

# SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESSEN, FOUNDER OF [membermouse™](#)



## Ep 122: Why Video Is The Future Of Your Business with Chris Savage

*"The best videos are honest or authentic and they're also entertaining. They are willing to have a little bit of fun and a lot of companies miss that. A lot of companies miss the fact that especially in B2B you are selling to other businesses. But guess what, all those people out of businesses, what do they do at night? They watch Netflix. They watch HBO..."*

### **INTRO:**

That's our guest on today's episode of the podcast.

But before I introduce you to him, let me ask you a question:

"Who is your main competitor in business?"

Who or what comes to mind when I say, "your competitors?"

I'm sure you can think of a few businesses who offer similar products or services in your marketplace. Or perhaps a person or company that has captured the attention of your customers.

And now consider this: as much as you're competing for the business of your customers, you're also competing for their attention.

When you take this into consideration, anything that's captured the attention of your audience starts to look like a competitor. Instead of competing with a few similar people or businesses, you're now competing with everything from Instagram, Facebook, Netflix, and Hulu. In fact, we're living in an age where there seem to be more things competing for our attention than ever before.

How much time is someone actually spending on your website, looking at your pages, reading your blog posts? In reality, the amount of time that your customers and prospects spend with you compared to your direct competitors is probably very similar. However, the ratio of time they're spending with your business versus their Instagram feed or Netflix watch list is a totally different story.

So that begs the question: How can you compete with a juggernaut like Netflix for the attention of your customers? Is it even possible?

Well, our guest on today's episode responds to this question with an emphatic "yes." And, he and his company have actually pulled it off. They've cracked the code of creating business content for their audience that people actually choose to watch on nights and weekends, times when they'd otherwise be plowing through Seinfeld reruns.



So, without further ado, let me introduce our guest on today's episode of the podcast: Chris Savage, the co-founder and CEO of Wistia. Wistia is a video software company that helps businesses create, host, share, and measure videos. Chris and his team are at the very forefront of video and marketing technology and we're very fortunate to have him on the show today.

In this episode, we dive deep into the nuances of a thought-provoking article Chris wrote on B2B businesses becoming media companies and explore the impact their recent "One, Ten, One-Hundred" documentary series has had on their business. So, if you want to learn how to truly earn the attention of your audience and compete with attention-grabbing Goliaths like Netflix, this episode is for you. As always, I'm your host Eric Turnnessen and this is episode 122 of the Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

**Eric:** Hey Chris, welcome to the show.

**Chris:** Hey, thanks for having me. So excited to be here.

**Eric:** Really excited to get back in touch with you. I was reflecting back on the first time we talked. I remember it very vividly. I was in New York living there at the time, walking around in a circle in one of the parks talking to you on the phone. I think it was around like 2010.

**Chris:** Yeah, that sounds about right.

**Eric:** A lots happened since then.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Which is really like what I'm excited to talk to you about, what's happened over the last 10 years, but let's give some people some grounding. Just let's get the 50,000-foot view of who you are and what you're doing.

**Chris:** So, my name is Chris Savage. I'm the co-founder and CEO of Wistia. Wistia is a company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We've been around for almost 13 years. There's about 100 people on the team today. A little more than that. Basically, what we do is we provide a video platform that you can use for videos on your website, for marketing videos, to understand how those videos are performing, what people are watching, what they're skipping, what they're re-watching, all that kind of stuff, and then we take that data, push it into their marketing platforms, help you capture emails. Lots of different tools like that.

We also have a product called Soapbox now, which is a Chrome extension that allows you to record your webcam and your screen simultaneously and then you can put really simple edits in so you can make something that feels really professional really quickly.



**Eric:** Awesome. You wrote an article back in February, Why All B2B Brands Will Be Media Companies in the Next 5 Years.

**Chris:** Yes.

**Eric:** I read that article. Really amazing article, on the surface, just super interesting but also there's a lot more going on to how you ... I feel like how you came to being able to write that then one can actually gleam from the article. This is kind of the thing that I'd like to dive into with you because I think, you know, from my perspective, Wistia's been a media company from the beginning. In one form or another, would you agree with that?

**Chris:** Yeah. We've been a media company from the beginning. Yes. But we did not realize that we were. We weren't thinking about it in that way.

**Eric:** Exactly.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Because it's interesting, you can go back even today to all those videos that you created, you know, 13 years ago. It's kind of like going through a baby photo album. You know, you see like ...

**Chris:** It is.

**Eric:** The baby pictures and then, you know, you see how much you've improved over the years.

**Chris:** Yes.

**Eric:** And, you know, in this project that you just did, the One, Ten, One Hundred series, which I just binge watched last night and it was amazing.

**Chris:** Oh, amazing.

**Eric:** It was absolutely so easy to do because you did such a great job with it, but I think that that project ... There's a lot of meta-stuff going on with that project, but ...

**Chris:** Yes.

**Eric:** In and of itself the fact that your team was able to do that and you had the ethos of a company to just take the risk and give them the time to be expressive through a medium made it such an amazing project. So, I'm not sure exactly where to start with this. You know, first of all, maybe why don't you talk about what you think a media company is.



**Chris:** Yeah. So, I think a media company makes products that are actually content and a media company recognizes that content is not just, you know, in the online marketing world content is thought of as like a thing that people search for and it's like people write blog posts just so that when someone's searching for specific key words they'll find it. A media company doesn't think about it like that. They think about it as like we invest in making something that's going to be entertaining or educational that is for an audience that will care so much about it that that audience will either watch it even though there are ads or they will pay to have access to it and usually the way that it works is like the content that is released is released first to the most engaged and excited people.

So, use a movie example. Avengers End Game, there's a lot of people going to see that in the theater and that'll be in the theater as long as people are willing to pay money for it and people will spend a lot of money to go see it in IMAX and the Dolby Cinema's and like all this stuff, and then eventually it will come out of the theater and it'll show up in like airplanes and it'll show up in other places and it'll hit iTunes and people will first only be able to buy it. Then eventually they'll be able to rent it, and then eventually it'll show up on Netflix, and then eventually it'll show up on the Disney thing when that launches and like there will be people who don't see Avengers End Game for three years but when they see it in three years they'll be really excited. They'll be deciding what to watch tonight and all of that marketing of that content over the years and all the things that they've heard about it will convince them to do it and if they like it they'll be more excited to go back and watch another Avengers movie or another Marvel movie.

It's this idea that content, when you have a network of content and you have a brand around that network of content you can start to engage people and bring them in and then in return for their attention, you can monetize attention. I think another piece of why media is important and I think the way I think about it is like there are a very small number of types of businesses that truly scale without a lot of additional cost, and probably the two best are software companies and media companies. So, when you can figure out to act like a media company in how you're doing your marketing, if things work you can end up with some of the most scalable ... The scalable results you can possibly get.

**Eric:** Right, because you are also ... Wistia's also a software company.

**Chris:** Exactly. Yes.

**Eric:** What do you think about this statement: "Media companies are the humanization of the old idea of a company."

**Chris:** I think that's interesting. I think, yeah, it's like people expect to have a relationship with your company beyond just buying a product now. Like who you buy from is important, what the values of that organization are, are important.



**Eric:** Not only that, as from the company's perspective you're not just thinking about the consumer as someone who's going to buy your widget. You're thinking also of building a relationship with them. How can we have a conversation? How can we build rapport? These are the questions that we ask ourselves without even thinking about it when we meet each other in person, but as the world gets more digital we kind of have to reverse engineer how human relationships work.

**Chris:** Yeah. I think that's true and I think the other piece of it is that we live in a culture, and our culture has evolved so much where today we really more and more rely on recommendations of people we trust and those recommendations drive a lot of action. Right, like what people are talking about on social, but what people are talking about in slack. What people are talking about in texting. What people are talking about in group chat. Like those are where we go. We go to those groups when we want to know which products to buy and which companies to care about and I more and more think that the only companies that people are going to reference are the ones that truly solve a great problem and truly have great products that they have a strong relationship with. Like if they can't remember the name of your company, you're screwed. So, brand is mattering more. You need a brand that transcends platforms. You need a brand that people actually talk about. I think that's one of the reasons why those relationships really matter and why investing in a longer-term relationship with your customers or even people who aren't your customers, like people who will be fans of your brand but not a customer, and still thinking about that as being important, I think is ... When you can do that you can kind of breakthrough in your marketing in a different way.

**Eric:** Is that something that you think Wistia has focused on from the beginning?

**Chris:** Yeah, we kind of focused on it, we focused on it early and we focused on it almost by accident. We were making content and people were asking us how did you guys shoot this video, what lighting did you use, what microphone did you use? What does your studio setup look like? To try to shut people up we made videos that explained those things.

Then of course, there was 100s of comments on those videos, those videos essentially went viral and we realized there was actually a lot more to teach. We started teaching people about stuff that really it was related to your product but you could watch the video and get value, and never use Wistia. That seemed crazy to do at first, but we started to realize that by actually making content that didn't require you to be a customer we would actively think to ourselves let's not try to solve people on what we do in our content, the audience for the content got much bigger, much faster. Then what that meant is that the people in our audience who cared and had a connection to our brand, that grew and then that process started to grow the company.

**Eric:** Now when you learned that, how did you then move forward with intentionality to ... It's one thing to discover something by accident. It's kind of like once you know that you can do it sometimes, when we try to do it we can't do it.



**Chris:** Yeah, so we figured it out and started. We came up with guidelines and where we landed was you should think about marketing a mission, not a product. Your product should help accomplish whatever that mission is, but if you can pick a mission that's big enough, you can actually almost always find a way to make a boring product interesting and a boring market interesting. You try to accomplish as much of that mission with your content as you possibly can and then there's going to be some of it that to accomplish that mission people will just need your product. We hit on that as a guiding principle and that set us free. Suddenly, the ideas we had for different types of content we could make went up, and up, and up, and up. That meant that we had more chances of attempting things that people could connect with and it all compounded and it really worked.

The funny thing, of course, in our case is we were doing that and then we thought all right, we need to layer in other forms of marketing. We started putting tons of money into paid advertising. We started doing lots of events. We started this whole litany of other things trying to diversify. In our case, most of those other things didn't really work.

It was funny because we started to realize, wait a second, we tried all this other stuff, our content, we're still investing in it in a similar way that we were before, maybe we should just be going bigger on it. Maybe we should be investing more. There just is a very simple thing like maybe the thing that's worked, let's do more of that again.

That's actually one of the things that led us to do "One, Ten, One Hundred" and if you look at a lot of the content we've done in the last 18 months, a lot of it has been bigger, a lot of it has been more interesting, covering different topics. The pace is accelerated, the quality is accelerated. Of course, get back to what you do well and it's helped us grow.

**Eric:** Can you share what the production schedule looks like for one of your internal projects? When we go to your page and we see all these videos we see a single unit of a video that's a deliverable. One of the things that's clear when you watch "One, Ten, One Hundred" is there's so much more. We know this, but when you see it you're like, "Oh my God, there's just so much that goes into actually getting this right". From soup to nuts, getting one of your pieces of content out, how long of a process is that for you guys right now?

**Chris:** For something that is going on the blog, the hard part is usually the concepting, it's like the pre-production of the concepting of what will best tell the story, what's going to accomplish the goal the best of whatever that piece of content is. Then if it's a scripted video, you can script it usually in a day and then shoot and edit in a day. For "One, Ten, One Hundred" that was a process that started about a year before it was released and included flying out to California a few times and recording meetings here, just a ton of post-work, a ton of graphic's work. That was like for an hour and 42 minutes that was probably 7 months of production. It really, really depends on what the content is.

**Eric:** Typically, if you basically have something where you're able to turn something around in a couple days-



**Chris:** Usually. There's a lot of content that's we think impactful but for even smaller audiences that we turn around in an afternoon.

**Eric:** How much of that did you chalk down to your experience and your capabilities?

**Chris:** At this point a lot of it comes down to experience and confidence that these are worthwhile projects and that it's worthwhile taking these risks. But I think this scripted video format that is going to be a minute and a half launch video or a minute and a half behind the scenes for a blog post or something, our production there is not wildly different from what somebody else could do. I think it's like having people who you trust and giving them the freedom to make mistakes, and the freedom to try new things. Then the most important piece is can we concept the right thing. That is where you make or break it because we know that we can make the videos great, but we can make a great video with a bad concept and it's not going to work. Really getting that nailed is important.

**Eric:** I think that was one of the key takeaways from the "One, Ten, One Hundred" project is essentially for people who are listening just so you can get this grounding, Wistia hired a production company in LA to produce three version of the same ad, one with a \$1,000 budget, one with a \$10,000 budget, and one with a \$100,000 budget. This documentary goes into all the different aspects that go into each one of those productions and you get to see the final products. There're so many interesting things that come out of that and I think there's a lot more to be learned from this series than just about video production. It says a lot about how to approach a project in general, the importance of taking action, the importance of spontaneity. One of the things that I took away from it is you can easily get bogged down by thinking you need the greatest, the latest and greatest stuff. But the fact to the matter is, if you just get up and do something, you can create something that's valuable and engaging. In some cases, that's going to be a lot more important than the quality.

I think one of the things that also came through is because of who the production company is and their experience level, they were able to make each one of those videos great. But of course, the challenge becomes when you're working on a \$100,000 budget and so many people are involved and so much pre-planning has to go into it, how do you maintain the spontaneity and that realness of the small production video that can turn on a dime but plan it and polish it so much more? I think that's where experience comes in.

**Chris:** I think you're exactly right. I think you nailed the description of what this is and the takeaways. It's figuring out when you should go for something quickly and give yourself as much credit freedom as possible and when you're doing something that requires the bigger budget, requires some more planning up front. Being honest with yourself about the gravity and expected impact of a piece of content. I find that so many people get themselves hung up overly worrying about the brand impact of something that's only going to be seen by a small number of people or only be seen by a lot of people if it's successful. It's like you need freedom to learn and without that you're never going to be able to make enough progress.



**Eric:** Ultimately, I think as a consumer of content, I resonate with that so much. When I see somebody make a mistake but totally authentically, it just happened, you can tell the difference. It's like oh, these guys they're working through something just like I am. I can act with that and I resonate with that. I'm going to continue to watch these guys because they're on a journey, they're not trying to act like they're somewhere they're not, they're just sharing where they are.

**Chris:** Exactly.

**Eric:** You've been doing this a long time, you've seen the stats, you've seen low production, you've seen high production, so after doing this for 13 years do you think you're closer to understanding the essence of what people are really engaging when they're watching videos?

**Chris:** Yeah, I think after doing this for this long it's clear that what people want is something that's honest and meets them where they are, and that deserves to be a video. I feel like that's the most fundamental thing. I see these automated videos on news sites where they just crawl stock footage and they crawl the content of the page and try to put together a video so that someone will watch this thing. If you ever do watch those things it's not helpful that it's video, it's not helping you at all. It's like it's useless. I think the question when you're making content and you're making video in particular is, is there a benefit my audience is getting because this is a video or not. Usually that benefit is authenticity, connection to the brand, connection to specific people. It's more real in the sense that you can't fake things as easily. Faking things in video is of course possible, but it's quite expensive. I think we all know that and expect that and so when we're watching something, especially that a company makes, we're on high alert for being sold something we don't want, it forces an honesty which I think is a good thing.

The best videos are honest or authentic and they're also entertaining. They are willing to have a little bit of fun and a lot of companies miss that. A lot of companies miss the fact that especially in B2B you are selling to other businesses. But guess what, all those people out of businesses, what do they do at night? They watch Netflix. They watch HBO. They're not trying to live stodgy lives, but I think that people get all hung up on that and worried, and they don't take risks, and they don't stand out, and they don't understand why it's not working. You have to think back that these are all individual people that are watching your content.

**Eric:** I think that it's kind of an unlearning process because there was a big period of time as a business owner, somebody who was starting business, I saw all the content was out there in the way that was teaching how we're supposed to sell to people. It was kind of like the lessons learned from a different error basically.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Speaking of the "sales process" because yes, we want to build a relationship with the people we're talking to and not treat them as a commodity. At the same time, we also have to



have that split vision where we're also thinking about the practicality and the fundamentals of the business. How do you approach that?

**Chris:** Our strategy is we try to build the brand and the audience and that is the main driver of growth at the top of the funnel. As people work their way we've set up our products to be self-service and they are premium. We believe that people who are interested or will tell others who they think would be interested will be able to come in and play with our products themselves, and that the products stand ... You should be able to figure out from it by using Wistia, whether it's a good fit or not.

Then we have teams that are working on making sure that if somebody is working their way through the product, they're touching the right things that we think are the valuable things and we also have a sales team and a support team that are going to help you if you reach out and have questions. It's pretty simple, but most of the people we talked to are reaching out to us, like 98% of them. They are looking at Wistia, they're wondering if it can do X, Y, Z thing and they're not sure, or they need help convincing other people inside the organization or whatever it is. It's just a very simple thing and we try to take a really long-term approach with all of those customer interactions as well. Our team will happily send somebody to another product if we're not the right fit or they'll go above and beyond basically to make sure that everybody has a positive brand interaction. Even if somebody isn't going to be a Wistia customer today, maybe they will be in the future, maybe they know other people who will. We've always taken that approach and so it's just another extension of the same thing. It just is in a one-to-one way instead of a one-to-many way.

**Eric:** You mentioned earlier that a lot of people go home and watch Netflix, HBO, et cetera. There's tons of content out there. How do you distinguish yourself?

**Chris:** The way to distinguish yourself today is it's changed and I think just like probably seven years ago, eight years ago, what we saw is people doing crazy viral stunts and that was like how they would try to distinguish themselves. Then what ended up happening is that evolved towards only big companies being able to do that because big companies would have to put money behind those viral stunts to make them go viral. The web has become, at the same moment, it's become more expensive and harder to stand out and we've become more reliant on recommendations from people we trust.

I think the key to really growing in a content strategy today is to figure out what niche can you focus on where you can be so focused on this niche and so zeroed in on what their problems are and what they're thinking about, and what their opportunities are that you can make content for them that is so on the nose that they will actually pick your content instead of watching something on Netflix or instead of watching something on HBO, or what have you. We see this happening already. I feel like the most common place this is happening is podcast, so podcasts have obviously been around for a long time, but they've been taking off recently and there's a hell of a lot of people listening to podcasts on their commutes to and from work. Previously that time, those same people were listening to music. Where does the music come



from? It's like mass media. In this one way, podcasts have eaten into mass media. We see a lot of podcasts that it seems like who in their right mind ... How many people would be interested in the story of Providence, Rhode Island and crime town? It seems like only people in Providence. But guess what? If it's zeroed in enough, it turns out there's an enormous audience of people who care about that type of crime mob drama. That's true for every single interest.

I think the key to a success strategy is really picking something that is small enough but underserved and just honing in on them and understanding them. If you can do that, you actually can grow the niche. That's the other thing that's I think crazy that's happened where our culture is now such purely an internet culture. What that means is it used to be that people had their ... most of the entertainment was mass media and then if they wanted the internet you could get into your weird thing, the subculture that most people aren't talking about, whatever it is, Dungeons and Dragons, what have you. Now every one of those weird things, those subcultures, are enormous because every person in them in the world, even if it's a 1/10th of a percent that cares about it, that's an enormous group on the web. The key is zeroing in enough and once you do that you can out compete the other mainstream content.

**Eric:** Right. It is important that you, the one who's creating the content, have some sort of relationship and interest in that thing. I guess the question, do you think you can be just analytical about it? Okay, I see the numbers, this thing's a good opportunity, let me do that even though I don't know anything about this thing.

**Chris:** I think you could look at the numbers and say, "Here's a good opportunity. I don't know anything about it, I'm going to jump in," but I think that's definitely ... you're going to have to sustain your effort there, so that can be tough. I think you're right that if you do already care about that or if you have some insight into that niche that other people don't have, that's obviously going to dramatically your likelihood of success.

**Eric:** Now after having this experience with "One, Ten, One Hundred" and actually seeing the results of that project, from your personal perspective, how do your learnings and experience from that inform your choices going forward?

**Chris:** It's had a huge impact. I think, it's funny, but exactly what we were talking about is what happened with the project. We saw a lot of interest in the project before "One, Ten, One Hundred" actually was launched. Then after it was launched we started to see the views coming in and a couple interesting things happened there. The view numbers were not insanely high at first, but the time spent with Brand was really high. Like if someone makes it three minutes into "One, Ten, One Hundred" they end up watching the whole thing basically. What that meant is that if you start watching "One, Ten, One Hundred", just as you were describing earlier, you can really get a feel for the importance of creativity and how it's linked to budgets. It can change how you think about what you're doing and that's impactful content.

The other piece of it that's interesting is that there's a lot of people who watch it at night and on the weekend. What we saw was like, okay, we actually did this thing. We made something



that's zeroed in on the niche enough that for people they will sit at home and instead of watching something on Netflix it's like well I might as well watch this. I think it's high enough quality and it's entertaining enough that you could watch it with your partner, your spouse, your friend. Someone who doesn't even know what it is can enjoy it.

What that said to us is like wow, how much more opportunity is there for this? We started to realize that this is actually probably the very, very beginning of this. It's totally changed our strategy. We built out a new physical studio here at Wistia. We have five shows that are in some stage of pre-production right now and we're going to have more shows, those shows will start coming out soon. There's just a lot more people involved in it.

One of the things that was interesting with "One, Ten, One Hundred" is the promotion around it was incredibly complicated, so we made the documentary, the four-part documentary but then we realized we need a trailer because we knew we needed something quick that people could watch to get an understanding of the overall project. We knew we wanted to build some hype for the project so we released the trailer before "One, Ten, 100 Hundred" came out. Then we sent it to folks and said, "Hey, we're doing this. Are you interested? If so, we're happy to do interviews on it". We basically did a press tour. I ran around and did probably 15 or 20 interviews with folks about the project, why we were doing it, what we were hoping to uncover. Those folks got to write about it before the project came out and they got different insights like slightly more in the actual documentary itself.

Then we put some money behind promoting the trailer because we knew that our audience would likely care, but how many other audiences would. We wanted to understand that, so we tried putting in front of different demographics on Facebook and YouTube, and dialed in what we thought was going to be the most impactful there. There was many, many other pieces. We actually released it first in person at a theater, so invited people to come to that who we thought would be really excited about it. That was really fun watching a theater watch the whole thing.

I keep saying treating content like it's a product, I know that might sound confusing, but what it means is content is thought of normally as such a transactional thing and rerun blog post gone and then it's out of your head. If you think about it as actually having real value, you can keep telling people about a blog post that's really impactful. If it is really impactful they'll come back to it and they'll tell their people about it and they'll write about. That's something that we found has been much easier to do with video than blog. What it's meant is that we've been able to build an entirely new audience that cares about this that hadn't even heard of us before we did "One, Ten, One Hundred" in the first place.

**Eric:** How did the whole Webby thing happen?

**Chris:** The Webby thing, which is super exciting, we just won in banded entertainment. We were up against Google and Lenovo, and Uber, and all these folks. At some point someone said, "Hey, I think you guys..." I can't remember exactly how we first got nominated, but we had to



do a bunch of work telling them similar things what we're talking about like behind the scenes and why we did the project, all that kind of stuff. Then it went to public voting where people could vote looking at us and our four competitors in the category. Then there was a private judge voting, and amazingly we won both, which is so cool.

I've known about the Webby's for a long time because I think this is the 23rd year of them. There was a moment when they started that was like if you want to shit is cool on the web you basically need to look at the Webby site. It's cool to be a part of it now.

**Eric:** What I think is really encouraging about not just the fact that you guys won a Webby with it and not just the fact that a lot of people are paying more attention to more Independent produced content is it's transferring attention away from a smaller group of large organizations to a large group of small communities?

**Chris:** Yes.

**Eric:** Which is really encouraging for me because it's just more ... This word is so overused, so I'm sorry. It's more authentic. It's just people being people.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Doing what they like doing.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** And giving others an opportunity to share in it.

**Chris:** Yeah. I think it shows us that small brands can compete with big ones when they're focused enough. That is another way of saying what you're saying, but for me that is like the most impactful part of this is we know this audience really well. You'd think for a Webby these other companies are trying to deal with a much, much broader audience basis and I think they all probably had more views than us, but I think the impact of our views was greater. I think when we told people, "Hey, we're up for a Webby," a lot of people who watched it actually went and voted. I think in the other cases, I would bet that most people forgot they even saw the content.

**Eric:** Yeah, I don't even know of the other content, so that's one thing, right?

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Eric:** I've also noticed in Wistia you've come out with channels, you've now come out with Soapbox. There seems to be also a diversification in terms of your software offering. For a while it was the Wistia player, basically-



**Chris:** Yes, yes.

**Eric:** ...and everything, of course, that goes on behind the scenes and the analytics, there's tons of stuff. But in terms of perception, there was one thing that everybody was engaging with and now in a short period of time you're starting to add more products and offerings. Is this also in response to people asking or was there another reason why you started doing this?

**Chris:** There's a few reasons why. People were asking. We also just realized that the problems we could solve were bigger than some of the problems that were solving previously. Many of these things, like channels is a good example of something that we saw that having a channel of long form content from "One, Ten, One Hundred" was incredibly impactful for us. We've learned over the years that how things are presented matters. If you can present things in an elevated way, people assume that the content probably is of a higher quality, they go into it thinking differently. Previously, we'd always solve that problem with design. But we realized a lot of our customers don't have extra designers to invest this much in this. We're a video company, of course we're going to invest a ton in all of these things. We started thinking can we use the product action to make it easier for people to do that. We started doing that and the response has been really amazing. Soapbox is the same thing.

We have an incredible video team here. We make 100s and 100s of videos a year and we started to realize what if we could put this power in more people's hands even internally, like what if we just had a tool and made it so that anybody at Wistia could make something really professional. We looked and we thought okay, the key to doing that is making something that actually has the right constraints in it. If you make the right constraints it doesn't feel like you're editing and that's kind of the key to the whole thing is you record your webcam on your screen, which lends itself to doing presentations, which is an incredibly common thing for people when they're communicating internally. It's also incredibly common in marketing. It's incredibly common in sales. We thought let's try to make something that does it all in the cloud, makes it super simple, you do not have to be a video editor to make something that looks good. Even the switching in Soapbox is kind of borrowed from live television where they do live edits of picking between cameras and it makes something much more engaging to do that. We thought let's do the same thing here.

It's just like problems that we've seen with our selves internally and problems that when you start looking at it and covering with customers, that actually a lot of folks are running into and looking for software that makes it easier. That's why we've started to go down that direction. You'll see more from us trying to make it easier to make great video and try to make it easier to market your content and get more out of it.

**Eric:** Yeah, which is great. It's almost as if you could have taken that lesson directly from your "One, Ten, One Hundred" experience too because they talk a lot about the value of constraint and the fact that the iPhone exists means that a lot more, what could have been so hard to make 10 years ago, can be made on the spur of the moment and now Soapbox is also a tool that can help do that. For people who may not have done it before, now that the tool exists,



they may do it which means there's going to be more people sharing what they want to share in a spontaneous way.

**Chris:** That's exactly right.

**Eric:** Is there anything that's top of mind for you that you think would be interesting for our audience? Generally, I think people listening to this are solopreneurs considering membership sites. Now maybe they're excited by what we're talking about, like yeah, I want to do video or I'm doing video, I've always wanted to do it. I find these obstacles, what are some things that you think can be helpful for everyone to focus on and not get in their own way about it?

**Chris:** I think the key if you have not been doing video or you're thinking about video is to just start. I tell people instead big companies that are concerned with taking risks and I tell people at small companies who are afraid because obviously brand does matter and if you make crappy videos it's going to hurt your brand. How you make something that's good is you should give something like Soapbox a whirl and just make something. The hardest videos you'll make will be the first five, so you might as well make five the first day, which is possible.

When you start to turn on a different part of your brain that says, wait a second, the people saw my face when I'm explaining this concept. They probably would be more engaged or if they saw me walking through my product they'd be more engaged, or they saw me going through this presentation, that would be more engaging. It's just starting to trust yourself and realizing that's a muscle that you can build.

There's a ton of other free tools that you can use to play around with and I would just encourage you to play. If you take a risk and no one sees it, you didn't even really take a risk. A lot of the cases here, I've talked to people who are afraid to put their website up because they want to make sure that everything is just flawless that's one there. It's like well make it flawless but I don't know how anyone's going to find that website. It's like-

**Eric:** There's no such thing as flawless anyway.

**Chris:** There's no such thing and the problem is distribution. It's not like are you going to make something that's horrible, so you can make something that's amazing and people won't see it. I think the key to a lot of this is trusting yourself and just getting started. I think a lot of the points you made earlier in terms of picking topics that you're actually passionate about. Look for a niche that's completely underserved. I think if you can start to do that you can make stuff that is actually more engaging than anything else out there because in many cases there's nothing else out there.

**Eric:** Another thing that's going on in video these days is live. Do you have any thoughts around that in terms of is one better than the other? Is there a way to use them together or any other angles that you seek?



**Chris:** I think live is important when you're trying to create urgency for people to be present for something. Sometimes you can take live content and then also record it and distribute it later. It depends on what the content is, but that can be great. I think it's when you want to create urgency around something, you want them to sign up for something, live is not a bad way to do it. We see a lot of people using tools like Zoom to do this now. I think Zoom has probably the best live conversation tool at this moment, so we see a lot of folks using that for their webinars and things. Facebook also is quite good for that, so we see people doing that.

I think it feels scarier as a presenter because obviously when you screw up, no taking them back, no second takes, but that's also why you could sometimes get more people to show up. But remember, we live in a global world and everyone is not on the same schedule, so that is the other problem you run into with live. If you're trying to have customers around the world, live can be challenging or you have to do things multiple times, or whatever. I do think people are used to and expect that they can watch pre-recorded things when they want.

**Eric:** Then what is the downside of a ... I think when it is live we forgive a lot of the production aspects of it because typically we understand it's a live recording, therefore, audio, video, there's some things that may not be right about it and we forgive that because we're watching it live, we understand. But if we're going to share that video later, as a viewer, I don't feel as engaged in a live video that's prerecorded or already happened.

**Chris:** Yeah, I think you're saying the exact points. If there's some reason why what you're announcing or discussing is better, maybe because there's a Q&A that can happen live, then that is where I would push towards live. I think live is a good way to try things because of this exact thing you were talking about. People forgive production values. But you're going to have to have different content and a different approach when you are doing prerecorded content. The nice thing is there of course, you can do multiple takes and you can edit out the stuff that didn't work.

I think a balance makes sense for people, but it really comes back to what are you comfortable with, where do you feel like you're your best self? Where do you feel like people all want to be met? If everyone's saying they want to come to your live events or because you're streaming yourself playing videos games on Twitch, then yes, that's what you should do. If that's not what they're saying, then maybe not do that. A lot of this is going to come down to who your exact customer is and what they want, how they spend their time.

**Eric:** Yeah, that makes sense. Cool, well it's been great reconnecting with you Chris. I really appreciate you taking the time to come on and share all this stuff with me. Really appreciate you and your team creating "One, Ten, One Hundred". It was really enjoyable to watch. The other amazing thing about it is you had a great balance of yes, this is a documentary and we're also going to teach you some stuff. We're going to teach you about production design. We're going to teach you about some other fundamentals of pre-production and post. It's just well-deserved for everything that you're getting from that end. I hope that there's more to come and I'm looking forward to seeing it.



**Chris:** Well thanks. Thanks for having me. It's great to reconnect. It's been such a long time. I'm excited to hear about everything that you all are doing and I hope we reconnect soon.

**OUTRO:**

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to Chris for coming on the show and sharing from his knowledge and experience. My hope is that you now have a better idea of how to truly earn the attention of your audience. If you haven't yet read Chris's article on B2B businesses becoming media companies or watched their compelling "One, Ten, One Hundred" documentary, I highly recommend you do so. You can find links to these resources at [SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/122](https://SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/122).

There you'll also find the show notes, a complete transcript, and all the other resources mentioned in this episode. If you enjoyed this episode and would like to hear more interviews with successful entrepreneurs, please subscribe to the show on iTunes, Google Play, Stitcher, and now Spotify. If you know someone who you think would benefit from hearing this conversation, please share this episode with them.

Coming up next on the Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast is an interview with Gillian Perkins. Gillian is an entrepreneur who has tried practically everything -- from paperback books, rental properties, and membership sites -- in her quest to earn passive income. Gillian joins us and shares key lessons from her journey, why she thinks membership sites are the best way to earn passive income, and how she got her first 300 members on board. We have an amazing discussion and you won't want to miss it. See you next time!