

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.

Well, let's go ahead and kick things off.

How do you think about audience building?

What does your audience mean to you, Sean?

Oh, wow.

Emotional question.

How do I think about it?

I think about it like, I don't really think about it.

It's the byproduct of what I do.

So the way I approached it was after I sold my company, I said, all right, I can do whatever I want now.

So like, hey, time to face the tough question.

What do I actually want to do?

What do I actually care about in my life?

And those were big questions that kind of scared me.

So then I trimmed it down, I said, all right, well, how do I just want to spend my days?

What would be a normal, what would be a great day that I could do every day?

And the thing that came to me was like, the thing I enjoy doing the most is just getting curious.

I'm generally very curious about things.

And if I have to like go do work and then put those on the side and hopefully get to them when I get to them, that seemed like that was not great.

But if I could just make my work, that I could just be curious about these things, whether it's crypto or it's audience building or some new science tech thing, or it's, you know, where the hell, you know, do peanuts grow on trees or from the ground?

I don't know.

Let me go find out, right?

Like whatever it is, I was like, I want to be professionally curious.

All right.

Well, that's cool.

The curious part is easy.

How do you be professionally curious?

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

Well, one way was, let me turn that curiosity into content.

So I'll take these questions that I want to, you know, go look into.

And then I just got to package up my learnings at the end and share them with others.

All right, cool.

It's going to be more fun for me and it'll turn into something that actually generates a bunch of income, which will let me just do this all the time.

That was my thought process.

So audience building and content was just a kind of a necessary means to an end or a byproduct of the main thing I wanted to do, which was just be professionally curious, be able to wake up and just dive into the thing that's most on my mind that day and have no other restrictions beyond that.

That's about it.

Usagura about you.

Yeah.

I mean, I think that building an audience is a lot like making money, especially in the year 2022, which is that you have to provide something that doesn't exist and then people will commoditize it with their attention or, you know, if you're a business and you're building, you're trying to get revenue.

So with a way that I built my show and the way that I consistently think about building and getting more audience is just to continue to fill niches.

You started out filling one particular niche, built niches and niches and niches, put an underlying philosophy that girds that and then continue to try and build more on top of that, which just results in overall top line figure that continues to go up.

I actually don't think it's really that complicated as a concept.

It's just incredibly complicated to execute, which is why not a lot of people do it.

And there's really, you know, not that many people at the very, very, very top of the game and why, you know, in the whole influencer market, all returns are exponential, both, you know, the top 0.01% of podcasts get just so many more downloads than even the top 1% of podcasts.

Like what I figured when I found out what was even in the top 1%, I was like, wait, like 20,000 downloads.

I mean, how can you, I was like, I don't even know how you make a living for something like that.

And then, you know, you compare that to what the top 10 are.

So I think that execution is harder than everything else in this game, probably exactly the same as business.

I mean, it sounds easy to fill in each, but actually doing that, doing a consistent basis over years and years, through changing conditions, you know, changing market conditions for business,

changing information environment for somebody who's in the content game, that's where the scale all comes into play.

Like simple, simple, not easy, right?

Yes.

It can be simple.

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

What the answer is, but not necessarily easy.

Like we did this, like getaway, like this getaway where we're going to play basketball with a bunch of interesting people.

And one of the people that came was Mr. Beast, the number one YouTuber in the world.

So he, you know, he knows a thing or two about audience building.

And it's like, if you talk to him, you're like, Hey, you know, awesome.

What's the, what's the secret?

What's the trick for getting huge on YouTube?

And he's like, he's like, I just want to make the best YouTube videos possible.

Make great videos.

And we're like, okay, yeah, but like, you know, how'd you do it?

How'd you become number one?

He's like, I just tried to make great videos every day, just wake up and I'm like, all right, what's a great video?

How do I make that?

And it's like simple, not easy in the sense that like he didn't overcomplicate.

Okay.

Well, what makes a great video?

Something that gets your attention.

Something that holds your attention.

Something that, you know, makes you feel something at the end, you know, laughter or feel good moment or outrage, whatever it is, you could choose and you could break it down from there and add a little more detail.

But fundamentally, you're not going to get some answer that's like, damn, I never thought of that.

Right.

Wow.

They had this insight that's just not, it wasn't available to me.

And now that I have this insight, now I too can go succeed.

It's like the best, the people who are the best do the simple thing just better than everybody else totally is make great content.

Is that really kind of the, the bottom line here, if you were to say, like, what separates that top 1% that Sagar was mentioning from the other 99% is it as simple as just make great content or, um, okay, well, you went through YC, right?

I'll, you guys, were you in YC?

We did.

Yes.

Yeah.

What's the YC motto?

Right.

YC, the greatest startup accelerator in the world.

Um, has a great, greatest track record created almost half a trillion dollars of value of the companies that went through it.

What's the secret?

Make something people want is their motto.

Just try to start up, don't get distracted by fundraising and press and all these other things that you could try to growth hacks.

Are you making something people want?

Of course.

Really?

Uh, you know, tell me, uh, how do you know what, what gives you that feeling?

And then there's sort of like, I don't know, I just sort of assumed I was, it sounds so simple that I just sort of assumed I was already doing that.

Same thing with content or audience building.

Are you making content that people want?

Right?

That's the, that's the thing.

It's not just make great content.

It's make content that people want.

That's what great content is.

When he talked about picking niches and then figuring out how to serve that niche.

That's what he's doing.

Making content that people want in that category and then doing it better than, than others and doing it consistently.

So they build a habit, et cetera, et cetera.

I completely agree.

Yeah.

I mean, uh, I get approached by a lot of people, Hey, will this light do it for me?

Well, this camera, my camera's not your problem, bro.

I'm like, your contents is a problem.

I'm like, make content good.

Everything falls up in that.

You know, I recently spent \$60,000 on cameras and that's after three years of doing this, but needing 4k cameras was an added benefit for my existing audience, not what I needed for a requisite to start.

Like, sure, there's the baseline level of production.

I think a pop filter, uh, like a Yeti USB mic and a basic webcam and that is not a high startup cost.

And everybody's like, what about my thumbnails?

What about my, listen, thumbnails matter, headlines matter.

All that other stuff matters, et cetera.

But what Sean is talking about, which is that all Mr. Beast does is he knows exactly how to rank of retention, thumbnail, all of that, stack it all on top of each other, iterate it a million times and then come up with the quote unquote secret sauce.

He has the exact same YouTube dashboard that I have that all of us have that you have access to.

He just figured out how to read it better than anybody else.

So I always say, is the content good?

That's my number one concern.

Is it good?

It's compelling.

And that, as he said, it's simple.

It's not easy.

They got a certain point.

It is strange.

Like it is really one of those, like, you know what, when you see it, I can listen to something and be like, that's compelling.

And I can listen to something.

I'm just like, I don't know what it is, man, this needs work.

And it's tough to exactly explain what that is.

Yeah.

We listened to a session on product-led growth yesterday and it was almost like everybody was kind of like, well, what's, what's the hack?

What's the tactic?

What's the secret?

And our speakers were very simply like, well, you need an A-plus product in order to have any sort of product-led growth.

And I feel like the principle stands true for any form of audience growth as well.

Now, both of you have pretty distinct personal brands as well as like a business brand that you're both independently growing, either on accident or on purpose.

How do you think about the sort of brand building as a company, as an entity, versus personal brand building?

Do you have any heuristics or ways of thinking about it, Sager, you know, the way that you kind of use your own Twitter versus like, right, breaking points?

Yeah.

That's interesting.

So from a business, obviously it has to be whenever, and Sean, you too, you're like, you're in a partnership, right?

So this is inherently not something that you have total and 100% freedom on.

So whenever I'm doing something under the BP umbrella or, you know, business or hiring, it's not necessarily just a reflection of me.

It's a reflection of the ethos and the principles that we decided that we were going to grow on, mutually agree on together, you know, within that framework, everything is being branded, is being used.

That's a reflection of us, of our philosophy, et cetera.

On my personal brand, to be honest, I just have a lot less capacity for caring.

Like, if I'm interested in it, I'm just going to explore it.

Like, frankly, I'm at a level where I can do that if I want to, and if people have only I'm sick.

I literally don't care.

You know, either Instagram-

Yeah, you know how hard it was at the Suggest to find tweets that I'm able to show?

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

Yeah, I was like, I was a little scared whenever you were like, I was like, oh man, I was like, we're going to piss off half the audience.

But I mean, that's fine.

You know, I'm used to it in this line of work.

And that's kind of what I'm getting at, which is that the business has an orientation, which is A, make money, B, perpetuate itself.

For me, personally, I mean, obviously my personal brand, I probably thought about this very, very differently.

Whenever I was younger, and I was like on the up and up, but at this level, I actually just do whatever I want to do.

And so that is the only dichotomy between the two.

How do you think about it, Sean?

So what kind of answer would be interesting to you here?

What's like the, like, because I try to figure out what's the question behind the question.

So the question, the surface question is like, what's the difference between your pod brand and your personal brand?

But what is the question behind that?

The question behind that, here, let me start with the problem.

So the problem is that audience building as a brand is hard.

It's hard to create affinity when it's not coming from a human face.

And people often find, at least in the folks that I've chatted with, even personally, honestly demand curves, Twitter has been difficult to grow versus like, you know, personally, like individuals, as like Julian, for example, has a much easier time with his growth than we do as a company account.

So yeah, the question behind the question, that's a great question, Sean, is, you know, how ought to, like, how should startups and companies be thinking about audience, audience building when they have, yeah, but they have got like the personal brand in there.

Now I understand.

Now I understand.

Yeah.

The question really is like, what am I doing wrong here with demand curve?

But more generally speaking, like, I don't know the, it's, I haven't cracked this.

What's the difference?

I've noticed personal brands are easier to grow, but I also do, I want my company thing to grow, blah, blah, blah.

I think that here's my like very simple slash controversial take on this, which is I think if you're a company, you should be using individual faces to grow, you'll go, you'll go faster that way.

If you're an individual trying to grow like a media property, you should put it under a brand umbrella, mostly because you can't ever sell you.

So like if you wanted this to be an asset and not a job, you needed to grow its own brand, like you need breaking points or like in more case, like I had a personal newsletter and a personal Twitter that grew really fast.

I grew my personal Twitter from like 10 or 20,000 followers to it's at 300,000 in like

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

a year, basically a year and a half in a year, we got to 200,000, then it just trickled up.
But like, great.

What am I going to do with that?

I'm, I don't really want to be some like influencer.

And, and great, like, you know, I can't hand this off to anybody.

It's my voice is my name is my face.

So it's a job.

Now I need to maintain this thing.

And it's cool because like, I just don't get like, I'm like, I just don't care.

So I'll go six weeks without tweeting because I'm not trying to maintain some schedule is not a business of mine.

But when I created the milk road, it's intentionally not called Sean's crypto newsletter, which actually would have been easier at the start to get subscribers for because people already had bought into the Sean franchise.

So going for, oh, Sean is going to talk about crypto and do crypto analysis and crypto opinions.
Great.

I want to know about that.

But instead I called it the milk road because I thought one day I'd like to not be the guy writing this thing.

One day I'd like to not be the person maybe even owning this thing.

I'd like to sell this someday.

I want this to be an independent asset.

And so for that, again, me as an independent media content creator, I created a brand umbrella for those reasons.

But let's say it was my startup.

I would be saying, hey, I'm Sean, the growth guy from Bebo.

And I'm going to talk about growth over here, not the Bebo account doing it because it's going to get less play because people would rather follow people than companies.

And so you got to use, you make that trade off when you're already a company, then use the fact that people would rather follow people.

If you're an individual, you take a little hit by putting it under a brand umbrella, but you get this big benefit of it's not tied to your name and face forever that way.

So it's a strategic bet.

That's my opinion on this.

Well, it's super helpful.

And it kind of points to the problem that we originally had a demand curve where so much of our brand equity was tied up in Julian's brand equity.

And so being able to build that up under a new brand has certainly been something that we've done over the last couple of years.

That's super helpful.

Okay.

Yeah, let's go ahead and start to repeat that tweet segment here.

But we're going to experiment with screen sharing for the first time, see how this goes.

And yeah, both of y'all, the idea here is for both of y'all to just react to the tweet.

What were you thinking when you tweeted it out?

Why do you think it took off?

Why did it work?

And yeah, any other context that you think we would find interesting?

I wonder what percentage of these I'm just going to be like, I have no idea what I was thinking.

I don't believe that that's stupid.

These are bangers only, so hopefully you remember.

Sean, you did this hot take about everybody being wrong about the metaverse.

Obviously, it was a very hot topic at the time when you did this.

What can you tell us about this?

Well, I'll tell you my point in a second, but I guess that's a little less interesting even than just what made this work.

So this thing reached, I think, I don't know the exact stats.

But I think it's sort of like, some of it was in 10 and 20 million people in the US, but then it also was, it got shared like crazy on Instagram and it shared in China, like some big Chinese social media influencers were posting it, I guess.

So it got like millions of views there.

Logan Paul was talking about it on his podcast.

Mark Zuckerberg referenced this in the Lex Freeman interview.

So it went really far.

And I was like, why did this go so far?

And I think it was because it basically had three things.

Number one, it was timely.

So this was right when Facebook had rebranded to meta.

People were talking about the metaverse.

And I think everybody had this like sixth sense and it's sort of like, you know, sneaking suspicion that everybody's bullshitting about this.

But like nobody knew, it was all smart people and big names that were saying how the metaverse is the future, but nobody was saying what the hell the metaverse is or why it's the future.

And so like, I think everybody kind of smelled bullshit, but didn't know how to call.

So it was timely.

I was calling bullshit, which generally is like something people are going to want to click into and read.

And the last thing was, I think I backed it up.

I think I had a good point that could get you to agree with my conspiracy theory, so to speak, was not so far-fetched.

And basically, all I was saying was like, when people hear the word metaverse, they think about this like virtual reality shit, like, oh, I'm living in some thing.

I'm an avatar now.

And I said, actually, I think it's more like this concept called the singularity, which is an artificial intelligence, which is like this moment in time, this tipping point where computers have reached a superintelligence and they're vastly smarter than humans.

And they are so smart, they just program themselves to become, it's like runaway intelligence.

They program themselves to become smarter.

And so I thought, oh, the metaverse is kind of like that.

It's basically this tipping point where, well, a lot of my friends are online now.

I think I have this experience, many of you guys do, look at this like experience we're having now.

A lot of my work is now digital.

My social identity, like my profiles, my followers are all digital.

If you buy NFTs, cool.

So my art is now digital.

More and more things that are important to you are now like they live on the internet.

And so at some point, all of your digital stuff matters to you more and you spend more time and energy and focus there than you do in your physical.

That doesn't mean you'll never go eat or walk or exercise or anything like that.

That's not what it means.

But it just means like sort of this is tipping point where before rewind 20 years, it didn't matter.

I had a computer room in my house that was like, there was a computer room and everything else was non-computer.

And now like, the computer is attached to my body basically, right?

So it's like, you've seen this transition already, it's just going to continue.

And so, hey, don't think it's this crazy virtual world.

It's just this tipping point where at some point we've been creeping towards it, creeping towards it.

At some point, we're just going to value our digital stuff more than we do our physical in the sense that we're going to spend more time and energy and effort and money on the internet than we do offline.

That was the idea.

So that's my explain this tweet.

All right.

A quick message from our sponsor.

You know, I was thinking about the shortest day of the year earlier.

And while we technically had the same amount of time as every other day of the year, the lack of daylight makes it feel so much shorter, which is exactly the same kind of feeling as working with disconnected tools.

Our workday is the same length as always.

But before you know it, we spent three hours just fixing something that was supposed to be automated.

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Super helpful, man.

It was surprising to me during your podcast with Hasan Minhaj that he was he was genuinely

triggered by the suite.

It affected him like an identity level.

Yeah, he called me.

He was like, hey, can I call you?

I don't know the guy, by the way.

I didn't know him before this.

He's like, he had followed me from one other tweet that went viral about Clubhouse and he then he called me and he was like, bro, like I do stand-up comedy and real crowds with real people that energy.

That is my home.

That is my craft.

That is my favorite feeling in the world.

And like, God, I don't want this like, you know, metaverse bullshit, like, you know, topper through it.

And I was like, I don't know what to tell you about.

And like, I think it's going in that direction.

I don't think, you know, I remember, I remember people being like, I love waking up, getting the newspaper, bringing it in from my front lawn and the feel of the newspaper, right?

And like, it's true, you probably did like that thing, but guess what you liked more was like instant real time news constantly flooding into your brain turns out that that was more addictive than like, you know, being able to get news from all these different sources rather than just your local provider, that turned out to be really important.

Being able to access it on the go on your phone turned out that wasn't really important.

And so yeah, you liked the feel of it, but there's all these other benefits that like ended up crushing that.

So that was a, that's what happened after this tweet.

You contextualized it well.

We talked about kind of the benefit of accountability.

It's a double edged sword here, we're, you know, get the upside and the risk involved in that.

Super interesting.

Sager.

Yes.

Like I said, challenging to find tweets I can share with everybody here, but I would love to hear.

My most viral.

Yeah.

Actually, I think the most viral is two days ago.

I just saw that.

Yeah.

Very cool.

Yeah.

Talk to us about what, why did this, this tweet work?

What is this speaking to?

And like, why do you think this resonated?

Yeah, I'm actually, it's interesting.

I kind of pivoted to becoming the gas guy and politically.

This really is really just purely a function of what I talked about earlier, which is that if you were to ask me why I think my show is successful is I think because I cover things in a way that most people feel are not being covered by existing sources of information. That's very basic.

Like thesis statement.

That's why I think it does well.

I've always noticed that coverage of gas is skewed in a particularly partisan way.

So one of the things that I like to do is just highlight basic textualizing that every American has to put into their car on average a couple of times, or at the very least like once a week, a couple of times a month.

So what did I do there?

I said the average American nets at some amount of money after taxes at \$5 a gallon.

That means that they're spending approximately 10% of their take home pay on gas.

And when you include food and housing, it gives you a picture of how bad things are.

That's not a political statement.

That's just like a statement about where things are.

That got shared as what I was saying.

People screenshotted it.

It was shared on Instagram.

Both ways.

It's like oil companies need to stop profiteering.

Here's why Biden needs to start drilling.

You can put it any particular way you want.

In general, my most viral content, actually, although just speaks to more putting out facts and then contextualizing them in a way where people feel like they can be used to something that is very meaningful to their life.

I'll give you another example, one of my most viral posts recently has been about mortgages. And it really was just a basic take about like, hey, in 2021, you could buy X-House price house for this monthly payment.

Mortgages price has now gone up, so now you get less house.

Once again, you can read that whichever way you want.

You can be like, congratulations, Jerome Powell.

You can say screw you, Jerome Powell.

You can put it any particular way.

So I think to piggyback on what Sean is saying, I think timeliness is everything.

So timeliness is, you know, timeliness is number one, it has to be timely.

Number two, it has to be the most viral stuff, I believe, has to be able to resonate with somebody and not tell them how to think, just give them the ability to then form something.

And then three, I think it's also concise, which is why Twitter is very, very helpful.

That's great, by the way.

It's like you handed them like a hammer and you're like, don't beat up whoever you want

to beat up with this information, and this can be used on anybody, you know, just use it to serve your agenda, which is like kind of the like, I don't know, cynical take on content creation, which is like, you will blow up faster if you sort of gas up an audience around something that they already have a bias or belief system of and you feed that. This happens, for example, it doesn't even have to be political.

With crypto, this happens all the time, which is like, oh, just be anti the dollar, anti fed, anti Warren Buffett, anti whoever, and you just keep feeding information that like riles up this zealous crowd that already believes that all they're looking for is like, they're not looking for real information.

They're looking for information that just fits their worldview only.

And I don't mean that to pick on them because pretty much everybody does this.

And so, you know, everybody's looking for information that feeds their worldview.

So one useful way of thinking about it is, what worldview do I like and respect and maybe share?

What worldview do I understand?

And then that's the worldview that I can serve by producing good packaged nuggets because I know what will hit with that audience.

And then I'm focused on that versus just generically producing content and then not really thinking about the worldview that it's going to go live in.

By the way, what's the tweet that went viral two days ago?

Oh, that was about Dr. Fauci.

We don't have to get into that one.

We don't have to get into that one.

What are we here to do?

I mean, I'll go into it.

I don't care.

Sure.

Well, Bill, not to derail your, not to derail your tire condition.

For those who are not familiar with something called the lab leak theory, the theory is is that coronavirus leaked from a lab.

And so the underlying facts and circumstances around this are pretty interesting.

The tweet that I did was again, actually speaks directly to what you just talked about, Sean, which is that if you're unfamiliar with the characters who are involved, there's one particular guy who served as the cut out as so-called cut out of funding from the NIH to the Wuhan Institute of Biotechnology.

His name was Dr. Peter Dazak.

He's been intimately involved in the cover up of any facts or evidence around the lab leak theory.

This was all old news at this point, basically two years ago that we've known all this information.

Well, you know, Dr. Fauci on his waning days as the head of NIAID actually just granted a \$600,000 grant to the same individual for the same type of research, which possibly led to the escape of coronavirus from the Wuhan lab.

That was it.

There you go.

It's right in front of you.

Fauci is waning days.

As you said, I'm like, here's information.

Why do I think it went viral?

I mean, that's not difficult because nobody else is reporting it and millions and millions of millions of people are interested.

That's literally just a screenshot from a government website.

By the way, you said something like, you know, I know a lot of people care about, like, I know that the gas issue or something, a lot of people about that they don't feel is being adequately covered.

How do you know that?

You're reading YouTube comments to get this information.

You're talking to people.

How are you figuring out both what my niche is interested in and where there's a lack of service on that topic?

Is it because you're not seeing it and so you're like, oh, I am a customer.

That's how I know.

Or do you have some feedback loop?

How do you do it?

At this point, it's art and a science.

So I have a general intuition of like, hmm, this is not being covered.

Also the reason why I got into gas was because I could see that my segments on inflation were going astronomically high.

Really what it is is I did a monologue months and months and months ago.

It was very basic.

I was like, hey, we are going to have an energy price crisis.

This was actually before the entire Russian invasion of Ukraine because we were still having problems in our gas supply and I was really obsessed like why these specific market conditions and it just went mega viral.

I got all these emails from these people being like, hey, man, like, thank you so much.

Like nobody talks about heating oil in Vermont and like couple of contracts look like for these things.

And you know, for me and my family, I only make \$50,000 a year.

So when I have to lock in at X price, like it really, really hurts.

And I was like, hmm, that's interesting.

And so then again, you throw a couple of test segments and you like do some segments on it.

Each one either consistently performs or does more so than normal and like, okay, well clearly people care a lot about this.

And so what I do then is like kind of use my insider ability as a guy who works in the Washington press corps more to like cover it in a professional manner.

And I think that was the way that I could discover it.

But I also have a general sense of, you know, I work in this media, I work in media, I live in DC, I know what the people in power are talking about and obsessed with and my general

orientation has to bet against whatever that is and cover anything else.

And in general, that serves me very well.

So there you go.

That's cool.

I like that.

One thing that Sawger shared, maybe when we get into more tactics later, he can cover this, but one of the things that worked for him early on was, I think you would say like, just posting transcripts of like, different people would say, so if Trump would say something all you would do is just snip the transcript and just sweep that out and let people have whatever take the wanted on it.

Yeah.

I mean, I can share that.

So my first 50,000 followers, I was, I was really obsessed with Twitter, like obsessed, which is not a good thing.

I should say, when I was younger and I was like, I want to get more Twitter.

I remember Michael, I was like, I want 50,000 followers.

I had like 4,000 at the time.

I had a job as a White House correspondent and like, okay, well, how can I take advantage of this?

So all I did was I just got really proficient at using live transcription services, which literally watched cable television and then spit out rough transcripts, copy and pasting it, taking out the caps, editing it for clarity and just trying to be one of the first people to be like, Trump said X or the Secretary of State said Y.

And as you said, Abil, you're just pumping information out into the world.

This is why also, you know, I think I probably have a timely bias because I work in the news business.

Like for us, timeliness is everything.

If you're two hours late, like you might as well be dead, you know, you're a zombie.

And so for us, like microseconds, especially in the, you know, in the so-called like information distribution game, you're competing against the Associated Press, against lawyers and you know, like major multi-million dollar professional organizations.

It really just turned out to be getting pretty good at tweeting out transcripts.

So I think my first 50,000 followers all just came from people who were following me in order to find out like what was going on that day in politics.

And since that was literally my job, I was both doing my job well.

And I was building an audience.

So yeah, there's a lot of, yeah, there's a lot of ways that people in this audience can apply that.

I mean, you're all in your own niche.

You all have the influencers and the leaders in those niches going out and doing appearances.

There's ways of adapting this strategy, not just in the news and timeliness context, but even in the tech.

I have a question about timeliness.

Oh, yeah.

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

Yeah, go for it.

It exemplifies it.

So I created, or so there was this big news event that happened in crypto where this token called Luna crashed and it had been one of the high flyers and then it goes to zero kind of like overnight and I had a position in Luna.

So I ended up losing what was like a million dollars in that crash.

And I also had kind of like an interesting take because you need to have a take on, you know, everybody knows what happened.

What they want to know is, you know, either why it happened or what it means.

And so I had a good take and I decided, okay, the way I'm going to do that and two things happen.

Hey, I was a little bit busy that week.

I was like on vacation and stuff like that came back or a couple of days go by.

And then I was like, okay, what do I do?

Either I'm just going to post this as like, you know, a couple of tweets, a thread or what if I made like a video on this?

And so I go on YouTube, I end up creating this like almost like the John Oliver show was last week tonight.

I go and I create this like, I'm like, I do this rant.

I rant about Luna, I rant about why, why it blew, why it got big and then why it crashed and why it got devastated and it was had jokes spliced in, I heard this editor, the editor is amazing.

We're working on this.

We're iterating on it.

We're making great content.

And we put it out now, two and a half weeks have gone by as we put it out.

You can see this if you go to YouTube, Luna, John or something like that.

And the video has like, I don't know, 17,000 views or so, 20,000 views, maybe at this point.

But it never went viral and like, so, you know, I consider that sort of like a flop of a piece of content, especially one that I tried really hard on.

And the funny thing is like, I kind of knew this, that like the smarter thing would have been if I literally had opened up my phone, typed out a thing in the notes app, screen shot it and just posted it immediately when it happened.

It would have been less great because it was not the jokes weren't as good, there was no video production, there was no nothing, but it would have been on time.

And on time matters way more than great.

And when it comes to this type of reactionary, what does everybody care about right now?

Because a lot of times three weeks have gone by, just nobody cared about it anymore.

The world had moved on, there was two other crises to worry about.

And so that was an expensive of time wise lesson of how much effort I put into something that did not go viral compared to shit that did go viral because I did it good enough at the right time is better than great at the wrong time.

Totally agree.

Good enough at the right time is better than great at the wrong time.

That is the quote and heck of a, some art here that you got going on, Sean, I love it.

Okay, cool.

Let's rapid fire through one more each.

Let's see.

So Sean, we have your clubhouse one, but I feel like it's pretty close to the metaverse one as to why that work.

Yeah.

Do you want to talk about this Elon one or do you want to talk about this learning one?

Yeah.

I'll do both real quick.

The Elon one is actually like Sagar was saying, one of the threads that went viral was no original insight.

Elon was on clubhouse, like popped onto clubhouse when clubhouse was hot.

And just a guest appearance by Elon Musk is not something you get very often.

And also clubhouse was like overloaded, it was like invite only and it was overloaded.

So I just go, for those who are locked out of the Elon thing, here's what he's saying.

And I just live typed and transcribed everything interesting he was saying in a thread and real time.

And I was the only guy doing it.

And like, you know, on one hand, I felt a little silly, I was like, oh man, I've become like a professional note taker on a fucking beta app of clubhouse, like, geez, what does my career come to?

And then also I was like, oh, wow, this is like 7,000 likes already.

Okay, never mind.

Let's shut up, like go.

And so, you know, I just like, just did it, but it was like, it talks about that same thing, which is like some people think they need to have this like really great insight or amazing, you know, perspective or whatever.

And sometimes you're just providing a service better than others.

You're just clipping good content and you're posting it and you're doing that consistently and people will follow you for that.

You can build a huge audience as simply a curator or remixer of content.

You don't even need to be an original content creator, I would say in most cases, you do not need to be.

So that's kind of what this one was, which was I just pull this was separately.

I just pulled out, you know, this, this great quote, you know, by Elon and, you know, this is another one where it fits people's worldview.

My audience is mostly entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs love to have this chip on the shoulder, this badge of pride about like how hard it is to be an entrepreneur, which I find pretty stupid in general, but I can play to it.

And so I played to it here, which is like, Elon was like, you know, if you need words of encouragement for doing a startup, don't do a startup.

Oh yeah.

Like, you know, that's right.

We are the special breed and like we don't need this, you know, motivational speeches, whatever.

So I knew that this would play.

And so, you know, just threw out there and sure enough, it hits.

The other one that you shared was, oh yeah, this was meant to trigger people.

So everybody thinks that, everybody thinks that things like education and healthcare are like highly nuanced topics.

And I find it also that really funny and stupid.

Like, I think that nuance is something that smart people love to hide behind because it's so easy to just say, oh, well, you know, it depends.

And like, you know, it's, it's not so simple.

It's not so easy.

Yeah.

It's not so black and white.

It's not so binary.

They love to like do this, this nuance thing.

And so I knew I could trigger everybody.

If I just said here, I could fix education in like a tweet and it's like, oh, classic tech bro thinks he could fix education in a stupid tweet.

And so, you know, I know how to like, you know, just bait the animals with like, here you go.

Right.

And it's something I do believe, which is that most people when they want to learn something, they start by trying to learn it.

They go read about it.

They watch about it.

They, they go attend seminars and workshops or take courses about it and they'd be better off just going and trying to do the damn thing.

And then when they get stuck, they should go look up how to get unstuck.

Like I do believe that that's true, but if I had just said that, it would have gotten a tenth of the likes by, by adding there, I fixed education.

I was able to trigger a bunch of people.

And so, you know, that was, you know, these are the Jedi mind tricks of the, of the great kind of creators.

I mean, I really hear that you relate to Twitter as a game.

Like it's not like a thing where you have to tell like what you believe exactly the way you believe it.

You're, you're, there's, there's a bit of a game that you're playing.

Is that how you would relate to it?

Yeah.

Don't take it too seriously.

Like, I don't take anything too seriously, but definitely not going to be Twitter of

things.

I barely take parenting and like, you know, things like that seriously, I try to be playful and silly and lighthearted with those too.

So I'm definitely not going to take Twitter too seriously.

The other thing is I, I'm lucky that Twitter is not my, my, my real job, you know, like I basically been successful outside of content creation.

So I had the security that I can just kind of f around with content creation and do what I think is interesting because I'm not doing this in order to become successful.

So I don't have to, so I didn't have this mental block of like, I need to play things a certain way.

So I was talking about this too.

Like once you get to a certain size, whether you did it outside of content or even through content, you can start playing much looser because at the end of the day, your life story, just do whatever you want to do, say what you want to say.

It's a lot more fun, rewarding and fun and interesting that way.

And so you could do that, you know, you could buy yourself that right.

But most people are sort of have this mental block where they're like afraid and they take everything so seriously and then it becomes an unpleasant experience for them.

I think, well, I think a lot of people don't, don't enjoy social media because they don't treat it like a game.

You enjoy games.

You don't enjoy things that are ultra serious.

And so, you know, I think that's where most people get it wrong.

Yeah.

Having that, that block of like, oh, I need to get it right, I think is the kind of the internal conversation that, that keeps people from even, even taking that action in the first place.

So let's see.

We have this on student debt or this on CNN plus, which one would you like to chat about?

I like that one.

That's a good one.

Narratively that I always enjoy that.

So that one was, yeah, so just for those who may have been watching the failure of CNN plus and lapsing of Obama's wife, Connor are related.

So why is this tweet successful?

You take two viral events that are being discussed.

You pair them together and then you put a thesis statement on why exactly it supports a broader meta narrative.

Shitty establishment content previously forced back to us in cable monopoly era simply cannot compete in the free market streaming.

The revolution has just begun.

So revolution has just begun.

G feeds the thesis, you know, most of the people who follow me and I, in general, anybody below age like 50 doesn't like cable monopoly and cable news.

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

So obviously a huge market there.

You know, biology actually said, biology stream of option one says something to me is always bet on charts.

He's just, you've got to find the right chart to bet on.

And so I always say that the right chart for me is trust in the mainstream media, which is 13%.

That means my market size is 87% of the United States.

So I only have even more to grow.

And if you put a globe on that, it's even like, man, so I feel sorry for CNN serving this niche 3rd, 10% of the audience, poor guy, if they need some help, I got you.

It's about flipping things on its head.

And it's like, no, no, no, no, no, it's like, you're the one who is only serving the need.

So putting these two things together, the Obama Spotify contract, the CNN like to legacy established political, both brands kind of in their own right, everybody knows, but yet not a lot of people are consuming and then putting them together and saying and trying to describe a market condition that is arising that can tell us about why these two things have failed, that goes against the way that people who actually work in professional media explanation are able to tell you, I mean, to date, I have not seen a dispassionate view maybe out of one or two people, I can count on one hand, Sarah Fisher over at Axios, I think she's awesome, there's like Dylan Byers over at Puck News, I think he's a straight shooter too, those two are pretty much the only ones I've seen with like an actual rundown of like why these things don't work, compared to the amount of money that are being invested in them, the Obama Spotify contract is the same one, it's like, you know, they paid the former president of the United States millions of dollars, and it just didn't do that well, when he was paired one of the biggest rock stars on earth, that's, that's kind of insane. I mean, you have somebody who hundreds of millions of people knew that know his net billions of people probably know his name, you have somebody who received like 10 hundreds of millions of votes collectively over two elections, and yet he can't even crack the top 10 on podcasts, like how does that, how does the former MMA cage fighter beat this person?

Like how's that possible?

And so that's a very interesting story.

Now nobody wants to tell that story because, you know, when you're working the quote unquote powers it be, you're gonna offend the wrong people, and so it again, that's just a niche that opens up for me to come in and to build that.

So I think that's why that it took off.

It was it's not, not even a difficult one really to explain.

Well, no, that's, that's, I like that take two viral events, stitch it together with a thesis statement, and then cater to that 87% of the audience who doesn't trust in the mainstream media is very clever.

Cool.

Well, let's go through some rapid fire questions, tactical questions, and some questions from the audience over the next five to seven minutes, and then we'll call it a day.

Sagar, talk to us, you know, you mentioned the strategy that you did early on, kind of

[Transcript] My First Million / How To Get Started With Building An Audience in 2022

just taking scripts of what other more influential people are saying, like what were really the inflection points or tactics that took you from from that first zero to 100k, let's say Twitter.

Okay.

So zero to Twitter is actually not that hard, which is that most of the people follow only a few amount of accounts.

So get those few amount of accounts in order to follow you and get them to retweet you.

And that's basically the secret to grow.

I don't think it's that complicated.

So what does that mean?

It's like, well, find the, that niche, the point of 1%, what do they need in their feed that they're not getting, provide that service.

For me, I was the first guy in order to tweet the transcript, which means that they were all following me, which means that they're all retweeting me and exposing me to their millions of followers, which means that some people would then and follow me.

So for me, it was, I would say around 10k is a big, is a big jump.

For some reason in people's minds, it's like, when you cross 10,000, that is a point where you're going to get exponentially more new numbers of followers.

What I've discovered across all my platforms, the more followers you have, the easier it is to get followers, which is so frustrating.

Whenever you're starting out, you're like, when you're, oh man, 5,000, at that point, if I had 5,000 followers on Instagram, which, you know, once upon a time was a case, if I got 50, I was like, Oh my God, I lose 50 a day to actually more, probably more like 100, and yet I'll net out, you know, at a thousand a week or something like that.

And it's simply because of like the churn, the burn, the way that your algorithmic treatment is offered.

So I think 10 is a big inflection point.

I think 50 is an even bigger inflection point.

That's where things really begin to go vertical.

And you know, this is probably the same startups, which is just getting that, you know, first initial customers and then compounding that to a sustainable ish business is like the really most difficult, requires the most amount of thought.

Because at the end of the day, that's where you're filling the niche.

That's where you're discovering the niche, that's where you're playing around.

That's really the time, too, of the most experimentation, where you have really, really high stakes.

So I would say it's there.

And then also on the other end, where, you know, after I reached 300K, actually after I reached 200K on Twitter, I was like, I just don't care anymore.

I was like, if it goes up, it goes up.

I could care less.

You know, my business is almost entirely dependent on YouTube, and I frankly care more about Instagram than I do about Twitter.

I think I have much higher quality engagement, just from what I've seen, my ability to sell, either my subscription tickets, any of those things are there.

So then it just became a complete game after that.

I just genuinely did whatever I wanted.

So those are kind of the interesting inflection points.

Cool.

Yeah, I like the idea of finding, look, there's a few accounts that everybody follows, like it's almost account-based marketing at that point where it's getting in touch and making an impression with those nodes, those sort of super nodes in your industry.

Sean, do you have anything to add?

That's smart.

I wish I'd done that.

Didn't have that insight, but I learned something great today.

Yeah, mine was sort of like, actually, it was the same, but I did it in a much slower, stupider way, which was the first kind of 25 people mattered a lot.

And so it's not the number.

It's who those 25 are.

For me, I built those relationships in person.

So like, you know, Ryan Hoover had a popular Twitter and I had known Ryan in person, you know, for seven, eight years at that point.

And so once I started getting active and started saying interesting things, he was happy to kind of like share.

I never asked him.

He just, he followed me already.

He thought some things I said was interesting and he would share it with his audience.

And then that happened with like 25 important people in tech that were already well known, I had built in-person relationships with them, built in-person credibility with them.

And so it's kind of the same idea, actually, but just a very slow version of what he just talked about.

And I didn't think about it like creating content that serves them, that they would want to share with their audience.

I just thought like, it just, it just accidentally happens, you know, sort of along the way.

The main things that I would say is like, you know, figure out your, you know, the domain you're trying to build your authority in.

So, you know, get really tight on that, the tighter, the better, but it's very tempting to be broad.

And I've made this mistake many times with this, like being like, well, it's that, but it's also these other things that I like, and it's also this, and it's also that.

And actually, you'd be better off just starting off, starting off there.

Then there's basically like some tactical things like, you know, for example, there's this theory called the red pill theory, I guess, I think politics has a different definition.

I heard it when I talked to the guy, there's two guys who do wait, but why, and so there's like Tim, who's like the writer, the famous guy, and then his friend Andrew, who, a childhood friend who helps him run his businesses.

And Andrew, I talked to Andrew and Andrew was like, yeah, you need to have your red pill, which is like, you need to have the truth that you can say people that wasn't like,

it's not the thing everybody's saying, but when you hear it, people, like some say one of the people will nod their head vigorously, right?

So, what is the ends of other people call this your spiky point of view?

It's like, you know, what is your, what's your thing, right?

Like, you know, maybe your thing was like, that inflation is a way bigger problem.

The government is playing this down.

Boom.

That's your red pill.

And you can do, you can base your whole brand off that for a period of time.

And then you have to eventually swap out and create a second red pill, which is like, you need to be giving people, and by the way, red pill comes like the matrix where it's like, do you want, if you take the blue pill, you go back into the matrix and you just live like a sheep again, and you just don't question anything, or do you want the truth?

And that's the thing.

You're trying to give people the truth in a way that they're not, that they haven't been told, and then you can become known for that.

And so I think that's important.

That's a very useful tool.

I think some other tools are speaking from the eye.

I found great success in this, which is a lot of people in the more successful that they get, they'll just keep saying you like a fortune cookie, like, oh, you got to do this.

You know, when you feel this way, you got to try doing this.

And it's like, it's much more powerful when you're like, you know, I was feeling this way, or I was going through this, I had this experience and it made me think this, but what I need to do differently is I need to do this.

It's a much more, I think in general, it's good for personal accountability to speak from the eye.

But secondly, I think it plays really well to content because it's different than what everybody else is doing.

So same thing, personal stories and speaking from the eye, I think works, but like the high level things is, you know, you could be either a generous expert sharing your knowledge and expertise, or you could be a curious novice and a curious novice is somebody who's just going through like you're saying, you're just typing out the transcripts, you're just finding interesting clips and sharing it, you're remixing, packaging, curating and presenting, you know, stuff as a beginner's point of view rather than saying, I know everything.

So you got to know what areas are you an expert in and what areas are you going to be a curious novice and then use both in your content.

And the last is just, I don't know, don't quit and go viral like that.

That's ultimately like, if you want to win, don't quit and like find ways to go viral or you won't grow.

So if you just only going to remember two things on the strategy is like, don't quit and go viral, I would say is the takeaway.

I could talk to both of y'all for another hour.

This is awesome.

Yeah.

Just the nuggets at the end, nonstop.

I think we're going to create an illustration of this to capture a lot of those things.

So stay tuned for that.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Thank you both so much for spending your time with us today.

This was a ton of fun.

I feel like I can rule the world.

I know I could be what I want to.

I put my all in it like no days off on the road.

Let's travel, never looking back.