

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

And Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney Smith.

Augusto Pinaud 0:22

I'm Augusto Pinaud.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:22

And today we welcome to the show, James Mulvaney. He is the founder of radio.co, as well as podcast CO, and we wanted to kind of treat everybody with this interview because we think this is going to be a fun, interesting conversation regarding entrepreneurial productivity. Welcome to the show, James.

James Mulvaney 0:42

Thank you very much for having me, guys. Yeah, it's pleasure to be here.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:45

Absolutely. So tell us a little bit about your, your entrepreneurial journey here because it's very interesting to hear that you have this company radio co that helps people create radio stations, basically online. And then this podcasting platform what got you into this and what led you to here.

James Mulvaney 1:02

So when I was sort of 1617, I was growing up and sort of finishing school I wanted to originally I was looking actually going into radio as on air talent, you know, as a DJ. And I used to always love music and I used to love listening to the radio, you know, when I was growing up, and I recorded myself on cassette tape and playing it back and all that kind of stuff like nerdy nerdy kid stuff, right? And, and, you know, he, when he got when it got to about 18 years old, I, I decided not to go down that route as a career, but instead I was learning how to build websites and a bit about the tech industry. This was back in like 2005 2006. I then went off to university and I grew a business which was rather than being actually involved in the radio industry, I grew a business supplying services, streaming media services to the, to the industry, because it was obviously an industry that I kind of understood because I kind of worked in radio a little bit. I've done some, you know, work experience. So I sort of understood you know, the value proposition there. Although when I began, I didn't really know what I was doing technically. So I kind of

just figured it out as I went along. And yeah, it just sort of stuck, really, I'm still very passionate about radio and I love. I love audio as a tool to communicate. I think it's fantastic. And obviously, over the past, sort of four or five years podcasting has had this big resurgence, or even maybe the last two or three years, it's been quite a recent thing. Obviously, we launched radio.co in 2015. That platforms now got, I think, over 4000 different stations using it. So it's been very successful. And we had lots of clients coming to us saying, you know, guys, you're gonna have a podcasting platform, or you're going to implement some kind of podcasting feature into the service. So we sort of looked at the market and thought, well, do we want to do this as part of radio co or is really their opportunity to launch this as its own standalone platform. So we took the decision to actually create a completely new platform. You've built it from the ground up. We obviously have a link between the two services, but the two months It's also quite different.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 3:01

Tell me a little bit about what the podcast co does as a platform. Obviously, it's a media hosting platform. But it does a little bit more than that. And I'm curious about what, what got you to think this is going to be the differentiator between a normal podcasting platform and this,

James Mulvaney 3:18

we we will do some obviously, look at the market. And interestingly, the first ever podcast I recorded was like back in 2008. And this was just being like a business friend of mine and we were we had this podcast called kits to kickstart kick start profits. And that ran for like, I don't know, I think we made we manage 10 episodes or something. And this was kind of just us messing around with the medium. Fast forward like five years and you know, obviously we kind of saw that there was this opportunity of, you know, podcasting start to pick up and we looked at a lot of the the other software out there like when we meet my friend Steve records, his podcast, we used to like use WordPress with a plug in and it was really complicated and then, you know, to the idea of podcasting like to thousand eight around then was kind of you'd have to download the file onto your iPod to walk around, you know, and obviously nowadays, it's completely different. So we wanted to build a solution that was more modern, and easy to use. And it seemed that a lot of the podcast platforms out there really had been kind of launched in this period of like 2007, to about 2010. They're kind of quite clunky, old school sort of software. And we wanted to build something that was fresh, modern, and also looked at not just the actual you, how do you get your podcast online? But how can I distribute it to, you know, apple, iTunes, Spotify, Google and as many platforms as possible and really sort of take that technical knowledge away from people because it's still quite confusing for someone who wants to start a podcast the idea of understanding what an RSS feed is, is it kind of like to your average

person, that's computer talk, isn't it? So so yet the plan was to just build a kind of done for you platform, just make it as super simple and clean to use in an easy as possible for consumers.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 5:02

And by day, I actually teach people what RSS feeds are so I feel I feel I feel that pain, regular basis

Augusto Pinaud 5:09

that pain is shared. You know, I I laugh when you mentioned cassette tapes. You know, I'm sure there is listeners who don't know what they are, but and they're they and then you went to the to the basic I but but it is interesting because I, you know, I said a lot I do business coaching and a lot of the things I tell the people is one of the big problems people have is they're really good at what they do. But they don't know how to share content and how to use that content to grow and what is really interesting for me about the platform is that it allows the people to come with that expertise but let you do or the platform do what it do well instead of a slowing them or stopping them to do that part and I think there is the need for for tools like that, as you said that we're you don't need to necessarily fully understand what our analysis is. But you can now come and bring the content, bring the expertise, you know, on the small businesses. What I worked the most with. That's one of the biggest, biggest obstacles is you have these people who are incredibly good, but are completely stuck where they are.

James Mulvaney 6:26

Yeah, I totally agree. I think the way podcasting is as moved as well is, I think 10 years ago, it was really something reserved for enthusiasts, both on people who are making podcasts and also people are listening with them, or listening to them rather. So nowadays, you know, people who are producing podcasts aren't always that technically savvy, you know, people who just want to share their knowledge. And you know, why should they have to understand that stuff. So that was kind of really one of the core values of the platform when we were sort of designing it we thought it should be simple to use, it should not be intimidating and and Also, you know, accessible for anyone really,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 7:03

we came into contact with you in a fairly unique way. And it was because I'm guessing I was on one of your email lists or something to that effect. And I came across this platform called matchmaker.fm. I logged in and created a profile. And and lo and behold, you popped up in my messages inbox. And so I'm curious about this match maker.fm platform that you've also launched within kind of the podcast co ecosystem, and what it's all about, and and then your, your kind of program here, the 30 and 30, where you're doing 30 interviews in 30 days, and tell us a little bit about matchmaker.fm and the 30 and 30

program what how did it come about?

James Mulvaney 7:45

So matchmakers a it's a real fun project. I don't we getting a lot of satisfaction from making connections and we only launched in middle of February, so it's been live for for around three months. We've surpassed 3000 users now. And the premise is like, it's Tinder for podcasters, you know, because there's about 60% of podcasts are based on, you know, having guests on or interviewing people, or collaborating with others. So, but there didn't seem to be one resource where you could go, and you know, everyone on there was either looking to be interviewed either industry experts, or entrepreneurs, or people who've just got interesting stories to tell. And, you know, podcasters, who are looking for incredible guests, you know, because this is the thing if you've got a podcast that's based on interviewing people, sometimes there'll be people who will pull out last minute, or you know, maybe you've got a weak way for whatever reason, you haven't got a guest lined up. And then sometimes it can be quite a lot of effort to try and consistently deliver results and make sure you've always got someone lined up for the next episode, especially if you're doing like many people do a podcast on a weekly basis or even, you know, bi weekly or monthly, it can be quite a lot of work sometimes to kind of coordinate make sure you've always got guests lined up. So we thought, wouldn't it be fantastic if there was just one resource that you could go to, and you could get results very quickly. And that's really been the sort of the premise of matchmaker it's been, as I say, live for three months, the feedback that we've had overall has been fantastic. We launched it as currently as a sort of retreat like a startup within a startup. So it's, it has its sub team working on the development, and the marketing, sort of responsibilities is shared with the existing team. But the main thing is to say that there's been the kind of blow me away is just the response rate we've had from people and the amount of people I've had contact me just saying, James, you know, we've getting so many good results from this. We're having really interesting conversations of we weren't aware of these podcasts or we weren't aware of these guests before. And so, as part of the marketing for this platform, I decided to set myself a challenge and get booked on 30 podcasts within 30 days.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 9:53

Fantastic. And that's what brings you here today.

James Mulvaney 9:54

That's what brought me here today. Yeah. And so far, it's going well, you know,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 9:58

good, good. I'm glad to hear that. I'm Glad to hear that one of the one of the things that we talked about discussing on the show because

we are ProductivityCast and we talk about all things productivity I thought we would dive into your kind of your entrepreneurial productivity systems and tools and and so let's start with kind of like on a daily basis what is a day in the life of James Mulvaney his productivity look like?

James Mulvaney 10:21

I'm right. So but it's it's so i by no means I'm the most organized or, you know an expert on productivity. I think one of the things that used to I used to do every single day and I don't do it as much now I've got kind of a big team working with me. But when especially the days where it was just me on my own, I was starting out I didn't have a team. Every single day I would have a sheet of paper which I would put in front of me and I think sometimes I like working on paper. In fact, I've got a notepad right in front of me right here right now because I just think having post it notes and papers sometimes, you know, they're always in front of you, you can glance at whereas if you kind of got to go into Trello or whatever. It's You're using to, to look at it, it can, it can be harder to find information. So one of the things I used to do is just block the day into like our sections and just say, right first hour, I'm going to do this second, I'm going to do this and I'd make sure I'd just cross things off as I was going, that was really effective when I just used to be on my own. And, you know, I didn't have a team to manage or anything like that. Nowadays, you know, we obviously work on sprint. So in terms of development team, they work in two week sprints, according to sort of an agile methodology, and you know, that they're sort of super organized about that. And interestingly, we've just in marketing and sales, we've started working in Sprint's as well now to, you know, to two week intervals, just to try and get some more organization going. So yeah, those are kind of like my top tips. I think, to be honest with you, the bigger you grow, there's about 30 to 30 number staff are working across both brands now. You know, I think you need to focus more on communication, you need to focus more on organization. You know, it was the I think, for me, like the sweet spot of when, you know, it was kind of like it was a few of us. And we were sort of in the early days of radio CO, maybe there was like, 10 to, like, not eight or nine of us, you know, that was kind of super cool because of it. Everyone could just kind of throw ideas together, whereas now I think you've got to be more structured about everything.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:21

Yeah, as, as a company grows, there's always going to be a culture that develops, and that culture needs to be, you know, understood by everybody. And that always means more investment, in that infrastructure habits or to individuals is culture is to organization. Things are slow moving when it comes to organizations. And that also means that if you don't have the right structure up front, then that becomes more difficult on the back end.

James Mulvaney 12:46

Yeah, I mean, I'm super lucky because I have a really good CTO and a really good CEO. And they they're both super organized. So I think they kind of I'm the ideas guy, I come up with the strategy and you know, sometimes I can go a million miles an hour and what I've learned over the years last few years, especially as we've grown, the team is, you know, some will have to slow down and keep my mouth shut. Because actually, sometimes you need to let people focus on one thing and finish doing that before you can start saying, Well, how about let's doing this? And let's do that, you know, so. So I think sort of having having those structures and those processes in place has been really important and crucial to us as a business.

Augusto Pinaud 13:20

And I think anything you hit an important point and you said, I had an incredible CTO and CEOs that are super organized, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but you said you I'm the least organized of these three, at least. At least that was what I understood. And it is really important as this entrepreneurship skills and this business are growing, who are going to be these teams and which skills are going to have sometimes we see people who tried to bring their people with a similar skills. Oh, well, I'm really good at this. Let me bring people like this instead of people like what you're describing that come and complement those skills that that you have So, so you show I mean for us to show us on the camera a little note but but let me dig a little bit more into that because you know as you know, you know when the when we do the regular show, you know we have PCs, we have Mac's we have iPads, we have Chromebooks. So we have basically every device comes to the show when the forum the regular shows happen. So what is in front of you it's a Mac is a PC doesn't matter, you don't care you work on a phone. So what is your technology tools that continue helping push in day to day? And what is that application? I know you mentioned Trello slightly there is Trello still there on the list or what are the applications and and the reason is people like to know you know, what are the day to day but also what helps James think, you know, three step forward.

James Mulvaney 14:53

I'll tell you everything we use. So I I'm based on Mac I switched to Mac about 10 years ago, on a I've always I've been a big fan ever since. Same with phone. I like Apple iPhone, right? In terms of software, yeah, we use Trello quite heavily for managing sort of the Agile process, we use JIRA, in terms of our development. And we started using that as a marketing as well. I still also like writing notes. So I have a lot of notes on just like the apple notes application as well. You know, obviously, sometimes, as I mentioned earlier, paper has a benefit for just kind of doing database stuff. The problem with this thing is, if you want to go and find something that you wrote two months ago, it can be quite difficult, right? So sometimes I think, you know, having notes on the computer can also be

really useful as well.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:42

I won't I will just poke in I'll poke in there and just say that you can you can always take a photograph of that and then that way you can search it you know, later in different applications, whether that be any any number of tools that do that

James Mulvaney 15:54

Evernote Evernote is I never I started using Evernote a few years ago and I just never quite got into it. But I supposedly it's got some really powerful features you didn't know me that's that's why

Raymond Sidney-Smith 16:06

little little thing you probably don't know is that I'm an Evernote certified consultant and also the I'm the Evernote regional leader for North America and you're not in North America, so you wouldn't have known. Yeah, but but does Yeah, Evernote does have that capability, which does make it quite useful. And most recently, Google lense got the capability of capturing, lifting text out of the documents that you scan. So you could just, you know, open up the application, snap a picture of it, and it actually lifts the handwritten text and turns it into type text. So you can then just like throw it into Apple notes. So

James Mulvaney 16:44

I think that's one of those things where you have to get into the habit of doing it. You know, it's, I'm not in the habit of doing that. So I go for day to day notes, I'll put them down on paper. Then, if the stuff that I know I need to reuse I'm quite good at doing lists. on Apple notes, and again, Apple notes has got so much better than it was say like five years ago, it used to be really basic. There's a lot more functionality and you can be more organized have folders and everything now, whereas I think back Back then it was just literally one list, wasn't it of notes. And I don't think you'd have like checklists or anything. So So yeah, I think there's lots of software out there. It's just about finding the right thing that works for your workflow. Really,

Augusto Pinaud 17:23

you know, when years ago when I begin moving from that similar issue, you know, from having the notes and, and the notepads and pieces of index cards, I love index cards, and we're having exactly that issue. You know, the pile of index cards at the end of the week, and who's going to read into these but some of the information was critical. I really need to good note afford to to lose it. So what I started doing was I said a couple of times on my calendar in the middle of day and the end of the day to take the pictures on a scan and initially they went to to Evernote I after that remove them from there but but he was a when the problem right now is if I told you go and scan it, you're

going to look all the six days back and say I quit out, when you start putting that then now it's a 10 to 15 minute task that then you will get done, you know, much easy. And the power of having the access to those notes are incredible I I live on the iPad, and there is an application called Goodnotes where I take and now the good notes allow me to handwrite everything and then I can select it and convert to in text is a conversion perfect no because my handwriting is so awful. But he's not the software capability is right in here. But it is probably 85% accurate that if I'm looking at that note I'm converted I can quickly fix the little things and now I have a text that I can export to notes or to Anywhere, I love what Apple has done with notes, especially because as you said, I can have them on the iPad, and they will synchronize automatically. And I don't need to think about where that note is. And if the search function on the app works really, really well,

James Mulvaney 19:15

I think that's the thing I think search as well as got so much better over the last, say, five years. And you know, it really, you know, again, get a Gmail, I just think it's fantastic. I can generally find any email if I want. If I want to find an email and remember the subject to remember some part of it, I can always find it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:31

Yeah. Augusto, he introduced me Well, he didn't introduce me, but he convinced me to use good notes. And I'm, I'm a handwriting fanatic. And so I'm actually taking notes in our conversation today on an everlast rocket book, notebook. And I love them. I absolutely love the notebooks and, and they're great. But you know, I do go back and forth between writing on the iPad with the Apple Pencil. And and Augusto convinced me to go with Goodnotes over notability and And then he showed me last last week I suppose it was the the ability to circle text and lift the text from the from the image and I'm sorry I just have a my my text comes out perfectly every time

Augusto Pinaud 20:13

I begin saying it's not this software is the handwriting. Okay, I was in college and many years ago and I you know that the test and I did the test and when the teacher came back, he asked Who is this? And I raised my hand you know, kind of shame. And he said, next test, you do it in my office on my laptop. Poor guy could not read my my handwriting text.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 20:42

When we talk about your your CT0, CT0 and CEO I'm curious Do you know what makes them you know if you're the visionary crazy maker in in that aside, what what do you feel like makes them organized and what do they do in some of their work to help keep you organized? Moving forward?

James Mulvaney 21:01

That's a very good question. And, you know, I think, sort of touched on it before having a good team around you that complements you is great. And obviously, you know, we've all got our strengths and weaknesses. JOHN, who's CTO, he's, he's been with me for a long time. Now, you know, we've worked together since about 2011. And he was always really good at kind of the granularity. And in terms of what he does in managing the development team, you know, making sure that there are certain standards that are adhere to when code is written. So when you're working on a big platform, like radio, co podcast, CO, you know, there's a lot of code base there, and you've got to be organized and structured in a certain way. So that when someone new comes onto the team, you know, they they can immediately easily sort of start understanding how sections of the product work. And certainly, in the past, when we've built products, especially in the early days, you know, we had that problem. where, you know, you might have one developer working on some solution, here in a silo. And that can be very, very dangerous position to be in as a tech company, you know, because certainly, if that person decides that they want to move on to a different company, usually you can show you can hire someone to replace them, but then the rest of the team don't always have a good understanding of how that that function was built, for example. So we've been as a business making a lot more, being a lot more proactive over the last, I'd say two years of making sure that, you know, rather than having one developer working on one thing, one developer working on another thing, that always kind of sharing the tasks and responsibility. And Aaron, who's our CEO, he's always been very organized, you know, again, he's, he's probably one of the best people within the organization at putting processes in place, you know, and making sure that different departments are communicating. And again, it's interesting because over the last few couple of months, you know, as I've said, we've all been We're not the office based and I think we've been having to focus more on communication. There has been a few hiccups here and there where, you know, different departments aren't necessarily being the best at communicating together. So there's always always room to improve. And one of the other things we've recently implemented again, this was our CEO who sort of put this in place is doing a town hall meeting, which is basically when you send out an anonymous survey to every single member of the the company, they could complete it, they can say what they're enjoying what they're not enjoying good things, bad things. And then obviously, the main things you need to look at, okay, what how can we solve any of these negative points? And certainly, what's very interesting about this process is we're seeing, you know, people who have have said similar things. So if you get sort of three people within a department saying, Yeah, this isn't great, this is great. This is great, you know, they've got some kind of issue there. So allows you to sort of signal down and focus in on how to solve those, those problems. Then the idea is you have this meeting at Town Hall, which coincidentally is actually today we're doing this meeting, but

obviously, you got to do it remotely like this, where you basically say, Okay, look, we've we've identified these common issues, and here's how we're going to try and resolve them. And here's how we think we can solve them out. So so that has been a fantastic example of an exercise that's kind of, you know, we we ultimately we want to we want everyone to be productive as they can be also is very, very important to me. And, again, I think this is one of my strengths is just building a really good solid culture within the company. But then obviously, if if things start to slip, and it's, as you grow, it's quite easy to take your eye off the ball in terms of the culture side of things, because you're not speaking to everyone and fully aware of what everyone's doing all the time. So it's a good way to kind of just get everyone unifying everyone on the same page. Basically,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:51

I think it's really important to have a culture that one, you know, respects everybody's individual views, even if they're not used. I always think People, you know, I want to hear everything, even if I say no to all of them. And, you know, and it's just good to understand that I'm going to hear people out. And and and i'm curious, as we kind of wrap up the conversation in terms of what do you feel like is the like, number one? If you could have a number one, what's the what's the kind of the best thing that you feel like has caused the success of both radio CO and podcast CO, in terms of the organizational qualities of the business and maybe the fit? Because I'm just curious what what do you feel like was the success of the organizations?

James Mulvaney 25:40

Ci? That's a hard question to answer, isn't it just to narrow down one thing? I think I think I you know, I go back to I've said before, I think culture has been really, really important. You know, we've got a very, very good track record for retaining staff, which traditionally isn't always the case in the tech technology sector. And also just perseverance. I think, you know, you've just got to sometimes keep out things. This is one of my values as an entrepreneur, you know, once you've decided to go down a certain road, you've got to keep going down that road, even if things don't always go your way. Just try and keep focused. And stay down that path. Because again, this is the thing, especially in the early days, I was always guilty of like, you know, coming up with ideas every single week, and then suddenly, you'd end up just sort of focusing on too many things at once. So, I think, you know, sticking sticking to one thing can be really valuable.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:29

So focus and culture,

James Mulvaney 26:31

focus and culture. There we go. Yeah.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:33

Any any final thoughts that you have that you wanted to share before we close out?

James Mulvaney 26:38

Well, I mean, just this, obviously, I'm at the moment I'm trying to get as many folks on board as Matchmaker, so if anyone listening has got an interesting story to tell, or they think that they can add value to people's podcast, please feel free to sign up. It's totally free to join.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:52

Thanks, James, for joining us here on ProductivityCast.

James Mulvaney 26:55

Thanks, Ray and Augusto, great to speak to you both.

Augusto Pinaud 26:57

Thank you. Thank you.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:58

That was James Mulvaney. CEO and founder of podcast CO and radio Co. If you have a question or comment for James, or anything we've discussed during this cast, please visit our episode page on productivity cast dotnet there on the podcast website at the bottom of the page, you can leave a comment or question I will be happy to respond and answer any questions that you might have there. By the way to get to any ProductivityCast episode quickly, simply add the three digit episode number to the end of ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash so Episode One would be ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash 001. Episode Two would be ProductivityCast dotnet, forward slash 002, and so on. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, please visit ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact, you can leave a voice recorded message or you can type us a message and we'll be happy to look to see if we can feature you in a future episode. I want to express my thanks to Mr. Bernard Francis Wade and art galleries for joining me here. On ProductivityCast each and every week, you can learn more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net Also, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast. Here's to your productive life. Take care of your body.

Voiceover Artist

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.