

John Sheehy Podcast Transcript

[00:00:00] **Andy Murray:** Hi, I'm Andy Murray. Welcome to It's A Customer's World Podcast. Now more than ever, retailers and brands are accelerating their quests to be more customer-centric, but to be truly centric, it requires both a shift in mindset and ways of working, not just in marketing, but in all parts of the organiz. In this podcast series, I'll be talking with practitioners, thought leaders and scholars to hear their thoughts on what it takes to be a leader in today's customer-centric world.

[00:00:51] Hello everyone. In this episode, we continue our series of exploring the evolution of Retail media network. An area we haven't yet explored is how retail media networks fit into the broader world of media in general. To talk about that, I'm really excited to have industry expert John Sheehy join our show.

[00:01:10] John has over 30 years experience in media technology and creativity. He held top leadership roles in some of the world's biggest and best agencies, such as Leo Burnett, and most recently served as the global brand president for Starcom World. John is currently an operating partner at New Road Capital Partners based in northwest Arkansas.

[00:01:30] He's also a strategic advisor for Zeta Global. Zeta is a leading omnichannel cloud platform that provides companies with consumer intelligence and marketing automation software. I can't think of anyone better equipped to dive into the conversation about how media is changing and where all this is headed in the future than talking with John.

[00:01:51] Let's join the show. Hello John. Welcome to the show and thank you for taking time to chat with me today.

[00:01:57] **John Sheehy:** Andy, great. Great to be with you today. Looking forward to our time.

[00:02:00] **Andy Murray:** You've had a quite a remarkable career journey across technology, media, and creativity. And recently up to the global brand president of Starcom Worldwide.

[00:02:09] For those of you don't know, it's one of the largest global media agencies. I'd like to start by just first hearing your career journey and what has led up to what you're doing.

[00:02:18] **John Sheehy:** Sure Andy. I started out almost 33 years ago. I started out on the creative side of the business with Leo Burnett at the time.

[00:02:25] And I was fortunate because Leo Burnett had some great clients and really the ethos there was always be an extension that client understand their business via strategic partner business for them and then bring them the ideas at the time that helped their brands grow. And that was a great foundation.

[00:02:41] I did that for about 20. I was fortunate enough to work us and abroad in that role always on clients. And then about 2010, the opportunity came and the industry was changing and I decided to jump over to the media side. So I've spent about 13 years on the media side of the business. Started out as dark on media, best group evolved into Publicis Media and throughout that time working around the globe with many of the world's best clients.

[00:03:11] It was really an interesting time because as everything was moving. Digital, search, social all the budgets were shifting in that direction. And now if you look at the last three to five years, you're seeing everything continue to move, whether it's on the front end, leveraging data or on the back bringing solutions so that people and consumers can go from awareness to purchase through commerce.

[00:03:34] So an exciting run, and if you cut me open, I'm a client. Always have been, always will. I thought the most interesting part of being a client partner was really helping them strategically define where they wanted to go, and then bring the parts or the partners to bear to unlock that for them as they look for solutions in terms of helping them create that great consumer experience.

[00:03:57] **Andy Murray:** Leading through change like you did in the earlier stages, 2010. And what happened? It's really difficult sometimes for clients to stay on top of that level of change and know strategically what to do versus, tactically what to do. So I really appreciate your perspective there, and I look at what's happening today with media and retail media networks and this explosive growth in the last couple of years.

[00:04:20] Depreciation of cookies. It feels to me like, and I could have it wrong I don't know, media at the level of course that you do, but it feels like we're in the throes of a lot of change that rivals that earlier digital transformation. I How would you characterize what's happening in media today?

[00:04:35] **John Sheehy:** It's certainly exciting and change is a foot every day. I think we all see that, we all face that, but for me it's a great opportunity. I think on three levels. First the world continues to become more addressable. As Things move more digital, not only does it throw off data, but that addressability, because you're able to identify that audience better, get the better audience insights, and then certainly activate.

[00:05:00] And if you think about full circle, not only can you activate, but you're also being able to attribute to performance and get from beyond some simple awareness frequency model to more business outcomes. Media sits at the strategic foundation because that's involves the audience, the investment dollars, and then optimizing those dollars to business outcomes.

[00:05:22] That journey is very exciting now, more than. As you mentioned, cookies are going away. So in a way that has to be addressed so that we can continue that in a very privacy compliant world. But that's just demanding more and more from what we can do with technology, whether it's machines, automation, know, the consumer.

[00:05:42] What we wanna do ultimately is give them a seamless experience. So you're bringing that all together and media's been a great fulcrum for being able to make that.

[00:05:52] **Andy Murray:** And how have you seen clients being able to keep up and not just keep up with with it from a tactical perspective, which is quite a chore because it does take quite a bit of technology investment on the client side, but also, when the agency partner side.

[00:06:05] But how have you seen them adapt and change organizationally to take advantage of the opportunity in a strategic way?

[00:06:14] **John Sheehy:** It sounded a bit cliché, but I'll say it again. COVID. Actually was a great force for change. Usually you don't move until you have to, and I think. Because of what happened during COVID it, it broke and then opened up new business models in a very rapid way.

[00:06:32] And so some examples of that, certainly if you're sitting as an established brand and you've built up your barriers through retail traditional channels, traditional ways of engagement. What we've seen over the last 24 months is a dramatic shift to players being able to, with direct e-commerce, with what we've seen in terms of every vertical being disrupted.

[00:06:55] It's really put a lot of pressure on both traditional brands, emerging brands, and I think it's also, it's thrown scale. A bit up in the air. We used to be able to really leverage that scale. But I think agility matters most now, understanding who your core customers are, what they want in terms of their experience, and then having the agility to not only if you have to, Partner up in different ways, build things, manage them in different ways.

[00:07:24] But it really is, the ecosystem has shifted and I think it's an advantage both for traditional players and non-traditional players. It really is who can adapt and who can really think through what the challenges of tomorrow are going to be.

[00:07:37] **Andy Murray:** It's interesting, John, I could have this wrong and I'd love to get your perspective on it, but it feels like a lot of the technology shift that happened in enablements in the last couple of years have really helped in more of a performance way or transactional way, where you've got more closed loop reporting, starting to get more addressable data and such, and more metrics to tell you about that performance.

[00:07:58] But what do you think has happened in the challenge of discovery and new brands in brand building, in the space of media? It feels to me like today you want to go to TikTok to get discovery or such, but it, is it harder to get discovered in terms of new brands or growing brands or challenger brands in a world that really values performance and incrementality on known brands?

[00:08:22] I How's media helping in that?

[00:08:25] **John Sheehy:** That's good. It's a, that's a dilemma, size does matter. Yeah, no doubt about it. Especially when you think about brands and what they've built over time and time again. But at the same time, Andy, I think you have you've pinpointed the challenge and the opportunity all at one.

[00:08:40] So a couple fundamental shifts. The first one is that, as a world has gone more digital, The world then gets more addressable. So you think about the ability to really understand audiences at the ID level and then aggregate that up. The insights, we can see shifts over a six week period in terms of what might be happening during this current environment where we're seeing a lot of inflation.

[00:09:04] We can pick up on the nuances now much faster because that data's more available. So really what that means, if you're a big or player is that you have to own your customer. You have to find a way to make sure that you have

as much data and be able to use that data to really get back what are still the fundamentals.

[00:09:25] Who are we going to go after? Why, what do we know about them that fits what we're trying to. Sell them and then be able to activate against that. And what digital has done is allowed us to do that. You look at the identity, if I break it down, you look at what Amazon has done. They own their customer, they have purchased data.

[00:09:46] Walmart has done that. All the big retailers have done that and will come on and I think talk about retail media in a. The Googles, the Facebook's, the world. They created this with the walled gardens from a holding company standpoint. You've seen publicists with Epsilon, you've seen IPG with Axiom.

[00:10:03] You've seen Densu with Merkel. And the reason everyone's doing this is they understand that you have to have a view of the customer that then gets blended, joined together with that view, whether it's your client view, For retailer's view and that enables you in this world to target better and then to your point, be able to drive their performance because you can activate in a digital world and be able to attribute that across many more channels.

[00:10:33] And then be able to hopefully optimize that more in real time. There's still a bit of a lag, but it's much faster. And it goes back to the agility than we had when we were waiting for Nielsen results, a quarter, six months post. And that was the only truth we have. If you're a big brand and you're able to have already a view of your customer, that's great.

[00:10:54] What are you doing to start with that view, add to it, and build as you move forward. And if you're a smaller customer, take some of these disruptors or Parker's a great one in terms of eyecare going against behemoths. They're able to use that to be able to cross sell. And really take the pulse and make sure that they're meeting that consumer as their needs changed.

[00:11:12] And stay in front and foremost with very focused message. Remember you own the data, you're able to use that in a much more agile way, in a much more cost effective way than if you're just buying for awareness and trying to hit some broad metrics.

[00:11:26] **Andy Murray:** That's really insightful and super helpful.

[00:11:28] And it does seem like because of the technology changes, what you could do is almost limitless. And it pulls you back to what should I do? And you

mentioned something I thought was really interesting about the fundamentals, the marketing fundamentals of trying to understand what drives brand awareness, what drives new customers.

[00:11:46] The, to me, it feels like the fundamentals become even more important. Of having a really clear strategy of what you could do, because if you don't have a clear strategy, you don't understand the marketing objectives and how that really works, the world of what you could do takes over and you could get so locked into ROI that you actually shrink your brand because you're not playing the metrics against a set of objectives.

[00:12:10] Do I, does that sound right?

[00:12:12] **John Sheehy:** Absolutely. The great part of our business, Andy, and you guys have spent a lot, you and I have spent a lot of time, is it's always come down to, again, that simple, who's your audience, right? Understanding that at a category or brand level, grabbing insights, especially if you're able to understand them better and faster than your competition, and then to be able to activate.

[00:12:33] On a scaled way. And, I think that, we just look at the channels that have just emerged over the last couple years was going on with influencers slash creators. You're looking at what's happening with ctv, you're looking at digital auto home, add that just to what we've been able to see explode outta social, including TikTok and what's next there.

[00:12:51] Go back in time and you can even add that to some of the big social platforms. Facebook, Instagram and we're tying all that now to direct purchase with the computing power of our phone. That consumer expectation experience goes through these things rapidly. Awareness, engagement, involvement.

[00:13:09] Involvement meaning participation votes pinging a friend, sharing. Things are moving so quickly, so you know, what's harnessing that is, is not just the fundamentals, but some of the technology that has to be. Created, integrated is probably the biggest challenge and then leveraged. And I think it takes a really smart marketing or smart brand that's really bringing all these things together and think about differently.

[00:13:34] So a CMO now is partnered with the it CMOs, not just on his marketing channels. He's tied to the hip at his sales counterpart because, again everything's much more compressed. As you talk about business outcomes, not,

broad metrics like awareness or a frequency number that we used to measure ourselves against.

[00:13:52] **Andy Murray:** You're talking about an understanding of the complexity and knowing how to leverage that agility and the knowledge required.

[00:13:57] That seems. Almost the cost of doing business for your top 20 to 30 CPGs. But then as you click down into CMOs of mid-tier brands, it may not have the resources, they don't have the team, the plethora of data scientists to be able to, put up against or with a big holding company. Media team that could really sort this out.

[00:14:17] Any advice to mid-tier brand CMOs who, they may have been a brand manager, marketing director at a Procter Unilever and realize they may not be CMO there, but they become CMO of a mid-tier brand and wake up and say, gosh, I don't really have the team. And how are they going to keep up with this level of sophistication?

[00:14:39] Any advice on what they might be able to think through and do that's in their scope of abilities?

[00:14:45] **John Sheehy:** Yeah, that's a great question. First of all, I think it's a collaborative world. You can't do everything by yourselves. You can't do everything with your own agency ecosystem, even if it's a great one, cuz things are moving so quickly.

[00:14:55] And so you have to, again, comes back to fundamentally knowing what your strategy is and then having a plan that allows you to partner. And manage all the moving parts and partners together in a very integrated way to get to that business outcome. So a good example there's a company I advise for called Zeta Global.

[00:15:18] And what Zeta has built is an identity platform that allows them to see over 230 million individuals in the US. And they're able to not only see them, but in Apr, in a compliant way, be able to understand attitudes, be able to stand location, be understand, buying behavior, and therefore they can activate it.

[00:15:40] Now they're a technology company, not a marketing, not an agency, but a technology company built off years and years of CRM and bringing together different companies, but they've built an Agile platform. So if you're a

small, mid-size player and you can't afford or don't have the time or the technology or the technologist to be able to build your own.

[00:16:02] Identity platform or activation platform. There are partners out there like a Zeta, and you could go through all the parts of the ecosystem that are doing this for us. E-commerce as Andy is another area because things are going so quickly. That everyone's looking to partner to win.

[00:16:18] And much like we saw when search and social was coming up back in the early nineties, a lot of the startups had better answers than whether it was a big agency partner to begin with. It just, it took 'em time to scale that. They maybe were acquired or they were built in another solution.

[00:16:35] But same thing's happening now as we look at the rapid changes going on in the, whether it's retail, media slash commerce world. And so it's really exciting to be a marketer or someone coming into this business. To be able to go up those type of learning curves and be able to apply things and get learnings very quickly as opposed to a nine month pilot or a year pilot to figure out if we got the next big idea.

[00:17:01] **Andy Murray:** I love the way you think. I love the way you think, John, and I think you see the changes in front of us as opportunity. And I do too. And when I looked at, when I started in the shopper marketing space, it was a fuzzy area. It grew really fast, all about first moment of truth. Now it's probably about first moment of commerce and where you can really connect.

[00:17:18] Not that those shopper marketing fundamentals are gone, it's just there's another layer of opportunity there. Which brings me to probably I answered my own question here. What you're doing today with New Road Capital, because you. See that opportunity? Is that part of your next season of saying like, how can I help influence capital allocation against some of these new opportunities that may be under capitalized, but really spot on in terms of catching these waves?

[00:17:43] That's happened in the last couple of years.

[00:17:45] **John Sheehy:** Yeah, absolutely, and I think that's a good way is capturing so at New Road as an operating partner, you're trying to identify those clients who are filling some of the gaps in the disruptive areas, or they're bringing together technology solutions because they've able to see things very clearly.

[00:18:04] And really be able to focus on some of the things that were broken. And then what you're trying to do is help them think through how are you going to scale that business? Where are the right connections, whether it's at a client level, at a holding company level, at an industry level, to really help them with a network effect that allows them to do what they have such a passion for, which is solve these big holes.

[00:18:27] There's some big holes as we've talked about, the challenges in just understanding, as GI Joe used to say, knowings have to battle the other half is doing Yeah. And. I think the fun part is always being able to apply these in real time so that you can iterate in terms of where the solution.

[00:18:40] So some examples where I think we're going to see big demand, if you just look at what's. What's needed from a content perspective. Way back when I started I make fun of it. We used to spend a lot of time to figure out the campaign. And the campaign used to drive all the other channels of communication, whether it was print or outta home or newspaper.

[00:19:02] And obviously digital shifted that, but now we're in an extraordinary. Number of moving parts and partners that have to be brought together. So technology machine learning has to help address that, but you still need systems that allow you to take that content that's in your repertoire and apply it in certain formats.

[00:19:22] Distribute it, measure it. Optimize it and then do it all over, or be able to pretest before even. So you have confidence that, hey, this new CTV ad, this new streaming that I'm going to give a try in Seattle against this type of user. That's been optimized before you even bring it to market again.

[00:19:42] Agility to me. And those who can think and manage that in a very agile way are going to be the winners. Whether you're a big client, a small client, a startup, or a big technology. Continue to innovate to stay out of all this competition that's coming to the marketplace. Yeah. But

[00:19:58] **Andy Murray:** that's well said.

[00:19:59] And I also think the VC industry has matured quite a bit. I think back in 2004 when I was looking to scale, really the strategic. We're the only opportunity really to grow and to take that on at the next level, and that's been the case for some time. Sometimes it's better to maybe take investment from BC and allow your model to grow in a way that you've got strategic advice, but you're not pulled into a ma a major ecosystem before you're ready.

[00:20:24] Like a bigger holding company which can have its challenges and getting absorbed into that could set you back. Six, eight months sometimes just going through that integration process where you know that those opportunities weren't there, 10 years ago that are there now, which I think is a great time to be doing, like things that you're doing, I'm doing in the venture capital space to get behind these so that we can see these innovations mature a bit more before maybe they're looking at a strategic and get a strong operating model under.

[00:20:53] **John Sheehy:** Yeah, and I think before things would have to go through almost a linear process or guardrails that didn't have this big network effect with people that were willing and able. To help out in real time as people have the ideas they want to incubate the ideas they need to get the capital to be able to do that.

[00:21:12] Scale it, find the people, and find the technologies that can help them continue to evolve that until, as you say, it becomes an underpinning in the industry or the channel that they wanna win in. So all very exciting. And again if you keep your eye on where clients are and the challenges they face, or brands or experience that need to be created, I think it's a pretty good guidepost for where we'll see a continuous change.

[00:21:37] **Andy Murray:** Hundred percent. And let's talk about some of that in the retail media network side, because, it has been a lot of change really fast. The promise is amazing but it does create some new problems to solve that need to be solved, which again, problems then lead to opportunities in that space.

[00:21:53] As you look at what's happening with retail media networks, where do you see some of the opportunities that you think, we're going to see some innovation here because there's a problem there to be solved.

[00:22:03] **John Sheehy:** Yeah. Or problem solve, and then opportunities even bigger. So I think retail media is an interesting one.

[00:22:09] If you think about it and just break it down what's enabled that, again, it goes back to their ability to have Their ability to have audience. Walmart's a great example. Amazon's a great example cuz they're probably the furthest along, they see millions and millions of people, 40, 50, 60 million people who they know and they understand and they want be able to provide an experience.

[00:22:30] On the other hand, you have the brands who want to just like you would in a normal bricks and mortar store, be able to show up at the right time

and the right place with the right message. And therefore grow. And so now in a digital world, you have this retail media network. So you have a whole different buying audience.

[00:22:50] You can think of Walmart as you would to Facebook. You're just trying to put relevant, engaging experiences or messages out there for people who are already part of your network. And so brands, I think want to and will continue. Assuming that it's relevant to show up in those spaces, want to be a part of the Amazon network.

[00:23:12] The Walmart connects around Dell's but it's not going to stop there. It's going to go to, Marriott is a great example. They too have. Cross sell, upsell opportunities. So you think about credit card, you think about where their people are staying and the ability to serve up messages, whether it's a museum, a restaurant, a theater, whatever that might be.

[00:23:31] So these retail media networks are going to continue, and I think then the challenge becomes from a brand, How and where do you play? Yeah. And how do you get the results you're looking for? Cause it's another dollar you're going to spend where you could be spending it somewhere else. And then from a service standpoint how do you make that a frictionless transaction or engagement?

[00:23:56] And that's where I think some of the challenges be. So a retailer their business traditionally has. Making sure that the distribution shows up, that they have the product available in store that they have a good order system that fulfills that. Now they're playing both sides. So it's a different type of business.

[00:24:11] Again, they have to run both at once. A lot of technology involved there. So there's a lot of startups technology companies already fulfilling that need, have been fulfilling it for a while. But we're seeing it's a nons. Opportunity or challenge just cuz of the amount of change that's happening there.

[00:24:27] Yeah. And I think on the other part also, the whole experience is getting redefined. Everywhere we look, you go in front of a outta home space, it's digital now. They don't serve up the same ad for 10 weeks in a row. They're able to change that day part by different audience. They're able to measure that because you're connected to your mobile ID device, and so they're able to fine tune that messaging.

[00:24:50] Maybe if you're walking by and you're close to McDonald's, you're getting an offer on a Big Mac in the afternoon and you're getting. A breakfast burrito ad in the morning, all because they're able to understand who's at their premise and serve up these things in real time. And the technology and the creativity is allowing that to happen.

[00:25:10] So retail media networks is fascinating, incredibly fast moving, and it's just going to redefine the whole shopper experience. Yeah, for years.

[00:25:21] **Andy Murray:** And I think at the end of game there, it is more valuable to the consumer to have more relevant, you're talking about relevance and really getting to a place where it is a more relevant experience for the consumer.

[00:25:29] And I think that's a good thing, not a bad thing in the agility. That comes with that. I agree with you. I think it's and the other piece with retail media networks is you really have to be sensitive to where you have store level inventory and where you don't. And that has never really been factored into traditional media buying.

[00:25:45] When you start linking in supply chain logistics layers on top of this now it starts to get really interesting because you can be very clear, I'm not going to run an ad in this geography. If I don't have inventory in that store in that time, it just doesn't make a lot of sense. And you actually get penalized in the algorithms for most retailers for being in that situation.

[00:26:04] So now you've got supply chain logistics in the fund and that adds another layer of collaboration, which really gets down to, you've got to be really good at collaborating and building partnerships. It's your earlier point, right? I The more parties you get involved to do this together, the more important collaboration.

[00:26:19] **John Sheehy:** I just look at it too. If you just think about what you just said for a minute, we used to have to run up 60, 70 ACV distribution before you'd think about launching a national product. Cause that was the game. Now you can take regional, you can take fully online if you want, but you can combine that and then you combine a much more efficient way to engage.

[00:26:39] Whether it's through influencer, through social media, and then CTV or connected tv, you're not able to execute. Video targeted, relevant, carve out marketplaces, like it's nothing. So again, it goes to big brands, regional brands, smaller brands. That's a tremendous opportunity because, if you wanna prove

that you have a viable business to the big Walmarts coming to them having shown what you can do.

[00:27:05] In a regional, or even in a couple markets is a big selling point, as and just look at the number of brands you've experimented with in the last the last 12 months or in the last six weeks. Oh. Thanksgiving is a great time to go out and figure out what's new, you

[00:27:18] **Andy Murray:** know? And brands that launch DTC and then start moving into physical have a tremendous insight.

[00:27:24] If they've used to working with first party data, all of a sudden now they've got an edge that may, many of the bigger brands that have always been through retail are struggling actually to build some of that first party data on their own. And. It's not just the big wins here. It is does level the playing field.

[00:27:39] So John we work a lot with the University of Arkansas, the Walton College of Business, and I had a chance to visit with Molly Raper, the professor of marketing there. And she typically, for these interviews, I tell her who's coming, she'll send in a question or two from the students. Do you mind taking a few questions that students had on their.

[00:27:55] Oh, that'd be great. Okay. The first one's actually from the teacher herself, Molly as she heard you were coming and asked a question, she said, in this most recent stage of your journey with New Road Capital Partners, how will your expertise with media, creativity and technology converge in this new space?

[00:28:12] **John Sheehy:** It's a great question. I think first again I just look at my experience and what I've tried to do throughout my career is, and I've had the opportunity to look across many different categories, many different markets, and so I think, big believer in fundamentals. I think the first thing you do is you look at a space.

[00:28:31] And try and understand, not the depth and breadth of it, but find out where those areas at a you, you think there's going to be a lot of opportunity for disruption or b, you have a lot of passion for. And I think that's where you start. So we've selected marketing technology as an area and we started down our thesis in terms of where we think there's going to be a lot of energy and opportunity and, examples like digital asset management.

[00:28:58] Cause you think of the. Pieces of communication that have to be managed now and managed in a very agile way. Whether it shows up on your e-commerce site, shows up in your retail ad there's an opportunity to do that better, faster, take away a lot of costs out of the marketing system and apply back to greater return as your content.

[00:29:18] More fit for purpose, more relevant and more engaging, and it shows up in a very automated way. So that's one area we talked about, retail media networks. It's going to be very exciting as people look to monetize audiences in that space because they have they have such good information in terms of how it's working and the ability to do that in real.

[00:29:41] And then if you even look at the in-store space and how that's becoming more digital, I think that's going to be another exciting because the traditional retail box has stayed pretty stagnant. Relatively stagnant for a long enough period. But now, With what you're able to do with digital, whether that's being able to engage that customer in a different way.

[00:30:02] You're able to read those signals in real time, respond so you get a much better consumer experience. So I think again, if if you follow where. The money's going and where the demand is or where some of those gaps are, it leads you to some very interesting spaces. And then lastly I'm able to combine a lot of knowledge about brands and categories.

[00:30:22] The whole holding company, organization. I was fortunate to work at Publicis where we had. Sapien is a big technology consultancy that we acquired about nine years ago and then epsilon a massive data. Having been able to apply that to clients, Over the last four or five years as part of my core job I see this as very similar and very exciting and keeps on a different scale, but a much more agile scale.

[00:30:45] So that's what I'm really excited for.

[00:30:46] **Andy Murray:** Yeah, that's exciting. You said something earlier about the fundamentals in it. I put myself in Molly's shoes as a professor of marketing trying to, equip students to enter this workforce in such a dynamic space with so many different vectors of technology and change.

[00:31:01] And I think she could be assured that teaching the fundamentals of marketing and those core objectives, right? That is such a north star to get through the complexity. And so in one side I'd be really intimidated trying to

teach students today to come into the workforce. But on the other side, it does come back to really learning the marketing fundamentals as a real basis point.

[00:31:22] Would you agree with that? What would be your thoughts on that?

[00:31:25] **John Sheehy:** Absolutely, if you could write a class about the marketing fundamentals and just apply all the opportunity today, it's a never ending book, I think it's always come down to understanding what your brand.

[00:31:37] What's that reference point that you're competing in? And that's shifting around on a daily basis now, and it's certainly not as stagnant as it once was. And then I think importantly, what's that point of difference and what's the support for that point of difference? What's the reason that you can be the best, the fastest, the cheapest, whatever you want to be the best at.

[00:31:55] But I think those fundamentals, brand positioning audience understanding and insights ways to activate. Ways to measure, these are what underpins success across all markets. Across all brands. Big or small.

[00:32:09] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. Yeah. Great. Said. have two student questions and they tend to be fairly similar in approach because they wanna know about leadership, career advice kind of stuff, and so one's from a case.

[00:32:20] Kazi Bennett college Station, Texas Marketing and Supply Chain major. As she's asked the question, what moments or moment in your career do you feel has refined you the most as a person?

[00:32:32] **John Sheehy:** I'm very humble. I think for me it's always been learning from other folks and being part of winning teams that's always kept me motivated.

[00:32:39] Whether I see myself as a leader of that part of that, or learning from, playing with winning teams and the energy that comes from that. I just love. Positive attitude. We can hire all the smart people in the world, but what you can't hire are two things. One, I always find that positive people, positive attitudes make a huge difference.

[00:32:58] And then the second one is initiative and they usually follow each other. So yeah, I always say, look the world's littered with a lot of people that are smart, have answers. But then you put positive attitude initiative and people who are willing to work hard. I think that goes as far as we want to.

[00:33:14] **Andy Murray:** I don't think you've gone very far in your career as a client person if you had a negative attitude. Cause clients want to feel that energy and hope and not, oh yeah, we're of screwed, aren't we? Bill wouldn't go very far. The last question I have is from Taylor Howard. He's from Gunter, Texas.

[00:33:31] He's a marketing supply chain major, and his question is, what advice do you have for seniors who are beginning their careers? How early did you know what you would be passionate?

[00:33:41] **John Sheehy:** Taylor, that's a great question. I'll try and answer that one. I have two kids, 1 29, 1 27, and I'll share what I shared with them.

[00:33:49] And a lot of it's based on, just how I felt at the time. But I always think what you want to try and do again as you look for opportunities, and certainly your first one, is get a good sense of the culture. Of the place that you're going to be spending your time, get a good sense of the people that are there, how they think, how they act, how they behave, and.

[00:34:14] Really you can then marry that up with, now it's about earning capabilities every couple years. So you find the right company, they're going to be able to teach, grow challenge you marry that up with a capability that gets you excited. Let's call it supply chain management. It could be procurement, it could be marketing, it could be retail media.

[00:34:35] It won't matter, but I think starting. Culture makes a huge difference. It will all your career, but then you're going to feel every day you go to work, it's going to put a smile on your face and at the end of the day, you're going to be as energized as when you started. I think that's the key thing.

[00:34:49] So look for that. Don't just settle for the first one that puts an offer in front of you. And it's a good offer, I'm sure, but, really spend the time to work and believe in something when you start out. And obviously it's going to change, but, I think that's a good rule. Thumb.

[00:35:02] **Andy Murray:** I love that advice.

[00:35:03] I have so many students maybe over fret about getting the perfect job at a prestige company and maybe not have that cultural fit for them or be that energized, but and then end up grinding it out and not having joy. And so I, I just think that's, fantastic advice for students and anybody graduating is to find

that cultural fit first and really then let that joy and expertise really flow from that.

[00:35:27] Wow. John, this has been a fantastic conversation. I really appreciate your time. You've got a wealth of knowledge and experience. I'd love to have you come back again and perhaps also maybe if you get some time a visit with some of the students in the class. From a lecturing perspective, you've got quite a bit of experience to offer.

[00:35:43] And I love your key points around, getting back to the fundamentals, seeing all of these challenges and changes as opportunities to really be able to exploit those opportunities for change and relevance and being, connected to the consumer. And that speed of agility, which is also a mindset as much as a practice area, right?

[00:36:02] And so I just really appreciate your time today. It's been a fantastic learning and you made it sure it didn't get too technical for us, that don't know media at the level you do to be able to follow along. So I appreciate that. Thank you so

[00:36:14] **John Sheehy:** much. And Andy, thank you. And for the students who are watching this, I know not everyone, but.

[00:36:19] If you need anything Andy, myself, we're here to open up opportunities, so never feel as though you cannot ask and use a network as to the best effect you can. It's it's a fantastic businesses that we've been fortunate to touch and our biggest challenge. Is and always will be finding talent.

[00:36:37] It's finding you, not you finding us. Please do me a favor. Do us a favor show your interest and if there's a good fit, we'll do our best to make it work. Andy, thank you. Love

[00:36:46] **Andy Murray:** it. John, can I find you in maybe your LinkedIn profile? What's the best way to reach you? We could drop that in the show notes.

[00:36:52] **John Sheehy:** Just drop it in the LinkedIn. That'd be great. Okay. That's great. All right guys. Thank you. And have a great rest of. Thank you, John.

[00:37:03] **Andy Murray:** That's it for this episode of It's a Customer's World. If you found this helpful and entertaining, I would be so grateful if you could

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