REVolution

Ecosystems, Partners, and Communities, oh my!

Featuring Jill Rowley

Episode 103

Episode music: Get ready for the REVolution. It's coming to you now. It's coming to you now.

Jill: The data shows that partner sourced and influenced deals convert at a higher rate. They have a faster, you know, a higher velocity. Your win rates are higher, your deal sizes are higher, and the retention and upsell and cross sell of those joint customers is greater.

Alex: Welcome to REVolution, where we dive into what gets in the way of growth for B2B revenue teams across sales, marketing, customer success, and beyond. I'm Alex Krawchick...

Mary: ...and I'm Mary Blanks. For decades, we've been talking about how revenue teams can work better, together. On this show, we talk about the opportunities remaining for teams to better align, evolve their approach, and reach new heights of growth both professionally and personally.

Alex: Today, we're excited to talk with Jill Rowley, a force in B2B software with experience as an early employee at both Salesforce and Eloqua. Jill is an advisor with experience across sales and marketing technology companies and is a Limited Partner and Go-To-Market Advisor at Stage 2 Capital.

Mary: Thanks so much for joining us on the podcast today, Jill. Let's hop right into the conversation and start by talking a little bit about the current state of Go to Market and all of the things that are happening and shaping how teams are working together, whether that's culture, skills, process, data, tools, all the things. What are the top two or three things that you see really impacting how teams work together?

Jill: I think the, the big thing is what you said, work together. Teams today are working together, and you know, I always have an expression better together. And what is happening is the, we're finally tuning into the customer experience.

The end to end, hopefully it doesn't end, but the end-to-end customer experience. And we're realizing that we have to have more connectivity of one, the buyer's journey, right? So the buyer's journey, nobody wants to be handed off from marketing to sales and then handed off from sales to customer success.

That isn't good for the customer, and so I think what we're really doing functionally is saying from the lens of the customer, how do we design a customer experience, one that reduces friction, right, for the buyer and the customer, but also how do we design it so that there aren't handoffs? That that's number one, is we're seeing the functions coming together and doing it around the customer.

Two, data, right? We're still not where we need to be in terms of bringing all of that data from all of those disparate functions and all of the explosion of technology and the number of systems that companies are using. We have to bring all of that together to have that view of the end to end, never ending customer experience. So that we can actually make better decisions about how we reduce friction and how we improve, the experience for the customer.

The third thing I will say, which is what I'm super passionate about right now, because in the two thousands we went through the digitizing sales era, and then we went through the digitizing marketing era. And the things that we were doing and arguing that were best practices, once everybody starts to do what the best practice is, then we need to find better practices. We need to evolve and we need to change, and the buyer has continued to change.

And so what I'm seeing now is this shift towards ecosystems. And what is the ecosystem that me as a product company fit into? Where do I fit into what already exists in the ecosystem? And it's the ecosystem where my customer lives. It's also the ecosystem where my partners live. Because we have all this technology, we need this technology to work better together.

And so we have to form better, richer, deeper partnerships so that we again, reduce friction for the buyer and deliver a more comprehensive solution for them. So I'm super excited about ecosystems, which I include partnerships and communities, and I know we're gonna talk a lot about those two things.

Mary: Yeah, I definitely want to define all of those things because I feel like the words, people are using them with different definitions at times. I'm curious when you say working better together and thinking about it from like all of the changes from kind of a digital perspective and bringing together data across teams. It feels like there's a lot of noise in all of that data and across all of those systems. I think it was on LinkedIn last week, I saw this video of the handoff and it was basically, I think like jumping or dancing, just like completely missing the catch of a person. And that does feel like how it is today in the market.

Do you, how do you think about like cutting through that noise to have better handoffs across teams?

Jill: So we don't want handoffs, we want to work collaboratively around the customer experience. And I'll keep bringing back the customer in the center, and we have new business models like product led growth.

Right, so when you're going to market with your product, not with your marketing and sales people, you know, you are actually, the product has to be super easy to use, super quick time to value. And so with the product taking center stage, you need product data, right? So we oftentimes just talk about sales data and marketing data and customer success data, and now partner data.

We actually, with product led growth, we need to think about product data. And so what I'm seeing is an understanding that we need to pull these operations functions under one roof. And this is where we see the evolution of rev ops. And I, you know, started thinking about all of the overlap in functionality across sales and marketing specifically. I was really digging into that. And thinking, we now have overlap of functionality in these disparate systems. So how do you know where to work? If you're in sales, are you working in your marketing automation system to get alerts about website visits, around nurturing and scoring?

So I, I think what we're realizing is that we need to have a rev tech map, right? We talk about sales tech, we talk about martech, we talk about customer success tech. Now we're talking about partner technology. So we have all this technology, we have all this data, we have all this workflow, and we need to pull it together under one view of all of that data. And that really is this emerging function of revenue operations.

Mary: Makes sense. Pulling and aggregating all of the data seems like the first step, but then to your point where the teams actually work together, that still feels very new in everyone working from the same place and operationalizing those insights to be able to serve the customer at the center. I'm hoping that that's where a lot of innovation happens in the coming years.

Alex: Have you seen anybody, Jill, like doing it well, and, and if so, what, what do you think, how did that, how are they doing it or how are they... Maybe they're not doing it all yet, but maybe they've just started to really innovate and bring the teams together for, from a, and by the way, I hear the words alignment, collaboration. I, I think you talked about cross-functional partnership, whatever word, I mean, we want to get the teams, but have you seen people doing it well, and if so, how are they doing that?

Jill: Yes, I have seen people doing it well, and doing it well is not calling sales operations revenue operations. And, and I see that a lot.

Alex: Amen, amen.

Jill: It's like we're not just rebranding and putting new labels on these things. We actually have to change the way we work, right? And so I, I even listened to a Gartner sales podcast fairly recently, and it was titled Revenue Operations. And literally the entire topic was actually sales ops.

And it's like a timeout, guys. This isn't just a, a new label on top of what we've already been doing. Same thing actually with Go to Market. A lot of times when people talk about Go to Market, they're still really talking about sales and it's, and it's like sales still is the, the keys to the kingdom, when that is not the way the world works anymore.

And so it's not the way the buyer works. 72% of B2B buyers prefer a sales rep free buying experience, 72% don't wanna engage with a salesperson, so that means all of your other functions need to manage and support and deliver more of what that buyer needs to be able to get up and running on the product, to be able to understand the problems that that product's gonna solve. To be able to connect with other customers who are using the product.

So sales, it, it's, it's really roles and responsibilities are shifting, and then from a companies that are doing it well, I think the bigger you are, the harder it is. The bigger you are, the harder it is because the more systems that you have, the more industries you have, the more geographies you have. It just gets harder and harder and harder and harder.

There are companies innovating like Snowflake. I'm a huge fan of Snowflake and I know their CMO Denise from, she was an early, early Eloqua customer back in like 2003, '04. She's data driven, she's brand and demand, she's customer centered and centric. The alignment that they have between product, marketing, sales, customer success, and ecosystem is phenomenal.

And that's, it starts at the top. It starts at this, hey, we're not feuding between marketing and sales. We're actually partnering between marketing and sales, and it's been very deliberate from day one. So Snowflake is a great example.

Mary: Yeah. It's that, that deliberate from day one that feels like the big differentiator from people that are doing it really, really well and those who are still trying to drive the change. It does feel like leadership has to be super tight in alignment in terms of how the teams are going to work together. You've also talked before about influence being the new inbound. Can you talk about what that means to you and how you see that shaking out in the market?

Jill: Yeah, so we think about buyers and who they trust and how they even get ideas and then validate ideas and then make it happen.

It's the Edelman Trust Barometer. I have been watching that since they've been publishing, or at least since I was studying more the buyer than how to market and sell. And the trust that buyers have in brands, in companies is decreasing. And in fact today, your brand isn't your messaging, your brand is what your customers are actually experiencing and saying about you. And so influence, we trust our peers and the folks who are in the roles that we are in way more than we trust your marketing messages and your sales people, and even your, you know, even your customer success team.

This is where, from a partnerships perspective, your partners, and I'm talking about tech partners, I'm talking about services partners, your partners that have relationships with your customers, your ideal customer profile, your potential buyers already. They know the customer. They have insights. They understand the goals and the, the challenges and in terms of if you can get those partners to understand why and how you are going to add value to what the customer's already doing, that's another source of trust.

And so influence, we're seeing just individual people now with the proliferation of LinkedIn specifically and being able to publish content and authentic content, we're seeing that that is driving inbound, right, if you, if you wanna know what ABM technology you should use, you're gonna go to a community of peers.

You might go to G2 to actually research the number of, you know, providers in the ABM space and look at the rankings. We're not reliant on the, the marketing message, the sales people within a company to inform us on decisions.

Alex: Yeah, it's almost like the way that I think about it is, you know, way back in, in my career, it was the website would be the first place you go, and now the first place you go is community. And you might visit the website once you're done or in process with the community to validate some of the things that you're hearing, but the whole buying paradigm has completely changed. It really is, like you said, Jill, I mean, no one, I shouldn't say no one. I know Mary actually enjoys interacting with sales reps, but she likes to game the system as much as she can.

So, but the whole paradigm is changing and PLG is fascinating to us too, by the way. We've got customers where, you know, we're pulling in their product telemetry data into some of our models and it's, it's a very, very interesting time. And, you know, we, we didn't even get to the point, right Jill, where, you know, I, I've been calling it three legs of the revenue stool for the last couple of years, Sales, marketing, and CS. We haven't even completed that evolution and now we're already talking about product. And to your point, now we're talking about partner, you know, partner ecosystem.

By the way, who's doing partner ecosystem really well? Like how do you define, you know, ecosystem like partner ecosystem? If we could dig a little bit more into that, that'd be great.

Jill: It is a new concept, right? So there is, what, what excites me about this partner movement is it feels very much like the early days of MarTech. It feels like the early days of people figuring out together.

And I was just at an event in Miami last week, and it's a community, a non-vendor, community. Of course there's, you know, at the event there's vendors who are sponsors, but it is agnostic to technology and it's called Partnership Leaders. And it was phenomenal to be at this event where there's, there's more questions right now than there really are answers, and the playbooks are just now being written, right.

The frameworks are just now being developed. The models, the job descriptions, the new functions, the new way of operating is really just now being created. If you look to who's done it well from an ecosystem and a partnership and a community perspective, you look at Salesforce. I mean who, who, who wouldn't want to replicate what Salesforce has done?

Salesforce is at the center of the ecosystem and they have partnerships that surround everything that their customers need to go to market, but to also build product, right? They've expanded, they, they acquired Slack. They acquired, MuleSoft, they acquired, long ago, Pardot. So they've, they've actually made a number of acquisitions of their strategic partners that they saw a lot of overlap in their ideal customer profile. So you've got, you've got Salesforce, you have HubSpot. HubSpot now has a Chief Ecosystem Evangelist, and the goal isn't just to grow HubSpot's annual revenue. The goal is to grow the ecosystem, and the benefit that their partners actually get from connecting their products and their services to HubSpot.

Another example, Zero out of Australia, great example. Really, you know, I've listened to a couple different podcasts about their, their move to platform, and their move to ecosystem, and they're, they're embracing of, of partnerships. And thinking about not owning end to end everything that the customer needs to run their business, and, and they're focused more on small business accounting and software, or accounting and, and, managing all the things that you need, invoicing and payroll and all of those things. And, and Zero has allowed and brought together partners to build around the edges of their product. So those are three examples of this approach to ecosystem and partnerships that I've seen working really well.

Mary: So I'm curious if you're, if you're not a Salesforce or a HubSpot, you're smaller and you're thinking about where to get started. I think you've; you've talked about there's three different ways to think about

ecosystems: partnerships, communities, and marketplaces. Are one of those an easier place to get started if you're smaller in trying to kind of figure out where to make the biggest impact early?

Jill: Early, what I would do is not try to go necessarily build a community, but early I would look at one, knowing who your ideal customer profile, the, the vision of your ideal customer profile, the different roles within that. Who's the user? Who's the buyer? Who signs, you know the check? Who's the executive sponsor?

And figure out what communities, what channels, what, maybe it's analysts, maybe it's journalists, maybe it's bloggers, but where are they learning, right? Who do they already trust? Where are they gathering? So initially I would say it's a lot of listening and learning. And I've even seen companies that start not necessarily have a vision in mind for a product, but they start with going in and doing deep listening and research within the communities where their buyers already sit and live and, and collaborate and, and learn from each other.

Okay, so now I understand the problems that these folks are, are having and the gaps maybe in technology or services that exist, and I build in community. I build for community that's a new way of a lifecycle of a company, really. From a partnerships perspective. I think you look at like just at this partner tech partnership, leaders. It was so fascinating to see the different tech providers and how they were collaborating with each other, really trying to actually map out who does what, right.

Do you have partner tech that helps with co-marketing? Do you have partner tech that helps with co-selling? Do you have partner tech that helps with driving adoption? Like partner enablement? Do you have partner tech that focuses on really the data and analytics and the insights? And so it was really fascinating to see mainly like smaller companies. There are bigger companies in that partner cloud movement and so all the little ones wanna partner with the big ones. Right?

And it's a tough thing cause, the big ones are now trying to prioritize their time with who are their first partners. It really is looking at where can the most customer value be generated and building that better together value thesis and, and if, if there is better together value that you can really articulate and define, then you say, okay, and how do we go to market together? Right? How do we actually align our product teams from a roadmap perspective, right? We're seeing cobuilding at that products level before even trying to go co-market or co-sell. So that, that's, that's where I think you, you, you start.

Mary: Makes sense. I think the part that I struggle with sometimes is we're still talking about how our internal teams work together, and then when you layer on this ecosystem, you have to figure out how to align your internal teams to best align externally.

Do you feel like marketing, sales, like who's, who's that leader typically kind of reaching outside to that ecosystem to help connect the entire motion together?

Jill: I think the DNA is more in marketing than in sales. The challenge with that, I think is you really have to get the revenue leader on board, and if it's a true, you know, Chief Revenue Officer, then she owns marketing, sales, customer success, and partnerships.

But I think the DNA of community sits a lot in marketing, a lot in customer success, because customer success is really focusing on how do we deliver more value for our customers? And if we don't have that capability in our own product set, then who does? And I think our customer success folks are having so many conversations with the customers that they're hearing more about the tech stack and the ecosystem that customers are actually working with today.

But if you're, if you're talking more of a, of a, you know, a technical audience than on, on the product side, right? You've got DevOps communities with all the open source and you guys know from your, for at least Mary, from your Red Hat experience, right like you understand that almost cult-like engineering DevOps that exist.

And so it's, it really, I think depends a bit, but I think the DNA of marketing is probably where it best sits initially, but it really has to be driven by the revenue leader.

Alex: So yeah, I agree it, I think I call marketing sometimes, Jill, the glue of the organization. I think there was an article, Mary, I think it was a few weeks ago, where it said the new CMO is actually a Chief Connection Officer, not a Chief Marketing Officer, and I see a lot of that happening.

Jill, you, you've been so fortunate in your career to see some really transformative evolutions in sales, in marketing, in CS right? CS wasn't even a thing until Nick and Gainsight, you know, came out and did it, I don't know, 10, 10, 12 years ago. Now we've got this product element, and now we have a partner ecosystem. What things have you learned throughout those that you're taking with you now to this new partner ecosystem?

Jill: So, I love what you said about Gainsight. They really, they really built a community.

Alex: They built a category and a community. Yeah, a hundred percent.

Jill: I think to build a category, you have to build a community. I think, I think and, and, and, and it is interesting where I see companies thinking they're gonna build a category, but they wanna own it, right? You, you, you, you can't build a category by yourself. That's not category creation. When I look at, you know, there are three now, big ABM tech providers, there's 6Sense, there's Demandbase, and there's Terminus, right? I think of those as like the big three core ABM products.

And when Sangram Vajre, he was a co-founder at Terminus, when he was thinking of how do we do category creation, he kicked off a conference called Flip My Funnel, that wasn't Terminus branded. It wasn't about Terminus, and in fact, he invited and included Demandbase and 6Sense to this community movement party. I think we have to think about that from, if we're doing category creation, if we're looking to solve a big problem for a customer, we have to think about who else, and also like customer success being a new function. There were no job descriptions, right? There was no, you couldn't go and look on LinkedIn and find someone who had customer success in their title. So how do you actually develop a function that doesn't exist before? And that is one of the, the vantage points that I have. In particular, if I rewind the clock to 2002 when I joined Eloqua, demand gen wasn't a function. Like people were still buying email lists, like literally they didn't have a first party database. They had to go out and buy and rent email list.

So then what we saw, this function called demand generation emerge and also marketing operations. If you're not, if you're now gonna have data and systems and process and workflow and automation in your marketing function, then you have to have an operations function. But that didn't exist until it existed. So somebody has to go out and create that and you don't go create by yourself. Not sure I actually answered the question, Alex.

Alex: No, that's okay. And it, and it could be, I mean, this is a fascinating conversation, Jill. I think, you know, my question was more about, you've just seen some really cool stuff over the years, and you've seen a lot of things that we've done right? And you've seen a lot of things that we've done wrong. You've been part of some really interesting organizations. Right? Let's just pick Salesforce, you know, Eloqua, Marketo, for starters. And now we're going down this path of not only PLG but partner ecosystems. So my question was more around like what did we get right and wrong with those previous experiences that were gonna take with us into PLG? I'll give you an example. So for, to help maybe set, cause it is a deep question that I'm asking and I recognize that.

PLG, so it's really interesting and I've seen some organizations completely flip their organizational structure, so that product is now, you know, the ones responsible for, now, I don't know if this is true from a P&L perspective, but product is responsible for driving pipeline. Product is responsible for helping marketing understand what to do.

I've seen in this one organization I'm thinking of, I've seen the sale, they had a hundred sales reps, field reps go down to ten because of PLG. They're much more account focused; account centric. So I'm almost seeing this like inverse relationship now where product is, you know, driving the entire organization and it really truly is collaborative.

It's, as you say, you know, cross-functional partnership. And then I think about, you know, and that's just in very early stages, like you think about prepubescent, I mean, they're basically learning how to walk and crawl first and then. How, how do you think it's gonna be for the partner ecosystem too? Like, you just came back from this wonderful conference and your brain must, your neurons must be firing.

Maybe the best thing we can do at this point is just to all get in a room together, you know, which is what this conference was, and really start to hammer out like, how can we, you know, but where do you see those best opportunities, you know, forming, being created in the partnership community right now? What's most exciting for you about that?

Jill: It's the combination of things. It really is bringing pieces of the puzzle together. And, you know, I started listening to podcasts that were focused on partnerships, and Partner Up is a great podcast. Partnered is another great podcast on partnerships. And they, what they've done effectively is interview people who are in roles.

And when I was actually moving my way into this partnership community, my lens was through how we've done go to market, right? Buying ads, sending emails, nurturing and scoring leads, and then hiring a truckload of SDRs and BDRs to interrupt and ignore the shit out of buyers, right? The call, email, call, email, the series sequence, cadence of touchpoints, trying to interrupt buyers.

I've seen that. And in the, in the partnership community, it, it really is, you know, who are who, who are the people doing it, who are on the frontlines? Like, who are the technology providers and, and content, right? Crossbeam has done an incredible job of creating that early content that defines right what does a partner led strategy look like? Who are the VCs that are actually investing in partner tech and why? Why are they investing in partner tech? And you've got companies or VCs like Bessemer, you have VCs like

Andreesen, A16Z. Actually, Sarah Wang, one of their partners, she was at Crossbeams conference called Super Node.

Just think about what Super Node means, the ultimate right connector, and going back to your chief, you know, your Chief Marketing Officer, really being the Chief Connecting Officer. She said that if they have two portfolio companies that they were looking to invest in, and one was tripling in revenue, a hundred percent direct pipeline, and the other was only doubling in revenue, but their pipeline was 50% direct and 50% indirect. They'd put their money into the company that was only doubling because the data shows that partner sourced and influenced deals convert at a higher rate. They have a faster, you know, a higher velocity. Your win rates are higher, your deal sizes are higher, and the retention and upsell and cross sell of those joint customers is greater.

And so we're seeing VCs, we're seeing people who are in roles, we're seeing now people who have left like a guy, Brian Williams has left Zero and he is started his own demand gen Dave Lewis type agency. He's creating playbooks and, and formulas and best practices and helping to find job roles and functions.

You've got someone like a Jay McBain. Oh my gosh. If you wanna know about partnerships and ecosystems, Jay McBain, he's like the Mac daddy. He, he is like the Scott Brinker Martech, Jay McBain partner tech. You have new media companies like PartnerHacker that are now curating from people who are in roles from technology companies that are working on, the tech stack.

So it's, it's what, what I see working really well is that there's, there's this willingness to create, to contribute, to collaborate, and to truly function as a community. That is what's working incredibly well.

Alex: Jill, one of the things I love partner stuff, right? So like we are at, at Klearly actually. It's, it's, I'm very grateful and humbled that we have a lot of partner stuff happening in our own sort of internal ecosystem, people coming to us, we're going to others.

It doesn't scale though, right? So like, it, it takes a human to, in a world where we're in data and automation and all these things. How have you seen companies doing it where, I don't wanna say they're scaling it necessarily, is that part of what this partner tech is facilitating?

Jill: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, to scale, you have to automate, right? And to scale you have to use data, and to scale you have to use technology, and to scale you have to use people. So this isn't really anything different, it's just applied to a different use case. And I think, you know, ecosystem, no one's gonna wanna believe this right now, but I think ecosystem sits above, above product, marketing, sales, customer success.

Because ecosystem is the ultimate of bringing it all together. I mean, it's transformational. It's truly, this is transformational, and even going back to Sangram Vajre, who wrote really the first book on Go to Market, and came up with some frameworks and models on how revs ops, stitches and weaves, all of these disparate people, process, data, et cetera, under one function.

In his book and he's, he's fine with me sharing this. When I sent him feedback on the early release, I said, you are missing a big piece of the new go to market playbook, the new go-to market strategy, and that is ecosystems, partnerships, and communities. And you Sangram, of all people, know the value and the role that community plays.

And you Sangram say, without a community, you're a commodity. And so this is a big miss in your book, in your frameworks, in your models. And to his credit, he said the book has to be, you know, not too long to read, right? And so, so many companies are still just struggling to get these marketing, sales, customer success, rev ops under one collective cross-functional function that, you know, adding that other layer, which in my mind is the bigger layer, adding that in, the market's not ready for that.

And that's what excites me about being in this movement and being in it early, is that the market's really not ready. And so we have to do a lot of education to get the market ready.

Alex: Don't, don't let Sangram kid you either, Jill, the reason why he didn't include is cuz he is selling an update to the book in a couple of years. That's why.

Alex: He's a smart man.

Jill: Very smart. And he launched his own organization and they're becoming like an analyst research firm focused on Go to Market, which is really exciting to see because do we really have, since SiriusDecisions got acquired by Forrester, and they were really my go to on demand generation and marketing operations as a function, but who is the analyst today that is actually really focused on go to market, and then focused on how this is evolving into ecosystems, partnerships, and communities.

Alex: No, I, I, I agree and I say to Mary all the time, and I don't, I don't mean to throw, you know, the analysts under the bus, but I hear, I hear people talking about a lot of really good things. I don't hear a lot of examples of how people are doing it. So Mary knows, you know, I, I hear a lot about alignment. And I read these fascinating whitepapers and blog posts and listen to podcasts and watch videos, and I still can't, I'm begging the author, I wish there was a q and a, how our team's doing it, and we're starting to see some instances of that.

For example, I use a concept that we've, we've, Mary and I have experience with, and people call pods, right? So you have sales, you have marketing, you have cs, now maybe some product, now maybe even some partner. I haven't seen partner in a pod, by the way. So that's interesting. We need to come up with an acronym for all five of these things, by the way. Mary, my stool just grew two more legs too, by the way. It's not just sales, marketing and customer success anymore.

Mary: I actually like, to connect all the dots, as a clarity person, I see this stool in a room that's still yet like not painted fully, which is like the markets and the ecosystem. I've got, the visual learner in me is ready to draw.

Alex: Well, you know, my room is padded, my room's padded...

Jill: Well, let me ask you, aren't stools normally four legs anyway?

Alex: It depends on what kind of stool you're into.

Jill: Like I actually could go to my counter stools and their four legs. So, so expanding beyond three, right? It makes sense.

Alex: Yeah. It's a, now it's five. I don't think I've ever seen this stool with five legs, so I don't, you know. But like you said, maybe, maybe, all right, now we're gonna, now we're gonna crush the metaphor. Maybe the stool, like you're saying, the seat is actually the ecosystem and the legs are the other four.

Mary: I've been thinking about that. I actually think that the seat is the product because that's what we're all working to, like deliver to the customers who are coming into your beautifully padded rooms.

Alex: So then Mary, in your stool where's the ecosystem?

Mary: The ecosystem is the room around your product, but the ecosystem is connected to everyone else's rooms, right. Rev ops is stitching all of that together. Like I got, I got the whole house here, which is like the broader ecosystem.

Jill: And the customer is sitting on the stool.

Mary: There you go, right? Yep, within that whole ecosystem, and then connecting out, I think into the, the communities. To me, in some ways it feels like B2B is catching up to where B2C has been for a while. Would you agree with that or disagree with that statement?

Jill: Absolutely agree, right? Because even with product led growth, the reason why companies, well, one of the many reasons why companies are moving to product led growth is because they have to really focus on building a product that the customer actually wants to use and that it's easy to use.

And I will tell you that Eloqua was not, right? You know, Alex, it, it was not, it was an enterprise grade product. It was built in '99, 2000. Like that was the, the root of it. It was always, I want people to know, it was never a, an on-premise, but it was always SaaS, but holy cow, like UI, that that wasn't, their designers and like that wasn't a thing back then.

Alex: Well, by the way, by the way, some of my best friends were the instructors at Eloqua that I got to know really, really well. I still love those people. I mean, they saved me. I mean, that was the first thing when I got my budget every single year, I was like, okay, gotta put some money aside for Eloqua University. Gotta take my classes.

Jill: We actually got to the point where we wouldn't, the deal had to include at least one seat of training because we knew that it was really effing hard to actually use Eloqua. Now, what we did find, and actually it's in my, my oldest son, he has used Eloqua, Marketo, and Pardot, and just based on the way his brain works, he actually found Eloqua to be the easiest to use to get the work that he was trying to get done, done.

So there are aspects of it is what's the job to be done, and then also how does your, you know, how does your, how does your brain work? But the point was on product led growth, right? And so from a consumer, B2B and B2C, we wouldn't be using our iPhones, we wouldn't be downloading and using apps if they weren't easy to use.

And so we expect that in our, the technology and the products that we use, in the, in the way that we, you know, do business. Cuz we spend, you know, at least as much time working as we do not working.

Mary: Yep. Instead of our friends' recommendations now we're, we're heading into Slack and other communities to try to find that from a professional perspective. It feels like a natural evolution to me and it's our data and our tools are catching up to our expectations as buyers.

So different tangent here. As we start to wrap up, I'm curious, you've had a ton of experience in the space. Se've talked about decorating rooms and stools and all of those cool things. Have you, like, do you dream about ecosystems and partnerships? Like, do you sleep peacefully at night without the need for a notepad next to your bed to jot down these ideas?

Jill: I do sleep peacefully at night. It is to the point where you, my husband is now able to have a conversation about partnerships and ecosystems because I talk about it all the time. And even my 17-year-old daughter, right? She's now able to basically recite my new mantras, right? She could talk about marketing automation and Martech and she could talk about social selling and even a little bit about like venture capital and the startup language.

And now she's actually starting to, to be able to, you know, she hears mom say ecosystem and she rolls her eyes. So, yeah, and I can't get enough of content. I can't get enough, you know, podcasts, I ride my bike to Orange Theory and I'm, you know, oftentimes listening to a new episode of a Partner Up or Partnered podcast. There's another podcast on the platform journey, and when you really think ecosystem, if you're trying to build a platform, you absolutely have to think holistically about ecosystem, because you're building the platform that other products are plugging into. So you have to think platform.

So yes, I'm constantly reading and listening and when I hear someone super smart on a podcast, I send them a personalized invite to connect on LinkedIn because I want those people and their content to start, appearing in my, in my LinkedIn news. So yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm so energized to be on the front of what I believe is the next new thing in go to market.

Mary: I love that. Thank you for sharing that with us. Are there any other key points that you feel like are really important in the ecosystems, partners go to market world that we didn't cover today that you feel like would be really important for people to lean in and learn about?

Jill: Well, I mean, I always go back to literally the customer, right? And the more we understand and know and listen and learn and, and, and really collaborate and co-innovate and connect our customers, that's really the driving force of a business.

It isn't your product, it isn't your marketing, it's not your sales. It's not your customer success. It's not your partnerships and ecosystem. It's not your rev ops department. It's really at the center is the customer, and we just need to make every decision around product, marketing, sales, customer success, partnerships around and through the lens of our customers.

Mary: Totally agree. Awesome. Thank you so much for joining us today. It was a lot of fun to dive into that and I've added a lot of resources and people to my list that I need to start following, for sure. I feel like that was like the Jill mind map of everyone you need to know if you are exploring this space.

Alex: Thanks, Jill, and thank you for listening. If you like this show, be sure to follow so you don't miss an episode. This show is brought to you by Klearly. If you are ready to embrace revenue as a team sport -

where all of your teams work better, together - visit us at klearly dot com, that's K-L-E-A-R-L-Y dot com, to learn more.

Mary: Next week, our journey towards the B2B REVolution will continue with another great guest. Until then, I'm Mary Blanks...

Alex: ...and I'm Alex Krawchick. We'll talk to you next week.