CUSTOMER SHOWCASE » **APPCUES**

Flexibility in Format: How Appcues Elevated "Voice of the Product" into a Binge-Worthy Series

Looking for truly binge-worthy content in the b2b space? Look no further! See how Appcues played with format to revamp season two of "Voice of the Product".

When product-led growth pioneer Appcues decided they wanted to create a genuinely binge-worthy content experience, they knew it had to be different.

They had already launched a successful webinar series, free tools like the User Onboarding Cost Calculato, and even a full User Onboarding Academy. And while these assets performed well and fueled the sales pipeline, the team was seeking content a little higher up in the funnel; something that could solidify Appcues as a thought leader in the product-led growth space and build brand affinity over time.

The result? A finely tuned video interview series called *Voice of the Product*. The premise was simple but succinct: Conduct one-on-one interviews about product-led growth with SaaS leaders executing this approach. And the first season of *Voice of the Product* did precisely that.

So, how did Appcues align this video series with their vision of growing the product-led growth movement? And why did they take a totally different approach for the second season of the show?

into a truly binge-worthy show in just one season. Let's dive in!

Launching "Voice of the Product"

The initial vision of *Voice of the Product* was to highlight business leaders paving the path for product-led growth. After the first set of interviews with SaaS leaders from companies like IBM and ProfitWell, the Appcues team knew they were onto something special.

Kelsey hosted the first season, which debuted with five episodes. Each episode was shot on-site with guests and edited down to around 20 minutes. The series was well received in the industry and served as cornerstone content for Appcues's Product-Led Growth Collective website.

Image courtesy of Appcues.

However, despite the popular adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," the Appcues team decided to shake things up in a significant way for the second season. A unique opportunity forced the team to get creative and totally rethink the format of the show.

Shifting to a snappy new format

Perhaps the most fundamental shift between the first and second seasons of Voice of the Product was the format.

"The first season was more of a classic interview-style show where we would meet the person where they were and do a longer interview," Kelsey said. "Sometimes, they were closer to about 30–40 minutes, and then we would edit them down to be a little more concise—15–20 minutes."

However, in the second season, all the interviews took place in San Francisco at the [Product Led Growth Summit](). A niche event for product professionals, Appcues had access to 30+ leaders at a single event—the perfect chance to sit down with some of the industry's biggest players and leverage their expertise for the show.

Appcues leveraged their partnership with [OpenView]() to identify and reach out to relevant business leaders who spoke at the summit. Since OpenView had already virtually vetted all the potential guests as summit speakers, it made it easy for the Appcues team to identify whom they wanted to interview.

"Anyone coming through the speaker green room was somebody we wanted to talk with," Kelsey said. "Through that collaboration with OpenView, we also knew exactly who was going to be in the green room."

With a location change and a little recording set up near the summit green room, Kelsey and the Appcues team also saw an opportunity to tinker with the series' style.

"The thought was, why don't we ask a lot of consistent questions, and then we can edit it together to show where the holes are and where the agreement is?" Kelsey said.

Unlike the first season, which focused on a single SaaS leader interview, the second season's episodes focused on individual questions, with answers from multiple SaaS leaders. Suddenly, the format became less of a one-on-one chat and turned into a much larger conversation where multiple guests shared their thoughts and insights on one particular topic.

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insights on one particular topic.

For example, the first episode of season one was a standard one-on-one interview Kelsey conducted with IBM Chief Digital Officer Nancy Hensley, with both participants visible on camera. By contrast, the first episode of the second season did not feature Kelsey on camera. Instead, the episode panned to seven different SaaS leaders who gave their answers to the first question of the series—what do companies get wrong about growth?

The new format also made for a different viewing experience. None of the episodes in season two crossed the 10-minute mark, which also added a sense of urgency to how the guests answered questions during their respective speaking slots.

Leveraging the element of surprise

While the snappier second-season format was born somewhat out of necessity at the summit, it also came with added benefits. Chief among those was not having to go through a formal interview-request process where questions needed to be approved and schedules needed to be shifted.

"We emailed eight or so people to try to get them to agree to doing a video interview and then had two that were actually signed on," Kelsey said. "The rest of them, I think the other eight to 10 that we actually talked to the day of filming, were just grabbed out of the hallway or in the lunch line."

There might have been very few guaranteed guests heading into the summit, but the Appcues team pushed on and was able to land several guests for the second season by sheer will. But having several last-minute guests actually turned out to be a blessing in disguise, and one that worked in Voice of the Product's favor.

think, 'Well I don't know, am I going to look like an idiot? Are they going to ask me a question I don't know the answer to?'. They get in their own head. With video, I think the less time you give people, the more likely they'll say yes to it."

> "Honestly, with agreeing to be on video, folks can get very nervous. I think the less time you give people, the more likely they'll say yes to it."

Alas, Kelsey acknowledged, it can be a bit of a balancing act. Sometimes getting a high-profile guest that you want on your program requires sending questions in advance, as well as weeks of planning. That said, making time for a guest to pursue any tangents that may come up in the interview is also a great way to get a natural response from them.

In the trailer for Voice of the Product season two, a number of SaaS leaders are seemingly stumped while attempting to answer an unidentified question. Those organic reactions wouldn't have been possible without catching them off guard and using that element of surprise.
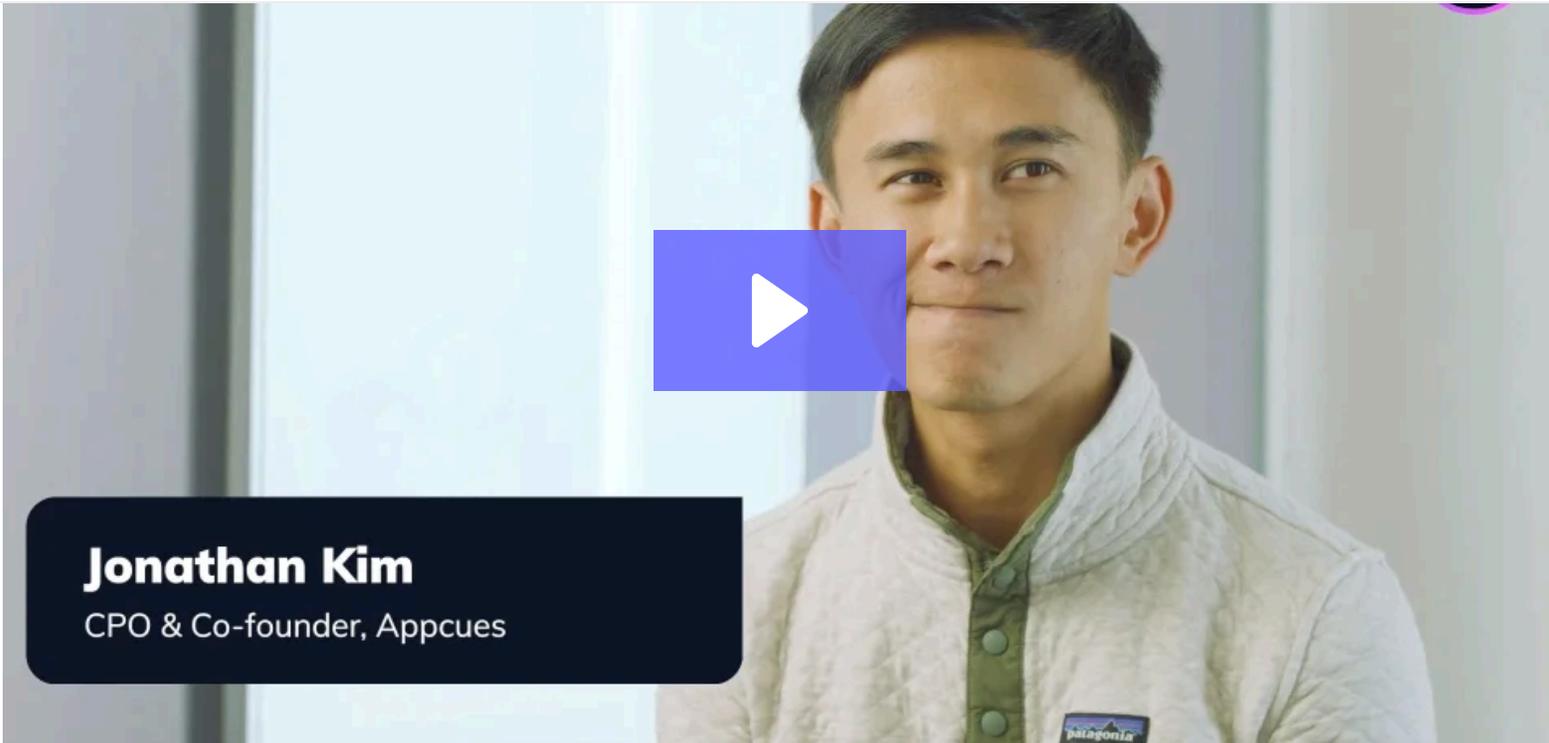
Jonathan Kim
CPO & Co-founder, Appcues

"Those organic reactions wouldn't have been possible without catching them off guard and using that element of surprise."

Putting guests in the hot seat

The shift from the first season's one-on-one format to the second season's question-centric format also meant the single question guests were asked had to be more poignant.

easy questions that anyone can answer comfortably feels boring to me. I think [the questions from season two] came from thinking, 'What would people want to see?' And nobody really wants a pre-answer to a softball question."

"Putting together a bunch of easy questions that anyone can answer comfortably feels boring to me."

So, instead, the Appcues team opted for hard-hitting questions in the second season. They made videos centered on questions such as, "What do companies get wrong about growth?" and "When should you use people over product?" These questions forced guests to really sit and think before giving a raw, honest response.

Image courtesy of Appcues.

Of course, Kelsey also admits that type of approach comes with its own risks as well.

"I don't think I irreparably damaged anyone," Kelsey said. "But I would say the comfort level of people was vastly varied in terms of who could really enjoy being on it and who wished, probably, that they didn't say yes to us. That being said, I think everyone did well. You kind of just have to push people out of their comfort zone sometimes."

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Sometimes you won't have everything figured out the first time around—and that's ok! Creating the type of content your brand wants to be aligned with takes time and constant adjustments. You need to experiment with new ideas and see what works best for the audience you're trying to build long-term.

The Appcues team made significant changes to the style and format of *Voice of the Product* from the first season to the second. While some of their creative choices resulted from outside forces, those choices and circumstances ended up working in their favor, helping to create the type of show that really resonates with their audience.

Start Planning Your Debut Show

All you need to get started with your first video series is a little inspiration. Explore five different types of series you can start creating today in this post!

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