



Next in Marketing | AppsFlyer

Episode 10: Visa's Matt Story Thinks Madison Avenue is Making Big Strides on Privacy But Has a Ways to Go on Diversity-transcript

Mike (19s):

Hey guys, this is Mike Shields and this week on Next in Marketing I got to talk to Matt Story, Senior Director of Global Innovation Marketing at Visa. We talked about how his company is wrestling with targeting consumers who are wary of sharing data with a big bad credit card company, how brands are grappling with the shortage of live sponsorship events like the Olympics during the global pandemic plus we had a very frank talk about Matt's coming up in the agency business as a person of color and what the industry needs to do better to address its diversity shortcomings. Let's get started. Hi, everybody. Welcome to the Next in Marketing. Today my guest is Matt Story. You're Senior Director of Global Innovation Marketing at Visa - do I have that right, Matt?

Matt (53s): Correct.

Mike (53s):

Matt and I actually go way back. We haven't even talked to each other in a long time, but we used to talk about video game advertising, more than a decade ago a lot, which is kind of funny cause it's sort of coming around.

Matt (1m 2s): Yeah.



Mike (1m 2s): When I hear your role, I'm gonna guess you do big global brand stuff - that you're the guy they go to for the never been done before, try something new things. Is that kind of a way to think about you what your role entails?

Matt (1m 14s):

Yeah, I'm gonna use a very technical term called, sort of. I would say in the most straightforward sense I help our marketing teams across the globe market our payment innovations in innovative ways. And so when we think about innovation, it's, you know, contactless form factors, the cards, mobile pays, and then also e-commerce payment solutions. So, e-commerce just rolled out a standard click-to-pay. So that's another one that we're working on to help, not only with our partners and clients, but also consumers, so that's one part of my role.

Matt (1m 49s):

And then the other part is I'm actually responsible for leading a lot of our relationships with key sellers and technology partners. So I get to work alongside Apple, Google, Airbnb, Starbucks, Shopify, just to name a few that we've, you know, had the chance to partner with, and do some collaborative marketing on. I do get to work with our teams that lead the sponsorship platforms because obviously those are megaphones to not only, you know, reach people in a passion point, but also you get quite a big audience when you have those big events.

Matt (2m 20s):

So we like to tell our innovation stories and our co-marketing opportunities to those as well.

Mike (2m 23s):

And I think the reason I say that is whenever I see Global in someone's title in the ad world, I assume that sponsorships, because I just assume it's hard to manage an acquisition part of your business globally, but maybe I'm wrong about that. I don't know - is that still the case?



Matt (2m 36s):

Yeah, I think it's fair. I mean, you know, I like to think of myself as you know, both a resource to our global marketers that are, you know, within a market across the globe, but then also helping to provide the connective tissue, you know, with a big brand like Visa, we want to show up consistently, but also take advantage of any lessons learned and being able to share those in an efficient manner. So I would say that's probably the two ways that we show up in a connective way and you know, we're there to be support, you know, obviously those in market know best what their, you know, local audiences and local partners are looking to fulfill.

Matt (3m 11s):

And so we just try to help them in any way possible.

Mike (3m 14s):

Before I get into what's going on with your recent advertising strategy, what, tell us about your category overall? Matt, you know, you're <inaudible>, in terms of people are using phones a lot more for payments and the non-traditional credit cards, things are growing, right, but then the pandemic hits it's like what's going on with the expansion of your category range thus far?

Matt (3m 33s):

Well, yeah, so I think one thing we all have in common is, you know, COVID-19 pandemic really accelerated what was happening over years into a matter of months and so we were quickly thrown into new behaviors that probably we weren't expecting back in February and January to start this year. We believe that a lot of those behaviors are here to stay. And as a brand that is recognizable by Visa, we both think it's not only our role to ensure our products are there and our services are there to help people in this new normal, but also we have to think through what are the things we can do to use our brand for a more of the social good.



Matt (4m 8s):

Ah, so what was helpful for us is, back in, was it probably March or April, our chief product officer came out with six truths and they really laid out the strategy for how we would be able to both service our clients and customers but also what are the things we could do to be of service during this very specific time of need. So first and foremost, consumers are shifting to digital commerce and that's across everything. You know, everyone's looking to your point looking for, okay, how can I pay with my phone now?

Matt (4m 38s):

How can I pay in ways that are easier, whether that's e-commerce or are actually paying in person? Secondly, small businesses across the globe, they are looking for any way and help to recover. You know, they are the lifeblood of communities across every single country we serve. So they are looking for ways to innovate and also be pivoting to digital commerce. We also saw that everyone's looking for immediate and secure access to their funds. And so there's a role we can play there. Then we saw an increase in contactless payments.

Matt (5m 10s):

So as you think about it from just an overall safety and health perspective, avoiding contact is something that is we're all looking for.

Mike (5m 17s):

Cash is, and it makes it doesn't seem fair, handing cards around isn't what you want to do it anymore.

Matt (5m 22s):

It was just you know, it allows more flexibility and comfort for you as you are paying no matter matter how. And then the last to are just, you know, ensuring that we're using the things that we have access to to help businesses make decisions and insights on. If you're moving into digital e-commerce for the first time, there's a lot of things you just don't know so what role we can play



there a and then lastly, just ensuring that there's a lot of transparency and just also protections because I'm, you know, unfortunately, as people are going in to this, there's just a lot of unknowns. So we've done a number of marketing programs around those six truths We were able to, back in June, we announced a commitment to help over 50 businesses digitally enable from, you know, the small and micro businesses community worldwide.

Matt (6m 1s):

And it really, what that means is as consumers have shifted their behavior, how do we help the businesses that provide services get there? And then also we've done a number of things on the foundation side of a Visa and done some things targeting, you know, women owned businesses. We specifically talked to black business owners as well, but you know, we can get into that in a little bit later.

Mike (6m 21s):

Yeah. I'm wondering, you know, it's funny, you mentioned I'm using contactless payment for my kids' babysitters. So you knew that things should change when, when you started doing start doing to something like that.

Matt (6m 30s): Exactly.

Mike (6m 30s):

So I've asked almost everyone I've talked to you this year, this question. So you're talking about how all these new behaviors are coming along fast, which is gonna affect your business. Similarly, there's a lots of new, ah, lots of new behavior in terms of how you reach people and their media consumption habits. And that affects your marketing strategy in a short term and long term. What has that been like for you guys, you know, when the pandemic hits and then now the things have sort of become new normal, whatever, whatever that is?



Matt (6m 55s):

Yeah. So I would say overall, I'll use sports as an example, given, you know, we're a very big sponsor of NFL Olympics, FIFA. We were, when the pandemic sent out to hit, we were actually in the middle of finalizing our Olympic plans because obviously we were months away from kicking it off in Japan. And then obviously there were ongoing other activities like the NFL draft was, it was about to take off. And then, you know, you go to an environment where not only are you not able to visit those events, but they are actually in question of whether they're going to happen?

Matt (7m 28s):

So there was definitely a bit of a pause. I think what we were proud to see is that the true Olympic spirit came through by the IOC and with their announcements to really rethink what is the best strategy with what we knew at the time and moving the game's to 2021. We also thought it was really important that the athletes were supported because these are, these are people that, you know, this, is there a moment this as their time to shine, they been building many of them, their entire lives for that.

Mike (7m 57s):

They only get one shot.

Matt (7m 57s):

Yeah, exactly. And so, you know, making sure that we thought about them in the efforts and things that we were doing. And so, you know, we had an announcement that we extended automatically our relationships with the athletes into 2021. So they didn't have to worry about that because many of these individual's live off of, their...



Mike (8m 17s):

Are you gonna bail on me? Now what am I gonna do?

Matt (8m 18s):

Exactly, exactly. And also just ensuring that we connected with them in the right way from overall, you know, marketing strategy standpoint, we pivoted very quickly to virtual. Whether that be both in the creation, but also in how we're delivering messages. Umm, so we moved most of our NFL draft efforts to a virtual digital led experience. We actually were able to take a lot of our partnerships with not only the league, but also the athletes and focus them on small businesses. Because nobody really wanted to hear, you know, what it, what does it mean to think about, you know the third round a draft pick have this particular team, they are worried about their local community businesses.

Matt (8m 54s):

And so we wanted to be conscious of that. And so being able to have that partnership and use that national, you know, platform to be able to deliver that and shine a spotlight on really your ability to support small businesses, can make all the difference in the world. Especially as many of us we're, we're still uncertain you know, in that time period. When is this going to end? And, you know, and, and what is this new normal entail?

Mike (9m 18s):

Right. Well, when you just saw this doesn't happen very often and in our lives that hasn't really when, when the Olympics get put off for a year or sports, get put on hold for months and months, you know, you talked about some of the tactics you took in terms of messaging and where you reach people, but do you try and replace that say that it was going to deliver, or, you know, 9,000 rating points or this year, can you even try to replace that you put it all in a hold like is, that can you find that sports viewer somewhere else? Is that just so unique that you can, it's a replaceable of this, right?



Matt (9m 45s):

Yeah. I, you know, I would say it's less about replacing quote unquote "eyeballs" because obviously those are huge platforms and it was more about, let's take a step back, take the time and understand what's important right now? And so I would say that we had a number of efforts plan to support small businesses, like, you know, that that's core to who we are and how we show up, but it was an opportunity to take those efforts and really double down there. And so think about what are the assets that we as Visa have, what are the assets that our partners have to be a support there? So we very quickly across 20 countries, we developed a small business hub and it was localized at each country to say, these are resources that you can actually have to help you through this recovery period or help you through this period of uncertainty.

Matt (10m 25s):

And so that was something that, you know, not only tools and services from Visa, but working with our partners to find access to things that they could also provide to help small businesses. So I would say we probably took the same effort that we would have put towards some of those major events and put it towards what we felt was really important in the time and effort.

Mike (10m 44s):

Well, what you're describing, that's, sure, that's marketing, that's very much a utility, like your trying to help people get through this in some way.

Matt (10m 51s):

Yeah. Well, it, it's funny because when you think about Visa, I think everyone in, and I always have this conversation with people in my family. They always think of us as a credit card company.

Mike (10m 60s): Sure.



Matt (10m 60s):

And what what's interesting is that we actually are not a credit card company. And like, even if I wanted to you know, give you a credit card, I can't, it's just not what our business model is. And so when you really think about what we are, we are a network of networks that enables all participants in the payment ecosystem to thrive. And so what better way to put a marketing message, to bring that to life then to truly make an impact on lives? And so for us it was just taking what previously would have been maybe a message about a particular, you know, payment type, a particular story that we want is to elevate and really focused on, you know, how can we actually make an impact in not only a macro level, but also in those local communities.

Mike (11m 42s):

Okay. So now that we've been, you know, through this, obviously that the world is not gone back to the way it was, but the country's in various stages of opening it's, but it's going to be, this is gonna be with us for a while this pandemic and the rocky economy? There's a lot of talk about how marketing is never going to be the same there, the way that you reach consumers and the speed at which you execute and produce campaigns is going to be forever different. Are you seeing that, do you think things are gonna find a middle ground or go back to the way they were? Or what do you, what are you guys seeing?

Matt (12m 9s):

Yes. Yeah. So I, I mean, I, you know, I would argue that the top marketers, even before we we're in this situation, we're already trying to move to more nimble, agile approach and thinking through how do, how do you balance brand building versus performance marketing and many people were starting to make those, the strategies and trying to develop those lessons learned. I think this, this is definitely forced us to everyone was thrown into the mix and in really thinking through, you know, how do we do that? And I also think that, you know, for us specifically being at this intersection of a pandemic and economic crisis and then ongoing just social injustice and in general, has required marketers to really go back to, you know what does Purpose Marketing mean?

Matt (12m 48s):



I think that it kind of had a quote unquote like Purpose Marketing and Brand Marketing. And you know, it's like, Oh, this thing on the side of that, we do, but its not really core to, to what we, we are the values here.

Mike (13m 0s):

Or the definition was getting really stretched.

Matt (13m 1s):

Exactly and I think now it's really, you know, most marketers are looking back at like, okay, this is an opportunity to show what our brand stands for. So I think it's a challenge, but I also think it's one that I've been impressed because we've taken it as an industry. And so, you know, even if you look at some of the brands that are reaching out to their competitors, to do things together and look at this as this, isn't a zero sum game, this is something where we all can contribute and, and be helpful and live out what our brand stands for. So that's one piece I have been impressed to see the, the other piece and again, more on the tactical side, but there's been a direct impact on marketing jobs because of the pandemic.

Matt (13m 38s):

And we've had a lot of colleagues that we previously worked with or, you know, you partner with that unfortunately have been impacted by this directly. And so I've been actually very proud to see the support that the industry has given and not only to our customers and our clients, but to each other and really standing up and saying, you know, this is what marketing is about. It's about taking people who have talents and introducing them to new opportunities because we are truly going into kinda the uncertain future and being a resource to others. So that's one thing I think, you know, it's also been impressive because I'm taking the skills we would normally use too, you know, reach consumers, drive down ROIs or drive up ROIs, I should say.

Matt (14m 17s):



And using that to actually help our fellow colleagues. I think that's actually shown a lot about what truly this industry can do.

Mike (14m 23s):

That's interesting you bring up the folks who's careers are getting were affected by this, in the marketing world and also the way the brands are structured. I wonder if your going to see a lot of, again, things that were going to happen anyway, happened fast where you are you going to see brands may be collapsed their performance team and their brand team because that doesn't make sense anymore or they'll have a whole bunch of traditional roles if they don't need to staff for anymore and had to hire more data scientists, are the things like that going to accelerate?

Matt (14m 46s):

Yeah. I don't know if it's like combining, you know, quote/unquote "disciplines." I think it's more of how do we take some of the fluidity and the agility that we've had to have and bring that to just how we work and how do we replicate what we see in a lot of and for us, we see it in our cross-functional colleagues on the technology side. They work in agile sprints and they work towards being flexible and you know

Mike (15m 10s): Participant make up?

Matt (15m 13s):

yeah, that's how they do business. And I think what marketing has traditionally done as you know, we'd been known as the, the group that does an annual planning and we go out and we make you know, a long drawn out process of we're going to do this, this year.

Mike (15m 25s):

I'm in planning now, but then I'm not in planning later.



Matt (15m 29s):

Exactly. So I think it's going to give us the skill-set to actually flex into things that we maybe wouldn't of done. And I think it's the less about the combining of teams it's more about how do you take the job in front of us and put together collection of talents that can actually accomplish it in unique ways. Because that's the only way we're going to be able to respond. I mean, just the simple fact that all of us are having most of are very important meetings via video chat and not able to sit in the room with a whiteboard and, and truly do the traditional brainstorm, I think that's just going to bring a lot of that ingenuity to how we structure teams.

Matt (16m 1s):

That's only going to help us and make us more creative.

Mike (16m 2s):

I know we've talked a lot about, about, you know, cycles of production <inaudible> buying going are getting faster and shorter, or what do you think that there's a lot of, a lot less of a discussion about whether the it's been years ago is the upfront got to go away, but we need this anymore? And now there's, it's obviously being thrown into a little bit of chaos this year or just moved around. What do you, what is your take on the future of the need for that event?

Matt (16m 23s):

Well, let's break that apart. So one is the medium and think about it less of TV, let's call it video, that's obviously all of us are consuming probably more than we ever consumed before.

Mike (16m 36s):

Up and to the right, totally.



Matt (16m 37s):

Two - the idea of having an event where you unveil, you know, the opportunity to participate these major things while that would, you would think that would go away just because one, we can't come together and two like, you know, everything is distributed? I actually think you're going to see more clamoring for those types of things, if you will, because everything we've seen is that, you know, production schedules have slowed down. We're not going to have as much to look at were not going to have as much to consume, but on the same time we, as consumers are consuming more.

Matt (17m 9s):

I also think we as advertisers are going to be getting more creative on what we can actually solve because all of our, you know, efficiencies are going down because we're not able to truly, you know, do the traditional TV or advertising shoot. And then I just think overall, some of these events like you look at when all this sports came back, you know, I think a lot of advertisers that are related to those entities did a great job of celebrating it. And it was kind of like, you know, it really brought us all together, even though, you know, we're all sitting in our own homes to be like, yes, you know, baseball is back, basketball is back, you know, XYZ is back.

Matt (17m 44s):

And so I think you're going to see more of that. And so if you, if you separate the two, I think video AKA TV will continue to play a huge role. Now, do we come together and think about it in the typical TV up front? That will probably change to a certain degree, but I would say I'd be optimistic just from an industry perspective on what we're going to be able to do with it.

Mike (18m 5s):

Yeah. There is some thinking that, well, it'll just, television will become so much like digital that you just, you buy it whenever you need it and scale up and scale down and not just become another thing down the line, but it'll be interesting to see how much the industry wants to rely on galvanizing events, where everybody comes together. And if, and when there's big production schedules to roll out, there's still gonna be a need for that congregating, whatever form of takes.



Matt (18m 27s): Definitely.

Mike (18m 27s):

Interesting. All right, let's start. This is a big shift, but you're a guy who's been in the digital advertising world and you're at a company like Visa that is probably ahead on data, compare to many other brands. Another huge, huge shift that was already happening, but is getting accelerated by what's going on with COVID and the economy and regulation is just the way you identify customers and target them online it seems like its going through a pretty massive shift between what Google is doing, with Chrome, Apple's ID change that's coming up that's really freaking out a lot of people in this industry.

Mike (19m 1s):

Then just whatever the regulator's are going to end up doing or not doing. How are you guys grappling with this? Are you, you know, is this gonna change the way you operate? And target consumers drastically or not?

Matt (19m 12s):

Yeah. So as you mentioned, we are a company that lives and breathes secure, reliable, efficient data, you know, trillions of dollars moving across our network, in over 200 countries and territories.

Mike (19m 27s): Relationships are everything.

Matt (19m 27s):

Exactly, exactly. So we, we take data privacy very seriously and we obviously understand the importance of protecting that. Now, as you think about it from some of the changes, whether it be government or a platform based, our teams are working with agencies to understand how do we adapt our model's, how do we adjust our strategies? And think through, you know, what are



some expected ways that we've really previously been able to reach you as a potential consumer into a new world?

Matt (19m 59s):

But I would actually say again, going back to our model, being a network of networks, umm, we have the ability to work with many of our partners across the ecosystem to tell not only great compelling stories on the creative side, but using those channels to actually reach you that are either owned by us or in partnership or rethinking some of the more traditional things that we've forgotten about. So, you know, for our small business program, we thought about it like, yes, we could go out and do a digitally targeted campaign to really reach to these people that are in need of these resources we've developed.

Matt (20m 34s):

And we can develop a campaign based on, you know, certain audience segments and look at them. And we did do that. Secondly, if you take a look, take the behavioral inside of it, if I'm a small business owner and I'm really trying to pivot my business, I don't have time to you know, be in some of those traditional channels we would have normally reached them in. And so we actually developed ...

Mike (20m 54s):

Their lives are crazy at the moment.

Matt (20m 55s):

Exactly. Exactly. We developed an on the ground street team to actually go out into the cities and sit with that business owner and to hear firsthand, what are they experiencing and what are the things that we can provide? And then as a leave behind, yes, you can go to the online resources, you can definitely check out some of the things we've collected, but you know, I think if you would have said nine months ago, does it make sense to do on the ground streets? It's like, no, it's more efficient that we can do it online, et cetera.



But again, I think this has caused us to rethink how do we drive that value? And so I'd expect many of those things are going to come to life as the rules or the guidelines around how you reach people will change.

Matt (21m 31s):

So I, you know, I'm always gonna bet on the creativity of the marketing industry, you know, once we get more data, we'll get more insights that's helpful. But I think we are just a group of creative problem solvers as an industry in general. And I'm just glad to get to work with, you know, folks that come up with things like that on a regular basis.

Mike (21m 48s):

That's interesting. You're not feeling as though brands are gonna be frozen or just paralyzed by this idea like, "Oh man, third party data is, I don't wanna touch it anymore, it's just too dangerous or I don't have any control." You feel like people will figure out new ways of reaching people?

Matt (22m 3s):

Yeah. And I, and I think you you've seen it also. I mean a number of companies and we're one of them as well, are going down the path of figuring out what are the things you need to establish to ensure you have that firsthand interaction with the consumer? I think everyone will do that and figure that out. But I also think, you know, thinking through the entire journey you have with a customer and again, for us, it's not just consumers, we work with so many other stakeholders that those channels don't necessarily help us with. So I think if you have to have that robust thinking and overall planning.

Mike (22m 32s):

Coming back to what you were mentioning with, what's gone on in the U S in the world with just trying to a real reckoning around social justice. I imagine that brands are trying to have their own, they're probably all having these conversations: "We got to be part of this." "No, we shouldn't touch this." "I don't know what we should do?" "If we don't do something, it looks bad?" "No, I really care about this. I wanna show people we do." Like imagine what, what kind of conversations



are you hearing about in the industry with regards to, how would you grade marketing's response to this?

Matt (23m 1s):

It is a mixed bag. I think some brands have been spot on. I think some brands have remained quiet and some brands have, you know, maybe had a misstep for two. I think the thing that I would focus on though, is it's not necessarily that we have to figure it out and we have to like hit it directly on the nail. You know, I've had conversations with colleagues, I've had conversations with friends and a lot of them are sharing concerns that its like, I don't know where to start?

Matt (23m 33s):

I don't, I don't know, you know what to do and I don't wanna make a misstep and it actually prevents them from being a part of the solution. So as I think about it, I think there is still an opportunity of obviously one education, two as, you know, someone that started my career here at Proctor and Gamble in brand marketing one-on-one I think you need to go back to your values and you got to understand what's authentic for your brand and how you should show up? Because consumers will appreciate that. And they'll obviously be much more interested in having that engagement with your brand if you're showing up authentically.

Matt (24m 6s):

So, so yeah, that's kind of how it works where I see it. I think that there is some hesitation, there are some leaning into it, but I just hope that the conversations continue. You know I don't want the new cycle to change it to something else and we as marketers chase, the next thing. I think that a lot of, you know, brands and companies are making investments, which is great to see, ah, so the movement over all just, I just hope that it continues.

Mike (24m 30s):

I wonder if have you seen this where, I've noticed some brands are, they'll say they are in support of change, but they don't want to say that they don't want to utter black lives matter because



then someone will come after them online. Like they'll get the blue lives matter people after them or something like that. Have you seen some of that skittishness out there?

Matt (24m 47s):

I think there's of healthy discussions and I think that what ultimately, what has to happen is you have to look at it through the lens of, is it authentic? So I'll give you an example. Many brands debated the, should we put up an all black square on Instagram? And there was probably a week where everyone, you know, was sitting in a virtual conference room having that debate. And I would argue that, that is important because you truly need to understand, you know, a brand is something that you build over many years, but you can lose it in, you know, a matter of a decision or seconds.

Matt (25m 26s):

So I think it's important to be deliberate, but I also think that we can let our performative actions slow us down from actually driving action and change. And I truly believe that every brand, every person can be a part of change, no matter what scale or level that is. And so finding ways to be a part of the change is, I think it really what's important. And so I would, I would advise feeling, getting away from that obligation a feeling like you need to be a part of whatever it is.

Mike (25m 54s):

You can either act like it or you can do something.

Matt (25m 54s): Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Mike (25m 55s):

Okay. Now what about this is this conversation has naturally found its way to the agency world, which even before this was having a, you know, the last couple years of a bit of all of a reckoning and when it comes to the way that women are treated and the unfortunate continuation of lots of



sexual harassment and that now I think you know, you are seeing agencies finally grapple with, okay, do we have enough black leadership, black talent, Hispanic talent? Where would you grade it? You know, you came from the agency world you're a person of color, what was your experience was like, and maybe what does the industry need to do that it hasn't?

Matt (26m 26s):

Yeah. So I'll speak to my agency experience because I do think it was a unique one. So when I started on the agency side, I had the benefit of working in a group within Google Assist that was led by Rishad Tobakawala, who - those, that aren't familiar with him look him up, you know, truly fascinating career, truly fascinating person with a number of insights and has touched so many brands in the industry. But I would say the thing that I was most impressed by what he did, is he was not only at talent magnate, but he had the ability to bring diversity to bear that actually drove change.

Matt (27m 4s):

And at the time it was change in the industry. So you mentioned, you know, video games, he had the foresight to say, you know, I may not know about the video games thing or I may not know about this mobile thing or this social media thing, but if I get people that actually understand it, I think that we can do something different and unique here. And he developed, actually I had a few conversations with a, with a former teammates a couple of weeks ago and we were just blown away by, we almost were naive to think other places were like that. And that we had a very diverse group, people of color.

Matt (27m 37s):

Looking across the split of have how gender broke out. And just how we worked, even from a seniority standpoint, like there was no like you're, you know, you're junior so you can't do this. leave it to a senior person like everyone had an equal seat at the table. And I think that it was not only contributed to the success of that group, but it also contributed to the success of the individuals that have gone on to do more. Now, I think looking back, you would have said now, how were you able to pool together for that many people with different backgrounds and, and have them an in a, you know, kind of a bubble if you will.



Matt (28m 12s):

And I don't think we thought about it at that time, because it wasn't like we had a diversity score, just a, you know, a scorecard that we were tracking against. We're just looking for great talent and we were looking for different thinkers to really up our game and take on the challenges that the industry was facing. And so that was my agency experience. It probably isn't a traditional agency experience, quote/unquote that you would see, but I would just encourage that, you know, maybe as we're developing the talent pipeline, we were thinking about who to bring into this industry. We don't go the traditional path.

Matt (28m 42s):

We don't stick to the schools that we normally recruit at or are we don't stick to the backgrounds that we normally look at. Like, you know, I myself am an engineer by schooling that found my way into marketing and that brings just the perspective of how I view things. I'm so is there a way for us to go into other disciplines and expose them to the opportunity that the, you know, both the advertising world, but also just the agency world experience can bring.

Mike (29m 4s):

Yeah. Cause I wonder if it's how much of a barrier it is to try to attracting people of color that's not, maybe not that it's, there's a, hopefully there's not a ton of institutional racism, I'm sure there's a lot of subtle and unspoken, but they are just recruited from the same pool's that they know. And that's just not, they're hoping that a broad base of talent comes through that way and it's just not gonna happen fast.

Matt (29m 24s):

Exactly. And I also think the thing that we have to work on, is incremental change is not gonna change these things that have been going on for many, many years.



Mike (29m 36s): Right.

Matt (29m 37s):

And it may not be stated institutional racism that's preventing you from being able to increase you know, your talent pool and the diversity of it. But there are just natural things and biases you have in place that you know, are going to make it difficult. And so, you know, when I posted a

Mike (29m 53s):

When all the leadership is white, those are things...

Matt (29m 56s):

Well, that's a whole other thing, but I was going to say like when I post a link for a job that I may be having on my LinkedIn, you're only gonna see my network. And so if my network is only made up of people that look like me, the only applicants you are going to get are the people that look like me.

Mike (30m 8s): Right.

Matt (30m 9s):

And then, you know, there's a lot of research that shows when you sit in a room with someone and if you feel comfortable, you're more likely to think more highly of them. And so then you get into all these other things that just are self fulfilling.

Mike (30m 19s): They affect culture.



Matt (30m 21s):

Exactly, exactly. But the piece that you were going on about the leadership I think is very important. So, you know, quick aside, back in June, I started a podcast of my own, again, personal venture creativity outlet, where I wanted to speak to leaders of color because I believe their unique experiences give them super powers that allow them to uniquely show up and do things in a different way. And in all of my conversations, I would say again, I'm going to make up a number, but nine out of 10, the person can actually point to a moment where they saw someone that looks like them.

Matt (30m 58s):

That that was a push into the career and the success that they eventually had. And then it could be a mentor. It could be a family member. It could be seeing someone in a movie, but it's like literally seeing that person allows you to actually know I can achieve that.

Mike (31m 11s):

Don't underestimate representation and how important that is.

Matt (31m 13s): Exactly. Exactly.

Mike (31m 20s):

Interesting. I wanna wrap up on, on a totally different note after the, thanks for all. Thank you for allowing me to go through the heavy stuff we have put you on the spot, but it's important to you. You kind of mentioned this and it was how are you and I first got connected way back when <inaudible>, had a division called Play, right? Which I think at least a decade ago, which was early days of trying to bring advertising into the gaming world. I'm curious what you think. Cause that, that never really took off maybe the way some of us thought. And now there's just some more talk about with the free to play gaming and the Fortnite phenomenon and more big platforms getting into this.



Mike (31m 51s):

It may be, we will start seeing, you know, advertisers get and advertisers. They are seeing the numbers are huge, right? You, how did they get back in the gaming? What do we talk about that trajectory and what you saw there right now?

Matt (31m 59s):

Yeah. You're very appreciative by saying it or appreciate it you say it's a decade a, because I think it was closer to 25, but that aside.

Mike (32m 7s):

We're both incredibly young.

Matt (32m 7s):

Exactly, exactly. We're not aging it at all. So I'll go back to that time and then I'll fast forward. But when I told my mom I was going to join Play. And at the time I was an interactive marketing manager at P and G. And

for those that, you know, are more, you know, younger in your career, interactive marketing was digital before digital was a word. You know, I told my mom, Hey, there's this company, they helped brands get in the video games. I'm going to move to California and do this.

Mike (32m 38s):

I'm serious about my career Mom, I'm going to a place called Play.

Matt (32m 39s):



Exactly. She took a pause, she said, you're doing what? And then she seriously, are you sure you want to do that? It was like, yes. And so for me it was definitely a passion point. There were some things that were done that, you know, I haven't seen the likes of since, but if we fast forward now to today, I think you're seeing a renewed interest in the, you know, especially from non-endemic gaming brands of getting into video games, but especially e-sports.

Mike (33m 5s): Sure.

Matt (33m 5s):

Because right now, you know, the only games that were happening when everything was shut down, were e-sports like, you can turn on ESPN, you saw all games on ESPN.

Mike (33m 15s):

And <inaudible> proof.

Matt (33m 15s):

Exactly. And so I think that you are definitely going to see a renewed interest. You're definitely seeing a shift there from marketing opportunities. I worry though, that we're going to copy and paste our sports sponsorship playbook into games and maybe miss the mark for the true insights of what happens with a lot of those. And again, 15, 20 years ago, sitting with some of those early gamer's that, you know, these are a 21 year old, you know, gamers' and understanding they hit a completely different trajectory than someone if you were sitting with some of that's going to the NFL or going to the NBA.

Matt (33m 50s):

And so I think that while there would be a renewed interest, I just hope that people get to the authentic nature of what's happening in gaming. And I'm going to be excited, you know, this holiday season, new PlayStation, new Xbox coming out, to see how brands figure it out because



there's no doubt that many smart marketers out there will find a way to push the boundaries of what's possible. Now the question is have, you know, if we find ourselves in this new normal for a bit longer, like is some of that to your point is a sustainable, because I think there was a lot of moves made in the two thousands that it worked for a little bit and then it went away and then people, you know, went to, you know, other things, whether it be social, mobile, et cetera, and it didn't really sustain.

Matt (34m 31s):

So I'm curious if the behavior we're seeing because of people being stuck at home are people thinking about virtual experiences more, they give it a little bit more, you know, lifeline this time around?

Mike (34m 42s):

I think given how much kids that have been playing video games constantly over the past five months, you are going to have a flood of Twitch Stars in eSports talent in like 15 years, it is going to change, might change a whole entire industry. Yeah. But it's going to be fascinating to watch what happens with gaming over the next six to eight months. Anyway, Matt, this was awesome. Terrific conversation. Thanks so much for going so many different directions with me, glad we can find some time to come on, thanks so much.

Matt (35m 6s):

Thanks for having me. This is a lot of fun, you sent me down memory lane and so I appreciate that.

Mike (35m 10s):

A big, thanks to my guest this week, Matt Story, Senior Director of Global Innovation Marketing at Visa. And of course my partners at Appsflyer.