat like trajectory curve.

I mean, we, we really built each city almost by hand at the beginning and then automated what we had been doing manually.

I mean, I remember in San Francisco, I was literally manually going through profiles and saying, okay, you put in a good profile.

You're in, you're in, you're in.

And like,

Cause there is like an,

Essentially being the bouncer.

There's an admissions component to it.

Right?

Yeah.

So we, you know, the idea behind it was, Hey, if we, all the users that have these half baked profiles or are just window shopping or there to message you and catfish you or you know, just kind of the crap users that just happen to, to find themselves being drawn to dating sites everywhere.

I mean, it's a problem in the whole industry.

If we just screen them out from the beginning, then we don't have to worry about them affecting the user experience.

So we basically have this like very curated community of people that actually want to be there that want to find a date that put a good profile together that aren't lying.

So is it fair to say you guys curate not just people that are real, but people that are

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also like professional and kind of have their shit together?

Or it's not that.

Yeah.

Well, I mean, it's definitely geared for, for those people that are like, look, I will trade time for money.

And I do want a platform that will help me find my partner and what does it cost?

So we, we have an admissions model.

So if you're put together really good profile and sort of the community that you're applying to needs someone like you in the community there, you know, we do put let people in for free.

We call it a guest, guest access.

And then we'll also, you can pay to, to kind of skip the line and get expedited review and then we'll help those people put together a good profile, give them optimization.

So it's kind of like, you know, you can pay to essentially, you know, have more visibility, be seen by more people.

And then dating it ultimately.

Kind of like university.

You pay a little bit.

Your kid gets in.

Well, I would say it's more like, if you are a mathematician and you recognize that, okay, only one out of three people that see you like you and you only like one out of three people, then the more people that can see you, the number of choices you have go up.

And so, you know, I think it's for a lot of, we call them hedge fund Harvey, but we have a lot of these users that, that do the math in their head and are like, yeah, it's totally worth spending a lot of money for this because I'm saving myself so much time and I'm getting to see, see my options basically.

And you were just telling me right before we started that you got engaged.

I did.

So the question is, was it, was it through the app or was it, was it, you know, real life serendipity?

No, it was actually through the league.

Like ironically enough, I was, we always joked that if it didn't happen through the league, I was going to have, you know, a hell of a time explaining it.

Yeah, that's what I was going to say.

No, I actually,

It either was going to happen through the league or you were going to lie and say it happened through the league.

We were going to have to come up with something, but no, it actually did.

I, I met him in LA.

So I joined the LA league.

I decided to move my location having dated in San Francisco and decided it was time for a little break.

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What was wrong with the San Francisco market?

No, it was good.

I just, I've been here, what, 10, 10 years now at this point, I knew the market really well.

Um, and I felt like I was, I joked, I felt like I was, you're standing on the edge of the pier, seeing the boats come in because I knew, you know, I'm, I'm basically running this marketplace so I can actually see, and I was like, or I could go to LA where I haven't met anybody.

Right.

Um, and so it seemed like a,

And when you saw his profile, what did you see?

What, what caught your eye?

Well, he's a musician, so he played a guitar, um, and yeah, he has kind of a, a different vibe than, than what I was, I guess, wanting to, well, yeah, wanting to, to try something I think a little bit different than me.

Um, so we're, we are, we are very different, uh, like on our Myers Briggs, I don't think we're very similar.

So we definitely compliment each other, but I think that was part of, you know, part of what I love about the league and working and dating is that you're essentially like working in human psychology every day and so much of relationships is, is kind of about understanding yourself and what you're looking for and what your childhood patterns are and what is like a healthy relationship.

And so I think, I think the process of dating is actually quite therapeutic in some ways.

So

Do you almost feel like you know too much?

I think that, well, I know too much about the, like the top of the funnel, if you will, of like, you know, how to optimize your profile and how to make sure your league score goes skyrocket.

It's like, we all know at the, at the league, we all know how to hack our own league profiles and stuff.

Photo selection, what are the key things?

Well, of course, it's always photo selection.

I mean, the higher res, the better, you know, better looking profile you have, the more model like the photo works, honestly, it's the better your score is, unfortunately.

Did you see this?

So I saw people like glamour shots exist for a reason guys.

They work.

Did you see this show that came out on Netflix called the circle?

No.

All right.

So, so Netflix is pushing this hard.

So if you open up Netflix, you're going to see the circle up top.

It's basically their first game show, but what's interesting about it, what, what you

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said reminded me of it is they put these eight people in a hotel.

So they're all locked in the room.

They can't go out, can't meet each other, but they each create a little profile.

And so the first thing they do when they get to the room is they pick their profile photo and, and some people choose to catfish.

They're like, you know, it's a guy, but he's playing, he's playing his girlfriend.

He's like, she looks so sweet.

People here will like her.

And so it's a game like survivor, except you're not out in the wild or just locked in a hotel room and all you do is you put up your profile with a couple of photos and a little status or a little tagline and you message each other.

And then every whatever couple of days you rank, like rank all the other players and who you like, who you want to keep the bottom player gets ranked, gets kicked out.

And so it's very interesting in this because some people were trying to choose like the model photo.

Everybody listed themselves as single because they're like, look, people will want to engage a little more if I list myself as single, but it's a fun show and I feel like it'll be.

It's been around a lot through the weeks, like with their first impressions.

Yeah.

So basically the first impression would be like, you know, whoever was at the top would go down and actually the optimal strategy was sort of to float by in the middle.

So you weren't seen as too big of a threat.

Like, because if you're too beautiful or too likable, some people would have a strong first impression either for or against you, but you were almost too polarizing.

Like you wouldn't make it all the way to the end of the show.

And so that was interesting.

I don't know.

It's super.

It's a bad show to be clear.

It's a really bad TV show, but the psychology and as they're talking through, like why I'm picking this photo because I want to show this other side of me, right?

My first photo was really professional.

So my second photo I need with my dog.

You need to show.

I always say, show somebody else besides yourself in one of the photos that you care about something

other than yourself.

And what do you feel about like people who put photo like, let's say, you know, I'm a guy, I put a photo of myself and another girl, but it's a friend.

Good move, bad move in a, in a dating out.

I mean, if you, if you really don't have any other photos, it's better than not, you know, not putting it on.

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If it's a good photo of you and it's better than a bad photo of another one, it's still fine.

But I would say not ideal.

Right.

Again, it depends on how much you're trying to optimize.

You know, I think, I think one of the things people like about the league is that you kind of cut your teeth or dip your toe in the water on the bumble or the tenders of the world.

And then you're kind of ready to join the league and like graduate to the league.

And so people are really there and they're like, they have their shit together.

They have their profile together.

They want to meet someone.

They want to go on like two dates, four dates a month.

And they're kind of there for, not for business, that sounds wrong, but, you know, they're there for a reason.

And so I think that's what we find works really well in the league is when you make a profile that sort of shows that, that you're taking it seriously and you have the high resolution photos.

You've asked a friend with an iPhone to take portrait mode.

I mean, it's not that hard, right?

So just putting a little bit of effort goes a long way, I think.

So what I like about what you're doing is, you know, there was always like this sort of serious platforms, like an e-harmony or a match.

And then there was sort of the very casual platforms.

And the problem with the serious platforms was that they felt very old, outdated.

And the seriousness was very much around marriage, whereas sometimes you're looking for a serious person, but not necessarily like, I'm ready to be married right away.

And I think you guys found a sweet spot that's in the middle of these sort of ultra casual stuff and then be like, I'm ready to get hitched right away.

Is that kind of how you thought about it originally or how did you sort of decide where to position yourself?

I mean, honestly, I built it for myself, right?

So I don't know if I mentioned that, but I, you know, I was using like hinge and okay, Cupid.

And I remember I was writing support tickets being like, you guys should really build this feature.

And then, you know, so I kind of designed it based on my own issues.

And at the time I was 28, 29 in business school or came out of school.

I was still in business school my last semester.

And I was like, you know, having to drive an hour into San Francisco to go on a date.

So every day I had to, you know, the cost was two hours of commute time.

So these dates had to be good.

So that's why I was like looking at everyone on LinkedIn and trying to find their Twitter and being like, okay, if I cross reference him in this, and if he has a Wikipedia page,

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so I was doing like, you know, legit stocking these people before accepting dates, which is work, right?

So that was like, why can't the dating app just do that work for us?

So, but anyway, so that's really who it is designed for is like, I wasn't necessarily ready to like go and get married, but I want to start maybe dating more seriously, maybe dating with the eye to think about someone that could be a fit for marriage, like they're not 23.

Yeah, a candidate.

But you don't want to like be freaking everybody out by saying, hey, I need to be married in a year.

All right, it's 2020 new year, it's going to be a big year, and you know, we had to come in with some new awesome partners.

So for January, we are partnering up with Microsoft and my first million.

That's right.

This episode is brought to you by Microsoft because whether you're just starting out or you're well on your way to your first million, Microsoft Teams can help your team hit the ground running with must have features like real time chat, editing and video calling all in one easy to use platform.

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Love it.

Microsoft, that is a trillion dollar company, right?

We're talking about my first million.

They're on my first trillion.

That's goals for everybody.

They got there because they build epic products, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint.

These are products that stand the test of time and now they've come out with teams to help teams chat, communicate and work together.

And I think it's awesome.

All right, great.

Let's get back to this episode.

So yeah, I wanted to kind of make it more of a community.

That's why we always say we're a community and on a dating app because we also have groups and events like you can be in the yoga group or the people with dogs and the surfers.

And so it's not that that's like a giant use case that's necessarily taking off, but I think the point is we want to be more like a local kind of social network that is very very social people, which happen to be often single people, but offering more of that kind of in real life.

So what we love about what we're doing with this video chat is that we're actually putting people on live video together.

Tell people what it is.

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So what's it called?

What's the feature called?

So we're doing two different things that are kind of both designed to get people closer in real life.

So one is through video and it's basically kind of like chat roulette back in the day, but you know, chat roulette was super random and you would just be paired with anyone in the world of like any age or anything.

Every third person was naked.

Yeah, exactly.

And I heard that that happened too.

So basically we actually take your preferences into account.

We know your voting history.

We know who you've liked, who you've matched with, and we essentially put you into the same pool and match you in real time with someone that we think is going to meet most of your preferences.

So other people who are online right now, they have the app open at 9 p.m., everybody get on.

It's a happy hour basically.

So it's kind of like serendipity in an app in a way because it depends on exactly what time you go that the, you know, then you'll trigger the algorithm to go search for someone.

If the match score is a certain amount, you kind of will get matched up, but if your score isn't, you know, if you're not an acceptable match for each other, you'll keep looking.

So it's like, it's kind of like taking what speed dating, those old speed dating restaurants and bars would host them and just have to do all this manual labor to like move people around.

And now you can just do it with, you know, pushing a button.

So I think that's going to be a huge trend.

And then the other trend that we think is super interesting is getting people in real life offline at the same place at the same time and just helping them sort of navigate their social nightlife compass.

So we call that like party scout, but it's basically, if everyone's going to the marina on Thursday night, who's 28 and single and, you know, in my city, maybe I should go to the marina instead of going to Hayes Valley that night or whatever.

So those are some of the like, I think trends that will be coming down.

That's where the puck's going.

That's where I'm excited about, I guess.

It's unclear how like much monetization that stuff happens, you know, comes with.

But I think, I think that's where it makes sense, technology makes sense as an application to solve a problem.

Right.

Yeah.

I believe in that.

I was, I lived in Australia back in the day and there was a dating app there or dating

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website because this was sort of like, you know, smartphones weren't as big of a deal back then.

And they did this.

And I've always wondered why nobody else did this.

So basically the whole website was, you were only masters of people who are also online right now.

And people would naturally just get online kind of after work in the evening, these prime times.

Yeah.

And so you would see, all right, there's whatever, 42,000 people online right now.

And you would just see people, you'd see a single photo of theirs and you start chatting with them and you knew you were getting a response back right away.

So like AOL back in the day.

Exactly.

But you knew they're all trying to date.

So you're not a creep for reaching out.

Like we're all here because we're saying we're trying to date.

And so compared to OKCupid or Match, we had to write, essentially write a letter and then wait.

That was slow.

Right.

Even the tenders, you still sort of wait for matches and then kind of come back later.

This was like, it was exciting.

You would get online and you'd be like, oh, it's going to, I'm going to meet, I'm going to talk to a bunch of people right now.

And so you'd start all these conversations and then as a conversation was going good, they had this great feature where you would, the person could unlock more photos of themselves for you.

And so it was kind of like, hey, I'm liking this.

Here's some more photos of me.

I was like, take your clothes off.

Yeah.

But it was more photos, right?

So yeah.

And the last photo, who knows what's in that last photo.

But I always liked that because it was like these little indicators of interest that you usually don't get online.

With video chat, you sort of can see their face.

You can see if they're into it or not.

They can swipe away and leave if not.

But I love this idea.

That's kind of my long-winded way of saying this.

I've always wondered why more people don't try this like synchronous.

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It's hard.

I mean, you have to have a, you know, our user base is small comparatively and it's hard for us.

I can't imagine a startup doing it with no users because it's, you know, it's hard to get even, even the people.

So we have the concept of an RSVP that they're going to go.

And then the concept of like, who actually shows up at nine and huge flake rate.

I was like bigger than, you know, and I run events for a living and I've seen flaky people in San Francisco for sure and it was like, you know, 50% flake rate.

So I think it's hard to get just, you need density, building a user behavior, right?

And we'd have to start training our users, but they are starting to come in at nine.

And I do think, you know, it is, we are growing slowly the future, but it is scary for people, I think, to be like so exposed for two full minutes.

So let me ask you, you come up with this idea in business school, like many people do.

And an MBA with a PowerPoint or Google slides now, yeah, unlike most people, you decided to do it.

So let's go slow through the steps.

Despite every single sane person that I respect telling me not to go into the dating space. Right.

So first tell me this, you have this idea, who do you bounce it off of?

Friends, mentors, who do you bounce it off of?

Oh, everyone, tons of classmates, tons of my professors, yeah.

The reaction you're getting is what?

Run.

Dating is too hard.

Run away.

Do CRM.

Yeah.

Cause I worked at Salesforce or like, just what, what, you're such a great girl.

Why don't you just go B2B?

Don't do consumer.

Cause you know, consumers so, so fickle.

It's hard.

You know, there's not a playbook as much as there is and B2B.

And so what made you, do you remember the night or the day where you were like, screw it, I'm going to do it anyways?

I mean, no, I started, well, I decided that I was going to build it anyway.

And worst case, it could just be a side project while I go get a regular job.

And then I decided to, one of my investors said he would give me 25K to put into it.

So I decided that I wanted to launch it.

And if I could launch it and raise at least 500K in funding, then I would do it full time.

And that was the decision I made.

So it was less, cause I knew I wanted to build it anyway.

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And so it was more like, how do I evaluate if, cause it's not even just, just when you build it, you don't know for sure if it's going to be a business that has legs.

So I just wanted to, so I felt like getting funding was at least the closest signal I could do.

And you're not a programmer?

Um, not, I would say I'm more of a hacker.

Okay.

Did you build the first version yourself?

Uh, no, no, no, we had, I had an engineer build it and it was all front end and objective

C. I don't do, I don't do iOS.

And so, uh, this was somebody you hired full time is kind of like a freelancer.

How did you get it built?

Yeah.

Freelancer, uh, Stanford undergrad, who's looking to like learn, learn basically.

So do you remember how much you paid for that first prototype, first V1?

Cause a lot of our audiences, people who are, you know, in your shoes, they're in business school or they're thinking about starting something.

And it's always these, and I'm going to ask a bunch of questions about the early phase because this is where most people really want to know, and it's sort of like black box.

It's like, yeah.

How does it cost to make something like this?

And how'd you get your first hundred customers?

So those are the questions I want to walk through.

Yeah.

No, they're good questions.

And, and I think people have crazy assumptions sometimes, but I think I paid him \$4,000 a month.

Right.

And, but I had, with that came him sitting next to me working as an engineer and I was the product manager and we worked side by side in a, you know, we work.

How long to get the kind of V1 ready?

We started really working after I graduated in June and launched it by November and he rolled off.

Cause we, you know, I just hired him to get the prototype out and then I was going to the, um, that was sort of our, our arrangement.

And so he rolled off in December.

So six months ish.

Yeah.

And, uh, you said something about like 400 users in San Francisco, uh, was that the launch essentially?

Yeah.

That was our November 12th launch.

I think it was 419 logged in and then it grew from there and who are those 419?

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Where'd you get 419?

Oh, probably my Stanford friends.

I was like, it was basically like, I pulled every single person I knew at Google sales force where I used to work, uh, Stanford and Carnegie Mellon.

And so there's a lot of that.

I think one of my friends joked when he opened the app, he was like, you should just call this MBA date.

Right.

Cause it was like all the, oh, I got the Harvard MBAs, the Wharton MBAs cause I threw a mixer that summer with the sole purpose of like, you guys are going to be my launch, uh, kind of my launch, my launch team essentially.

So, um, it was a definitely a lot of like 30 year olds that were in the exact, uh, demo of what I was designing it for, you know, looking to start seriously dating, but you know, not necessarily ready for like any harmony type experience.

So 419 people, uh, who you kind of source through your network or the mixers that you threw pre-launch, um, they opened the app and now does it sort of start doing anything? Or is it like to put after the first one you have to re, cause many startups have to restart up, relaunch.

Oh yeah.

We had tons.

We have, I mean, I could do a whole podcast on like mobile app nightmares.

Uh, but we, you know, we were using Facebook's parse at the time, which has now been sunset, it was like a giant, uh, giant, uh, disaster more or less because, uh, after we got to a certain amount of users, um, the algorithm that we had built was actually on the front end of the code and essentially you would take almost five minutes to load your batch of potential.

So that was, that was a pretty bad situation where we actually couldn't put more users in for like a couple months until we fixed that.

Um, but now, you know, we, we did, so we ended up rebuilding that app from scratch, but, but because of that, it's like nice and new and, you know, it was a year of like terrible construction, but then we, now we can be an international and we've kind of got all the scaling stuff done with.

And so, so from that first kind of November 12th launch, how long did it take for you to feel like, Hey, this actually might work.

Um, yeah, I'm not sure, but like I'm, I'm seeing something that's telling me that this is working.

I think when people kept logging in, despite having to wait five minutes, that was like one indicator.

That's a good way to test.

Wow, we gave them a really crappy experience and they still came back.

Um, because I think it was at the ultimate, at the end of the day was like, we had people that were interested in, in meeting and that was, that was what we did really well.

We curated an awesome group of people.

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So I think that was a big one when we started, when people started referring friends, we had a pretty high, I think it was like 40% of people referring, um, which is quite higher than the average.

And then I think what, what we also did, which I always tell people to do is, so my engineer, he wasn't a backend engineer, so he didn't know how to do any of the billing or payment stuff, but I wanted to know like how many people would pay or what percentage of people would pay.

So we ended up building a feature and just saying upgrade.

And then we just told the user that we would charge their card, their card on a file with Apple and they just push okay.

And so we ended up finding that we had like a 15% conversion rate on, you know, a membership without me having to actually sell, handle payments because we were not ready for that.

That's smart.

I like that.

So we started monetizing in 2016 with the new app, um, and then that's when you start having paying customers, which was another milestone, which I was a little unprepared for.

And that's when you really need a good customer support team.

So that's when we started building out, uh, kind of our, our customer success in our concierge team.

And so is the business profitable a bit?

Yeah, we just, as of, as of our end of year, 2019 financials, we are officially profitable.

That's amazing.

Not, not taxable profit, but thank goodness.

Um, yeah.

We did.

Don't worry.

The IRS doesn't listen to my podcast.

So we're all good.

I know.

I'm not giving it to California yet.

Um, but yeah, so that was exciting because that was something that was important to me was to be able, I wanted us to grow, but I didn't want to grow at the expense of profitability.

I just think in our space is, you don't have to, people are willing to pay in our space.

And it's also just, it's a huge risk to the business.

You can kind of be in this unsustainable position where you're spending money to, to keep your revenue at the same rate.

If you drop your marketing, your whole ship drops and I've just seen so many horror stories.

So I really wanted to, to both grow profit and grow revenue and we were able to do both, which is exciting because it's easy to like grow revenue when you grow marketing.

Right.

Yeah.

And if people don't know this, so I looked, I think we launched a dating app, I ran this

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idea lab for five years.

I think one of the things we launched was a dating app and I looked into it and there's this crazy thing.

I don't know how true this was, but something I read at the time was all the, let's call it, you know, sort of generation one of dating apps that got big, all the sort of IAC owned apps like match and whatnot.

Their business model essentially was you free account, but there was, they would sort of get you to message somebody and then, but if you wanted to reach out past a certain point, it was like, you have to pay or no, to receive your messages or to like read your messages you had to pay.

And so what they were doing was they were showing you matches of people who don't use the service anymore.

And so like, let's say you see 30 profiles, 29 of those would be people who don't use the service anymore, deactivated, inactive users, because they want to message that person that say, Hey, there's a message waiting for you.

Come back and check it.

And for you, you're basically talking to a dead end and you don't realize it because they make it look active.

And so they're using you to like reengage their users because they're trying to get them to come back, check their inbox and pay.

And that's what they got in trouble for doing with such a shady model.

They sent the scammers to the people who hadn't paid for memberships, but they didn't send the scammers to the people who already paid.

And that's what they're getting sued for right now.

So they, they, how does that work?

So they knowingly had scammers.

So that's a big issue in our industry.

There's all these people doing romance scams.

And so that's, you know, a hard part every day, you're always trying to deal with that.

But so what match did, which was actually a solution to the problem, a very unethical one, but they just said, well, let me send the scammers to the people who have not yet converted to membership and tell them they have a message waiting from a very good looking profile because they're a scammer.

And then so you get hundreds of thousands of subscriptions sold through basically a sales force full of scammers that you're using to, I mean, it's almost like genius and it's evilness.

Yeah.

I was going to say, that's somebody like me in the company who's like, yeah, here's the idea guys.

Yeah.

And then of course it comes around in the end.

Succession or something.

I was like, wow, this is like an evil.

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I mean, I'm sure it probably wasn't, you know, that nefarious, but it, but it is, it was their mom.

It was known for doing a lot of like shady stuff like that.

And you have all these different apps that have these different models.

Some raise tons of money.

Others like plenty of fish, like kind of famously.

Oh my gosh.

She's like my role model, man.

He didn't take any money.

Tell people, why is he your role model?

What did he do?

Well, first of all, he, he coded, so I coded a lot.

So I mean, part of how we were able to kind of keep costs down and be able to be super lean is that I, I'm like super in the weeds on the product and I, I'm handling, I'm doing heavy lifting or I was at that time.

And he's the same way.

And really, you know, he built all the algorithms.

He would go and ship code at night and he was able to basically not have to raise any funding bootstrapped it to like some crazy scale, kept the team pretty small and like just, you know, did a, not like a lifestyle business.

It was basically almost like the benefits of a lifestyle business with the exit value of a, you know, Andre send back startup or something.

They sold for hundreds of millions, right?

Yeah.

800 million.

Yeah.

Geez.

And he owned the whole thing.

Congrats.

And also like if you ever used plenty of fish, it was kind of the work product.

Oh, it's crappy.

But I mean, he, he, so the thing in our industry is all the people that got big all hacked an acquisition channel that was new and they used Facebook news feed before it got regulated.

They used mobile, Google mobile ads before they got anyone knew what they were doing.

Marcus knew Facebook ads inside and out.

And when they launched countries, he would just, from what I heard, I tried to read all these people's secrets.

But what I heard is they would just basically stuff the channels where you spend so much money, no one else can compete.

And then so when you're in Brazil and you type anything in dating, it's all plenty of fish everywhere.

Right.

And they almost like sponsor the internet.

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Bought the whole market.

Yeah.

For the month of their launch.

And so you have to have enough money to do that, of course, but he was, nobody was paying for Google mobile ads at the time.

So it was cheap.

So you basically are finding arbitrage opportunities, which is why it's really hard to grow.

What are the other, what are the other dating apps do?

So I remember with Tinder looking into it and they have some story, I don't know how important this was.

They launched on college campuses and they would send somebody, I think Whitney in and she would go talk at a sorority or fraternity and be like, Hey, everybody in the room, download this app right now.

They would get the whole sorority on, walk across the street to the fraternity, have them download it and be like, Hey, look, all these matches are on.

And then they would throw a party that night and you have to show Tinder on your phone in order to get it.

I don't know if this is exactly the model, but I've read stories like this, which is really smart.

But difficult to do in a way.

It doesn't sound that difficult, but most entrepreneurs don't like to get out of the room and go do this.

So what did you look at that you were like, Oh, I can do, here's my, here's my way to grow.

Well, I did that.

I mean, I did, I did the exact same thing, but with my MBA network or my Salesforce network, but I did, you know, I did a ton of events in San Francisco because a, I feel like that's how you build your brand, you know, and you're at the beginning stages, people don't associate well with a brand.

They only know online.

They want to know the person behind the brand.

They just felt like it was a good way to, to build a brand.

And also the main thing we're selling is people meeting each other, which is a physical product actually.

So it's like, why not give them the product they're looking for, which is to meet people.

So it makes so much sense for a dating app to, to market with events.

I think the hard part is we've done this.

It's just, you can maybe break even on events, but it just becomes, you're eventually running an event marketing arm, which is opposite of running a software company where you're like focused on.

So you, and when you're small, you have to kind of decide which one you want to do really well.

So we chose to, to be more of a product in a software company, but I still think like

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we're partnering with event right now to, to try to, to still be offering, to still be able to offer events without having to kind of put them on ourselves.

Right.

Cause that's what we found.

It was like, even with an ambassador programs, there's still overhead and manage it.

For sure.

You're still having, if someone represent your brand.

So when you guys go to a new city, you know, you don't, you want to go open up Moscow or wherever tomorrow.

Always do a rooftop bar.

That's it.

So you have a playbook.

A playbook, just pay for whatever the coolest rooftop bar is.

That's interesting.

You don't care about the venue cost.

Why people love going to a rooftop bar.

I love it.

It's better to pay up and just not worry that your venue, you picked a bad venue.

So we, we believe in a rooftop bars have a very high success rate.

And has there any, has there been anyone who's really helped you from an advisor mentor level?

Can you tell us a story about, you know, somebody or a moment where they kind of helped shift your direction?

Oh my gosh.

So many.

I, I lean on my business school network a lot.

So I mean, I feel like the league was incubated at Stanford.

I was in this venture studio, his sort of like, for the people that are getting ready to go into Stardex, we actually didn't get into Stardex.

But there's, you know, there's a ton of entrepreneurial programs at Stanford and actually four of my professors invested in the league as angels.

Nice.

And so I basically took advantage of that.

Do a lot of professors do that?

Do a lot of professors do angel investing?

I think they do.

A lot of them.

It's pretty cool perk of the job, right?

You get first dibs on a lot of Stanford startups, but yeah.

So one of the things I always go back and talk to them a lot is about people management stuff just because that's something I didn't come into doing a lot of that.

When I started the league, that wasn't my background.

And there's always these situations that you would never dream up.

Like you just couldn't make some of the stuff up where you're, you know, you're dealing

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with human psychology and trying to understand how do you keep someone motivated but need to hire above someone and how do you deal with, talks about equity and things where people feel, you know, you're almost like mediating really tough situations.

And so I actually had one of my professors mediated between me and my first hire about the one who I had contracted with about our equity split and actually helped us like come to a good agreement on that.

And for you, how many people are at the league now?

How many people are on the team?

So we're about 30.

30.

30.

And do you like managing?

I like building first.

And then I like, and I'd like managing this, how do I say this?

I don't like managing for the sake of managing.

Like I like managing when it, to get sucked up when, yeah, when I've seen something done to, I love product management, for instance, because you're, you know, you're managing sort of that you're, you're building this thing and you're managing the team that is, is creating it.

I think just sort of day to day people management isn't my strength.

I don't love, you know, doing performance reviews or I don't love thinking about org charts or compensation plans or things like that.

And so I think I prefer smaller teams because there's a lot of less, less, less of that stuff overhead.

Yeah.

Me and Sam talk about this all the time.

It's like, now that we've gotten a couple of exposures to, you know, different businesses and how, how they grew and some are small.

Now we got acquired.

So I'm at Twitch where there's like 2000 people.

And so when I want to hear about that, when I work with Emmett and he, you know, he's the CEO of this big company and it's, you know, owned by Amazon and all the stuff.

And I see his day to day and I literally had the thought, I was like, wow, uh, I would never want to do this.

And it's not that he's unhappy.

He, you know, he enjoys it, but I realized through seeing it, I'm like, this is not what I want.

I used to think that I used to think, man, I want to build this big, big, huge company king of the universe.

I used to think I wanted to be Sheryl Sandberg.

Yeah.

And now I'm like, no, like,

And now I look at her job and I'm like, first of all, I'm not even good at any of those

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things now that I know.

My trick, I need to figure out a way to get demoted so I'm managing nobody, uh, but get paid more.

A creative director.

I decided that's what I want my title to be.

Right.

Yeah.

Like special projects.

Nobody knows what the hell I'm doing.

Yeah.

Um, Google X.

Yeah.

You said, you said you wanted to ask about that.

What did you want to ask about?

Oh, just how, how that experience was going.

Going from small, small company to big or what was this part?

Yeah.

I guess, well, I guess just the journey or the after, after shock, maybe how it feel, how it felt then, how it feels now.

So when it happened, I had a whole bunch of assumptions.

Like joy, grief, like relief, first relief, because, uh, like I gave a talk at hustlecon called how to sell a failing company, uh, because we weren't taking off like a rocket ship when we sold.

It wasn't Instagram getting bought by Facebook, right?

We were like, Hey, you built something interesting.

You have an interesting user, user base, but this isn't like super profitable.

It's not in hyper growth mode.

Um, and I, you know, I have to choose one of those, right?

Yeah.

Like super profitable or, and I told my investor, I was like, look, I think we have something, but the road to get where we want to go is long A and B. We also have way more information now that tells us this is not going to be one of those mega companies.

You know, the reason we got together and decided to do this, I don't believe that outcomes going to happen.

So my opinion is we should try to sell this thing.

And he was like, okay, you know, you want to do this.

Yeah.

I also needed a change.

I've been doing it for like five, six years at the time of a couple of different pivots and.

One of the investors brought it up to you.

You brought it up.

I brought it up.

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Wow.

And so he was like, I think his preference would have been to keep going, but, uh, you know, he was super understanding and was like, look, that, that makes sense.

So I said, here's what we're going to do.

Let's take the next 30, 60 days and let's see if we can get an offer.

And so I went and started, I basically took the meetings that, you know, some people had been interested.

Right.

Other people had never even heard of us.

And I started knocking on those doors and taking, I'm replying to the people who already showed interest.

And so by the time we got ready to do it, it was just a relief that the deal closed, right?

Cause there's so much that goes into it.

And that's what my talk at hustle con was for is like, nobody teaches you how to do this.

And now that I went through it, I'm like, oh, I should write this down because there's nothing on the internet about how to sell a company that's not in, you know, there's a lot of things about how to sell when you're big and successful.

And the answer there is pretty much just like hire a, hire a banker, yeah, hire a banker and pick, you know, your offer.

So anyhow, by the time it was done, it was relief.

How long did it take?

We went really fast.

So we got our term sheet in 45 days after we decided to start the process.

And your first term sheet.

Did you get more than one?

Yeah.

We got, we got two.

And then by the time the third, we were going to get a third one, but we told them like they weren't close.

So we were just like, yeah, they weren't going to be close.

And then, um, then we ended up closing 45 days after that.

So the whole thing took 90 days, three months total.

And from like,

You're closer.

That conversation.

That's awesome.

Well, that's what I told my team.

I can even fundraise like a million dollars seed that fast.

Well, I told my team.

And I was like, unfortunately, the best thing I did as your leader was this last 90 days.

I wish I had run the company as well as I sold the company.

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Yeah.

That's great.

Um, but you know, whatever, you know, they say that's how you're supposed to do it run a really tight process and time is the enemy of all deals.

Right.

And I had these people that I, I called my, my deal doulas.

And so like my wife just had a baby and that's why I learned what a doula does.

And for the deal, I had these five deal doulas and one of them, he told me, you know, when I showed him the term sheet, I told him, Hey, we got the term sheet, um, and we're going to sign this one.

I thought that was the end of the process.

And he's like, Oh, this is now you need to sprint the hardest.

And I was like, what?

Cause I had, I had mentally started to ease up.

Yeah.

He's like, no, no, no, no, no, like you need to like now you need to sprint to the finish through the finish line because this is not the finish line.

This just tells you there is a finish line.

And so it was really helpful data requests.

Yeah.

We had to do our data room, get through due diligence, make sure that like nobody like the deal doesn't fall through the execs on their side, stay happy.

My team stays together and doesn't start like, you know, getting itchy.

And you told your team.

I told my team, which was an unpopular, I told him from day one, I said, look, I can't come in and look you in the face and say, Hey, go work your ass off on this feature.

When I know we're not going forward with that feature.

So I told him, I said, look, after you had assigned, I assume before, which was that's the part that was like unconventional.

I said, I'm going to run a process next, next 30 days and I'm going to know what type of appetite there is.

You've been working hard for like four years straight, like really, really hard.

I need you to relax.

I need you to trust me and I need you to not talk to anybody.

I will give you, I will tell you what's going on and I'll tell you if it's going to happen.

I'll tell you if it's not going to happen and we'll wait, we'll figure out a way forward either way, but I need you to just chill and let me do my thing.

And I said, if anybody wants to learn about how this process works to sell this thing, I'm going to have to figure it out myself.

There's an opportunity if you want to learn something, nobody took, nobody took me up on it.

That's what I always say.

Startups are like an MBA, a much cheaper MBA.

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I was like, I was like, where are these guys?

Don't they want to know?

Like it was the most fascinating process to me to figure this out, but nobody took me up on it.

I'll never understand why.

But yeah, it was just relief.

And then when I got there, I felt rejuvenated.

Like I was like, oh, here's the whole new situation, a bunch of new people, new shit to learn.

You know, let's see what this is like.

I've never worked at a huge tech company.

Okay, let's go try that.

So I'm still there right now.

And so let's go try this out and let's see if this is great or if this is horrible.

We'll find out.

That's exciting.

Yeah.

And so, you know, that's what this last-

Yeah, you have a good corporate life.

Yeah.

I get to do my podcast.

I got to do all this stuff.

Yeah, I want to do a podcast.

I was like, that's the dream is if you get to a bigger, you know, you get the company bigger than you can have a little more time.

You always think.

But then it's like-

Yeah, I don't think that ever happens.

The time, the time doesn't come.

I found out it only happened when the company had sold and actually I started this during due diligence because there's nothing for me to do at that point.

I was just kept asking the lawyers what's going on and they're like, hey, we're waiting for you know, Amazon's lawyers to get back to us.

Nothing we could do.

And so I was like, okay, I started getting itchy and I was like, well, I can't start like a new business.

That would be stupid.

That would jeopardize the deal.

I'll start a podcast.

I've always wanted to do that.

Let's see what happens.

And then now fast forward like six months since then.

And I think we're at about a million downloads in six months, which is like crazy.

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And so I didn't expect that basically.

So it happens you put a founder on a podcast, man.

Well, the fun thing is you probably feel this too, which is you meet people and you hear these stories, you hear their story.

I hear, you know, if we had just met normally, that's to be over dinner or drinks or whatever.

And you hear it and you're like, holy shit.

This is why people move to Silicon Valley is to be surrounded by these people.

But I remember what it was like to not be in Silicon Valley.

I was in Australia before I moved here.

Really the other side of the earth.

And so I remember wanting to be a fly on the wall for those conversations.

And so that was the impetus is like, what if I just, let's start with this 10 people who I've already heard their stories and they're amazing, but this time I'll push record.

And now other people can listen to it and like, let's see, let's take it from there and see what happens.

Yeah.

No, I've always wanted to eavesdrop on conversations, which is why I think podcasts are so cool because it feels like what you're doing.

Now you're the founder of a tech company.

You know, tech companies.

Thank you for calling it a tech company and not a dating app.

Tech companies love.

Well, I was actually going to make a joke that tech companies love to spy on their eavesdrop on their users.

Oh, I know.

No, we're, hey, say we're one of the few independents left.

So we're, we're trying to combine forces so that we can be the beacons of hope for the tech community.

What goes through your mind when Facebook's like, oh yeah, we're doing dating now.

Is it, what happens in the company that day you hear that news?

Is it, does it even, is it even a blip on the radar?

Do you address it?

Do you think about it?

Oh, of course.

It's like one of the scariest things that can happen to any industry.

Um, yeah, it was, it was crazy.

We, it came right after they had started really cutting down the API access to.

So about six months before they released Facebook dating, they basically stopped letting anyone look at profession and education in your hometown and your age and your mutual friends, which most of us had built our whole apps around, Tinder had built around it, Bumble had built around it.

We all did mutual friends, we all, so they basically just cut off that, that data source and we luckily used LinkedIn as our primary data source and Facebook is more of a like

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nice to have.

So we were actually one of the few that were left sort of okay, I mean, we're still bleeding, but the other people were totally cut off and they now have no social graph, which was part of why these apps even made it because they were, they synced with your identity and they, Facebook is better at scam detection than matches.

So people forget that like Facebook gave us a lot of and a lot of data and then now they're taking it away.

And so it's, yeah, it's almost like we're going backwards, um, back into the wild west of like an everyone's anonymous now on the internet.

And so now the, the problems that with an anonymous internet are happening worse.

So yeah, I guess a long, long way, long winded way to say that I don't think they're putting a lot of money or horsepower behind it, but, and I actually think it's good for demographics that live in rural areas and are not high density because it's the biggest database wins in dating in general.

Um, but I don't see them as a big competitor in like, you know, New York city, like elite or professional dating or anything like that.

You just don't want LinkedIn dating to come out.

No, I, you know, I pitched LinkedIn on letting me run their LinkedIn dating when I interviewed there before or after it was before I interviewed a business school and I said, all we need to do is add one button, single or not single and we got a dating app on our hands and let me run this.

And it was like a, you know, MBA that I was asking to run my own division and they didn't give me an offer.

They're like, not only are we not going to do this, we don't like your can do attitude.

You, you stay out of here.

It's a little too ambitious.

So then that's why our tagline is an app for the overly ambitious cause I was like, I'm just going to do it myself.

You have an API.

Right.

I like it.

But yeah, LinkedIn it now, but they got bought by Microsoft.

I mean, the world changed in the five years I've been doing this.

It was like a totally different place in 2014 than it is now.

It's a, it's kind of unclear what's, what's going to happen with all the privacy regulations and cookies are going away and like, yeah, the data, data stuff is interesting.

So one of the questions I like to ask everybody who comes in is knowing what you know about your space now, two questions.

So the first one is knowing what you know about your space, oftentimes when you're operating a business, you see adjacent opportunities.

It's like, we're trying to build this thing and man, it was so hard for us to take payments in India.

A payments is striped for India, that should exist.

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Have you noticed any sort of like adjacent opportunities as you've been building your business, either something that would help your company run better or help dating apps grow or, you know, like, is there anything you've observed that you guys aren't going to go do, but you, you've seen, you've noticed?

Yeah, it's a good, it's a tough question.

I know.

Yeah.

But I mean, we are on the ground floor, like building tools and we're, you know, we were one of the first, the first adopters of branch metrics, they're actually were classmates of mine, but, you know, around mobile attribution.

So we're definitely kind of deep in the ad, ad tech space and seeing all the changes happen.

I guess for me though, it's less about what we've wanted to always build is sort of this global blacklist, I guess you could think of it where there's all these bad actors and all of us are the non Facebook and the non Google people.

We like don't have huge databases and machine learning teams and giant infrastructure to prevent like thieves from getting on the apps and stuff like that.

And we're all literally solving the same problems.

Every dating app founder and every social messaging app I talked, we're all solving the same problems

repeatedly, different ways, different approaches.

No one's learning from each other.

So it's like a way to, to actually sort of solve off an identity without necessarily having to work with Google and Apple.

And obviously you have to work with the hardware, but, but can we, can we at least say, well, we checked with all of the other independent people and we all know that this person is a sexual predator.

So we are all going to not let him be on Coffee Meets Bagel or Hinge or the league or Bumble.

And like, like how do we like use, put the user safety first, and, and I think no business models are really incentivized to do that, to share that data and because it doesn't, so if there's a way to, I almost call it like the WW3C of like online safety and trust and safety and data privacy and creating sort of a, I don't know, an alliance.

Totally, you know, we, I had heard, so a couple of stories related to this, I had heard that back in the day when Facebook was growing like create like kind of earlier tech, I talked to some of the guys who did like security ops or like the scaling issues and they were all trying to solve the same things like, oh my God, we're growing like crazy.

How do we scale?

No company's ever scaled this much before or security issues.

They're getting DDoS'd and you know, threats like that.

And these guys would have this underground brunch.

They didn't even tell the employer.

It's just like the guy who's stressing out about this at every company and they would do this brunch and at that brunch, they would be like, here's how we're trying to attack it.

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Just your information.

That was one.

The second is there's a company called SIF Science.

You heard of them?

Yeah.

And so they, they were basically a Facebook fraud team, I think, or the Facebook sort of like trust and safety team that spun out and then tried to say, hey, we're going to build Facebook level tools and make it available.

We used them and we had a lot of success when we had a, we built an app that was growing.

It got to like 4 million users, but Martin Schrele was one of them.

Do you know who this guy is?

If you Google most hated man in America, he comes up.

He's now in jail just to give you a sense.

He was the guy.

You probably heard about it.

He bought this like drug and then jacked up the price.

It was like a drug for like, you know, a pretty niche disease and it was the only drug on the market for it.

And then he like 40 X the price.

And so people were just like, this guy's an asshole.

And so, and he used to do all kinds of trolley type of stuff.

Like he bought the Wu Tang Wu Tang came out with their one last album or whatever and he bought it for \$2 million and then just like stashed it and like didn't let, you know, like he would just do things that would piss off different communities.

And so he was on our network and 4chan was like, if this guy, they didn't like him or these different little hacking groups on the internet.

And so they started attacking us cause he was on our platform.

And so we had to deal with all this crap because of him, essentially.

And so, you know, we eventually use SIF science and it ended up helping us, but yeah, there's a lot of those ones, but it's like, they're not, they're all kind of, they're giving you the tools, but there's not like a shared database of like,

Well, they're trying to keep the database for themselves,

Right.

for all their customers.

They want us to give them our data and I'm like, but wait, we're going to be all of our users that we spent all this time acquiring and you're going to just tell us if they're bad or not.

And I'm like, no, I want it to be part of that.

Like I want it to be like quid pro quo, like the people who own the data should be talking to each other, not all these brokers trying to sell, I mean, that's why the space is all effed up anyway, because we have tons of brokers in the middle selling people's data and no one's pointing to them.

Everyone's pointing to Facebook and Google and it's really the middle people that are

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kind of the real nefarious ones.

Gotcha.

I think I mean,

I like that.

That's actually a really good answer and opportunity to which we talk trust and safety is like one of the main focuses and it's just like, we're just trying to solve the problem from scratch and you're right.

It's a, there should be a little more collaboration.

So another question I ask is, let's say you're 21 years old is rewind, you're 21 years old again, you can't do what you're currently doing.

So you can't go into this space again.

What space would be interesting to you?

Where would you go if you were going to start a new business from scratch and you had the time but you can't go into your existing space?

Cannabis 100%.

Okay.

What would you do?

I actually looked into going into it at business school too because the laws were starting to change.

It just, I figured that software with like no regulations would be easier than a bunch of heavily regulated industries where it may or may not be legal, but I just think that there's a huge opportunity to really redefine the experience of like everything from what's happening with the kids aren't drinking anymore to the white claw movement, to the fact that people are doing jewel pens, to the fact that people have edibles now.

I just think that we're sort of reinventing what socializing looks like and we're at the point where you can kind of design how you want it to be.

The entrepreneurs get to design this next world.

What would that look like for you?

Well, obviously you can, obviously nightclubs with drinking and smoking and I'm surprised that hasn't really happened yet.

Yeah, straight.

They're as fast as it would have in Denver or something like that, but I mean, I'm thinking of it kind of from a, you know, of course, an owner of a dating app thinking about the events you would have, but you know, I think, I just think that, A, from a socializing perspective, that's one sort of way to brand it and then also there's, you know, is it really good for you?

And maybe the micro dosing industry and the micro dosing movement is something that is sort of burgeoning too.

So there's so many different like flavors of approaching what's happening with the fact that a huge regulation has just been changed and you could have like 100 different flavors of startups to serve each niche from your morning coffee, you know, the new next Starbucks brand of cannabis with, and I think a lot of people are trying to do it.

So that's, you know, I'm, I'm sort of watching from afar, but I'm very much intrigued and

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I like, I like building brands.

So I just think it'd be fun to build like a, a very, I don't know, cool, cool league like brand for, for cannabis.

I mean, look on your face, it seems like you're going to do this.

This is fantastic.

Well, it's like the gold rush and it's like, there's not that many laws that have changed while I've been around and able to be like an entrepreneur to go after these advantages. And that's what I remember when I worked in Sequoia, that was like their number one rule was like when things change in the industry, when, you know, consumer behavior shifts or like huge regulation shift or technology changes turn a corner.

That's when, that's when you all need to start running.

And that's, you know, that's why the gold rush is called the gold rush.

But you know, I think, so I think that that's exciting and that's like the only one I see.

You know, self-driving cars is cool, but I just don't see the regulations able to support that anytime soon.

Gotcha.

That's cool.

And so like near term, near term things.

And is there anything else you want to share for the people who are listening, you know, stuff that you're interested in or some new stuff that you guys are doing?

This is your chance to sort of shout that out.

Also, where do people find you?

How do they connect to you?

Are you going to, you want Twitter followers?

You can get Twitter famous off this.

No, I like being sort of discreet on Twitter a little bit.

A wallflower.

Right.

No, this is my part.

This is part where I get to do self promotion.

Oh, great.

So I'm more of a, I guess I'm Twitter and Instagram.

I don't know.

I'm just Amanda Bradford, boring.

And then one of the models for this league live, I know I've been talking about it a lot, but the video chat, the chat roulette sort of feature that we have, I think there's a lot of really interesting applications because essentially we're, we're essentially setting up an appointment, right?

You're getting three appointments every day at 9pm.

And so obviously the use case we're solving first and foremost is, let me help you find a person to date and then great.

And then, but once you've solved that, there's a lot of other things you need to search for that you need to set appointments for, like for instance, let's say you wanted to find

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a realtor to buy a house.

Let's say you wanted to interview a nanny to take care of your kid.

Let's say you wanted to talk to a therapist and interview three.

So I think, you know, and then Jeremy and I actually, we're going to, they recommend before you get married, you go to a couple of pre-marital counseling sessions.

So we've been doing that, which has been really interesting.

And my wheels have been spinning being like, well, we can use this.

So what do they do there?

I didn't do this.

Oh, you didn't do this.

I didn't do this.

No.

What did I miss?

You know, your background and your family and just kind of get to know each other's history and, you know, you should have probably done that by now, but it's nice to just sort of the way they lead the questions and you'll talk about the personalities of your family and in like a very dispassioned way.

So it's just an interesting kind of experience to hear them, hear everybody be sort of described from their perspective.

So you do that and then, and then you go through kind of how, you know, any, any conflicts that you've had, you sort of, you analyze them and you put them under a microscope and you talk about what, you know, why that made you mad and why you didn't expect that to make me mad.

But it did.

And why, oh, that's because you really value people showing up at the same time at the right time.

Right.

And maybe I don't value being on time that much.

And so you start to get into like a value system.

So it's, it's actually quite interesting and it, it's helpful.

I think it's, I think it's crazy to think that you might like create a family without start without kind of understanding where your differences are and, and if they're, you know, and just sort of respecting each other's and it doesn't mean you have to change, but just sort of knowing.

Right.

I like knowing, I guess, before, before that.

So I kind of like to think of it as kind of like reading each other's, you know, little novel and, and it's this kind of fun shared experience.

So yeah, you go to a couple and they, they say it's supposed to be better than my parents and their last one, they wrote a letter to themselves to read it their 20th anniversary.

So it's kind of cool.

And would you continue this?

I was saying that could be something when we were going out, it's like, we should totally,

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this could be the next step on the league is once you've met each other and you're dating, then you could go and meet, do you, if you had to do couples counseling or talk to a therapist or find a minister to marry you, whatever it is.

Yeah.

I sort of feel like.

So that's the goes in line with the therapy movement right now.

Yeah.

I was going to say, somebody tweeted this out, they said, it was kind of a stupid tweet, honestly, but it was like, you know, five years ago, the trend was X. I don't remember what they said, 20, 20, you know, 2020 was, you know, about meditation.

What's 2025?

And my answer was therapy because I don't even go to therapy.

I think I saw that.

That was Brian Norgaard.

Right.

That's right.

Yeah.

Brian said that out.

Yeah.

He's awesome.

And so I think that's going to happen.

And I think I, I think I retweeted that.

Oh, there we go.

You're one of my retweets.

Fantastic.

I believe it.

And I think that I've noticed for all the areas that matter in your life, fitness, your career, your relationship, it's only like five things that matter, right?

Your parenting side of, side of life.

There's a handful of things and having a, an outlet or be a coach or trainer of some kind or a counselor of some kind, I've never seen it hurt and, but they're all, you know, they're sort of getting destigmatized.

Each one's getting destigmatized where, you know, before if you were doing something, it's like, oh, is it not working?

Is it broken?

It's sort of this admission of failure, which is kind of silly when it really should just be saying, this matters to me and I want to make it better.

Yeah.

You know, I don't go to the gym because I'm injured.

I go to the gym because I'm trying to make something more fit, more strong, whatever.

And that's what it could be for relationships, what it could be for your career.

It's like, shouldn't even be called therapy.

It's like relationship coaching, which implies that it's something you do just to keep it

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in good health and fitness.

Yeah.

I like that.

So I think that's going to continue to become less stigmatized.

My friends are the guys who started calm and I remember early on it was just like crushing it.

Yeah.

And it was just like, yeah, this thing, I believe in this, I've been doing this for a long time, but it was fringe.

And even when it started to take off, so I was asking him, I was like, look, I remember when you guys were doing like 100,000 in revenue annually and you couldn't raise money and it was tough.

And like, then all of a sudden it was like, yeah, we did 6 million last year, 20 million this year, 80 million.

And it went, now they're in 100 million plus a year revenue.

And I asked him what changed.

What was the tipping point?

And I thought it would be a product feature.

I thought it'd be some tweak they made.

And they're obviously, they did improve it over time, but he's like, honestly, the wind just started blowing behind our back, right?

Like people started to care about this.

People started to care about their mental health.

People felt really anxious.

They were looking for a solution.

And all of a sudden, you know, Apple featured them as app of the year because it was one of the few apps that a made money, which Apple likes.

And B was not like social media where there was all this like sort of toxicity behind it.

This was like pure good.

Apple featured it as app of the year.

That was big.

They got online doctor, a doctor, Oz or something like that.

But basically people started to care about meditation, just started search for it.

And they were already there.

They had done four years of work to be like sitting there with a good product ready to go.

Ready for when everyone, well, that's what we're saying for this league live feature because not everyone's ready for video dating yet.

We're like, we're just going to at least be there, be poised.

I bought up all the speed dating domains.

So it's like when people are ready to really do video dating, we're there because I just think we're early.

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Right.

Yeah.

It's a win.

Right.

Well, good luck.

Good luck to you.

Good luck to the league.

I'm a fan of the concept.

I had, I had known about it, but I didn't know the story till you came in today.

So I appreciate you sharing that.

And yeah, everybody should follow you and reach out to you.

But thank you so much for coming.

Cool.

Thanks for inviting me.

I need a dollar, dollar, dollar.

That's what I need.

Well, I need a dollar, dollar, dollar.

That's what I need.

So I need a dollar, dollar, dollar.

That's what I need.

So I need a dollar, dollar, dollar.

That's what I need.

That's what I need.

That's what I need.

So I need a dollar, dollar, dollar.

That's what I need.

And if I share with you my story, would you share your dollar with me?