

Pitch_ Ashlee Ammons of Mixtroz

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SPEAKERS

Matt Hunckler, J. Kelly Hoey



Matt Hunckler 00:14

Welcome to the powder keg podcast. This is not going to be one of our usual episodes. It's sort of an in between episode of the powder keg podcast which we are testing out to give you a sort of behind the scenes look at a really interesting tech company doing remarkable things. I'm your host, Matt Hunckler. And in today's episode, we're sharing a five minute live startup pitch between an entrepreneur and a panel of investors and advisors. If you like Shark Tank, I think you will love this because in today's episode, you'll hear from Ashley Emmons, the CEO and co founder of mix Joe's an app that helps people connect and engage at networking events, even virtual networking events. Here's how this pitch thing works. Ashley has just five minutes to pitch your startup mixtures to a live panel of investors and industry experts, and then the panel can then have time to hit Ashley with a rapid fire q&a, sort of Shark Tank style, banter back and forth after the pitch. The three experts you'll hear from in this episode include Mandy Haskett leadership consultant at advisor Phil Powell, Associate Dean of Academic Programs at Kelley School of Business at Indiana University based in Indianapolis, and then Kelly Hoey, angel investor, author, speaker and podcast host of build your dream network. Ashley is the president and co founder of mixtures. She is the 38th black female to raise over \$1 million in pre seed funding. Ashley also serves on the boards of the Nashville entrepreneur center and tech Birmingham and she was a 2019 Birmingham Business Journal 40 under 40 recipient as well as a Birmingham 40 under 40 of the decade and business Journal's

national rising star Here's my next pitch company. I first met this founder in Nashville, Tennessee and heard her her pitch a couple of years ago. Then a couple years later I've met ran into her again in Birmingham, Alabama, where she won the rise of the rest pitch competition. She has an amazing events software, and I'm not gonna steal any of her thunder. Please help me welcome to the virtual stage, the President and co founder of mixtures. Ashley Emmons, Ashley, welcome.



02:33

There we go. I was so excited. I was like, but I'm on mute. So okay.



Matt Hunckler 02:39

All right. I'm excited to



02:41

Okay, well, I can start going at any point. Is that correct? Yep. All right. Well, I'm going to keep time on my end y'all. I just walked in my bathroom and so I'm sorry that doors open on that for it to be closed but let's go ahead and get started. So, I am Ashley, this is mixed rose. We are a software use where 50 or more gather lines. Or virtually to increase engagement and collect data. So let's talk about networking. Or Probably not, because I know that most of you just did this at your computer screen, and that's okay. And in fact, it's normal. As for our friends at Harvard, these are the words that are most closely associated with the word networking. And that's not just morally bad, it's actually bad for business because there becomes a problem. Event organizers know that value added networking needs to happen at events because that causes attendees to purchase donate, sign up and keep coming back to events and event attendees On the flip side, they go to events to make valuable new connections yet people just don't mix it mixers. So we have to solve for this we are metros we are a software use that live in virtual events to drive your attendees from their phone to a face to face group networking scenario. And in doing that, we're able to increase engagement and collect data for our key stakeholders, the organizer, event sponsor and the event. attendee. So let's talk about how this works. We're a software as a service platform, our customers can get started customizing a mix and be done with it in under 30 minutes. We're an incredibly low lift. So attendee on the event day they launch our application. It takes them about two and a half minutes to get through our app process. That's a virtual name tag, and answering our questions series. That's where our secret sauce lies. Because with those questions, you're able to derive data. And you're also as the event organizer, or event organizer, able to see who's going

to be grouped with whom, when it's time for groups to get together, we make groupings of three to 10. That app reveals your group to you when it's a mixture of live event, it points you to a location in the venue that you're at you physically go there and meet your group. When we're in Mexico is virtual, we put you in a secure video meeting space with a two to nine people that you've been matched with. Once you get there with your group, again, three to 10 people we provide you with icebreakers to kick off the conversation, or a directive from the event organizer for project for you to walk on work on together. And then at the same time, all of the collected data becomes visualized. I'm a visual learner. So let's see what this looks like in practice, makes customization, virtual land tag.



05:13

This is what it looks like when people get together using icebreakers that there is engagement. And here's the data collection. On the virtual front and this is a new feature. You join your virtual NICs, it breaks you out into a virtual meeting room inside of our software, you can chat we have very similar functionality to video conferencing software you're familiar with, except our icebreakers are there and also the group data so you understand why you are grouped together. So that's an extra in a nutshell, the market for mixtures is huge. Literally, we can be used anywhere that 50 or more people are gathered specific to the events market. In the US alone, there are 2 million events held annually that breaks out to more than 5200 events per day. So the time is certainly now for mixtures because on the floor organizer side. The organizer now views, technologies and events as not a nice to have but a must have. attendees are looking for it and they welcome it. On the attendee side. 82% of attendees report networking as their priority for attending events. And attendees these days have an average of 60 to 90 apps on their phone that lets me know that they're savvy and they also welcome utility. And finally, we've reached the third wave of the internet, the Internet of Everything. So while we have Uber to help get us to where we're going, and we have wag to walk our dog, it would make sense that we use mixed roads to help us make value add connections, say hello to some of our paid customers. So we have two pricing models for mixed rows for a single mix with up to 500 attendees. The Price Is 989. We also have subscription pricing for unlimited annual mixing across our verticals, education, events and enterprise. But don't just take it from me take it from our customers. Babson is one of our new customers. One of my favorites. This comment came from Valerie a program director at Babson they used us for New Student Orientation. And Valerie said once the room was mixed, she actually had to physically jump up and down to get students attention back to her because they were so deeply engaged. That's a home run for mixed rows. As far as our go to market at the end of 2018, we were able to successfully raise a seed round of funding, which made my co founder who was also my mom and I, the 37 and 38 black females to ever raise more than a million dollars for a technology company in the US. At this point, we've put

processes and processes in place and we're at the point of rinsing and repeating. And our customers are clamoring for our virtual products to keep peer to peer engagement high even from afar. My mom is a former former HR executive, she led a global HR transformation for 120,000 employees. I am an A former event producer from New York City and most notably LeBron James first intern and I'm wrapping it up. We do believe that mixture is will be the noun there. verb and adjective for meaningful connection now and in the future. And finally, because the hustle is real, if you reference Powder Keg when you reach out to us receive a 10% discount. If you'd like to more, learn more about investments reach out to carry mixtures calm. And last keep up with me. admixtures Thank you.



08:21

That was awesome. Nice work, Ashley.



08:24

I'm done.



Matt Hunckler 08:26

I like your background to



08:30

muscle is certainly real. So I am.



Matt Hunckler 08:33

I'm going to adapt on the fly here because I somehow lost 20 minutes on the front end of this show. And I want to make sure I get your last two presenters in on time. So if you're available to come back and do q&a after three, Ashley, we're going to keep going and and we can keep doing it with whoever from our question. askers are still here. But I would go into the speaker ama channel right now and jump into some questions there



08:57

as well. One thing that I just have to say Still, you need to be my customer. So let's chat. Thank you so much. I'm an entrepreneur.



09:07

Good night, y'all.



Matt Hunckler 09:08

That was awesome. Nice work. Actually. That was that was a great. Hey, Matt here again, following Ashley's amazing pitch, we got to hear some valuable feedback and questions from this fantastic lineup of expert panelists about mixed rows. Here's that q&a discussion. Yeah, you bet. Ashley, you still with us?



09:27

I am.



Matt Hunckler 09:28

Hey, thanks. Thanks for bearing with us. And sorry, I didn't do better on time management. This is my first all virtual pitch event. So I'm, I'm learning with you. We've got questions for you though. And it sounds like Kelly might want to kick that off.



J. Kelly Hoey 09:43

But my foot my mouth or my you know, whatever. Anyway, um, first of all, everyone has to really give Ashley like, massive congratulations and also look ourselves in the mirror. Big Ass shame on the underfunding of minority black, underrepresented overlooked entrepreneurs in Sr. You killed it with your pitch. And they kicked it through you and your mom and your funding. phenomenal, phenomenal, phenomenal. And I'm very familiar with Katherine Finney and her study and all this kind of stuff. She's a good friend. So, you know what you need, like huge kudos for doing everything you had and everything you've accomplished and the the time period that, you know, I said that you've accomplished all this under all the constraints. So, well done. I wanted to know is your product customizable in terms of the questions and the icebreakers?



10:39

Yes, literally everything on the that's the thing that's variable each and every time we run a mix, so you know, questions that might be asked in an enterprise are very different from questions that might be asked at university or general event. So we allow the event organizer to do all that customization on questions, the available answers as well as icebreakers. Awesome. Thank you. If that's what Yeah, no, thank you.



11:04

Wait, Matt, you're on mute.



Matt Hunckler 11:07

I'm a pro at this.



11:10

When I said muting white man, I wasn't mean to you, Matt.



Matt Hunckler 11:15

It's okay. It's okay. I deserve it. Um, speaking of. Phil, do you have any questions for Ashley?



11:22

Sure. Ashley, great presentation. Thanks. Great to meet a fellow nashvillians the business I my hometown. Anyway, um, I'm curious. You start sourcing sounds like you started the product, per use in, in, in, in live events, work it all in the days where we can all come together and we can enjoy the human company. Right? But it's got it's got application now with online events. What what differences are you seeing in the usage of the product? Are there any surprises when you compare usage with with with just virtual events versus live events and how does In your ability to sell the product and or maybe Is it a different customer segment that you find more attracted to it?



12:05

Yeah, you know, it's very interesting. A virtual offering has always been on our product

roadmap. We were actually slated to release it in October of this year, but March 11, my mom was like, I think we need to do this now. And that was when everything really started going crazy with Coronavirus. So we've been able to spin it out in like about less than a month, because half of it was already built. When I demo my customers, I need a virtual feature because we're not both at the same location. So I need a way to be able to access the same mix as a customer from wherever they are in the country. So it was already half built. The only thing that we really needed to figure out was that B integration. At first we integrated with zoom but because of things that have been going on with zoom, zoom bombing, other challenges whatnot, we took zoom out and now we have it all our own software inside of mixtures which lives on my secure Amazon servers. So that gives us more flexibility to do what we will but I have to say People use the product very similarly. And it's funny. Customers are coming from all over the place. Like I have a mix that'll be going on later this evening. It's a gym and they just want their community to come together for cocktails and mixtures will be the vessel to take 100 Jim members and break them up into groups of three to 10 based on what they have in common.



Matt Hunckler 13:18

That's so cool. I think we might need to try that for our next virtual pitcher that



13:22

I agreed



Matt Hunckler 13:25

to sponsor. I love it. Cool. Mandy, any questions for Ashley?



13:30

Ashley? You're just such fun. I mean, whatever you're doing over there, I want to come do it over here. So you're awesome. We just I think we all feel your energy, that's for sure. Um, I just wonder if you can tell us anything about that secret sauce. Like what's in there? What kind of data are you collecting? Yeah, so Well, I was gonna say part of the reason why I'm so amped up is because this morning, I got up and I judged a Junior Achievement pitch competition. So I watched 10 pitches before I got to this one. So that's why I'm all amped up. So yeah, so The secret sauce. So we do have a base level algorithm that runs through mixed rows. But the cool thing is we give our customer ultimate control. So for example,

the way our customer is able to facilitate the group networking that they want to see at their event is if they ask the question, I am an entrepreneur and investor, a supporter, a community member, they get to wait that question positively, which will bring all entrepreneurs together, bring all investors together, etc. Or they can wait that question diverse, which means that they'll get a mixture of all of those people in their groupings, or they can choose not to wait at all and just collect the data. So realistically, the person who is the organizer can curate the groupings that they know would be most beneficial to their attendees. And that's where we see that engagement spark happening. And literally every time we run a mix, it's extraordinary to see the people who get brought together that might not have come across one another just in normal life. Very cool. Awesome. Thank you.



Matt Hunckler 14:55

I love that. I'm seeing lots of great questions being typed in here on zoom. So I'm gonna encourage all of those people who are watching here on zoom, go type those in in the speaker ama, because I want to bring on our last presenter, but first I want to say Ashley, thanks for coming back and going overtime on the q&a here.



15:11

You are so welcome. Thank you all.



Matt Hunckler 15:14

Absolutely. Thank you. We'll see you here in the slack speaker ama. That's it for today's episode. Thank you so much for listening. And a huge thank you to Ashley admins of mixtures and all of those who attended our first ever all virtual pitch event we had almost 1000 registered for it. For links to the social profiles for Ashley and the other people, companies and resources mentioned in this episode, head on over to powder keg calm and check out the show notes. And please let me know what you thought about this show format. It's something we're trying out and there are so many awesome companies like mixtures in our community. We're going to be doing a lot more of these company pitches, so be sure to check out upcoming live stream versions of the podcast with community q&a and expert advice at Powder Keg comm slash events. If you're currently in the market for finding a new role and want to be connected to some of the best companies in the world, you can join our matches platform at Powder Keg comm slash jobs. It's free you can apply right there at Powder Keg comm slash jobs, and to be among the first to hear the stories about entrepreneurs, investors and other tech leaders doing remarkable things outside of

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