

Meet Chattermill, the SaaS platform turning data into improved customer experience

For our quick-fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Mikhail Dubov, CEO of Chattermill, about working with not so small businesses including Deliveroo, Wise, Uber and HelloFresh and harnessing data to drive the future of unified customer intelligence.

What was the catalyst for launching the business?

As with most startups, *Chattermill* was born out of both a desire to solve an important problem in the world and a passion to build the solution.

In our case, the problem we identified was companies struggling to use the data they have to find opportunities to improve customer experience – something that was becoming increasingly crucial for every business.

We saw a chance to use the latest advances in machine learning and in particular NLP to build a fundamentally new solution to this problem.

Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Chattermill is a software as a service platform for unified customer intelligence. We aggregate unstructured customer experience data from across different sources and make it operational by discovering precise quantitative insights, delivered to the right person at the right time.

Our mission is to help every stakeholder become more customer-focused in their daily decision making. As such, we aim to work across the whole CX space and continuously push the boundary in terms of insights we can discover and how actionable we make them.

Our customers are typically leading consumer brands. To reach them, you need to not only have a fantastic product but also invest in the highest quality content, events and other forms of marketing.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

Chattermill has grown rapidly over the years since we started at Entrepreneur First in 2015. Chattermill has been featured by both the FT and Deloitte lists of fastest-growing companies in the UK. We are now just over 60 people and work with dozens of top brands including Uber, Amazon, H&M and Spotify.

How are you funded?

Primarily VC and angel funding. Our last funding round was an \$8M Series A, led by DN Capital, alongside Ventech and btov Partners. We were also very fortunate to be backed by angel investors Matt Price, Senior Vice President at Zendesk and Nilan Peiris, VP of Growth at Wise – who have incredible insight into customer experience and using data. We're also backed by Silicon Valley Bank and our early investors Entrepreneur First, Avonmore Developments and 2be.lu.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Undoubtedly, the greatest overall challenge is to continuously hire amazing people who can help push the company forward to reach new heights. It's not a problem you can ever "solve" for good, but we have made progress by sharpening our recruitment processes.

Of course, Covid-19, while attracting even greater focus on CX, was challenging in the short term, particularly for our travel and hospitality customers. Temporarily refocusing on other sectors such as retail and finance and developing new product solutions helped us overcome that difficult period.

How does your business address an unmet need?

Pretty much every consumer brand that has become successful over the last 20 years did so by building a great customer experience. Amazon, Asos, Deliveroo and Wise all harnessed CX as their main growth driver. But at the moment, companies don't have the tools, frameworks or intelligence to holistically analyse and improve their CX.

As a result, a lot of opportunities are delayed or even wasted. Chattermill helps companies close this gap and embed CX into daily decision making.

What's in store for the future?

We are incredibly excited about the future of unified customer intelligence. Brands now have access to petabytes of data they can use to build fantastic experiences for their customers. We are not even close to harnessing the full potential of this data and aim to keep inventing and building solutions to make great CX as seamless as possible.

What one piece of advice would you give to other founders or future founders?

For future founders, my general advice is to find co-founders and ideally a community (for example an accelerator). Almost all companies go through a few tough periods, and it's difficult to do it by yourself. If you are already on

the journey, it can't be overestimated what help a strong recruitment team can make to your growth.

Mikhail Dubov is CEO of *Chattermill*

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