

Shachar Scott Transcript

Shachar: The thing that I really appreciate about Meta is we are constantly thinking about how we scale this to everyone and make things available, and accessible. Even Horizon, we've opened up 2D across all of our apps. That's free. You don't have to pay to experience any of these things. And so doing it where truly everyone can experience it is gonna be where this is heading so that those barriers don't exist of having to buy something.

Matt: To thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape, brands must move at an ever-increasing pace. I'm Matt Britton, founder and CEO of Suzy. Join me and key industry leaders as we dive deep into the shifting consumer trends within their industry, why it matters now, and how you can keep up. Welcome to The Speed of Culture. Today, we're going to be speaking with Shachar Scott, the head of marketing for MetaReality Labs. Shachar has over two decades of experience in the marketing world and was recently selected for the prestigious Brand Innovators 2023 Industry Innovation and campaigned for 40 under 40 awards for her contributions to the tech industry. Shachar, thanks so much for joining today.

Shachar: Thank you so much for having me, Matt.

Matt: Absolutely. So we're going to take it way back when you were at college at UMass Amherst and trying to figure out what you want to do with your life. Did you ever think that you'd be working in the world of virtual reality? What did you think you wanted to do in the early years?

Shachar: I wish I was that cool. No, I was steadfast in wanting to be a lawyer. So I was on my way to law school following undergrad and took a detour and ended up falling in love with marketing and communications and positioning the psychology behind people's decisions. So I made a hard turn and never went to law school again. Went into marketing, but it was not what I majored in or studied or thought I would be doing 23 years later.

Matt: And what was it about marketing that fascinated you?

Shachar: I loved the idea of being able to tell stories. And also really connect with people in a way that was meaningful. So I started earlier on in a more, I'd say philanthropic nonprofit politics, where it was like issues-based marketing communications. So it was hard for me to believe that people didn't already believe this stuff. So like a woman's right to choose or human rights, things that I took for granted, honestly, that I had, and that I was raised believing that I was entitled to. And so it was fascinating to me to be able to like, bring people on that journey and educate through storytelling, but also stating the facts and giving people exposure to information to make better decisions about their health, their life, etc. And so that's what did it for me was this strategic thinking aspect of being a lawyer without needing to be in a courtroom, honestly. And I had spent three years as a paralegal in college. So like, I knew for sure I did not want to do that.

Matt: Yeah, I went down the same path at one point where I thought I would be a lawyer because my dad was a lawyer. And I thought this was what I was supposed to do. And I kind of came to the same conclusion.

Shachar: The rest is history. Yeah.

Matt: And the rest is history, part of that history early in your career, 2011, you ended up joining Apple as head of marketing strategy. As the iPhone started to gain dominance, the iPhone was launched in 2007. So four years later, it was just kind of taking hold. So I imagine that was a fascinating time to be at Apple. Tell us about your stint there, because that's a company that so many people are sort of enamored with in terms of what it's like to work there and what the culture is like.

Shachar: Yeah. And I mean, even having had that opportunity, I'm still enamored by it. I mean, it is still a unique company. So I was there like literally as the rise of the Apple App Store happened. At the time, Steve Jobs was still alive and he was very actively engaged in the company and thinking about how can we continue to monetize the Apple App Store. And so I joined in 2011 and it was like a side hustle for Steve called iAd. And it was Apple's first foray into advertising and monetizing apps and creating these immersive app-like ads in their app ecosystem. And so keeping people engaged and monetizing. And it ultimately didn't work. And as we all know, Apple is very focused on hardware. And some software and services, but like really, it's hardware. And so this was just like not going to scale to the level that they make one day in iPhone sales. And so I then transitioned to working on iTunes, and I helped launch what is now Apple Music and Apple News. And it was incredible. I mean, I cut my teeth in product marketing at Apple, incredible culture, very expert-based, though, you get hired to do the thing that you're amazing at, and keep doing it over and over and over again, and get even better at it. So there's a real specialty and the people that work there, it was siloed. I'm not sure if it is still that way. But I imagine like part of the secrecy and part of their success requires that a level of silos exist. But I mean, honestly, I always will be a fangirl. I only use Apple devices. So yeah. It worked.

Matt: Yeah. And a couple of roles later from Apple, you joined Snap Inc. back then, probably still know Snapchat and an incredible driver of cultural change amongst the consumer. What were some of your learnings from your time at Snapchat in terms of the product and your role there?

Shachar: Yeah. I mean, I joined early, like right as the IPO happened and Snap had a ton of organic growth. And I was one of the very, very first marketers to join and build marketing from the ground up. Because before I joined, it had grown organically as, a household name. And all of a sudden, you're launching in 40 markets at a time. And you do need to actually educate consumers about the difference between Snap Inc. and WhatsApp or Snap Inc. and Instagram, Facebook, etc. So it was a really amazing time to join the company. And I'd say my biggest learning because I was so heavily involved in international marketing and growth and how we showed up in the Middle East was very different than how we showed up in India, the product as well as the brand.

Matt: Just because the cultures are so different around the world.

Shachar: Totally. And the way that people use the product was also very different in those markets. Their relationship with technology differed pretty dramatically.

Matt: And probably what they're willing to share and what they're not willing to share, all of that.

Shachar: Exactly. So what I learned, honestly, was like, no two markets are the same. You can't just take what works, you know, in Great Britain and be like, oh, we're just going to do that in Spain. It doesn't work that way. And just because it's EMEA, it's a region, it's going to work. It doesn't work that way. And so the nuance, the thoughtfulness, the way to really go into a market is to understand the people and the culture. And Snap Inc. did that really well. And so when we did launch in a new

country or new region, we did so with a lot of intention and care. And that was an incredible skill set that I added to my toolbox.

Matt: Yeah. And I imagine another thing you must have experienced at Snap Inc. during that time because it was meteoric growth. And you talked about the company going IPO. It's just how a culture changes as it gets larger and larger. Because I just know from operating a company that when we have 25 or 50 people, I know everyone's name to when you're 300, it's just different. And I imagine you experienced magnitudes of that at Snap so is that something that you felt being in a place like that as the company had such growth?

Shachar: Yes, but I would say that I don't know that it lost its uniqueness even in the scale because it did grow quickly. And we went from 700 employees to 3,000 pretty quickly. But it was, I would say, well-contained. And having come from Apple, that was significantly bigger. Or certainly now at Meta, which is also significantly bigger, it was very much operating like a startup.

Matt: This isn't easy to do with 700 people.

Shachar: No, it's not. But it did. And I think that it probably still has that same agility, I would say.

Matt: Absolutely. So a couple of years later in 2021, you joined where you are today at Meta, first Senior Director at Marcom, and now Head of Marketing for Meta Reality Labs. So for those in the audience who don't know what Meta Reality Labs is, it'd be great maybe to just get a high-level overview.

Shachar: Yeah, sure. So we are the innovation arm and lab R&D really for Meta. And so we have a number of different product pillars within Reality Labs and it spans everything from across hardware and software from VR and our MetaQuest headset to the content and the gaming experiences that you play using your Quest headset to Horizon and really the foray into the metaverse, moving over to augmented reality and our partnership with Essilor, Luxottica, Meta smart glasses and the future of all these things are eventually going to converge. But you've got different use cases and the ability to like experience content, and human connection in ways that have never been done before. And then also on the productivity side, how do you use Quest as a means to bring your teams closer and collaborate more efficiently? And so that's the portfolio products that my team oversees marketing for and we're global. The roadmaps are constantly changing and growing and it's super exciting to be kind of on the front edge of that technology change because we are constantly pushing the boundary of how people use this technology and how they use mixed reality to experience something that they've never done before, like playing the piano. And doing it in the comfort of your own home without having to buy it.

Matt: Yeah, I mean, it's amazing—a lot of people who I interview on this podcast market toothpaste or shampoo or candy bars. And consumers know how to use those products. They've used them for decades and centuries. And you're marketing products that many consumers have never touched and felt before, let alone used. So you're really trying to sell a vision of the future. And that's a whole different type of way to market and communicate. So what are some of the tactics and strategies that you've tried to deploy in getting consumers to believe in some of these new form factors of technological adoption?

Shachar: You nailed it. I mean, demo is key. Getting people to try the headset to put on the smart glasses is our biggest barrier. And then once you do, magic happens. You instantly understand it in

a way that I mean, no matter how amazing our marketing or our messaging is, there's something to be said about actually trying something.

Matt: Getting in people's hands.

Shachar: And so demos are a key part of our strategy and approach. And I would say that's also for employees. Like you need to dog food our products to truly understand them and be immersed in the technology so that as we're building marketing campaigns, we are putting ourselves in the mindset of the consumer and understanding how they're going to interpret or resonate with a certain game or experience that they've never done before. But what I love about it, honestly, is the fact that there is no playbook. I can't go back and say, oh, well, let's just do what we did for Quest or Quest 3, but do it better. Doesn't work that way. Quest was VR. Quest 3 is MR. Mixed reality is very different. What you can do on it is entirely different. And the market also has changed. Quest was launched before the pandemic and it grew nearly during the pandemic. People's behaviors are different now. And so there is no playbook. I can't take what we did last year and say we're just gonna do the same thing. There's a curiosity that is required for this kind of marketing to be effective. And like risk-taking. To say like, we don't know if it's gonna work, but we're gonna quickly measure, understand, and see if it does. And then either pivot or keep doing it and scaling it.

Matt: Yeah. And you're also marketing, you look at Oculus Rift and the products, MetaQuest, you're talking about a platform. So the platform can be different for every individual user based on how they leverage the platform. So obviously, you have form factors and use cases like gaming and communications, replacing the office experience. What are some of the more interesting form factors that have bubbled up recently that maybe give you even more hope for this kind of new revolution of mixed reality to take place?

Shachar: Yeah, I mean, I think like certainly there's like an abundance of opportunities in gaming. And there's something to be said about not just playing an immersive game, but then doing it in the comfort of your own home and being able to see your partner walk through the door, your kids coming in from school and not feel like it's disrupting what's happening around you, but still being in that immersive state. So there are a lot of applications in the gaming realm. I think the one that I mentioned around like relearning or learning for the first time how to play piano is an incredible experience and Piano Vision is, you could say it's a utility. You could also say it's a game. You could also say it's an experience that you've never had before. That brings music and mixed reality together in one way where you can sit at your kitchen table and learn how to play piano. And there's nothing like it. I mean... Without even having a piano. Without having a piano. And there are haptics. You feel like you are touching the keys.

Matt: Oh, I need to try that out.

Shachar: Yeah. It's unbelievable. Unbelievable. So I think for me it is certainly there's so much that can be done in gaming and certainly the more like IP that we bring to the platform, the games that people know and love already, and yet, I think the utility of it is just as incredible. Fitness is another category that I think is very unexpected. And you can get an amazing workout with Quest 3 that you could never have done before. And it's like the world's smallest gym is in your house. And you can just do Zumba. You can do FitXR. You can do Supernatural. You can box and get a sweat on. And it's like you don't have to leave your house.

Matt: Yeah. We'll be right back with The Speed of Culture after a few words from our sponsors. And what are some of the barriers to adoption for some of these products? What's stopping it from going more mainstream? Because I always thought you have this big, somewhat clunky device, which is getting less clunky over time, but at first it was something where it's like, do people want to wear this? Is that the main thing, or are there other things that you're trying to work on as storytellers to get more and more consumers to trial this, get their hands on it, and start to eventually adopt it?

Shachar: Unless you are an early adopter or an avid gamer, no one wakes up and is like, which VR headset am I gonna buy today? And so that is truly our barrier. And so it is about going after intenders or upgraders, people that have experienced or dabbled in VR to get them to understand the evolution and really the advancement that has been made with mixed reality to see that like, this is actually groundbreaking. It has never been done before like this. And so it is about a demo. It is about also really like, I think showing some of the utility, the non-gaming experiences so that it doesn't just become the gaming device. But I think for me, what is the biggest barrier is like, people don't wake up thinking about this. And so we need to show up where they are thinking about what is that next device or headset or gaming console that they're considering and show them that this one is better.

Matt: Yeah. And I imagine another use case that, or at least I think, is very exciting is just this whole work-from-home revolution and the ability to put yourself virtually in the same room as your colleagues and start to brainstorm and collaborate. Are you guys working in that realm as well? And is that an area you see a lot of growth in moving forward?

Shachar: We are. So workrooms are exactly what you just described. It is the ability for you and I to be together, collaborating on a whiteboard, working on slides together without even being in the same city, let alone in the same conference room. And so it is that. Mark recently did a podcast like this with Lex Fridman, where they were both like avatars and they were sitting in completely different states, but they felt like they were together. And so it is exactly what you just said. It enables productivity and collaboration in a way that has never been done before. And especially as even with companies that have returned to office, there are still a lot of people that are working remotely.

Matt: Yeah most people are going back all five days a week and they're working differently and they're working with people all over the world. And the world's changed so much post-pandemic. So you can see such a strong desire for that type of collaboration if people can get comfortable with it.

Shachar: Yeah, exactly. And we've seen companies adopt headsets to get training done faster. Yeah. If they can't get their employees into retail stores fast enough, they can put a headset on and they can experience what it's like and have to navigate certain situations. And so they're able to do like training at scale. And we've seen that time and time again. So productivity is a big focus for us in the Meta for work category.

Matt: Yeah. Another cool application that I'm just fascinated with is Meta smart glasses. Because it's something that, to me, doesn't require consumers to change their habits at all. They wear Ray-Ban sunglasses already. And you're just seamlessly integrating new technical functionality into something that they're already doing. And my experience has been when you do that, it takes away so many barriers and unlocks so much potential. So how's that launch? I know this is sort of the

second launch of the product, or maybe the third. And so how have you seen, I guess, the success of that product evolving? And where do you see it going?

Shachar: Yeah, it is the second generation. So they've come a long way from the first. And we did just launch them and you can buy them today. It's groundbreaking. And also just incredibly, as you said, it is authentic to what you're already doing. People already wear sunglasses or prescription glasses. And these have audio built in. You can make a call. You can take a photo. You can use AI to command any of those actions and do it in a way that allows you to stay present.

Matt: Right. That's the key. You're watching your kid in a soccer game. You don't have to pull open your phone. And when you do so, maybe you get a text and you get distracted. None of that happens.

Shachar: Exactly. And if your partner isn't there, or the grandparents aren't there, you can capture a video and send it to them. So it is as if they are at the game. And it's a way to, I think, share experiences and your perspective in a way that is very unique. And as you said, just super seamless, in a form factor that is stylish, it's iconic, it's comfortable, we've made them significantly lighter. So you can wear them all day. And that's, I think, a big distinction, I would say. Between like the headset that you can take on or off throughout the day versus glasses that you can literally wear all day, every day.

Matt: Yeah, super cool. And when you think about kind of the bring that to market, is there a lot of collaboration with the folks at Ray-Ban? What goes into a campaign to bring to market like that?

Shachar: Yeah, so it is a full-like partnership. We co-brand and co-market the product with the Luxottica team. And they're incredible. They understand fashion. They understand eyewear. They understand manufacturing better than anyone. And so it is a perfect marriage and partnership between our two companies where we are the experts in the technology and bringing consumer electronics to market. And so it is a very tight collaboration with lots of meetings in Milan and over Zoom to get our teams together and just aligned on how we show up and go to market to build that interest and convert people either in Ray-Ban stores or Sunglass Hut or LensCrafters or on our website.

Matt: Yeah, super cool. So shifting gears a little bit. I mean, working in a tech industry, you need to sort of be on the cutting edge. But in your role, you need to be on the cutting edge of the cutting edge and be able to tell stories and understand where things are going. How do you as a professional continue to sort of stay sharp and keep your finger on the pulse of the consumer so you don't lose touch, but at the same time, continually push things forward, which is inherent in you being successful in your role?

Shachar: Yeah, I mean, we immerse ourselves in the tech. So for me, it is like trying everything new, being a student of culture, and understanding what's happening and what not only is just trending but the true behaviors. I mean, I've got two kids, almost 12 at home. And so I'm watching them grow up. And for them, like there is no, oh, I'm now my Roblox self. And now I'm going to text my friend and I'm going to be like, it is all them. And so I watch them and how they experience technology and really seamlessly move from one screen to another, not even noticing it. And so it is like being really present and aware of what consumers are, like how they're behaving, and bringing that insight into the work that we do all the time. I think the other thing is like, that I'm not afraid to take risks, even if they don't work. We are constantly trying new surfaces, and new media, and there is no, oh, here

are 10 case studies to show why this will work for MetaQuest. Doesn't exist if you're trying new surfaces. And so just having the ability to test and iterate and also say definitively, like, this didn't work and be okay with it, but also know what does work and do that over and over again, I think is what has led to our success.

Matt: Yeah, for sure. And when you think of the future in this space, just say five to 10 years from now, where do you see this going? I mean, what is one type of, I guess, use case for the products that you oversee right now that you think is going to be far more widely adopted than maybe consumers believe today?

Shachar: Yeah, I mean, I think, and Mark talked about this at Connect just a few weeks ago, like, I think that people are going to be more and more comfortable with wearing technology.

Matt: I mean, I'm wearing AirPods right now, right? That's wearing technology. I don't even notice.

Shachar: Exactly. Having displays helps you be more efficient, productive, and safe, even getting directions, presenting, and communicating differently. The more connections that we have with each other, the more that we thrive. And like that is what we're trying to do and do in a way that doesn't disrupt or take you away, isolate you from being there. And so that, I think, is where we're headed. And I think we'll get there faster than we think. And it'll be very interesting to see how that changes education, how it changes certain industries, pretty dramatically. And I think it'll take others a little bit longer. The thing that I really appreciate about Meta is we are constantly thinking about how we scale this to everyone and make things available, accessible, and Event Horizon. We've opened up 2D across all of our apps. That's free. You don't have to pay to experience any of these things. And so doing it where truly everyone can experience it is going to be where this is heading so that those barriers don't exist of having to buy something.

Matt: Absolutely. It's going to be fascinating to see where it all sort of evolves moving forward. So to wrap up here with you, Shachar, I mean, you've had a fascinating career and you're in an amazingly exciting role right now at MetaLab. When you look back on your career, what are some of the decisions that you think you made in retrospect that were the right ones that enabled you to end up where you are today that maybe you can impart to some of our younger listeners?

Shachar: I love that. I've always been very ambitious. I'm an immigrant, and that immigrant mentality and work ethic are ingrained in me. I was never afraid of trying new things like starting at a new company a new technology or a new job. And that's how I was able to be at the front of the Apple App Store and social and what became digital and innovation. All these things are now just how we live our lives. At the time, people were like, what? You're not just going to sell a billboard because that's like a trusted form factor. As for me, I'd say I like to have chutzpah and like to be ambitious. Don't let your curiosity get in the way of you trying new things.

Matt: Yeah. Fantastic. And to wrap up, is there one quote or mantra that you like to live by that maybe sums up the way you approach your career?

Shachar: I think I live every day like it could be my last and hopefully it's not. And so for me, that has like honestly fueled my aspirations, my parenting, and the way I show up as a friend. I just never take anything for granted. And so that for me is like, I think my mantra.

Matt: Fantastic. Well, thank you so much for joining us. This is such a great episode and I can't wait to see where you're going to take Meta Reality Labs and act in such an exciting space. So on behalf of Susie and Adwikim, thanks again to Shachar Scott, Head of Marketing at Meta Reality Labs for joining us today. Be sure to subscribe, rate, and review The Speed of Culture podcast on your favorite podcast platform. Until next time, see you soon, everyone. Take care. The Speed of Culture is brought to you by Suzy as part of the Adweek Podcast Network and Acast Creator Network. You can listen and subscribe to all of Adweek's podcasts by visiting [Adweek.com slash podcasts](https://adweek.com/podcasts). To find out more about Suzy, head to suzy.com. And make sure to search for The Speed of Culture on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts, or anywhere else podcasts are found. Click follow so you don't miss out on any future episodes. On behalf of the team here at Suzy, thanks for listening.