# ITSU Kirsty Dawe

**Matthew Todd**
Hi. My name is Matthew Todd, and welcome to Inside The ScaleUp. This is the podcast for founders executives in tech, looking to make an impact and learn from their peers within the tech business, we lift the lid on tech businesses, interviewing leaders and following their journey from startup to scale-up and beyond, covering everything from developing product market fit, funding and fundraising models to value proposition structure and growth marketing.

We learn from their journey so that you can understand how they really work; the failures, the successes, the lessons along the way, so that you can take their learnings and apply them within your own startup or scale-up and join the ever growing list of high growth UK SaaS businesses. Hey, welcome back to the podcast. Pleased today to be joined by Kirsty Dawe who is the CEO of a company called Webeo. Great to have you here.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Hi, Matthew, thank you for having me. I'm really looking forward to chatting you too today.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah. Likewise, looking forward to finding out a bit more about what it is that you're up to and what that journey has looked like. So to kick things off, can you give us a little bit of a brief intro? What is Webeo? What's your role there?

**Kirsty Dawe**
So Webeo is a b2b website personalization software. The reason that we exist is to support b2b organizations with driving conversion on their website. We solve that big problem that actually in b2b, not too many of us have identified exists, but our b2c colleagues have. In that, we maybe best case scenario, get a 2% conversion from every one of those buyers that we drive to our website. Actually, that means that 98% of our visitors just aren't converting.

So our solution is proven to drive an uplift in conversion by allowing a marketer to personalize their website in real time as a visitor hits their website. So that can be based on demographic data, such as their industry, the company size, or where they're based, or it can be based on the previous behavior of a buyer when they visited the website, or the fact that they exist in the CRM, and they've taken this action before.

Ultimately, it's creating a connection with that buyer and showing that we recognize you and we know what's important to you. So here's the right information. And, the biggest challenge that we've got is just keeping those high intent buyers on the site. So if we create that engagement, they stay on the site. And again, they're more likely to convert. My role is CEO, so I am leading the team here at Webeo. I like to think I'm a good person to do that, because I am a b2b marketer by background. So I am our customer. I have all of the teams working closely with me sales, marketing, engineering, product, customer success, all looking to support our customers in the best way possible.

**Matthew Todd**
Cool, awesome. Sounds really, really interesting. And one thing that struck me about what you said, is that not a lot of businesses realize the power that that personalization can have. Do you any kind of examples, you can kind of talk us through how that personalization really does make a difference?

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, sure. So, I mean, overall, when I look across our customer base, personalization delivers an average uplift of around 135%. So all of our customers run an A B test when they start and they'll serve 50% of traffic within a campaign, a personalized version 50%, the existing version. And on average, they get if they're getting 135% uplift in conversion on those personalized experiences.

Then for some, you know, if I brought some specific examples to live for you, you know, Acumatica as a really great example of a client who's well invested in their personalization journey. They're doing behavioral personalization, where they're getting like 60 70% uplift in conversion by talking to buyers, differently the next time they visit the website. Adressing the fact that they've already been there, what's important, and they're really powerfully driving conversion across all of their key industries by serving personalized experiences and actually, the firmographic use case, especially when you're using it on things like paid search, you can get this and conversion of like 200% plus and that would be something that Acumatica would be getting.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, I guess that makes sense, especially when they are coming from search, if you can direct them to some content or a page that has elements that are more tailored to the type of business that they're coming from. Sounds like it makes a lot of sense when you when you talk it through.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, it does. I think the other the other key point is that with paid search, obviously, you can create a landing page to respond to that buyer, and we highly recommend using personalization based on the keyword searched on.

But if you're only using a landing page, that personalization ends when they go through to the rest of the website. So what Webeo is enabling us to continue that, whether that be okay, well, they're they've come on the website from the manufacturing industry. So the landing page looks like this, but then, so do the customer stories. So the whole journey is better. And that's really important within b2b Because, my goodness, it is a journey. And it's never a journey that happens just once either. Personalization, of course, all of it is important.

**Matthew Todd**

Yeah. What do you think businesses that want to start out getting into kind of creating more personalized experiences, what do they need to know about their audiences, etc, to make that actually work and deliver those results? What have you seen working in that in that area?

**Kirsty Dawe**
So I think the customers who have the best success are the ones who understand their value proposition across those different segments. Whether that be like the vertical industry segments, or how a buyer moves through the funnel like, and that's really what any good marketer should have. We're all we're all running ABM campaigns, we're all running like personalization. We know, being relevant and powerful, you would never dream of a salesperson going to talk to an organization without having all of that nailed.

So getting that insight of how is the value proposition different on that first call compared to that vertical? Then, it isn't much more complicated than that, as long as the customer knows that we can then help them with our customer success teams translate that into a more compelling headline, and the body copy. They not changing every single thing. But they should understand if they are targeting different segments, how their solution works for those segments differently.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, absolutely. They should certainly understand that. But I can see how with technology, you can bring that knowledge, even just subtly earlier into that buying journey than before. So therefore, I can see how that would result in a better buyer process and therefore conversion rate for for the company as well.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, yeah, definitely will, because our best customers, you know, they've got that really good relationship with sales. So the language that that translating into those experiences is based on what customers have actually said. So it's using that language. As soon as they hit the website, this is your problem, because you exist in this industry. Okay, that resonates with me. I'm going to stick around.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, absolutely. For Webeo itself as a business. What has that journey look like? There's not too many tools that you come across promising what Webeo does?

**Kirsty Dawe**
Do you mean in terms of building the product and growing?

**Matthew Todd**
Just in terms of finding your own market fit and starting to scale out those operations as well?

**Kirsty Dawe**
Obviously what we do is it's certainly something that there's a lot of interest in. It's like it gives marketers the opportunity to be agile with their website and make changes in real time. Like all of a sudden, they're not relying on developers and briefs and rules that so there is a lot of excitement

around the technology. The editor is really, really powerful, simple code on the website and you can start to drag and drop all sorts of elements on your website. So it'd be really easy to sell that solution to many businesses, but I think what what we have learned is that we need to focus on the businesses with the biggest problem.

In a SaaS organization, as we know, retention is everything. There is no point in bringing people in. And they're like, Yeah, I want to do this because it sounds cool, interesting. And then then recognizing, but it's not easy to measure success is really important part of it.

So, customers that have a high volume of traffic to their website that have a demand generation focus website, that are actively investing in spending money driving traffic to their website, those are the ones with the pain. So those ones, it's very easy to show, okay, well, look, look at the great uplift, you're getting on your conversion when you're employing personalization. Then it's like, well, they're never gonna switch that off. Because, I'm getting visible leads for that app. If a customer wants to do lots and lots of personalization, but they haven't got high traffic, and it's difficult to measure success, that isn't going to keep them as sticky.

So we have really honed and focused down on our ICP, like we looked at all the ways our customers can personalize, be that using IP data, be that using an integration, using behavioral and then understood Okay, well how much traffic would they need to be able to create a meaningful test to be statistically significant, so they without doubt, know that that's delivering. Then that becomes our ICP, like those customers, we have no doubt that personalization is going to work for them.

That's when you're personalizing at scale because you want to go from 100 leads a month to 300 leads a month. A lot of the companies that we work with, that's the space that they're operating in. There are other organizations, who may want to personalize and do take more of an ABM route. That's more difficult to measure. So we recommend that that's part of a whole journey, obviously, like, if you're doing true ABM is one to one. You're not going to be able to do an A B split test. We encourage all of the use cases, but with a customer who's really got the pain, which is I've got high traffic, I'm spending 1000 to drive people to my website, and we're educating them to say, Look, stop doing that and actually take that 2% and flip it on its head and go, Oh, I'd like 98% of all those businesses, you're not converting, like, that's where you need to focus your energies.

**Matthew Todd**
I can see why if you go after those types of customers, you very, very quickly get evidence through that data that shows it's working and like you say, they're not gonna want to turn that off, if it is working, or they

**Kirsty Dawe**
It evolves over time that ICP does. We actually we have our ICP, we have ICP and more than ICP 2, and the ICP 1 is like, they've got everything, like they've got all of the characteristics that would make them ideal, and the ICP to is, yeah, it will absolutely work for them. But it would better. So we still accept those customers, because we know we can deliver success. But we also, our marketing team will attest to the fact that we say no to a lot of inquiries that come in. As a startup, it's really easy just to

take everything, but what you end up doing is then trying to make your product fit with all of those customers that have different needs and requirements. You can't satisfy the more you've got to just focus on solving that one problem.

So doing that data work, like looking at, okay, who were all the businesses that have these characteristics, whether that be traffic, whether that be other software that exists in their tech stack, whether that be where they're based, all of those things like we have that our own in our own ICP document. The business has to know and understand and you know, we'll say no, if they don't fit that,

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, it makes it so much easier to talk about the customer have shared knowledge about the customer when you do have that off. focusing I've unfortunately seen many SaaS businesses say yes to too many different types of customers. They think it's good because we've got all we've helped these people over here with that problem. We help these people over there with that product. It sounds good. But then they quite quickly plateau and they realize that they don't know how anyone's using the product. From a sales and marketing perspective, we therefore don't know how actually how to communicate with their customer base.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, I think there's absolutely value in having the segment's. We could talk really differently to how we would help manufacturing businesses use the product versus software or business services. Thats really powerful because when you're going to market to say, here's all the other people that look like you that we're doing this for, really resonates. But if you've got all of those different segments using and completely different, as in the solution, or the problem that you're solving is totally different. You've got a problem, because who are you building for?

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah. So segment based on industry characteristics or other characteristics, but have a core problem that they all share.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, that's the thing, because then you can look at the ICP, and the engineering team can look at the ICP, and the customer success team can look at the ICP, and everybody is aligned with this is the problem that we're solving. Definitely from a product perspective, we are able to constantly ask ourselves, like, what does this do? We have a name for our ICP. She's called Sarah. Well, what does this do for Sarah? How is it gonna make her world better? And if it's not, why are we doing it?

**Matthew Todd**
Is that something kind of from a culture perspective, that was pretty easy to get everyone on board with? Or do you still get pushback from people seeing an opportunity that you know that it's outside of what it is that you're trying to solve?

**Kirsty Dawe**

I think because we did it from an early stage. We're part of a group where there are much bigger brands who we've learned a lot from what they've done. We, we were able to actively avoid that situation, from the start. But it absolutely doesn't mean that it didn't cause friction, because the marketing team will be going look at all of these leads that we're generating that we're having to say no to the sales team going, No, we can't sell to that one for this this and they're so absolutely, there was.

But I think the key thing is, we're all aligned on the getting the LTV cap, right. And the only way that that's going to happen is if we attract to the right customers. So the team are grown up enough to do that. I think the challenge would have been if we were already doing it a different way. Because it is really hard. Like if you've only got if you've got an ICP that you've identified, that gives you your tam you know, you can't do marketing that you just keep throwing stuff at. You've got to be really considered as with the way that you talk to those buyers, and every message counts because you don't want them to opt out of your communications.

So what it's made us do is to think much, much more about content and messaging and thought leadership. Alongside the demand gen. Because actually my background and alot of the guys on the team, we've all come from that really measurable b2b demand gen background, has to flow alongside this thought leadership and content that keeps people engaged because you've got a limited audience to go after.

**Matthew Todd**
You mentioned you're part of a bigger group as well. Do you think that almost made it a bit easier knowing that those resources are there and you have that backing? You're not constantly trying to find that fit, perhaps in a way that could be a bit more scrappy with a smallest founding team?

**Kirsty Dawe**
So we're bootstrapped? The whole group is bootstrapped. So I definitely think we feel the pressure from that perspective, there isn't endless pots of money available. So, we have to be really selective about what we do. But yeah, absolutely being able to make that decision and say like, we aren't just going to focus on revenue for revenue sake and we're going to focus on attracting the right businesses and having the group support, of course made a difference. Yes. But equally, we had to do that within limited funding.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah. I guess there's pros and cons of different kind of operating environments. There are some very good stories of bootstrapped companies, and also some ones that don't work. And same with venture investment and capital, as well. I think as long as all the stakeholders are aligned on the journey, then that helps. I think it can be when you've got people chasing short term metrics, when you're trying to chase kind of longer term vision, that's when I think it can take you off course.

**Kirsty Dawe**
It's a constant battle on that, because obviously, we all we want more revenue to drive more development. But everything is about retention. So we just have to always check ourselves and bring ourselves back. Because the retention brings the revenue anyway.

**Matthew Todd**
It's good to hear someone talking about the importance of retention, because I think sometimes it can get a bit lost, especially in earlier stages, when like you say there's that  success of we managed to get these customers or those customers or we validated this or whatever it may be.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah. I think that absolutely did happen with us in the very early stages, because we had lots of early adopters. Lots of cool people who wanted to personalizeand use the technology, but we were able to identify that quite quickly and then make decisions, you know, early on in our kind of journey.

**Matthew Todd**
Iinteresting. In terms of kind of other parts of the business in terms of building out that sales team and processes. Can share a little bit about what that's like for a kind of product like Webeo.

**Kirsty Dawe**
It's really important that the sales team and the people in sales, understand the customers world. While the majority of our team, our sales first, we've also invested a lot in them to develop their marketing knowledge and skills. Actually some of them come from a marketing background. Because it's really important to be able to talk with authority to marketers.

I find that marketers are under a lot of pressure. They have this world where they've got all of this technology, and it needs to talk to each other. They've got to report the board, not just on, you know, volume of leads, but attribution right the way through to sale. The sales team really need to get that the worst thing that a sales team can do is come in and say, yeah, we've got this great product. And it's going to do this, this and this and have no idea of how that's going to fit with their integration and drive ROI. So the approach is really consultative, we're really getting alongside those businesses understanding their conversion, what their objectives are for the year, where they would like to get that conversion to, and then that translates right through to the CS team as well.

So the sales team have that level of knowledge and we can build out a really nice forecast for the customer, what they can expect to get, because we're able to identify, right, these are how many businesses that you're going to be able to personalize to using IP data. So all of that is known at the point of them onboarding. Then there's a further level of detail that that goes into with the CS team on those joint Customer Success Plans. So again, handing over from sales, this is what this is why you bought us this is what you want to deliver. Great. Okay, so this is the plan that we're going to keep you to that.

Nobody is going into a purchase of webydo not having a clear idea of why they bought it and how we plan to make sure that they deliver on that. It does make the sales cycle more intense, and perhaps a little bit longer than it needs to be, but it will aid retention in the long term. It also means that sales are throwing something over the line to customer success without really sitting down with them and saying, is this gonna work?

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, sounds like a very kind of detailed, thorough approach that really is truly aligned with the customer's best interests, ultimately. So yeah, I can see how that the sales team, and every other part of the business then has to have a certain level of marketing knowledge and, and expertise as well.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Yeah, the education that we've done on the ICP, the training that we've done with the team, they really get the MA platforms, Google Analytics, or all of the things that are important, but it doesn't mean that they don't want to speed things up. But process is key, isn't it? You've got to go through those processes to onboard a customer. People have to follow those. So, yeah, I guess being bootstrapped and having that smaller team means that we've been able to have that level of control, but we do have a very strict sales cadence and methodology that we use. The guys are rated on that regularly. So yeah, it's really important.

**Matthew Todd**
Yeah, no, that's good to hear that that is, you know, not just the ideal that you'd like them to do. But you are finding ways to hold people accountable to that as well. I also imagine with the prospects that you don't convert to customers, I imagine, because of that type of detailed process, you must learn an awful lot about the reasons why that wasn't how to better directs the product, the marketing the sales efforts that you have, as well.

**Kirsty Dawe**
So, because we are so close to the customer, like we're able to think about things that have been a barrier to sale. But again, when they come on board, because we are focused on their marketing objectives, and what's important to them, it really helps us develop our product return, which is most important, because actually, when we develop the product for churn that support sales anyway. But there is a constant feedback loop between sales CS and Product. So we're developing that.

**Matthew Todd**
It's just really good to hear that focus on retention. One thing obviously a lot of people are talking about as well is the opportunity for any kind of upsell, etc, to that existing customer base as well. How important is that in business like Webeo?

**Kirsty Dawe**
Upsell for us is, obviously we've got the opportunity to sell more licenses and more websites. We have also got the opportunity for for cross sell as part of the group. Although we're talking to marketing decision makers and other products in the group often talk to sales. We share businesses, so we are good at understanding, okay, well actually, there's a fit over there. So we can then we can then upsell to that customer and that will help with our net retention.

But with Webeo, we have the three tiers of product. So we've got like the entry level solution. Then we've got a solution which includes the Marketo HubSpot Pardot integrations. And then we've got a third solution, which is customer integration. So again, our customers can move up in tears, then thats the opportunity to upsell. Also as a customer grows in their traffic volumes. Again, there's upsell opportunity there. But watch this space. We are thinking a lot about how we can open up the world of personalization to different audiences by modulating some of the parts of the product.

**Matthew Todd**
I look forward to finding out more on that one. And, for any other founder CEO, whether they're early in the journey or whether they're in that kind of scale up phase, from b2b marketing perspective, what advice would you give them you know, based on your own journey, but also the the customers that you work with as well?

**Kirsty Dawe**
So, if you're referring to like, how do we effectively market ourselves Like, as a as a startup business, I'm gonna echo some of the words I had Patrick Campbell say actually, because if you're bootstrapped, one of the ways to really effectively market is by delivering really, really good content and making that content altruistic. So it is not there to sell your product, it's there to help your buyer solve a problem.

Because then when they want to solve that problem, and they've got budget, they'll know that you're experts. Even if you told them, there's loads of different ways that you can solve that problem and ours might be a small part of that. Here's the advice and guidance that we can give you to solve that problem. Their building a relationship with you through that content, and they see you as a trusted adviser. It does require investment from the CEO and the individuals in the business who have gotten the most knowledge.

So you've got to find a voice and be comfortable with putting yourself out there and writing a blog and writing a piece of content and having an opinion, and using your knowledge to help buyers. Theres a famous book that I absolutely love called Utility by Jay Baer. It just talks about, like, help is way way more important than selling because if you help someone, you'll have a customer for life. Once you understand what your buyers problem is creating good content that helps them solve that problem, irrespective of what you offer, is a great way to approach it.

Then obviously, understanding who is our market and creating good direct messaging to identify and reach out to that audience as well. So you've got like the halo effect of great content, and people find you anyway. Then you've got that, and we're here, and we're talking to you, and we'll send it to you. But it's the combination of push and pull. So the great content at the top and that's why we say don't underestimate. If you're out there solving this problem, you will probably a wealth of knowledge for your buyers, like devote some time every week to write something that they will follow or create something, whether that be a podcast or a quick video that they will find valuable. They'll hear about you that way.

**Matthew Todd**
I think that's really good advice. I like what you said about it being a push and pull, because I think some people can think that it's just pull only. That i'll create the content or write a few posts and then people will come and find me. Then they get disheartened after trying it for like three weeks and then realize no one's no one's approached me yet. We've not got hundreds of customers. Maybe I'll start writing content now.

**Kirsty Dawe**
They have to work together. But your demand gen and tipping people over into the funnel, it can complement what you're doing with your content. But yeah, just the content on its own. You still got to ask that question. You still got to go for getting the demo, you still got to make it measurable. So all of our teams are targeted. There's two elements. We're targeted on hitting that number. We're also targeted on shares and interactions with content and building our profile in that space, too. Because they're both just as important.

**Matthew Todd**
Just to kind of wrap things up, where do you think the world of of marketing technology is heading? There seem to be so many developments almost every day, new technologies, new integrations. Do you think it's an exciting time? How do you see things playing out?

**Kirsty Dawe**
I do think this is an exciting time. Because I don't fear AI from a marketing perspective. With things like GPT 3, and other solutions that are coming out, I see those as empowering us to get some of the basics done, so that we've got space for creativity. I was talking to a colleague the other day who said, I'm not sure about using this to, like, create blogs and things like that, and I was like it stops you starting with a blank sheet of paper.

Ai decision making like, this is what we've learned, other people have done before, that is a success, plug that in. This is some content to start you off and then you add your creativity on top of that, and you make it unique, I just think it's going to accelerate what we do and give us more time to focus on where we can really add value. Rather than just sitting there with nothing and having to create from scratch. So I'm all for it. I'm very excited by it.

**Matthew Todd**
Likewise, I share the same perspective, I think, if you're just trying to sell your time in creating things that don't stand out where there's no real value, I can see how you might be threatened for it. But for everyone else, it's like, yeah, it's a really good starting point. Now you get to spend most of your time on the stuff that really adds to that value.

**Kirsty Dawe**
Exactly, exactly. Even in any other workspace, anything that is repetitive, that doesn't need a human to do it. Great. Let's use those powerful human brains for something else.

**Matthew Todd**
Completely. Agree. That's a good way to wrap things up. And I certainly look forward to keep an eye on Webeo. Seeing what some of those developments that you hinted at end up looking like. So thank you for sharing that.

**Kirsty Dawe**
My pleasure. Really good to speak to you, Matthew. I would say on that nice thought leadership content. We have a really nice CRO podcast, we don't promote anything to do with the product. We just

talk about CRO guidance, and we're talking to marketers about what they do and what works for them. So if you are starting on your CRO journey, that's a good place to start, especially if your B2B.

**Matthew Todd**
Thank you for joining me on this episode of Inside the ScaleUp. Remember for the show notes and in-depth resources from today's guest. You can find these on the website insidethescaleup.com. You can also leave feedback on today's episode, as well as suggest guests and companies you'd like to hear from. Thank you for listening.