

Welcome to Marketing In The Know, the premier podcast to help you reap ahead of the marketing curve so you can grow your business. Now get ready, set and grow with your host and tour guide through the marketing jungle, Buckley Barlow!

Buckley Barlow: Hello-hello, Insiders, this is Buckley, and welcome to Marketing In The Know. This podcast is all about helping you leap ahead of the curve so you can grow your business at all sorts of stages

And today, I'm so excited to chat with my next guest because he walks the walk when it comes to growth, especially at startups. In fact, on his Twitter profile it says, "I build and grow startups". I love that short and simple. He's a Forbes 30 Innovator under the age of 30, and when it comes to growth, he was instrumental in growing Moz, Seismic which was later acquired by Hootsuite, and Stride which was first acquired by Neil Patel and then sold to ProsperWorks.

He's been an entrepreneur in residence at Betaworks and he is now the VP of marketing over at Bitly. Whooh, I'm almost out of breath.

Andrew Dumont, it's an honor to have you on the show today.

Andrew Dumont: Hey, me too, thanks for having me.

Buckley Barlow: Well, Andrew, I vaguely remember seeing an article in TechCrunch announcing the sale of Stride to Neil Patel. I think it was about what, two years ago, right?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, roughly.

Buckley Barlow: I remember that because I was looking at various CRMs for a portfolio company at that time, and that article stood out. So congrats on that that's interesting.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, it was, well, it was a fun little thing. It was a side project completely, so built it in the evenings and weekends with a few friends of mine, and it was really for pain-point that I had. I was using Salesforce at Moz just for kind of some deal tracking on some BD work that we were doing. And it was just too complicated, too heavy, and nothing out

there really solved what I was looking for. So I you know built a simple version, something that was mainly focused on deal tracking and not contact management.

And, yeah, I was able to build it to something meaningful in terms of revenue and customer base. And somebody else saw some value in it and found a good home for it so it worked out pretty well, and it was a lot of fun.

Buckley Barlow: Well, not just anybody, Neil Patel. He's kind of a – he's kind of a big name, isn't he?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, yeah, he is, big guy.

Buckley Barlow: Yeah, I hope to get him on the show a while one of these days.

So, Andrew, I'm pumped to have a conversation with a guy like you, and who knows where it's gonna land today. But in general, you're a guy that seems like you've got your finger on the pulse and I relish in these types of conversations to find out exactly what's been working out there and what's not working. So I hope you're ready do delivery, my friend.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, let's do it.

Buckley Barlow: The pressure's on.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah.

Buckley Barlow: Hey, all right, well, we have a lot of terrain to cover today, and today we're gonna focus on the first part about Moz, and then the second part we'll talk about Bitly. But before we dive into those two companies, I'd love to know more about you, your company, and your role over there.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, sure. So, generally, I've just kind of been in startups and building companies since I was 18. So I got involved with an early-stage startup in my hometown, which is just north of Seattle. And you know, started in a basement with two guys and we're just cranking on a product, on a startup. And this is you know back when startups were cool, I guess. So yeah, that started my obsession with it and

hooked me on it, and ever since then I've jumped around to a few different companies, saw a few exits, and now I'm at Bitly and I run the marketing org here.

So when I joined, the marketing team was only a few folks and now it's up to ten employees over a six-month period. So it's just been a really heavy ramp and there's a lot of opportunity here. So yeah, just kind of focused on building the marketing machine at Bitly right now.

Buckley Barlow: That's cool now let's talk Betaworks, first. You didn't mention that. Because you're an entrepreneur in residence over at Betaworks, can you give people some insight as to what Betaworks is and what the role of an entrepreneur in residence is?

Andrew Dumont: Yes. So it's a fascinating model. What they call it is a studio. And you can think about it as an accelerator, but it's a little bit different in that people don't come to them with ideas and companies or anything like that. Betaworks actually employs all the folks in the studio and those teams essentially create new products. And then as those products grow, evolve, and become companies in their own right, then they essentially leave the Betaworks studio and become their own entity.

So Bitly is one of those companies that has grown up and out of Betaworks. Giphy is another one that's relatively well known, Chartbeat is another one. Some companies in the studio right now are Digg which was acquired from Kevin Rose when that kind of went down and they're kind of reviving that product; Dots is in there right now which is a game for you iPhone. I mean they have – Instapaper is in there as well. So there's a whole slew of companies in there. So it was just an amazing place with a lot of brilliant people that were building really interesting early-stage companies.

In my role, specifically, as an EIR was essentially to hop around in different products, lend my expertise where I could. So I, essentially, got to see a ton of different business models and tons of different stages of companies, and lend help where I could and get involved in whatever capacity. It varied per company. And then as part of that

process, I spent more time with Bitly, and through my experience and through the work with Bitly and my experience in software as a service, it made sense for me to move over more permanently into Bitly. So that's where I'm at right now. So that's how that transition happened.

Buckley Barlow: That's cool. Now do you get paid for being an EIR?

Andrew Dumont: You do, yes.

Buckley Barlow: Yeah, well, I didn't know if you were a consultant or you get equity in the ventures, or how that works because I've seen all sorts of different models for these accelerators.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, it's a – at Betaworks it was a set salary, a competitive salary and some opportunity, obviously, to gain equity in some of their companies as you became more involved. So that's how that model worked. And then, obviously, if I had a company or an idea that I was particularly passionate about, then you could essentially start that up within Betaworks as an EIR.

But the Bitly opportunity was the timing was right and I knew I could do a lot of good here, so I decided to make that move.

Buckley Barlow: That's great. Now what kind of companies are you seeing go through Betaworks right now? And what's the common theme of what they're developing out?

Andrew Dumont: You know, they're generally focused on media and new media companies. And I know that's kind of a broad term, but they're interested in the evolution of media. Like, if you look at Chartbeat they definitely have their pulse on the media space, and that's where a lot of where they're investing is.

But you know they also have an investment portfolio. They invest off their balance sheet so they're not a fund, but they invest in early-stage startups in that. That portfolio include media and in Tumblr and a lot of those folks, so both in the companies that they create and in the companies that they invest in, they have a heavy new media focus.

- Buckley Barlow: Yeah, they've invested in Tumblr and AirBnB, right?
- Andrew Dumont: Yeah-yeah, pretty incredible portfolio, which I had no part of. So – I'd like to, but I did not.
- Buckley Barlow: Well, Andrew, let's take a trip down memory lane. You helped Moz, a leading SEO company for those living under a rock, a mass of a beautiful string of recurring revenue. I think you went from \$6 million to \$30 million, right?
- Andrew Dumont: Yeah-yeah.
- Buckley Barlow: And you guys did it without hiring one sales person, not one sales person, is that right?
- Andrew Dumont: Yeah, that's right.
- Buckley Barlow: How did you finance this business, in a nutshell without a sales team? I love it.
- Andrew Dumont: Yeah. I think you know a lot of that has to go to, well, definitely, it should go to Rand Fishkin who's the CEO of Moz. I mean, he was incredible in terms of the way that he thought about the long-term growth of the company. They invested very heavily in content marketing, in building the top of the funnel.
- For example, if you do a search for Learn SEO you're likely going to get Moz' Beginner's Guide to SEO as the first result. They invested very heavily in that, and what that allowed them to do was, with that top of funnel is, essentially, push people into a free trial sign-up. So with their price point between \$99.00 and \$500.00 a month, that allowed them to, essentially, remove the high tech sales process. And instead, allowed people to sign up for a free trial with their credit card and either convert or not convert, and that kind of built the funnel.
- So it was kind of this flywheel approach long-term top of funnel growth, and they built an amazing machine to do that.
- Buckley Barlow: Yeah, as an SEO company they were practicing what they preached, right?
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Andrew Dumont: Yes, exactly, exactly.

Buckley Barlow: And so you have a couple, specific tactics that you use to drive millions of dollars in sales in regards to this free trial. Could you go over that tactic? I thought it was really, really, insightful.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah. I'm at a [audio skip] –

Buckley Barlow: Well, I'm talking about the extended free trial which drove \$2 to \$3 million dollars in sales. I thought that was brilliant.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah. No, I mean, so I was tasked with building and growing the business development team there and through that process we developed a few channels. We created an API licensing sort of product, which essentially allowed us to charge and distribute our crawl data that we had, which powered the software product.

But one of the things that we discovered in that process was, essentially doing distribution of longer trial periods. So we essentially worked with third-party companies to offer an extended trial on Moz; so instead of a 30-day trial you would get a 90-day trial if you signed up through Treehouse or Namesheet or you know whatever company it may be. And what that allowed us to do was essentially co-market each other's products.

So what we created on our side was a group of discounts on the products that we would partner with. So it was this nice process for promoting other products through both our base but also offering value to our partners through an extended trial. And what it created was, I think by the time – when I left, I think it was somewhere around ten thousand-ish free trials that were created through product distributions like that.

So it was an incredible channel for us and it built on top of each other, and it's still I imagine recurring to this day because of the flywheel that was created through that process. So, yeah, it was an interesting tactic, kind of a

new tactic that not a lot of people employ, I don't think, but I'm seeing it more and more now.

Buckley Barlow: Hey, that's really cool. In fact, I'm sure over your years of experience business development has changed dramatically with all the new tools that are available and channels that are available.

So I like to call it "digital business development" today. Because this dev, you know 15 years ago, was literally hopping on a plane and meeting with clients. Today now it's about reaching out on LinkedIn or on Twitter, or making a comment on a post that somebody's written. And I don't know, the reach and the effectiveness of being able to move this kind of service along and be able to get partners onboard much more quickly is huge.

Andrew Dumont: Exactly, yeah. And I think – you know I think BD historically has been one-to-one right, but now in this new world its one-to-one-to-many is the goal, right? And that's how I think about it and that's how BD could be really effective.

Buckley Barlow: So if you were gonna start another SEO company today, or go work for another SEO company today, and they were just getting to start, how would you grow an SEO company knowing how much has changed with SEO?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah. I mean I would start first with content production. So I'd focus first on creating the community, so I wouldn't even think about building a product first. I would start on education, community, being in a place where that target customer goes to learn to grow, you know, to become more educated. And then once you have that community, once you have that audience, it's very easy to introduce a product. But it's very hard to start with a product and go community.

So I think flipping the script there and going the other way around is what proved to be effective for Moz and I think that's a new playbook.

Buckley Barlow: How do you compete against big companies like Moz? For example, somebody wanted to start an SEO company today

and eventually get to the point where they're like, god I'd love to hire this Andrew guy to come and work with SEO. Would you look on them and say, "Eh, I think that time has passed", or "Yeah, I think you've got a viable community that you can build around this experience, and yeah, we could grow this"?

Andrew Dumont:

Well, I think it's tough. I think this space is definitely more crowded. You know Moz kind of had a first mover advantage when they came into the market. So I think it'd be a harder slog.

Like, for example, with Stride that we mentioned earlier. That was a harder slog just because of the maturity of the market and how many players existed in that space, so I think you'd run into a similar issue. But if you took, maybe if you targeted a different market, if you went not for self-service, you know lower tier SEO customer then instead went higher tier, maybe there's a niche there that you can fit into. But I think, generally, it'd be a little bit more challenging than, I think Moz, the road Moz had.

Buckley Barlow:

Well, let's transition to Bitly if we can. You know I along with millions of other users use Bitly once a week or more for link shortening on Twitter, specifically. But what I find interesting is that Bitly has an enterprise division that really no one has even heard about, right?

So tell us about Bitly and what they do, and what need in the marketplace they're solving for both consumers and enterprises.

Andrew Dumont:

I knew of Bitly, it's kind of one of those internet staples, right, that's been around for I think seven years now, or a little over seven years now.

So that's what I knew about it as well. But when I went into Betaworks and I understood a little bit more about what the business that they were actually building, it was very intriguing to me because one of the hardest things about building a successful software business is building a top of funnel, right? Just like in the example of Moz.

And the beautiful thing about Bitly's business is that they have, it's for user-based that is millions of active users every single month. They process 10 billion links a month, Bitly links. So it's just an incredible, incredible volume and an incredible dataset.

So yeah, essentially, what the – the way that Bitly is broken down is they have this free product that 99 percent of free-users will be able to use for free. And then they have an enterprise version which essentially allows for branded short-links; much more detailed audience analytics in terms of who's clicking on your links, where they are, all that stuff, all the demographic information there. Deep links; so doing some intelligent redirecting into mobile apps or mobile web depending on device type.

So there's a lot of stuff that we're doing there that's more targeted towards an enterprise or brand sort of customer and that business is pretty significant.

Buckley Barlow:

Andrew, for those out there that don't know what deep linking is and how it benefits a user on mobile, can you go into detail on that and that strategy?

Andrew Dumont:

Yeah. It's kind of the wild, wild, west; it's new concepts.

But basically the idea and what Bitly is doing here is when somebody clicks on a link – so when you click on a link basically what's happening is when you click that link you're passing information to the destination which is basically saying, hey, I'm on a desktop computer, or I am on a mobile device. And what deep links allow you to do is basically intelligently redirect that person into either the web that they're on their desktop, or into the app if they have the app installed, or prompt them to install the app if they do not have the app installed.

So it's kind of this routing mechanism to provide the best experience for the user, depending on whether they have the application installed or not.

Buckley Barlow:

Yeah, and some of the best deep linking providers, they go beyond just getting to the app, they go to the specific content page. They're looking for stuff for a user; I think

it's awesome because we don't have to click through so many different layers.

Andrew Dumont: Yes, it's amazing, yeah. If CNN sends you a push notification you click something in your Twitter feed, right, it should take you into the app if you have it installed to that specific piece of content. And that's what deep linking allows you to do.

Buckley Barlow: Are you allowed to talk about revenue and what they're doing?

Andrew Dumont: I'm working on it, but not as of yet. But the team is roughly 85 people now, it's a decent size.

Buckley Barlow: Now is this product, this enterprise product, staying as an enterprise offer or do you see this making its way into small to midsize market?

Andrew Dumont: I'd like to see it get there. You know, our average price point right now is anywhere from, well average price point I about \$1,000 a month, so it's this interesting spot between enterprise and bid market.

But what I'd love to see us do is extend the offering to have a more small business, early-stage, you know \$100.00 to \$200.00, that price point. So I think we'll get there, but I think it'll take a little bit of time.

Buckley Barlow: So how are you gonna get the word out to make this more visible for this enterprise product? How are you planning on growing this out?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah. So it's been a lot of plugging the holes, is how I'm thinking about it.

So if you use the free products I think one of the problems that we have is you actually don't even know that there is a paid product. So a lot of it is just building stuff into the free product, or pieces into the free product, that make it clear that, hey, there is a paid product and essentially he's teasing it out through different features or different functionalities that you do not have a free-user, but you have as a paid-user.

So I think it's utilizing the free product, but also on the website, I think it's just having a place there for our enterprise product that speaks to the difference between free and paid, and just simple stuff. It's not rocket science at this point, it's really just doing the basics and using the amazing top of funnel that we have and putting that to work through some intelligent messaging and speaking to the paid products on the site.

Buckley Barlow: Well, speaking about SaaS companies and this model that Moz has used, does Bitly have a sales team or are they just using something similar to what you did over at Moz?

Andrew Dumont: No, so they do have a sales team. And that was actually part of the reason why I came over here, was I'm – that was a piece that I didn't – I wasn't able to see it firsthand at Moz and I thought it was an interesting piece to understand, especially with my interest in SaaS as a whole.

So it is a different model and it's a different – it's a different hand-off on the marketing side with a lot more intricacies here. So it's been an interesting thing to watch and learn from.

Buckley Barlow: Well, can you talk about the price point for the enterprise product? What are we looking at here?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, about \$1,000.00 a month.

Buckley Barlow: Okay, so it's for all these analytics and the tools.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, the deep linking functionality, stuff like that yeah.

Buckley Barlow: Well, Andrew, you've been around the block and you've probably seen tons of companies hit a wall or crash and burn in spectacular fashion, I'm sure.

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, I've been a part of one or two as well.

Buckley Barlow: Yeah! So what is not working out there right now in the world of marketing, in terms of growing a business? What have you found that's just, just not working any longer?

Andrew Dumont: I think that just this – I think the soft approach of marketing is done, right? So like everything has a data point now. And if you're not analyzing and looking at the data and using the tools that are at our disposal now and making informed decisions based on that, you're gonna fail. And I think the ones that do fail from a growth traction perspective are the ones that aren't understanding the world that we're in today, and taking all the data that's out there and using it to inform the things that are working and the things that aren't.

I think from a like very high level, the whole goal of marketing at least online today is, to figure out places where you can spend a dollar either in time, effort, paid acquisition, whatever it may be and produce **\$1.50** in revenue or a number of users, right? So there's an app, there's equations, and I think the goal of marketing is just to test and find the channels that work and then invest heavily in them. And I think the ones that aren't succeeding are the ones that aren't thinking about marketing that way.

Buckley Barlow: Yeah, I see a lot of companies just spreading their very precious capital over all these different channels. But I think you hit on it, when you find a channel that works with your audience it's time to double-down.

Andrew Dumont: Absolutely, yes.

Buckley Barlow: Okay. So you're a VP of marketing over there of a software-based business and I just have to ask this, we're seeing a big trend in SaaS-based companies building out growth teams, independent of marketing and engineering teams. And they're sitting right smack in the middle of both to bridge that gap for obvious reasons. But I'd love to know, Andrew, are you a supporter of building out growth teams independent of marketing and engineering, or are you more of a supporter to enhancing the skill sets of all those on the marketing team?

Andrew Dumont: So I'm really not. I mean I think that the function of marketing is growth. If you're doing marketing correctly, the function of marketing is to grow your business. So the idea of separating that out from the marketing team it just doesn't make sense, at least to me.

So I have, you know I have a demand team within my marketing team which is essentially focused on all of the analytics and all the demand generations sort of activities that directly affect growth. So I think where growth should live is essentially under the marketing org, and it should live within there. And I think what you run into is if you separate it, I think you run into a bit of a battle between marketing and growth. And it causes some internal strife that I think is unnecessary and, I think, causes a lot of confusion internally.

So that's my perspective on it.

Buckley Barlow: So tell me, why are so many people getting on this growth bandwagon out of Silicon Valley?

I mean so many people are saying, hey, let's separate out these teams because we – it's all about efficiency, right, and marketing is waiting for engineering to get something done, engineering doesn't want to necessarily just constantly be doing product iteration after product iteration. And so these growth-related team members that are technical and do have marketing savvy, it seems like their expediting the process of delivery, right?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, I mean I guess so. For example, on my marketing team, I have a marketing developer and then I have a marketing designer. So maybe the distinction here is that we are more of a growth-focused marketing team –

Buckley Barlow: That's great, that's great.

Andrew Dumont: – and perhaps in our case we don't need it. But you know, in I guess a more traditional company, where you have a very brand-heavy, brand-focused marketing team it may make sense to have a growth marketing team.

But in our case, our goal as a marketing team is to grow the business, and to distinguish and separate that into a separate org it just doesn't make sense.

Buckley Barlow: That's awesome, great feedback by the way. I know it's a polarizing topic.

So now – I always ask this of all my guests, but if you were to hire one person on your growth or marketing team, what would you be looking for, and why that one person that you could absolutely trust to help you grow a business? What would you be looking for?

Andrew Dumont:

You know I just hired someone who I've been looking to hire for a long time. And that person is a mix of technical chops, a mix of heavy marketing background, a mix of paid acquisition, a mix of analytic products and digging in deep there.

And I think having somebody like that, who both is a little bit technical, loves numbers, loves looking at the data and analyzing it, and then somebody who is experienced enough to be strategic in terms of what does that data actually mean and what can I do with it. I think, at least for me, that was the one hire that I think is really, really, difficult to find but it can be a complete game-changer for your team, for a marketing team.

So that's one that – it's tough to find but when you find it it's such an incredible and important piece of the marketing team. Because you invest so much, you spend so much time in you know spending money to acquire customers, or time to Bitly's content, right? But if you don't have someone who's looking at the data and trying to figure out what it's telling you, it kind of goes for nothing. So that was the biggest thing and probably the most recent hire that I made that I'm probably most proud of and most excited about.

Buckley Barlow:

Can you find me a few more?

Andrew Dumont:

Let me tell you, I looked for a long time.

Buckley Barlow:

Oh, that's awesome, great insight.

Now lastly, what's the best marketing or growth tip that you could give our Insiders that you've received or that you've done, that you've found to be useful for your business?

Andrew Dumont:

Oh, gosh, that's really tough. You know, I think for me, and I'm kind of beating a dead horse here so apologies for

that. But one of the first things that I did when I came to Bitly was I looked at what is our inbound funnel actually look like? Let me break this into piece by piece, what is happening from step-to-step-to-step? And what that allowed me to do is when you visualize that and you step back, is you can understand problem pieces in a funnel.

So for example, at Bitly what I found when we stepped back and we looked at that inbound funnel was that our conversion rate from a marketing qualified lead to a sales accepted lead was extremely low. Like the percentage there was just terrible. And what that allows you to do is it allows you to focus in on a specific piece instead of trying to boil the entire ocean. And you can look at that specific piece of the funnel, and you can tactically break it down into, okay, what changes can I make, what things can I do to meaningfully improve this conversion rate or this number.

And it just gives you something definite and something very focused to move the needle on and figure out what tactics you can employ to basically move that. So I think just the simplicity of that. I know it sounds very simple and very basic, but a lot of people surprisingly don't do it. So I think just stepping things back and visualizing your funnel whatever that may look like, and figuring out what problem pieces you have in that is probably the most effective thing that you can do.

I think generally, like the idea of tactics as marketing, it just doesn't really work. Like if you – like, what is the next trick I can employ. Like it just, it doesn't work. You need to think about it a little bit more holistically and target those tactics into specific problems that you may have, or opportunities that you may have.

Buckley Barlow: Well, Andrew, I think you embody the modern marketing genius out there. Because I think a lot of people in general still think marketing is advertising, right?

Andrew Dumont: Yeah, yeah.

Buckley Barlow: And marketing is not advertising, it's not top of funnel anymore. It's taking the top of the funnel all the way to the

bottom of the funnel, and you embody that approach and I think that's great.

Andrew Dumont: Thank you.

Buckley Barlow: All right! If you want to go out and find out more about Bitly's enterprise level analytics head on over to Bitly.com.

Andrew, it has been a pleasure, I can't wait to have you back on and see how the progress goes for Bitly over there. But thanks for taking the time to come on today.

Andrew Dumont: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Buckley Barlow: All right, Insiders, that is a wrap. Thank you so much for joining us on Marketing In The Know today.

Now head over to beintheknow.co for the links and the show notes to this podcast. And while you're over there grab the free version of my guide, *Rest, Set, Grow*. It took me a long time to pull together all this information, and I spent a pretty penny getting the look and feel just right. But feel free to grab your free copy, and there's also an upgraded copy where it's the full version. I'd be happy if you downloaded that as well.

Thanks again, Insiders, and I'll see you next Tuesday.

We appreciate you joining us for this episode of Marketing In The Know. For Show Notes and a free version of Read, Set, Grow visit beintheknow.co. Thanks again, and we'll see you next Tuesday, here on Marketing In The Know.

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