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smartboost is changing the way Companies do Digital Marketing by using AI to strike a balance between the Creative Side and Data Side

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Letellier, what is the concept behind smartboost?*

Mr. Letellier: We want to change the way people do digital marketing by getting the right balance between the creative side and the data side. Right now, marketing companies spend more time in data analytics and spend less time in the creative side. My goal is to lessen the time that my employees spend on data analytics by using software.

Right now, we are building AI software powered by machine and we are learning that will help companies understand what is going to be the next steps in order to predict what is going to be the next move and on which platforms. Our software is just for us right now, for the first steps, but maybe later on we are going to start selling them in the market. The goal is to balance between creative and analytics, through advanced technology have the ability to spend less time on the analytics.

CEOCFO: *How did you recognize the need for a different approach?*

Mr. Letellier: Most companies are collecting more data and they are looking for agencies that work with data. A year ago some companies started to hire data scientists to try to understand how we can deal with all of this data, because we said data is gold. Then I saw the opportunity for me to start building our own software to help those companies to understand the power of data and how the data that they have collected from last year can help them to generate more models on their side.

CEOCFO: *How do you work with the software? Would you walk us through a somewhat typical engagement, so we can see how the two sides fit together?*

Mr. Letellier: We are a technologically advanced digital agency. We work with businesses to increase their lead generation, to increase online revenue with their e-commerce platform and to generate more visibility online. The first thing we do is we start collecting data to see if the company is the right fit and to make sure that we can deliver the results that the company is expecting. If the first one is checked we then move to the next steps, where we have an interview with the executive of the company to make sure we align our goals together. Then we start working together.

The software starts as soon as we employ the marketing strategy. We plug their CRM; so, if they use Salesforce and HotSpot, with Google analytics, all the tools that they have that collect data. We plug them into our software, and as soon as we get some insight we share with the team. The team then creates the right tactic to generate ease or increase the visibility and generate more revenue.

CEOCFO: *How do results change using the new approach?*

Mr. Letellier: The results are in real-time, as we are able to see the work that we are doing in real-time through our software, which is also predicting what the next step should be, while also understanding what we are doing right now. We are going to see, based on some specific TPI that we decided between each company, the TPI will help us to optimize our actual company. Most of the TPI that we are using is lead, revenue, sales opportunity, increase of website traffic, increased organic traffic, and all that information will help us to optimize real-time how to do better the next month.

CEOCFO: *Do you feel that your clients understand the newer approach or does it matter to them, as long as you get results?*

Mr. Letellier: We typically work with medium to large companies where they have CMOs who advertise, and most of the industries we are working with are eCommerce and tech companies. Therefore, they know the power of data. That is why they are looking for an agency like us. Most of the time, they did not have good success with a traditional digital agency, and they are looking for an agency that is able to work with all the data that they have.

These companies are trying to implement a smarter way to do online marketing. Most of the time we need to explain it to them and do an introduction of how to collect data. Sometimes they do not have enough data for us to start, so we start with a normal digital marketing approach and when we reach a good number of data collected we switch to the AI marketing approach.

"Artificial intelligence is the science of creating things. Creativity is connecting things together. Modern forward thinking is creativity and intelligence having fun!" – Giovanni Letillier

CEOCFO: *What do you understand, on a very basic level, about marketing that others may not?*

Mr. Letellier: Everything is behind the data, so if we do not have the correct information we are going to look at data first. If we see that we are not able to do it based on the data, because they do not have enough, for examples; banks who we do not work with.

We really believe that all the information that we should implement at the marketing service is hidden somewhere in their data. We just need to find out. As soon as we find some pain points, we are going to bring the strategy on top of it using the data that we have. Some specific demographic or gender or job title or industry, even behave the same way on the website. I want to create a specific strategy for each of them.

CEOCFO: *The smartboost site shows, "We are crazy about data and driven by the notion of excellence." Would you explain excellence in this context?*

Mr. Letellier: It is very simple. We strive to over-deliver. Our goal is to exceed the expectation of the client, as we said at the beginning, and our goal is to over deliver, by excellent communication, so if they are expecting one hundred leads, we are going to do one hundred and twenty, or one hundred and fifty leads. If they are expecting five hundred thousand dollars in revenue amounts, we are going to do six hundred thousand. Therefore, our goal is to always do more than they are expecting.

CEOCFO: *How are you reaching out today? What led to the name change to smartboost?*

Mr. Letellier: The name change for smartboost was for two different reasons. It is because we had two marketing agencies. One was built in 2015 by myself and my partner, co-founder and COO, Clement Connor, using traditional strategies for online marketing. Then in 2016 we started to do the B2B side under another company Sio Digital Agency where we implemented AI marketing. My background is in mathematics, it is not in marketing or data; it is just strictly mathematics. From there, I started to use some data of the clients to do some statistics and do some predictive analysis.

At the end of last year, we wanted to try it on the B2C - Business to Customer side, clients of CNG digital marketing, and it worked. Therefore, right now AI was working with both sides, B2B and B2C. We have two different teams in our office with two different entities. For us, it made sense to merge under one name, smartboost which means accelerating revenue of the company smartly.

CEO CFO: *What surprised you as you reached this point in your new process?*

Mr. Letellier: The only thing that surprised me is that a lot of people are using data without knowing or using AI tools without understanding. For example, Siri and the voice search for iPhones, and Alexa and they do not understand that there is AI behind it. Therefore, they are going to be interested by AI, but they do not understand how to use AI technology and that in order to use it to its fullest potential we need data, meaning data in that company.

It is a change that needs to be done in our future and I think that in the next two years companies will have a better understanding of how to capture data. For example, we have so many clients where the data was not tracked properly, and we call that collected data we we're not able to use to predict what will be the next steps to benefit the company. They really need to understand that data is very important in their business and that they need to make sure that they collect the right data.

CEO CFO: *What is your strategy for the next couple of years?*

Mr. Letellier: First, we are a marketing agency using our own tools, and our own software. However, we are going to develop version 2 of our software that we will initially use exclusively for our clients. We are going to try to always have the best version for our clients and bring to market the best version that can help those companies to understand their data. We will still be a marketing agency in five years, but also sharing our tools that make our marketing successful.

CEO CFO: *How has the current situation with COVID-19 changed or altered your thinking? How do you work around a situation where things are pretty upside down right now?*

Mr. Letellier: For COVID-19, one initiative that we took is that all of our employees are working from home currently. There is no decrease of business so far and we really want to help the community. We began an initiative to help restaurants in San Diego, developing their food delivery and pick up online. When a customer is looking for food delivery not all the restaurateurs are ready to move to a food delivery strategy, because they are a restaurant, they are not delivery or take-out. Therefore we created a program at a low cost, in order to help those restaurants by building their food delivery system and also help them implement marketing tools to ensure that they can keep their restaurant in business during this pandemic and beyond.

CEO CFO: *What, if anything, my people miss when they look at smartboost?*

Mr. Letellier: The way we balance AI technology and creativity. Everybody needs to see through a live webcam how things work. However, if we look at the webcam, we are only going to see people, meaning the creative side working, bringing a new strategy, and a new approach. They are going to see on one-side, the tech team with the software engineer data scientists, working with older data from the company and they would need to understand and see how we balance both. Right now it is hard for them to see behind the website how AI intelligence or AI creativity works together, because they have never seen that before.