SmartUp Academy

Foundations Course

Lecture 2

Branding First

SmartUp

THE SMART WAY TO BUILD A STARTUP

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SmartUp Academy

A program to teach the **profession** of building successful companies

- What is a successful company?
  - Profitable
  - Fast growing
  - Modest investment

SmartUp Academy

A program to teach the **profession** of building successful companies (…work in progress)

- The Foundations Course
  - The three pillars for a successful company:
    - Profitable
    - Fast growing
    - Modest investment
- Workshops – specific subjects
- **4-5 years Residency program**

Branding First – Why?

- Ray Kinsella, an Iowa farmer, lives with his wife on their corn farm in Iowa.
- One day, Ray hears a mysterious voice **“If you build it, he will come.”**
- Interpreting this as an instruction, Ray decides to transform a portion of his cornfield into a **baseball field**.
- To his astonishment, the ghosts of old-time legendary baseball players appear in the field

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BY7FBX7BqGGGHa2YxzQriIFCsEjBxxMN/view?usp=drive_link

Branding First – Why?

- What is a brand? and what is the difference between branding and marketing?
- Why start with Branding and not with developing the product or at least a proof of concept or a prototype?
- How do you create a brand?
- How much does it cost to create and sustain a brand?
- The benefits of the process of creating a brand
  - Easier and cheaper sales process
  - Identifying beach heads

Branding First – Why?

- The benefits of the process of creating a brand – continued
  - Figuring out a process for lead generation at low CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost)
  - Opening up opportunities for additional products, revenue streams, and partnerships
  - Many times, it pivots the company to what customers really want and are willing to pay for
  - It creates intrinsic value that increases the value of the company, or it can be packaged and sold independently
- Various methods for brand creation

Branding First

- Industry examples
- SmartUp Academy Examples

- SEO Long Tail
  - ZoomInfo
  - Opster
  - TickChak
- Free product
  - BioForum
  - ZoomInfo
  - Opster
- Thought Leadership
  - Intelichain

What is a brand?

1. A brand is that your prospects know your name and vaguely something about you and what you do, and that
2. They have a positive feeling towards the brand

- Marketing is the process of “lead generation”, generating leads for sales people to follow, or for prospects to buy online

- Branding is the bedrock and foundation for successful and cost-effective lead generation activities

Branding First – The smart old fashioned way

And then what happened?

Branding First – A success

Branding First – Thought Leade

- John Deere & Company
- Founded in 1834

- The Furrow Magazine – Launched in 1895
- The magazine was so successful that it reached 4 million readers by 1912
- Still in circulation today, with a global audience of over 1.5 million

Branding First – Know these brands?

The Kardashians

Elon Musk

Akio Toyoda

Jeff Bezos

Andy Jassy

Blue Origin

David Limp

Mark Zuckerberg

Zhang Yiming

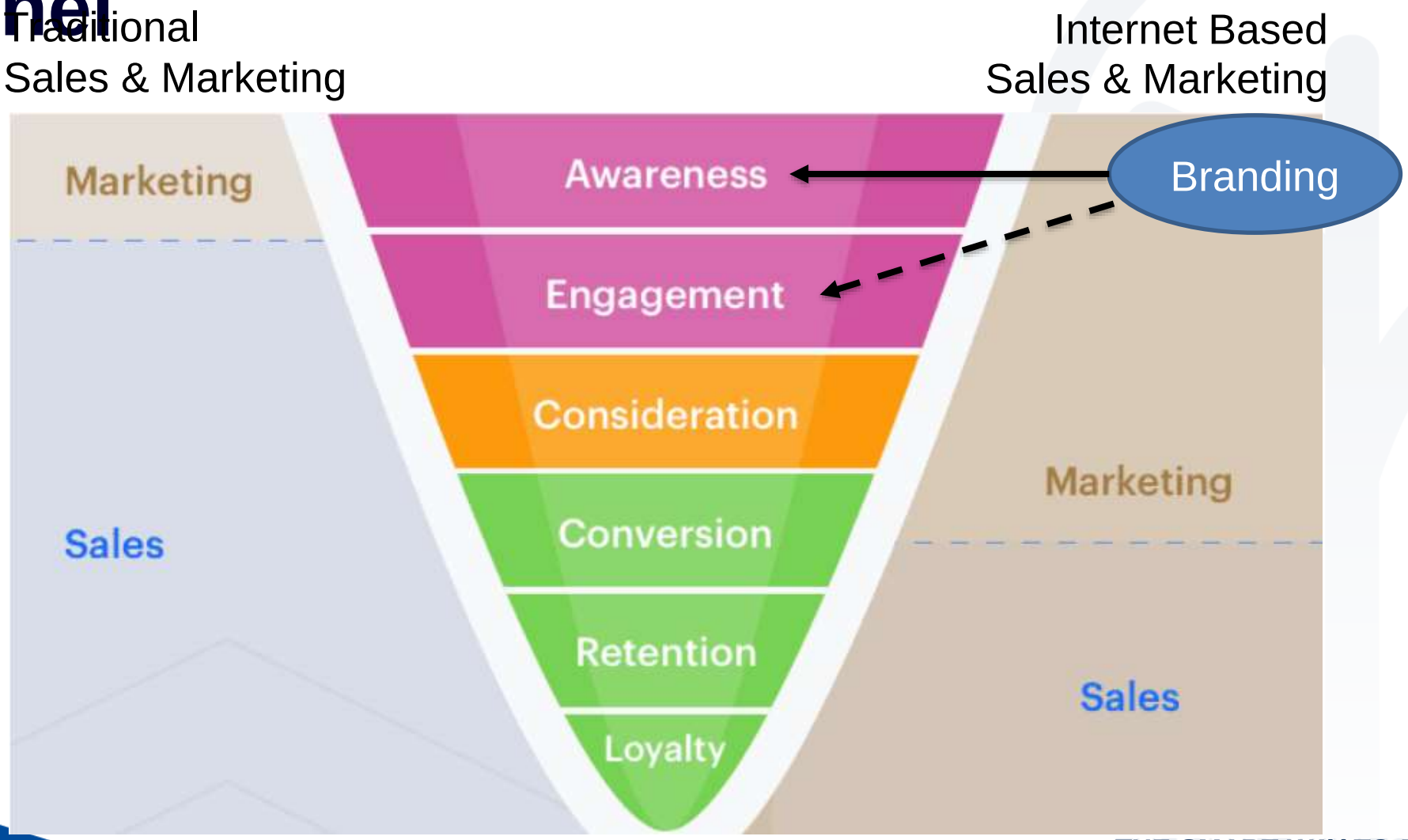
Jack Ma

8200

Albert Einstein

Niels Bohr

Branding First – Classical Marketing Funnel



Branding First

- Instead of building the product, or a proof of concept, or a prototype
- Invest the pre-seed, or Friends & Family, money in launching branding activities
- By doing so, you will create tangible value in various ways:
  - Develop a marketing funnel – the most complicated process
  - Gain deeper understanding of the market
  - Identify potential beach heads

Branding First

- Additional tangible assets
  - Potentially, identify additional revenue streams, that are easier to develop, just using the brand created
  - It will be easier to raise additional money

- Building a brand takes a long time – so better start early

Branding First – With NO product?

How to launch branding activities before having a product?

- Focus on the problem you try to solve, not on your solution
- Think of what else might be of great interest to your prospects
- Several methods for brand building
  - SEO – Search Engine Optimization, Long Tail
  - Free products, especially with viral engagement element
  - Thought leadership
  - Other? We are looking for additional ideas !!!

SEO – Search Engine Optimization

- SEO is the concept of creating content on the web so that people who search for answers or information will find your content
- The problem – Thousands of companies want to be found on basically the same obvious content

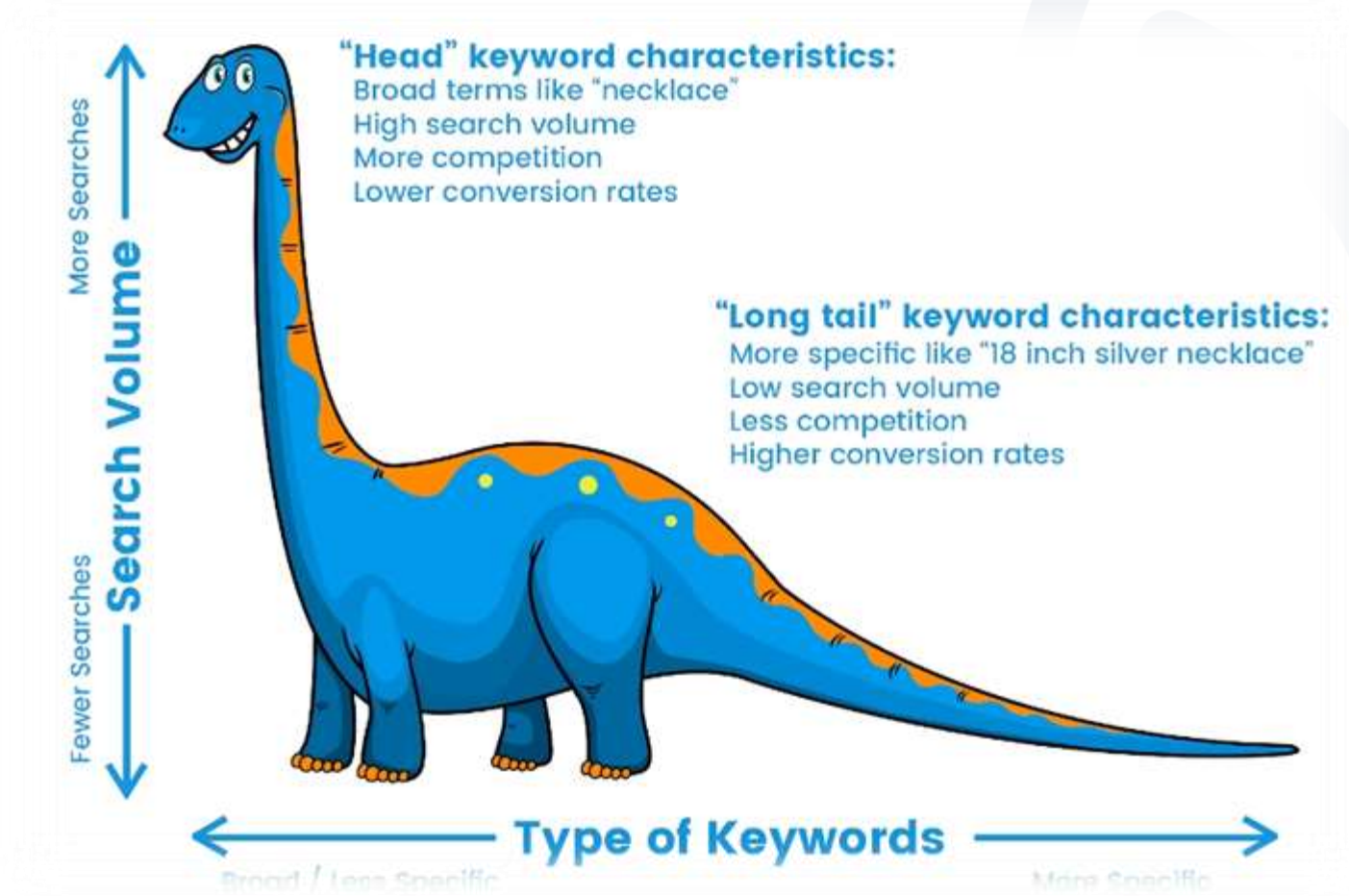
  For example:
  - A patent lawyer writing content about how to file a patent
  - A CRM company writing about the benefits of using a CRM
- Google present pages from sites with proven high quality content, and it is hard for a new player to stand out

SEO – Google’s philosophy and algorithms

- Google’s philosophy is very simple – they want to present the best content for every query
- The whole world wants to spam Google – “Show me!”, “Show me!”
- Google heavily relies on users to learn the value of each source
- Google is your best friend if you work with them to help their users

SEO - Long Tail

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)



SEO - Long Tail

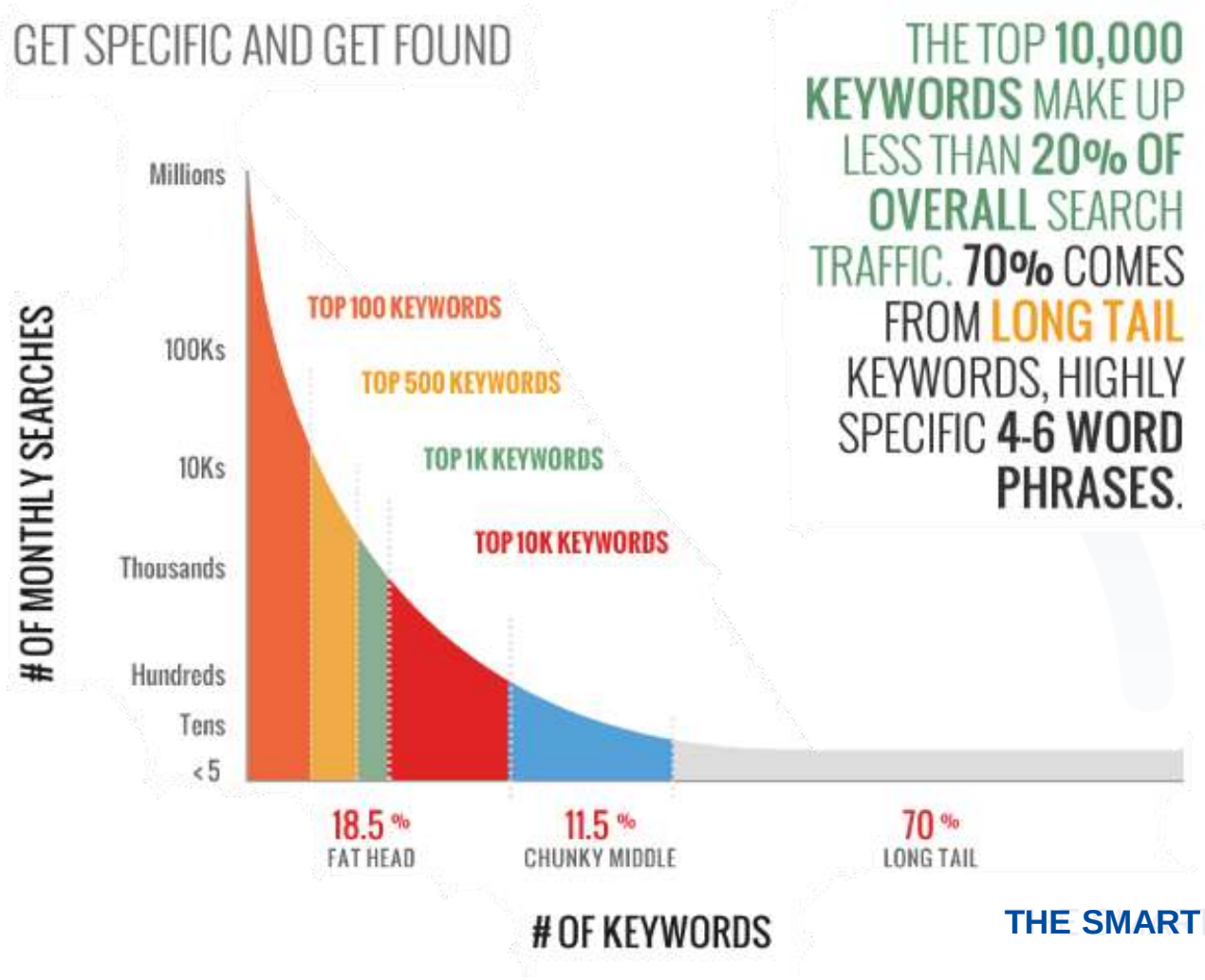
“Head” keyword characteristics

- Common terms like “necklace”, “laptop”
- High search volume
- Intense competition for a first page placement in Google
- Lower conversion rate

“Long tail” keyword characteristics, usually longer phrases, 4-6 words

- More specific terms, like “18 inch silver necklace with a pendant”
- Low search volume
- Less competition for Google first page placement
- Higher conversion rates

SEO - Long Tail



SEO - Long Tail

Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of *Wired Magazine*, noted that

"The best way to dominate the web in the face of stiff competition is to optimize for long-tail search."

SEO - Long Tail

The Problem

- Each keyword in the long tail has very few searches every month
- To reach high traffic you need to publish thousands if not millions of pages
- How do you cost effectively create thousands or millions of pages?

The Solution

- A database of information about something relevant to the problem your prospects try to solve

Companies that use Long Tail Effectively

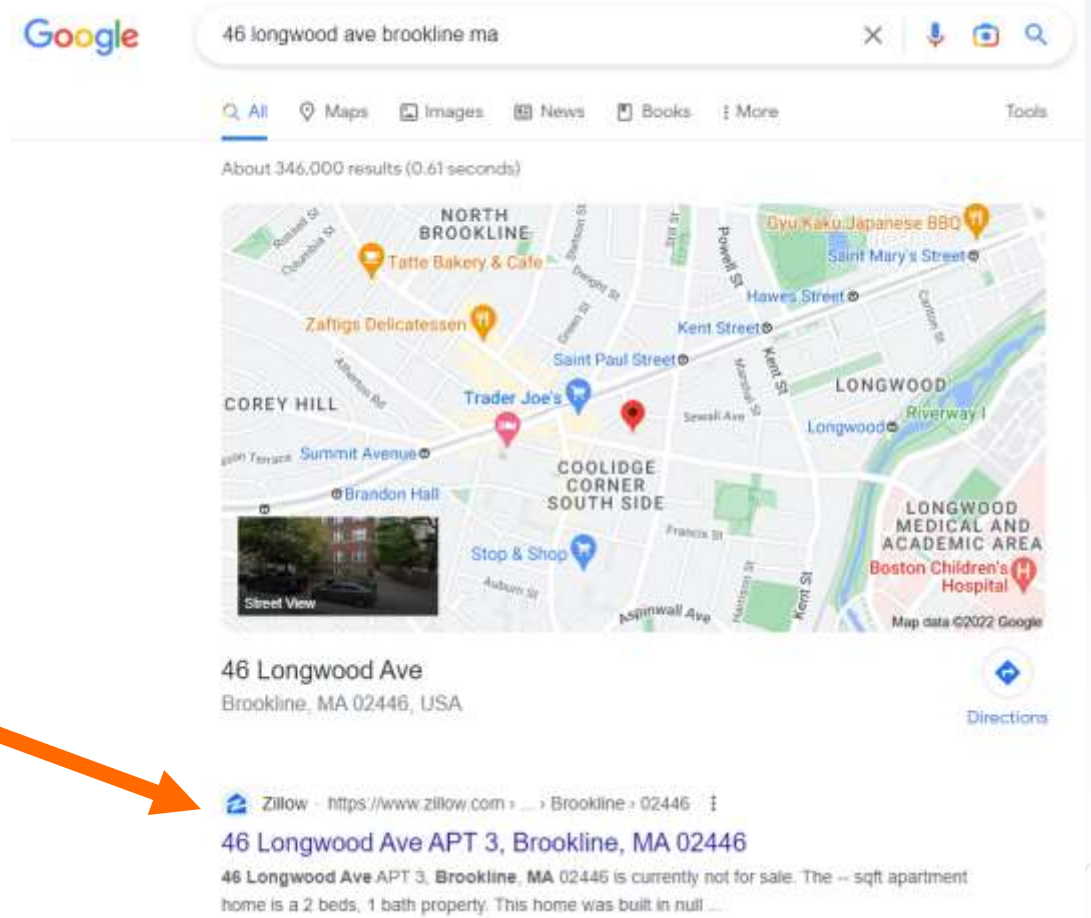
Many well-known companies use Long Tail for their branding and for generating sales

- Amazon – A page per every possible product
- LinkedIn – A page per person, a page per company
- CrunchBase – A page per company
- Facebook – A page per person, or group, or entity, ….
- TripAdvisor – A page per hotel, attraction, location
- Zillow – A page per street address

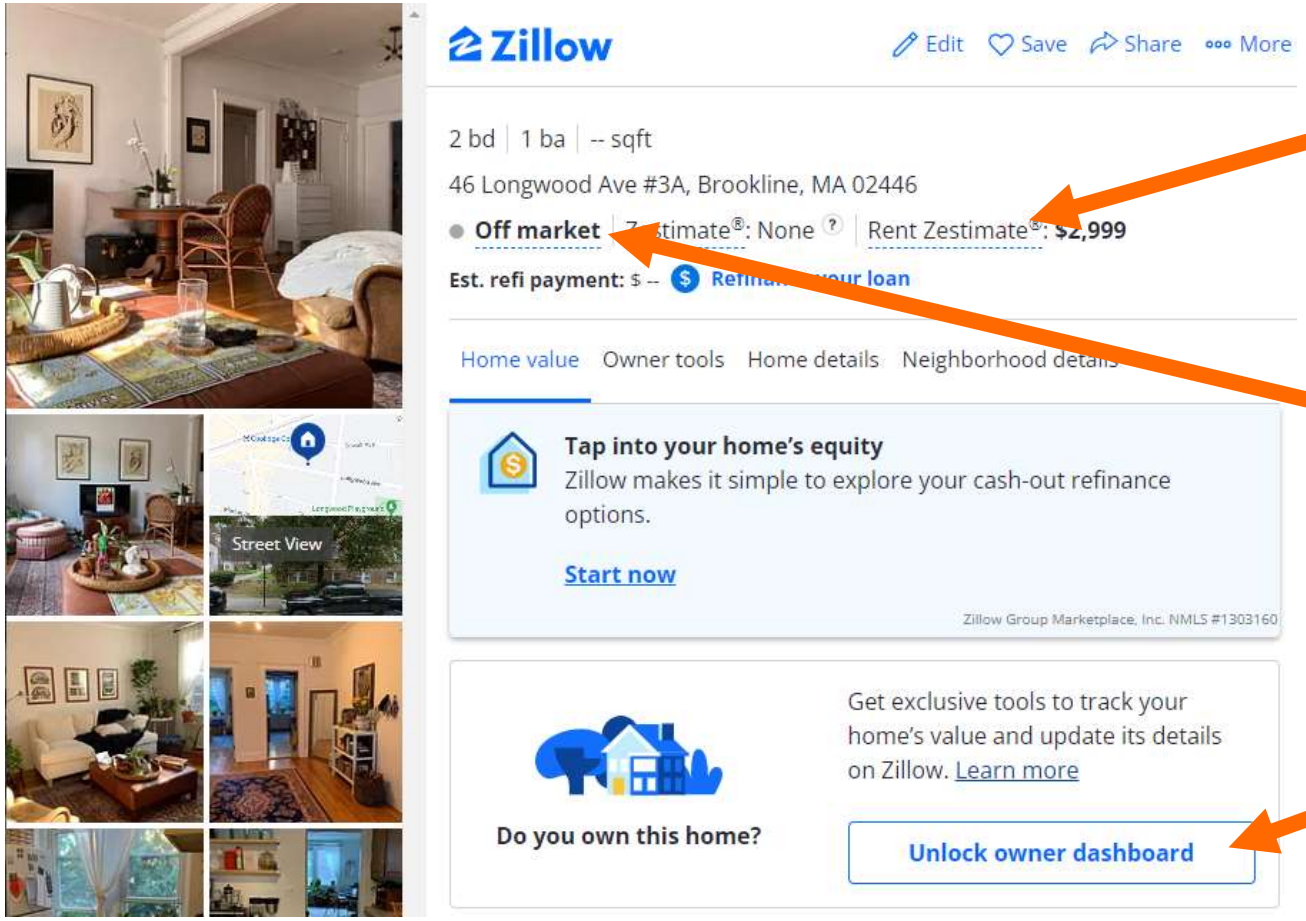
Zillow – A Realtor's Long Tail Strategy

My first address in the USA: 46 Longwood Avenue, Brookline, MA

Zillow is the first Google answer



Zillow



Notice the "Rent Zestimate" of $2,999

The "Off market" for sales estimate

And the funnel to attract customers

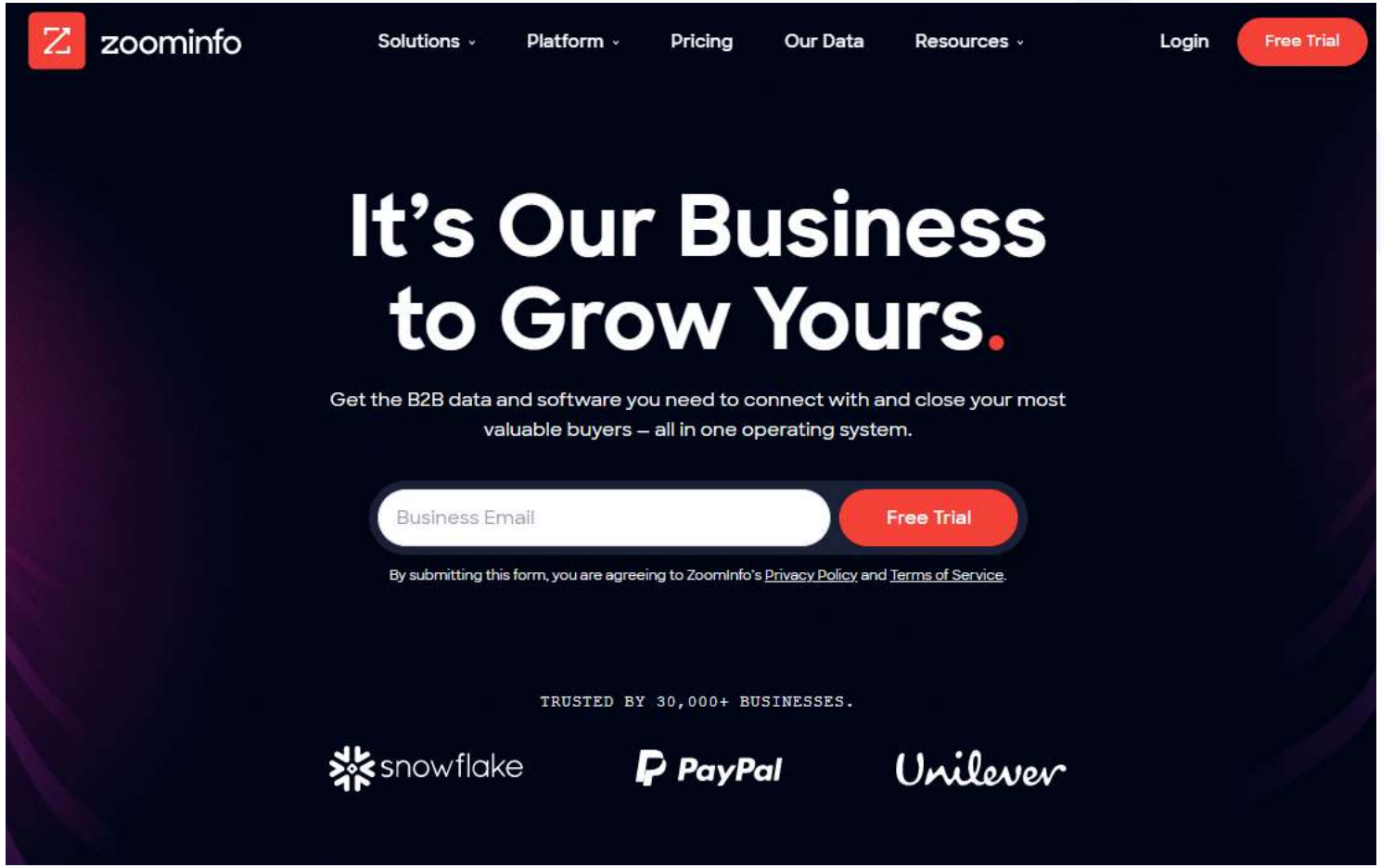
SEO - Long Tail

Why a database?

- Each row in the table is about an entity – Person, Address, Company, and will be translated to one page on the website with information about that entity
- The content of the page is the data included in the fields or columns of the database
- Any query can generate additional interesting content, like:
    - 20 largest companies in New Haven CT
    - 10 most expensive houses in Birmingham AL
    - CEO's of Cyber Security firms

ZoomInfo – Tools for sales

zoominfo



ZoomInfo - History

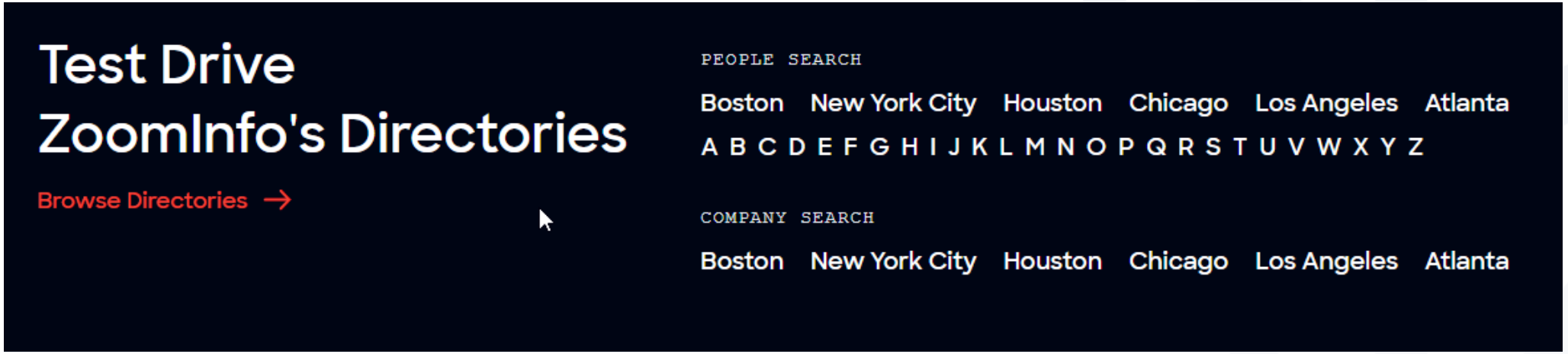
- Founded in 2000 by Yonatan Stern
- Nice little company, selling mainly to recruiters and Executive Search Firms
- By 2004 revenues were about $6m, profitable, growing
- But we wanted to grow much faster by going after sales people
- How to go from one customer set – recruiters, to another – sales people?

ZoomInfo - History

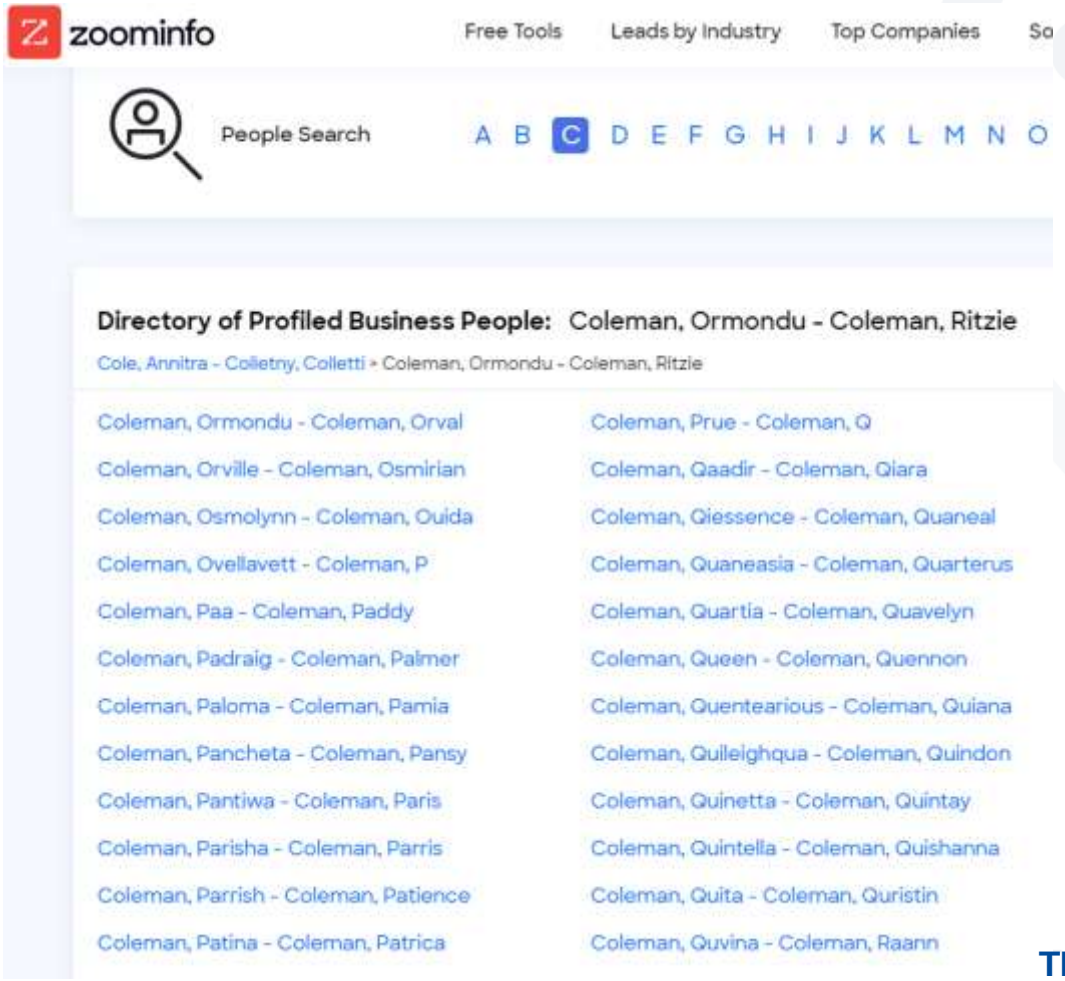
- Made a bold decision – Let’s publish all of our data, one page per person
- Long Tail - Sales people and recruiters search for people by name, company name and title all day long
- Search by name is one of the most common searches in Google
- There was no other people directory on the web at the time - LinkedIn just started 2 years before and did not publish its data

ZoomInfo Directory

zoominfo

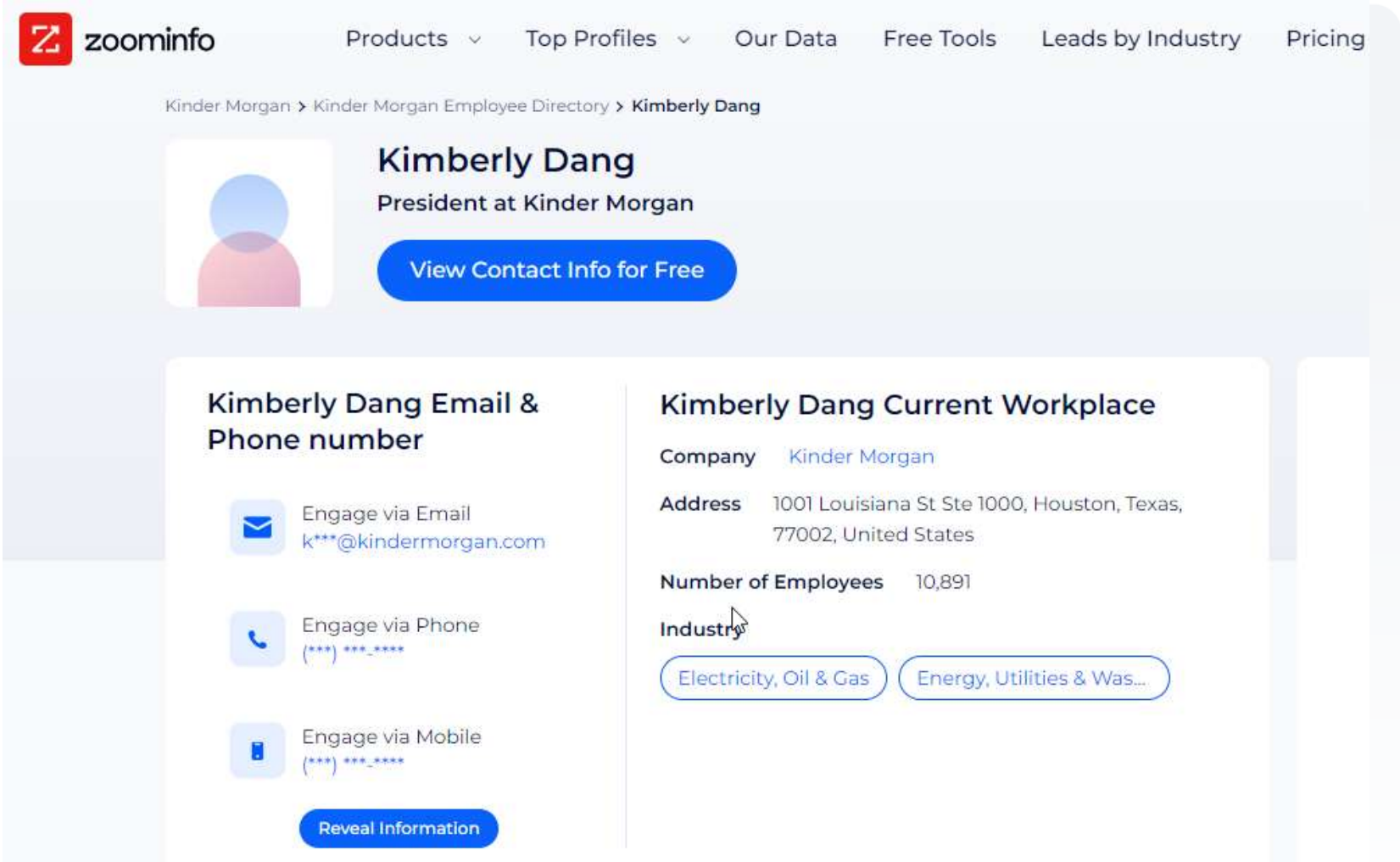


ZoomInfo Directory



ZoomInfo Directory

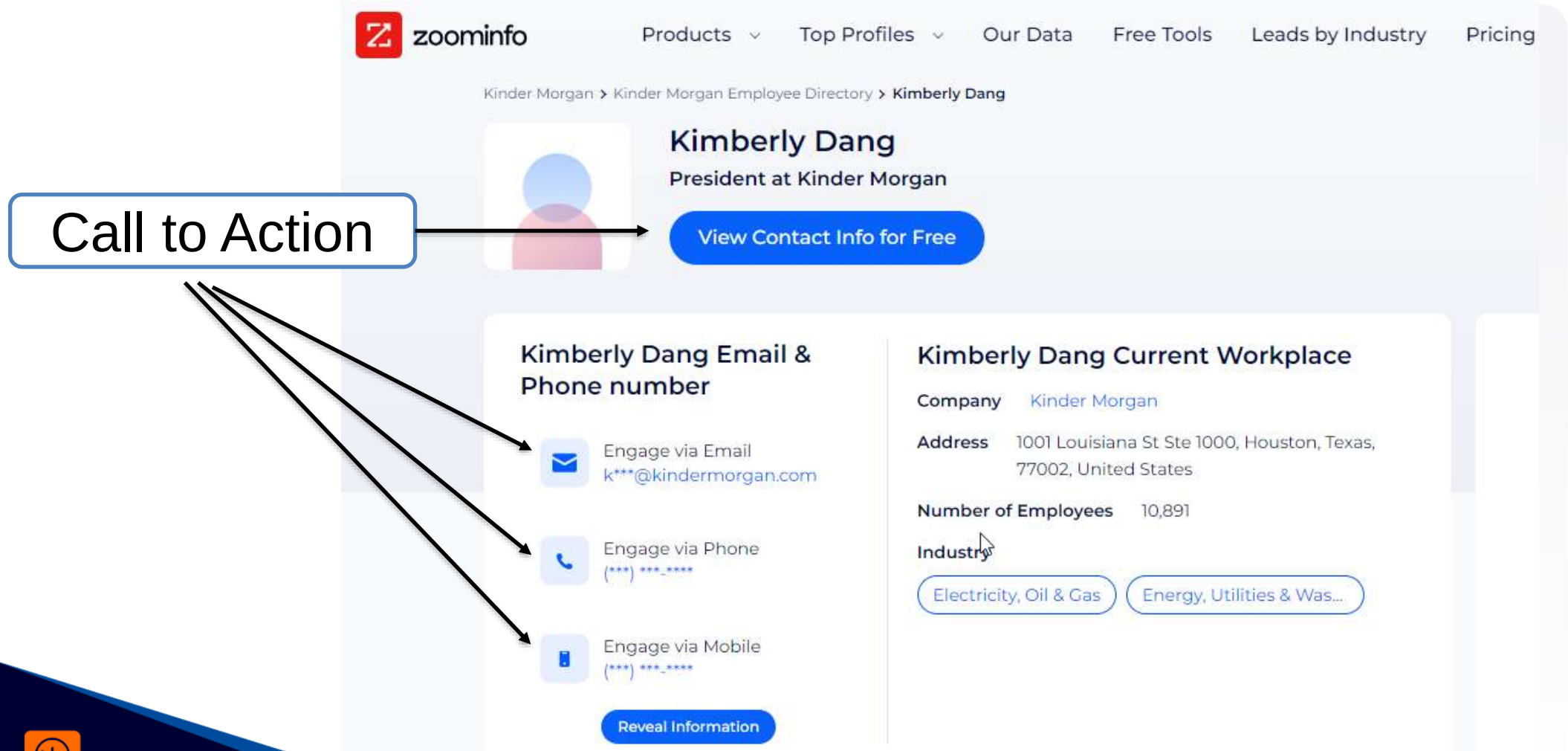
zoominfo



ZoomInfo Directory

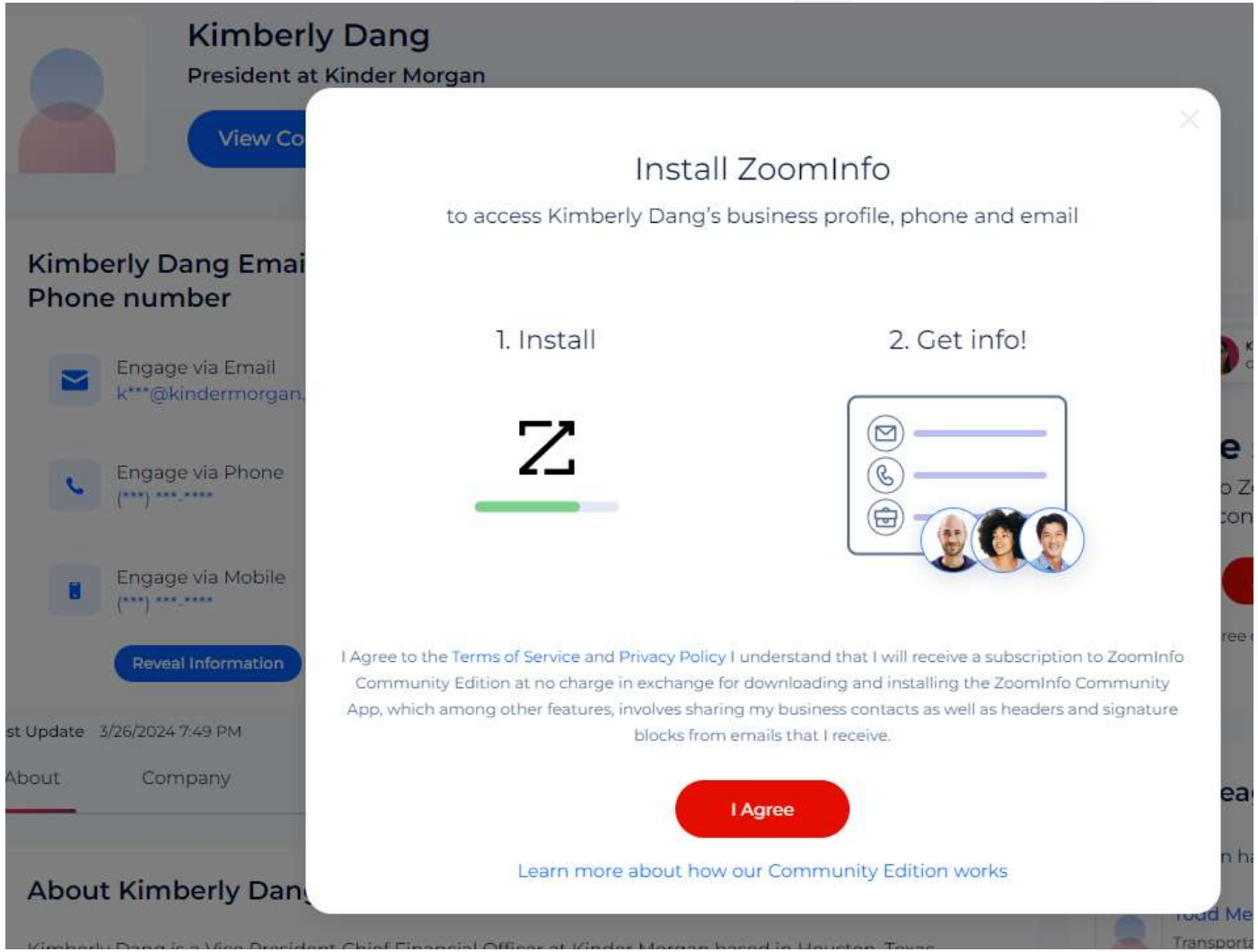
- The strategy worked really well and we started getting leads from sales people
- But…. Turns out that sales people wanted a different product from recruiters
- Recruiters wanted several good candidates – a needle in a haystack. Sales people wanted the haystack
- They also wanted phone and email address…
- Sean Parker's Plaxo (Napster)
- The "contributors" idea was born – a critical benefit of ZoomInfo's branding strategy

ZoomInfo Directory



ZoomInfo Directory – Call to Action

- Limited Free product
- Used mainly to sign up contributors
- Branding can generate additional assets



ZoomInfo - Results

By the time I left ZoomInfo in 2018 there were

- 50 million directory pages indexed by Google
- About 10 million visitors to the site every month – aggregation of many small searches each for a different name
- Tens of thousands of new contributors every month
- Some 20,000 inbound leads every month

ZoomInfo - Results

- Company grew revenues consistently by 50% year over year
- CAC –Customer Acquisition Cost very low
- Sale cycle of 2-4 weeks, customers were familiar with what ZoomInfo provides
- Company grew profits consistently by 50% year over year

ZoomInfo – The Brand

In early 2019 ZoomInfo was acquired by DiscoverOrg

- The CEO of DiscoverOrg ran a study to determine the name of the combined company
- ZoomInfo brand was 9 times more recognized than DiscoverOrg
- The combined company is called ZoomInfo
- The power of long tail branding

Opster

- Opster- Tools for DevOps engineers to manage and optimize mission critical ElasticSearch clusters
    - Did anybody here understand what that means?
- Who are Opster’s prospects?
    - ElasticSearch DevOps engineers
- How on earth can we target these elusive people?
    - They are busy and they don’t respond to emails

Opster

Focus on the problem - not on your solution

- When Opster started, we had nothing to sell. Product vision was murky
- We asked ourselves – What do DevOps engineers do when encountering a problem with their ElasticSearch installation?
- In many cases the ElasticSearch system produces an error log that is written to their log file
- Here are random examples of real error logs

Opster

Error Log examples

- Could not lock IndexWriter isLocked
- Delaying allocation for unassigned shards; next check in
- Suspect illegal state: trying to move shard from primary mode to replica mode
- Failed to start monitoring service
- Using discovery type and seed hosts providers
- All shards failed
- Term query does not support array of values
- No mapping found for ” + fieldName + ” in order to sort on
- high disk watermark [90%] exceeded on
- Mapping update rejected by primary

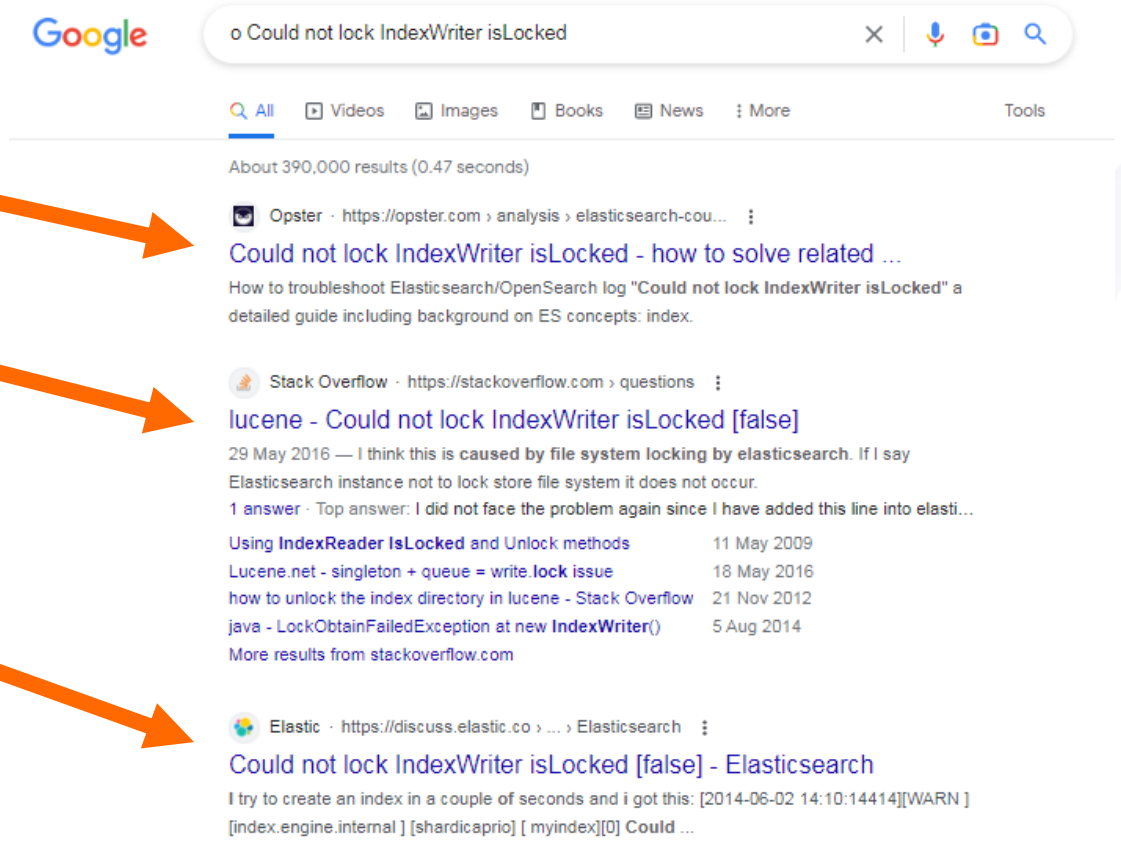
Opster - the Power of Long Tail

Ahead of StackOverflow and Elastic itself

Opster

StackOverflow

Elastic.com –
The originators of
ElasticSearch



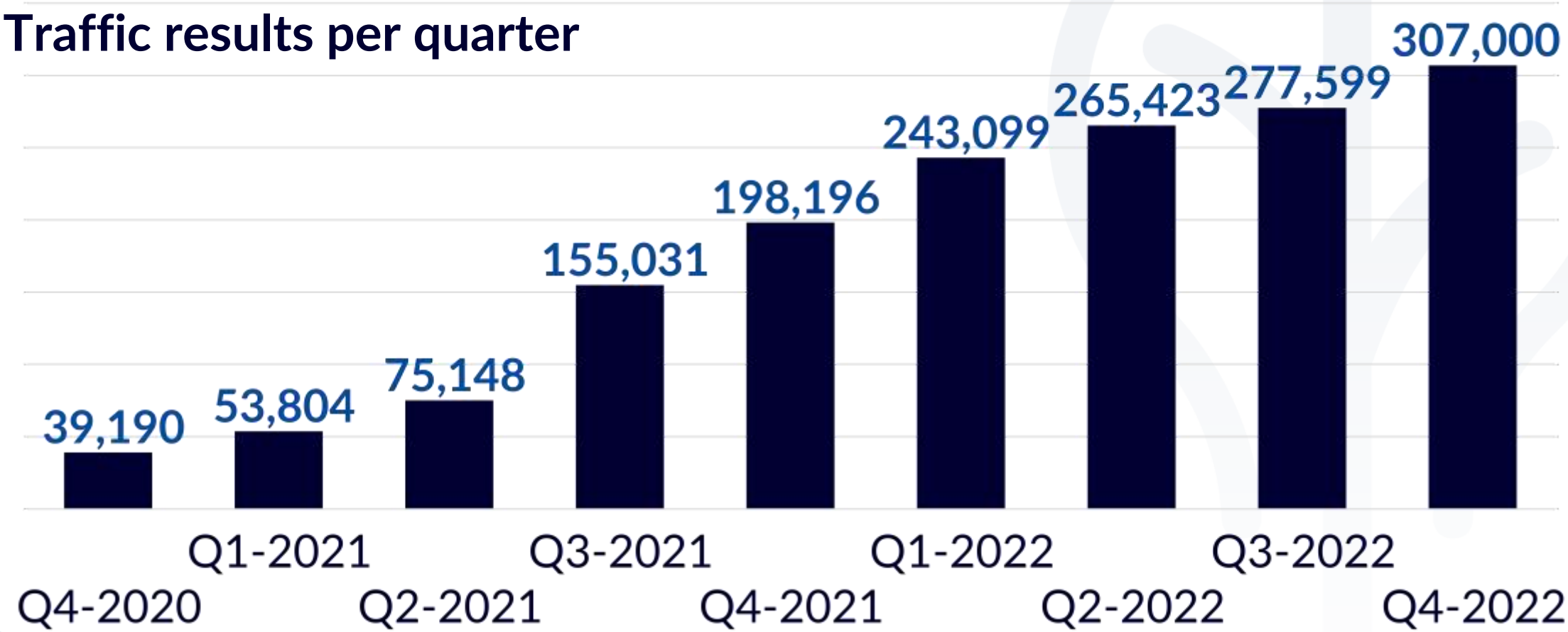
Opster

Long Tail Creation Process

- How to automatically create thousands of content pages?
- Wrote a script to extract all error logs from ElasticSearch open-source code. Initially extracted about 700 different error logs. Today there are some 3,000 error log pages published on Opster
- Created an Opster web site, mainly these 700 pages produced automatically. Plus a detailed glossary on the basic terminology of ElasticSearch, a page per term
- 60 or so pages generated 80% of traffic – manually enriched their content. **High quality content creates a strong brand**

Opster

Traffic results per quarter



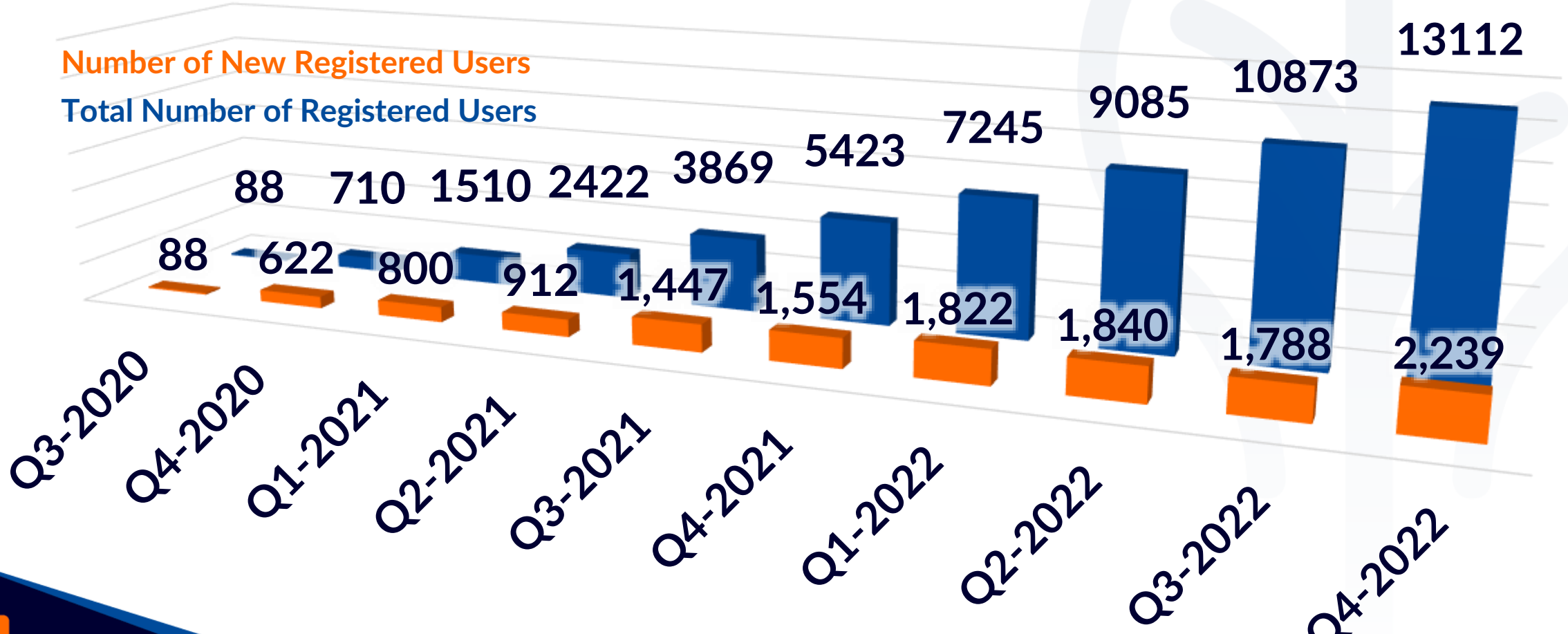
Opster – Marketing Funnel

BUT – Traffic is not yet leads

- Developed CheckUp – a FREE simple tool to identify problems based on 2-3 files taken from an Elastic cluster

- Users needed to create an account to run CheckUp
- Our main source of leads – Very low Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

Opster


Number of New Registered Users
Total Number of Registered Users
88
622
800
912
1,447
1,554
1,822
1,840
1,788
2,239
88
710
1510
2422
3869
5423
7245
9085
10873
13112
Q3-2020
Q4-2020
Q1-2021
Q2-2021
Q3-2021
Q4-2021
Q1-2022
Q2-2022
Q3-2022
Q4-2022

Opster – Content Creation process

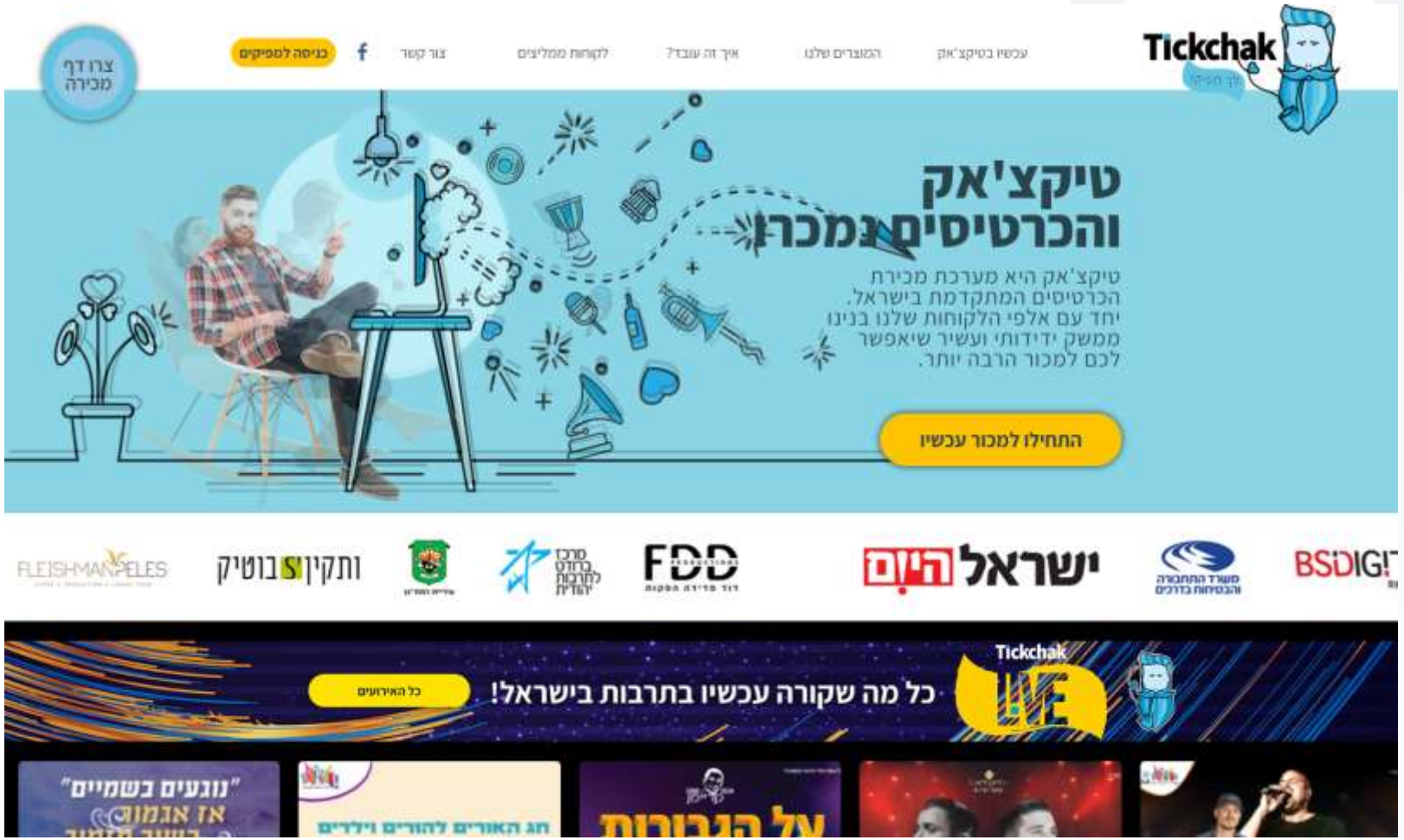
Content Creation Process

- **High quality content creates a strong brand**
- To write high quality content for the error logs, Opster engaged several high caliber freelance tech support writers
- Opster then used them to write hundreds of “How to” articles
- Gradually, Opster became the best source of information about ElasticSearch, and also about its open-source competitor OpenSearch, promoted by Amazon Web Services
- Elastic Tech Support engineers started referring customers to Opster’s content

Opster – The value of a strong brand

- In October of 2023 Elastic acquired Opster for its AutoOps tools, content and brand
- Currently integrating Opster’s AutoOps tool into Elastics products, and making it available to its tech support engineers
- Elastic also took Opster’s marketing team to manage their own process of building high quality content for ElasticSearch ☺

TickChak


Tickchak
צרו דף מכירה
כניסה למפיקים
צור קשר
לקוחות ממליצים
איך זה עובד?
המוצרים שלנו
עכשיו בטיקצ'אק
טיקצ'אק והכרטיסים נמכרו!
טיקצ'אק היא מערכת מכירת הכרטיסים המתקדמת בישראל. יחד עם אלפי הלקוחות שלנו בנינו ממשק ידידותי ועשיר שיאפשר לכם למכור הרבה יותר.
התחילו למכור עכשיו
FLEISHMAN PELES
ותקין בוטיק
FDD
ישראל היום
BSDIGI
כל מה שקורה עכשיו בתרבות בישראל!
כל האירועים
Tickchak
LIVE
"נוגעים בשמיים"
חג האורים להורים וילדים
על הגבורות

TickChak

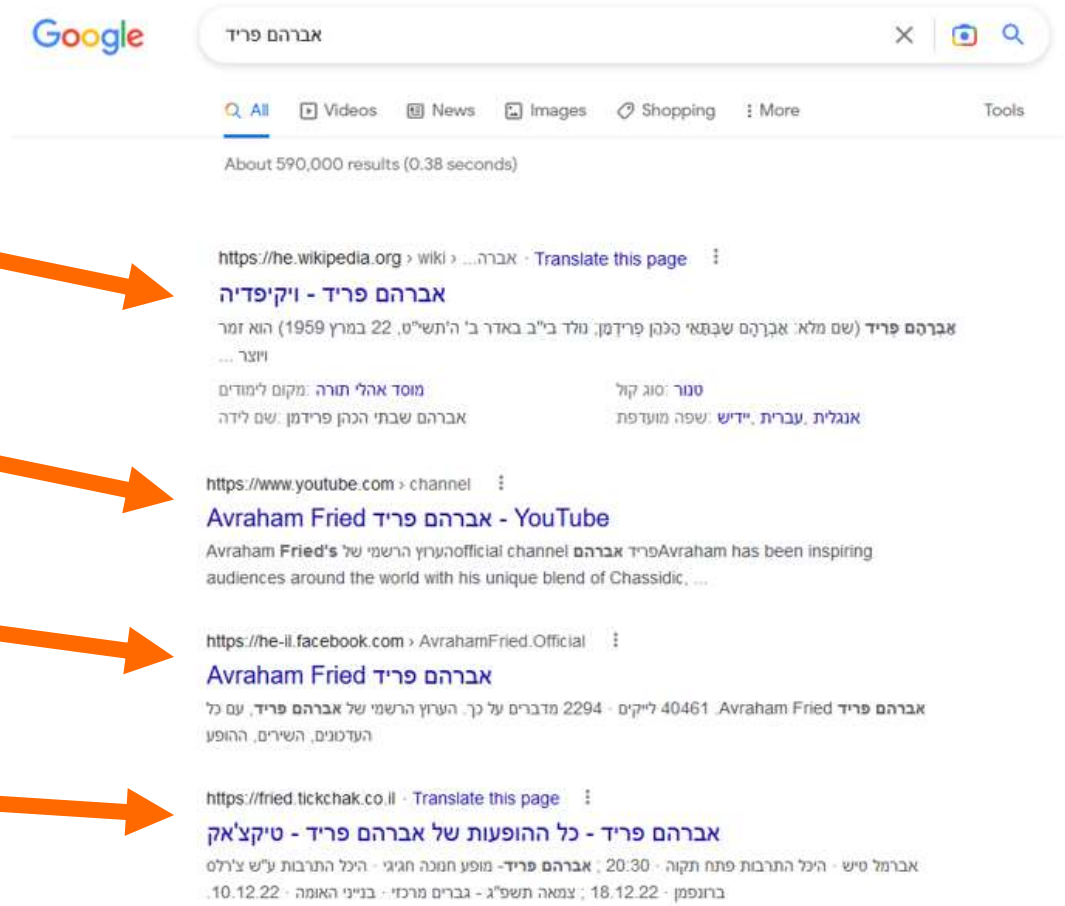
- A platform for selling event tickets
- Offers a simple and easy way for artists and producers to create an event web presence and to start selling tickets for it
- Fast growing profitable company
- No marketing, all growth from word of mouth
- However, they grew mainly in their relatively small community and wanted to break out to the entire events market

TickChak – Long Tail Idea

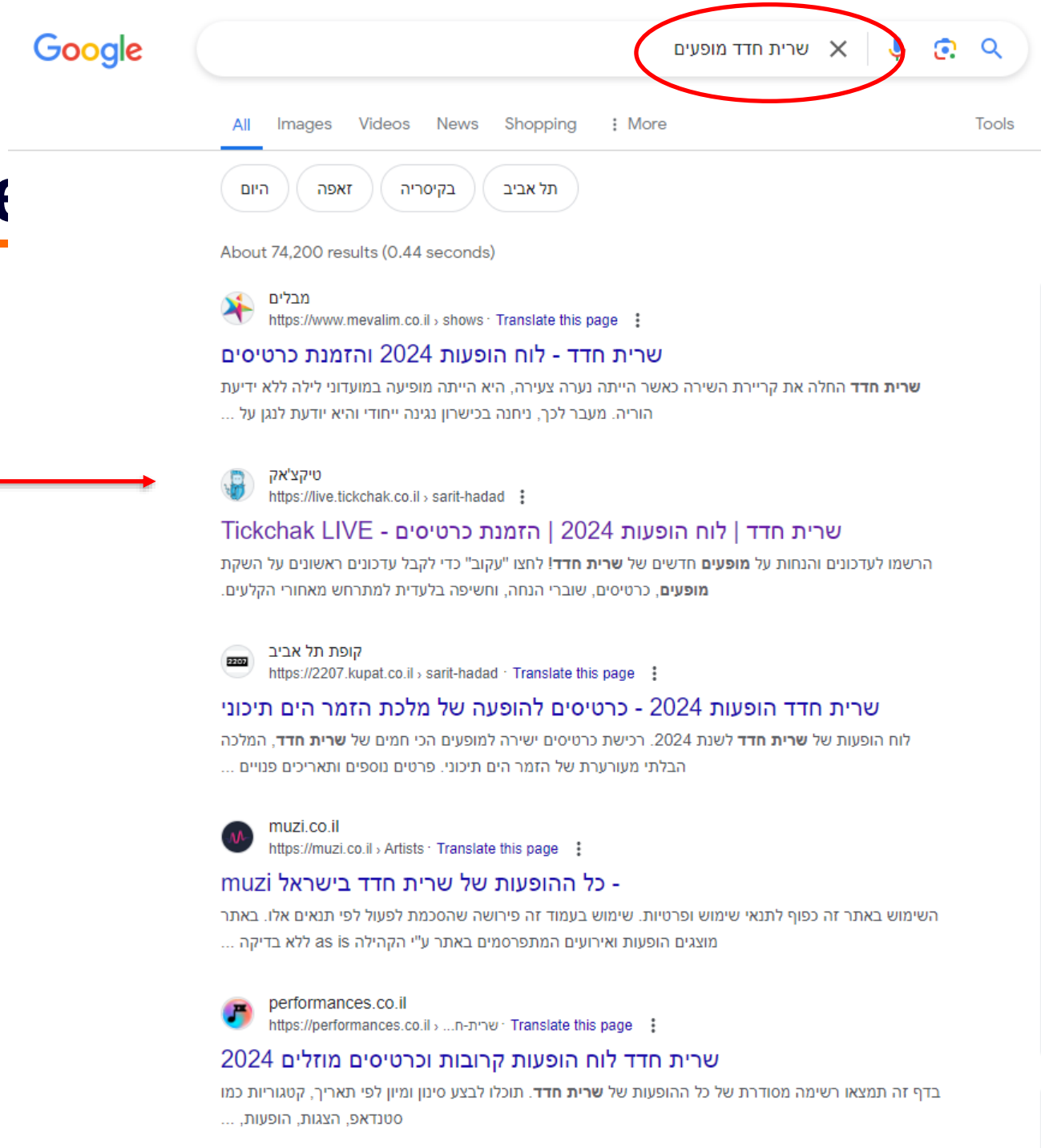
- The main idea is to aggregate detailed information on all events happening in Israel
- Built a robot to extract event information from all online ticket selling offices on a daily basis (about 25 offices)
- Information extracted:
  - Name of the concert, show, lecture, event
  - Genre
  - Name of the artist(s)
  - Venue, Location, City, Producer, Agent
  - Date and time
  - Price(s)
  - Link to ticket purchasing

TickChak – Google positioning

1. Wikipedia
2. YouTube
3. Facebook
4. TickChak



TickChak – Artist page



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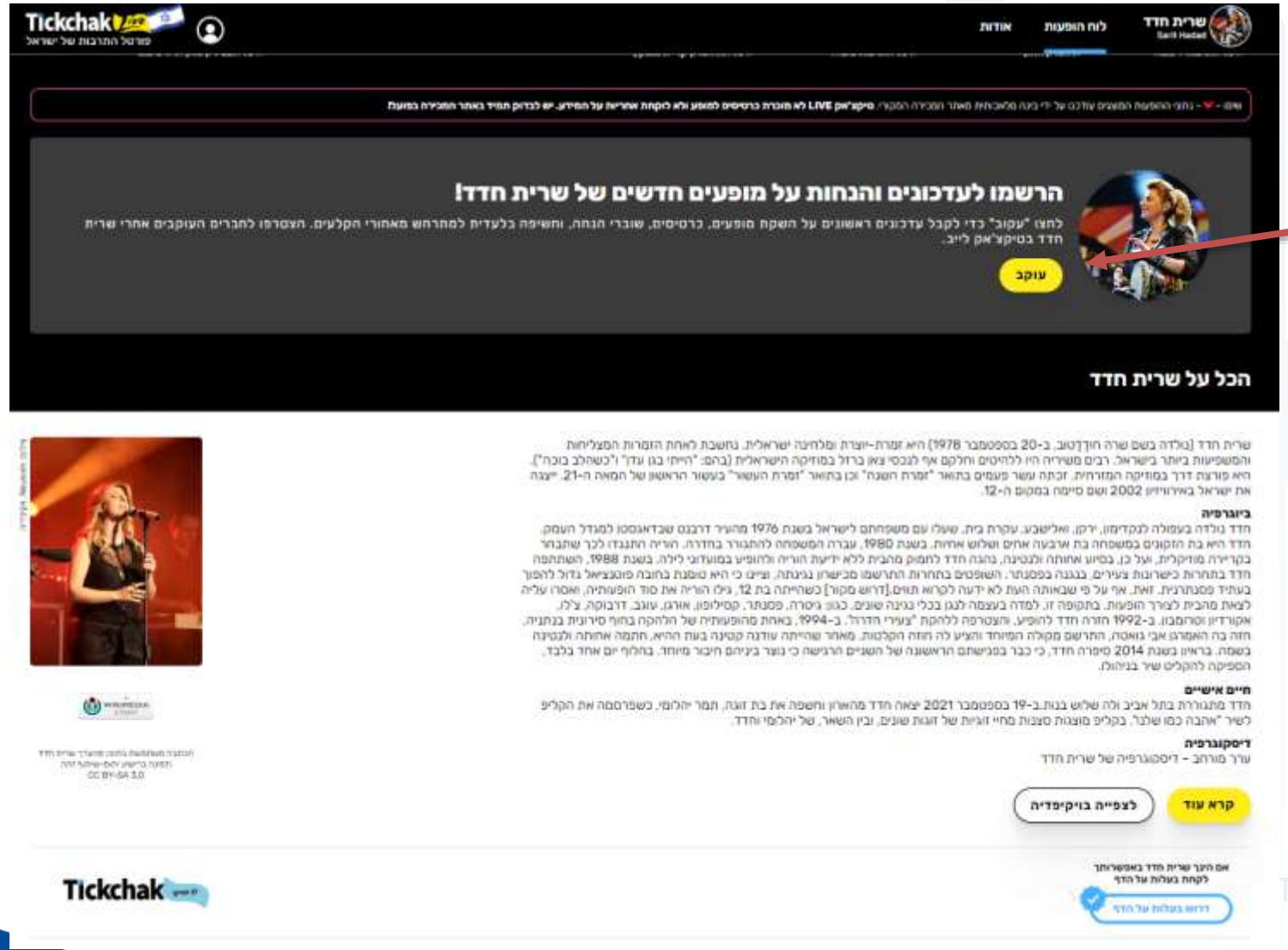
TickChak – Artist page

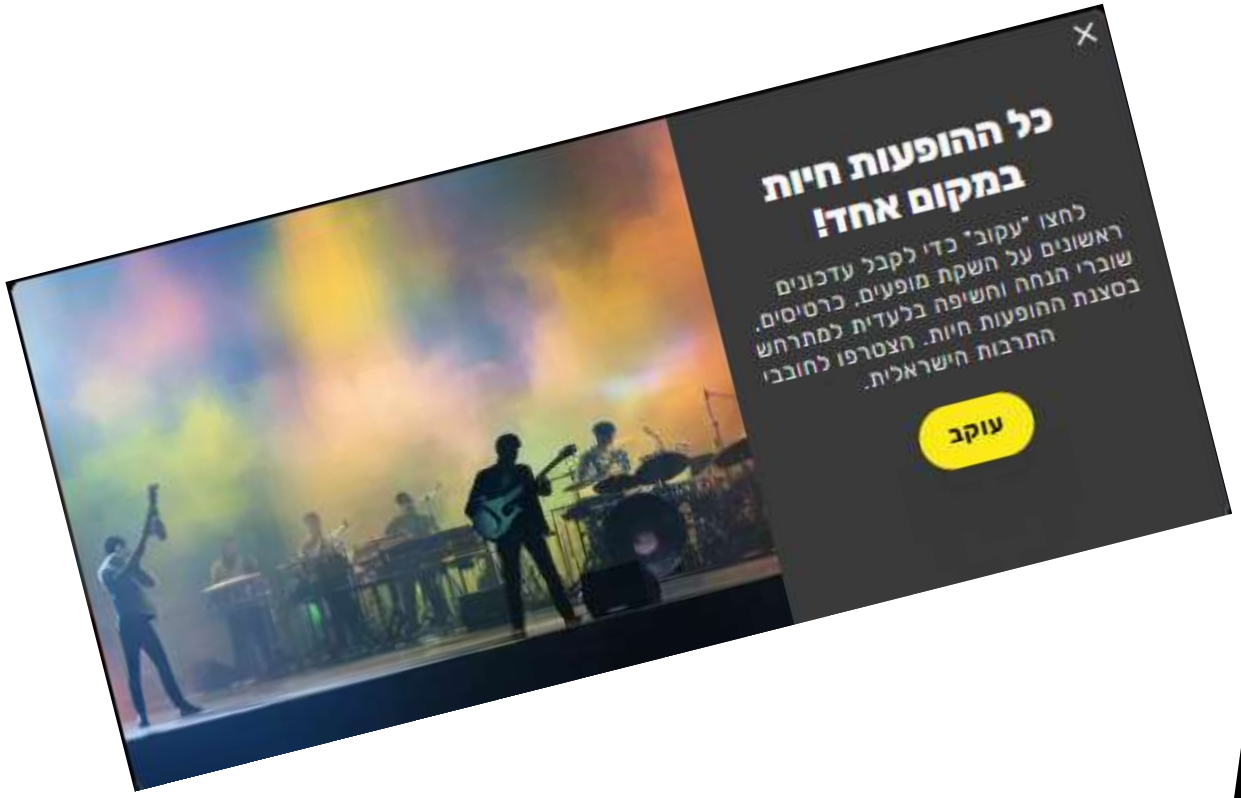
TickChak – Artist page – continuation

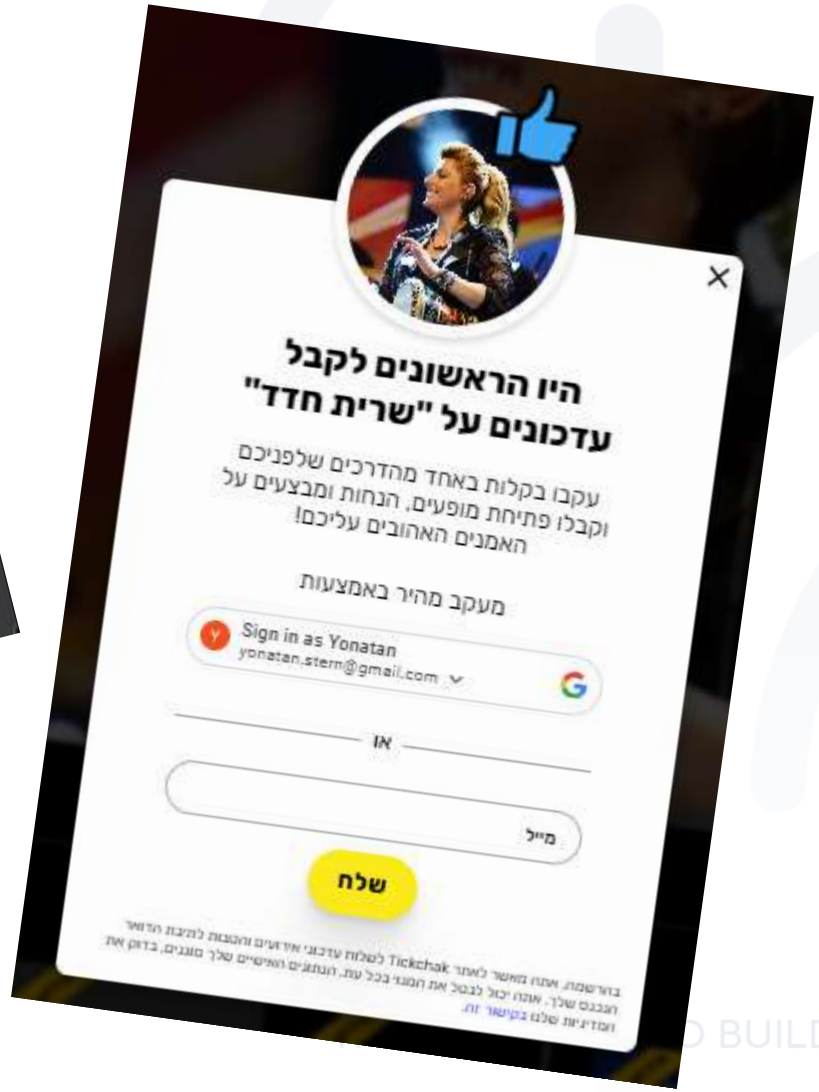


Follow

SmartUp
TO BUILD A STARTUP

TickChak – Artist page – Follow

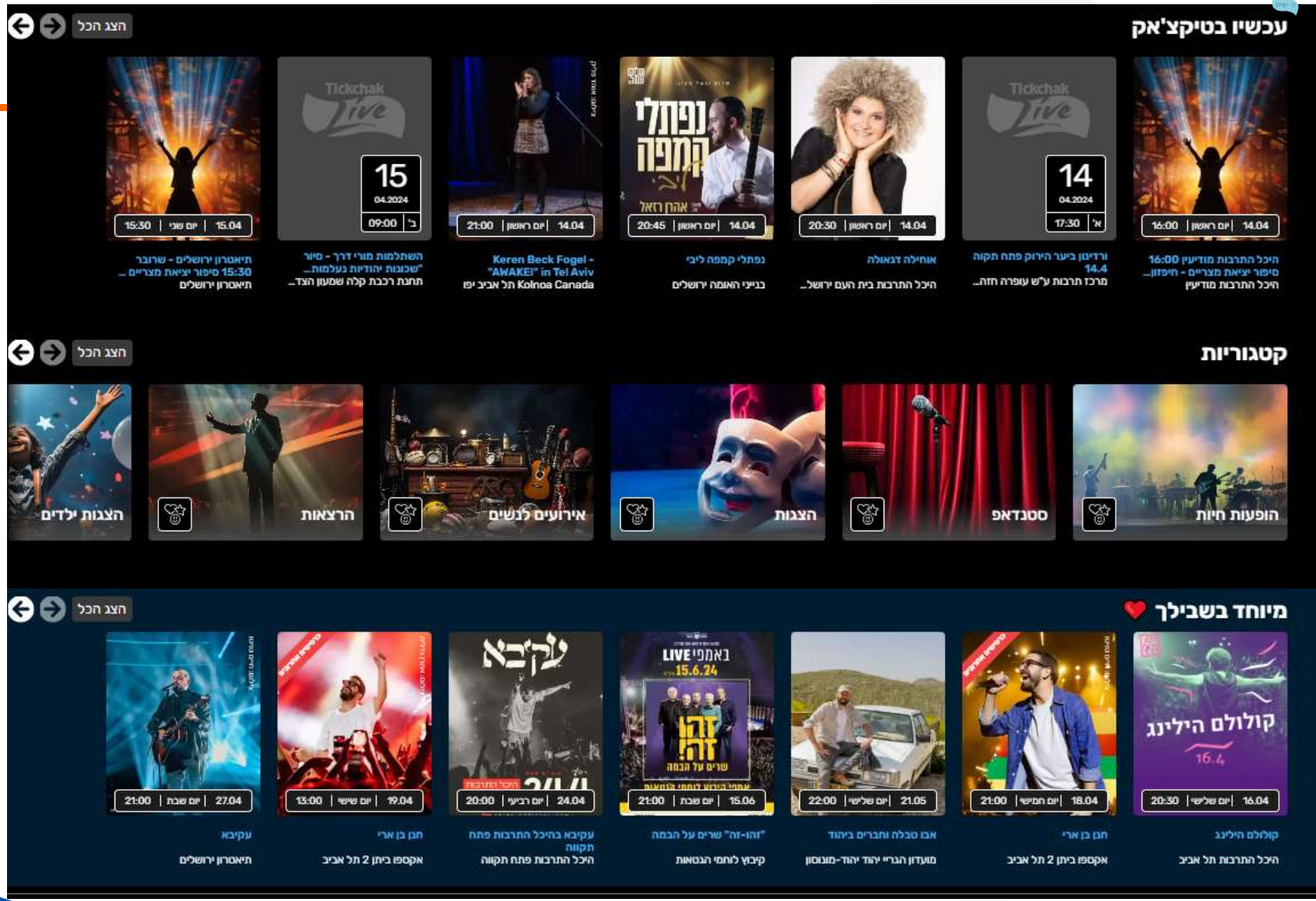




Categories

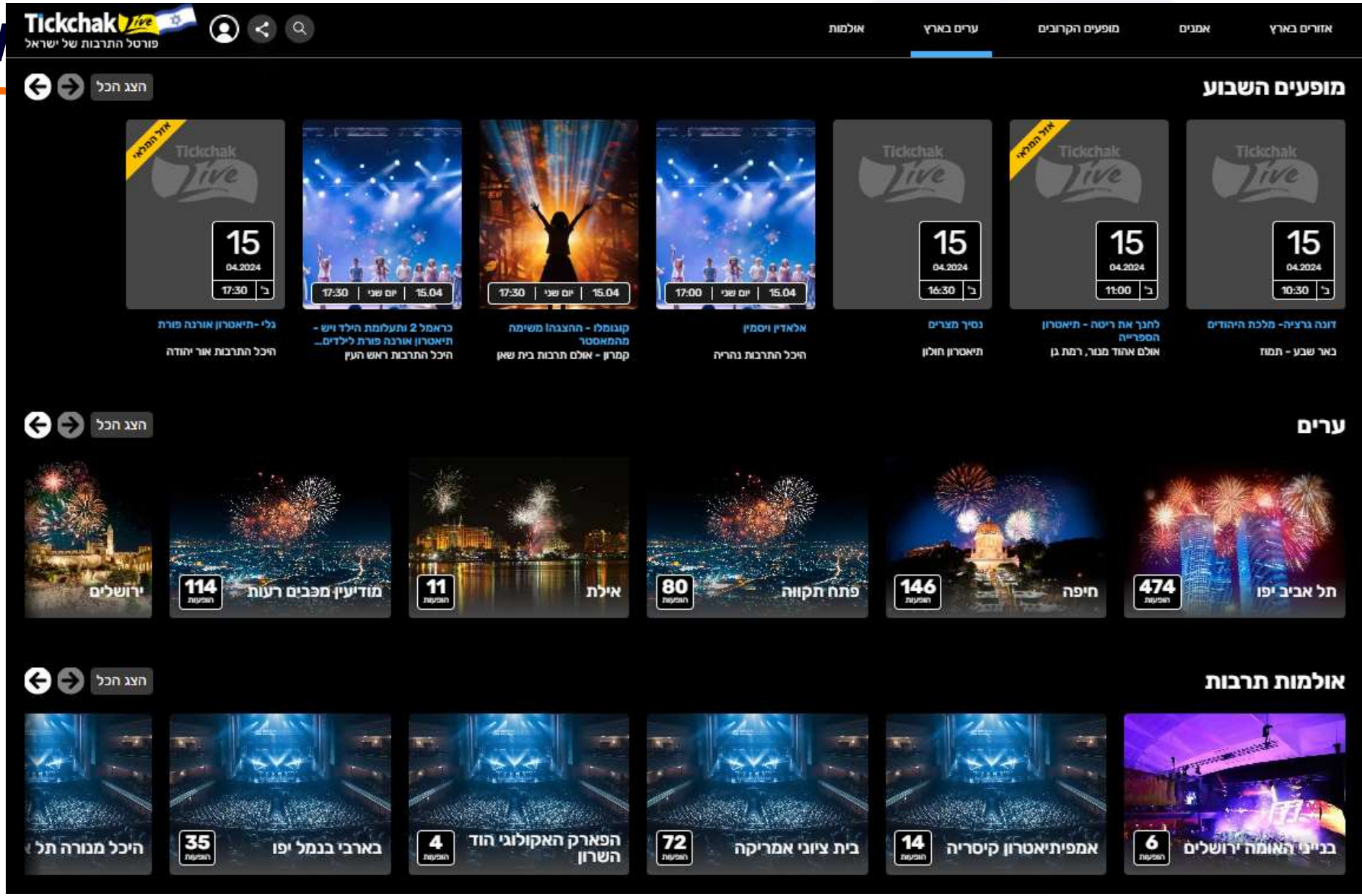
- Live concerts
- Shows
- Standup
- Lectures
- Children
- For women
- ……

- Personalization



Different View

- By Date
- By City
- By Venue



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TickChak – Branding First – New Opportunities

Artists – FREE with paid communication services

- Their home page – updated daily, with full history of their previous performances
- A database of their fan club, with contact information and communication tools – SMS, WhatsApp, email
- Tools to:
  - Interact with their fans before a show
  - Get feedback after a show
  - Pre-sale to fans
  - Last minute ticket sale

TickChak – Branding First – New Opportunities

Cities, Venues

- Daily updated summary of ALL events in their town or venue
- A history and summary of events in their town or venue

TickChak – Competitors

In Israel

- Mevalim.co.il
- Muzi.co.il
- Performances
- Others….

In the USA – SongKick

- Founded in 2007, as part of Y Combinator
- Raised $61M
- 30 employees
- Acquired in 2017 by Warner Music Group

The SmartUp Founding Team

Thank you for listening

Yonatan Stern
Founder
And CEO

Libby Molad
Co-Founder
and COO

Ayala Dinur Turgeman
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