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                 Okay everyone, today we have Mikael Yang, who is the CEO of ManyChat, which is the easiest way to create a messenger bot. How's it going, man?

Mikael Yang: It's going great. Thanks for having me.

Eric Siu: Yeah, thanks for being here. So first off, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you're up to?

Mikael Yang: I'm Mike, and we started ManyChat in July 2015 when Telegram Messenger opened up their API. We basically thought that it would be cool to create a platform that makes it really easy to send broadcasts through messenger. For those who are not familiar with Telegram, Telegram is basically a messenger like Facebook Messenger but with a different audience, different markets, different countries. They were one of the first Western messengers to open up an API. We've got really good growth there because we've signed, branded every bot that was created on a platform that [was 02:09] created on ManyChat. Basically when we got to 20,000 bots, we applied to 500 startups and after some interviews got in. Finished the batch 2016 in May, and that's when Facebook opened up their API, in April. When Facebook opened up their API, we instantly knew that this is an even bigger market because there are 70 million businesses using Facebook pages, and basically every Facebook page is just once click away from becoming a bot.

                 We built a platform for creating Facebook bots. It took off the same way. Because we focused on the marketing community, on the businesses, on helping businesses get more leads, close more sales, do lead nurturing, and do better support, we were able to become the leaders in the space, and the other platforms were more focused on [inaudible 03:16], on artificial intelligence, on the things that sound really impressive but if you think about it, businesses want results. We were focused on the customers, and that's why I think we grew so fast. Of course you will need a lot of sophisticated technologies in the end, but you got to start with the basic ones. Right now, we're the leading messenger marketing platform helping over 100,000 businesses all over the world do messenger marketing. That's

basically the short story.

Eric Siu: Great. No, that's helpful. How much did you guys raise from 500?

Mikael Yang: 100k.

Eric Siu: Got it. What are some numbers you can reveal around the [inaudible 04:00] because I know for a fact that your business has exploded. Everybody in the marketing space is talking about you, and I want to jump into that in a second, but what are some numbers we can reveal?

Mikael Yang: Yeah, sure. We're not really revealing the financials at this point, but I can say that we are powering over 100,000 pages. We're sending millions of messages every day. That's one way, from the businesses to customers, and I don't know, even more from customers to the businesses.

Eric Siu: Great.

Mikael Yang: Yeah, over 100 countries we are being used in. Those are the numbers.

Eric Siu: Awesome. Why should anybody use a messenger bot? What are some case studies or examples you can speak to?

Mikael Yang: That's a great question. A lot of people are reluctant to experiment with new platforms, but the only two numbers that I usually tell businesses is 80% open rates and 20% CTRs. If you're familiar with email marketing, you're in very good shape if you get 20%, 25% open rates. On messenger, you get 80% open rates if you're not even good. It's just the way that the channel works. It's not saturated, and more importantly, the way that messenger is set up is that you really don't want to leave messages unread. When you get a notification, you open it and you look at it. The other thing that is different is that the customer is always in control of the conversation. With email, the email can be sold. You can buy databases, you can re-upload your lists into the same provider or a different email service provider. Basically, you can spam people, which is not good for the industry. This is why the open rates are so low. On messenger, Facebook controls the interaction. There are downsides to that, but there's a lot of upsides to that.

Basically, they are looking after the customer experience. If the customer, for example, deletes the conversation with a bot, the business will not be able to message that customer ever again until that customer re-engages with a bot again. It makes it really important for the businesses to stay relevant to only publish the messages that will be interesting to the customer, and basically to watch how they are communicating with their audience. If they don't look after what they're saying, to whom they are saying it, then people are going to unsubscribe and it's going to be really hard to get them back. I think that's why you get that much open rates, and the CTRs are also through the roof. We have one of the brands that are sending out musical content, so basically a record label that sends out sneak previews of the upcoming singles. You know what the CTR to play those singles on SoundCloud

is?

Eric Siu: No.

Mikael Yang: I would want you to take a guess, but I'm not going to ...

Eric Siu: Yeah, I'll take a guess. 94%?

Mikael Yang: No, that's too much. We have some messages that have 97%, 98% open rates, but the CTR is actually 56%. If you send out 100 messages, 56 people are going to click on that message. That's insane considering email standards where your CTR is basically 1% or 2%.

Eric Siu: Right. Oh yeah, you said click through rate. Sorry, I was thinking about open rate. My apologies.

Mikael Yang: Yeah.

Eric Siu: So I have a question for you. I'm a ManyChat user; selfish question here, it used to be when people were using ManyChat, people would run ads telling people to comment and then they would be able to talk to the bot. How are people collecting bot subscribers right now? What are you seeing that's the most impactful or the best way to do it?

Mikael Yang: I think the comment growth tool was easily one of the best places to get subscribers. The way it works is you can read the post and then you ask people to comment on it with a specific keyword, and then when people do that, the bot replies to them through messenger automatically. After they reply to the bot, they become a subscriber. The other ways would be simple lead magnets. Think of this as any other channel. The channels can change, but the psychology doesn't change. When you want a person to basically interact with you, you've got to offer value. Free PDFs, free videos, coupons, discounts. Anything that would make the person interested in interacting with a bot, you should basically offer that. The way to deliver that differs for every business. For example, if a page has a lot of fans, then I would suggest using the comment growth tool or basically just post something with a link to say [your bot 09:30]. If you have an email list, I would basically add the link to the landing page where they're going to subscribe to the bot or the link directly to the bot.

If you have a website, and we provide those growth tools inside ManyChat. Something like a popover window or a slider, or a [hello bar 09:52], or an embedded button. There are lots of ways depending on your business. If you're an offline business, I would suggest either printing your messenger name on the wall somewhere and giving out coupons when the person mentions a certain keyword, or, actually this is a new thing, doing a QR code. Messenger codes are becoming really powerful because they're not just directing people to your messenger bot, but they're also telling you where that person came from. You can have different QR codes, all of which lead people to the same bot but actually have different

"payloads," as they call them, and can actually trigger different content.

Eric Siu: So you have a lot of options you mentioned in ManyChat. In ManyChat, there's a lot of different growth tools like the comment growth tool and things like that. Which one is the most effective by far that you're seeing right now? Just so if people wanted to use ManyChat, they can just zero in on one thing.

Mikael Yang: If you have already a Facebook page, I would zero in on comment growth tool. If you don't, I would still use the comment growth tool and set up the ads to boost that post.

Eric Siu: Got it. Just so people understand, let's say I'm running a Facebook ad to a comment tool. You say, "Yes, I want this lead magnet." What kind of cost per acquisition are you seeing per comment, I guess, because that basically counts as a new ManyChat subscriber right?

Mikael Yang: Yeah. Of course that's going to differ business to business. If you're targeting high-end customers with really low subscription rates, you can go up to actual dollars, five dollars. I don't want to [inaudible 11:43], but if you're just talking to general public, I would say it's cents. I've seen people doing ten cents per messenger lead. I've seen people do fifteen cents, twenty cents. I've seen people do five cents, so it depends on the offer.

Eric Siu: Well the other thing now is that you guys have the integration with Zapier where you can also take that person's email, push the CRM at the same time when they opt in, right? So you're collecting a messenger subscriber and you're also collecting an email subscriber? Is that correct?

Mikael Yang: Yes, we do have the integration of Zapier. The only thing I would point out here is the person has to enter their email inside the box, so it's not like you push a button and then you get all the subscriber's data because Facebook is really conscious of the user privacy. The way it works is the user presses the "get the lead magnet" button. The bot starts talking to them and saying, "Okay, where do you want that lead magnet to be delivered? Tell me your email address." They tell you the email address, you put that email address into InfusionSoft [inaudible 12:49], any platform that you're working with, and then deliver that lead magnet through email.

Eric Siu: Love it. Okay, great. People love studies, right? I've heard of somebody that used their bot and they made $400,000. Is there any amazing numbers that you can speak to or case study?

Mikael Yang: Yeah, we've seen people doing product launches, like six-figure product launches using basically ManyChat as the main driver of those sales. Like specific ones? You know, lots of these were done in the training space, so online education. It's funny, basically the people who were the first to discover messenger bots were people that were previously teaching the market about Facebook ads. Because they saw the enormous [inaudible 13:50] on doing ads and promotions through messenger

bots, they were the first ones to get their own case studies. I would say that the most successful launches that I've seen were in online education.

Eric Siu: Great. Are there any numbers you could speak to? Maybe they acquired a thousand users, made X amount of dollars?

Mikael Yang: $150,000, that's one of the campaigns that I saw.

Eric Siu: Got it. When you say "campaigns," are these people just creating marketing automation sequences? Is it basically that, or are they sending a custom message every week? There's so many ways to do this. I'm just wondering what template people can follow just to get started easily.

Mikael Yang: First of all, I would suggest that anyone who's doing their business should figure out the product, what they're selling, et cetera. Marketing is the next step after you know that you're delivering value, and [inaudible 14:50] has put it nicely that marketing is like a magnifying glass; if your product is shit – can I curse here?

Eric Siu: Yeah, you're good.

Mikael Yang: If your product is not good, then all you are doing with marketing is just magnifying that not-goodness. If your product is great, then marketing can help amplify that. That's one thing, but if you know that your product is great and you're looking for a marketing channel that will give you [outsized 15:19] ROI at this point, then yes, [inaudible 15:23] messenger marketing would be the answer I think. The simple thing would be, I would think of this, or if you're launching a product, I would think of this basically in the same terms architecturally that you're thinking about an email launch. Basically preheating the audience, opening up a pre-sale that is time limited, then closing that and then direction the people to the actual launch. All of that can be done through messenger but much better and much more personalized and much more interactive. One of the things that messenger is really known for is that you can create interactive broadcasts that, for example, ask the user a question. "Hey, are you interested in the pre-sale of this?" They can answer yes or no, and depending on their answer, they can get different results and they can get into different sequences, et cetera.

Every broadcast that you do through messenger marketing becomes this sort of a survey. You instantly see who is your audience, who is ready to buy, who is not. You can speak to them directly.

Eric Siu: Got it, makes sense. Yeah, I think there's a lot of exciting stuff that people can try with ManyChat. You have a free plan, right? Up to a certain amount of users?

Mikael Yang: We have a free plan with an unlimited number of users. The only thing that is limited is the functionality. If you want to get more out of messenger marketing, there's an option to switch to Pro, but if you're just starting out, there's a free version, no strings attached. You can cancel or just remove ManyChat from your page whenever you like. If you do find yourself getting more and more into it, then

yeah, the Pro version provides you with a lot of things to do.

Eric Siu: Great. Just so people know, how do you guys charge for these different plans? How do you even make money?

Mikael Yang: Our business model is pretty similar to any marketing or [inaudible 17:41] platform. Basically, we charge based on the number of active subscribers that you have in your list. That's it. If you're just starting out, we charge as low as $10 a month. If you've grown your list to, I don't know, 5,000, 10,000 people, I think we go to $90 or something.

Eric Siu: Got it, okay. Super helpful. What's working for you nowadays in terms of customer acquisition? I think there's a lot of people in the marketing space talking about it. That's how I heard of you guys, but what's one thing that's working really well for you?

Mikael Yang: That's it, that's the thing. It's the community. As I've said in the beginning, we've focused our efforts on this one targeted audience and tried to serve it as hard as we can, and provide the tools that marketers and business owners need to be successful with their marketing efforts. That's why the marketing community, I think, is talking about us, is because they've felt and they saw those familiar instruments that they are used to when they are doing other forms of marketing. We're not doing any paid acquisition. Basically, we're not doing any marketing. There's no marketer. We don't have a CMO or something. Basically, like 19% of the team is working on the product and we have a community manager and a person who is writing blog posts.

Eric Siu: Awesome, great. What's coming in the future for ManyChat? Any features you can talk about?

Mikael Yang: Sure. We're going to improve a lot of things and make ManyChat even better for marketers. Think about triggers and actions. Integrations with other platforms are coming. Ability to test your broadcasts and content using split tests, more analytics, more logic inside the bots, that they are more sophisticated. Bot cloning. Everyone is asking about how agencies really want to clone bots, so ...

Eric Siu: Oh yes, that would be great.

Mikael Yang: We're going to provide that option really soon. Just yesterday, we released the option to copy [flows 19:59] between the bots, so already right now you can go inside, basically copy your flows one by one from one bot to another. Really soon, you'll be able to copy the entire bot to another page. Yeah, those are the things that are coming up.

Eric Siu: Great. Yeah, I think for any marketers, if you do any Facebook ads at all, it's in your best interest to take a look at this. There's no downside to you just to even get something started. It's been great for us I can say, and I've tested it on multiple different sites.

Mikael Yang:	Yeah.
Eric Siu:	The other thing I want to ask you as we work towards wrapping up over here, ManyChat is a great tool, but what's one new tool that you've added yourself into last year that's added a lot of value? Examples could be Slack or Dropbox.
Mikael Yang:	Yeah, I think the one that's the best right now or that's provided a lot of value is Figma.
Eric Siu:	What's that?
Mikael Yang:	F-i-g-m-a. Figma is an online designing tool that allows you to basically create interfaces. It's kind of like Sketch in the clouds. It allows you to basically collaborate on designs so easily. It's just so good, and a lot of other products increased our productivity in terms of designing and team collaboration like, I don't know, several times. It's just so easy where you can just go inside a design and in real time collaborate on the design or see the presentation from your [web 21:51] designer, and then you can also give the developers access to it. Then they can see all of that. Recently, Figma added the ability to export the designs into actual instructions for developers with margins and [paddings 22:06] and colors, et cetera.
Eric Siu:	So it sounds like InVision app, or it sounds like it's more sophisticated maybe?
Mikael Yang:	InVision is much more about prototyping, and Figma is much more about the actual designing, but they also are adding prototyping features. When I say "designing," I mean what's the layout of this page, of this popup, of this menu? How the text is looking. Anything from mock-ups to actual hi-fidelity designs, Figma is really good for that for website design and for app design.
Eric Siu:	Great. All right. What's one must-read book you'd recommend to everyone?
Mikael Yang:	Must-read book. Viktor Frankel's "Man's Search of Meaning."
Eric Siu:	I think it's the second one. I think you're right. We'll drop it in the show notes for sure. There's so much stuff to talk about here with ManyChat, I think people just need to go out there and do it. It could be really daunting in the beginning, but it's just like setting up an email automation sequence in the beginning. I think it's a no-brainer. The engagement rates are so high right now, people should be checking it out. You said 94% to 97% open rates and 57% click rates, is that right?
Mikael Yang:	For the best [contents 23:27], yes.
Eric Siu:	For the best, yeah. Up to that. I think everybody should be checking it out if you enjoy marketing at all. Mikael, what's the best way for people to find you online?
Mikael Yang:	You can email me at mike@manychat.com, but email is not the best way to reach me. The best way to reach me would be through messenger. Just search for me on

Facebook. M-i-k-a-e-l Y-a-n-g, and I'll try to respond as fast as possible.

Eric Siu: Awesome, great. Thanks so much for doing this.

Mikael Yang: No problem, man. Thanks for having me.

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