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The most sophisticated growth team no one talks about: @WishShopping

1. The #1 shopping app in 40+ countries

2. Rumored to often be the #1 spender on FB and Google

3. 2 million items sold daily

I sat down with @cplimon to learn about the notoriously secretive company. Read on ■

1/ Your brand constraint is Wish's opportunity

Wish's superpower is leaving no room for taste or opinion. It's what happens when a machine builds a company based on data. The founder didn't plan to sell cheap goods to low-socioeconomic customers, but where the data took him.

"Until you work at a place like Wish, you don't know what data-driven is. Everyone else is data-driven when it's convenient, when it agrees with your opinions. Wish is great at ignoring their own emotions. It's data-driven with as much intellectual honesty as possible."

For example https://t.co/ZFgEbFisGO

> cursed wish ads pic.twitter.com/eMlx4LqgKA
>
> — big meaty claws (@leisureplex) June 4, 2019

2/ Differentiate by serving the under-served

Most of Wish's initial sales came from places like Florida, greater LA county, and middle-America. Specifically, zip codes with 95% Spanish speakers. Later, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe (avg household income $18,000/year)

"Wish sales grew in cities everyone else ignored, we didn't care what our friends or VCs thought, we blindly listened to the data."

3/ Think full-funnel

Even though Wish grew primarily through paid ads, they recognized they also had a perception problem. e.g. The top Google search result for Wish was "is Wish a scam." So they invested in brand campaigns, partnering with respected brands.

"The Lakers were the most prestigious sports brand in the world, and the greater LA area was Wish's top market. I did the deal the year they didn't make the playoffs, so it was priced low, and Magic promised me we'd get a big-time star next year...which turned out to be Lebron"



4/ Play to your leadership strengths

The founder, Peter, is the Michael Jordan of growth & performance marketing. He understands how every moving piece impacts every other piece. But with that, he maintains complete control of what everyone does at the company.

"If Peter said to do it, no one got in your way. No one knows what other teams are working on. Only Peter was allowed to connect dots between teams. The benefit is there is no bureaucracy – shit got done, fast. The downside is it's not for everyone."

5/ Hack the flywheel

Wish started as a free wishlisting product (get it?), and with that acquired a ton of free demand. They then went to the merchants of the most wishlisted products (in China), and offered this demand to them if they would sell their products on the platform.

"Now with the supply, we raised a bunch of money and threw it at Facebook ads to sell out the supply. The merchants were happy, so we were able to acquire more supply, which helped convert demand at a higher rate, and the flywheel began."

6/ Become the *best* at your growth channel

Wish helped invent what is now one of the most significant products within Facebook ads: Dynamic Product Ads. This gives companies the ability to upload a giant list of product SKUs, which FB pulls from to run ads dynamically.

"You can upload giant lists of products, and FB figures out which ones perform best and who to show them to. We also helped FB invent a feature where you can automatically overlay produce prices over on the product ad image, which we dynamically tested."

7/ Other wild factoids:
* Efficiency: Probably had a record of GMV to headcount ratio, several million GMV per employee for a long time
* The right timing: Wish was possible because of the combination of growth of smartphones + emergence of FB ads + Peter's unique skillset

* Acquisition offers: Both Amazon and FB tried to buy Wish
* Stunts: Wish also sponsored the Mayweather/MacGregor fight, and some of the world's most successful soccer players https://t.co/VavQ59kUl4

8/ For more, definitely follow @cplimon