FAQ MARKETING LOGIC

ARCHIVE AUDIO INTERVIEW

Stefan Ciancio

Guest Interview Transcript



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Stefan Ciancio

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Stefan Ciancio Interview

Editor:

Today's guest is Stefan Ciancio, the CEO and co-founder of WebinarKit, a platform engineered to help business owners turn webinars into automated sales machines. Stefan's deep passion for webinars led him to create a tool that builds slides, scripts, funnels, AI chat, follow-ups, and more all inside one system. And beyond the tech, he's a speaker, an investor, and an entrepreneur who embraces innovation and remote work.

Editor:

Stefan, really nice to meet you.

Stefan Ciancio:

Thanks for having me. Super excited to be here.

Editor:

Can I ask what started you in the world of webinars? What drew you to that world? And what motivated you to build WebinarKit?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah. So, I used to be a mechanical engineer when I was out of school, and I worked in that field for three years, but the whole time I was always interested in doing something more, working for myself. And basically, more or less, I wanted to find a way to get out of my day job and make money for myself. And more or less, one of the first things I did was eBay sales. That eventually led me towards appreciating selling digital products. So, I got into the space of selling courses, coaching, agency services. And the way in which I was able to sell all of those successfully was with a sales webinar.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, webinars became the backbone for success in any business that I started. And more or less, that led me to seeing the problems with the existing webinar software out there and their limitations and wanting to build something better. So, in 2019, I partnered with someone who was on the software side. And we were like, "Let's create something that's actually built for marketers to get better success with webinars."

Stefan Ciancio:

So, we started down that path. And more or less now, we've built a software that's had over 20,000 users, has fixed a lot of the problems with existing webinar software, and has allowed multiple businesses to actually succeed in areas where other software fell flat for them.

Editor:

I know WebinarKit has been really well adopted by the industry, but also people may have experienced WebinarKit without actually knowing it because of the white labelling that you offer. Maybe you could talk us through that a little bit, how that idea came to life.

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah. Well, believe it or not, it came through, I believe a user had reached out to us and say, "Hey, why don't you guys do white label?" And we just thought about it and we're like, "Sure." So, we like to listen to our users. And my goal is to build something that people actually want. I think that works out better for them and of course it works out better for us. So, it's a win-win.

Stefan Ciancio:

And more or less, we built in the feature. It wasn't too popular in the very beginning, but it became more popular over time. Initially, it was a separate offering. And we've integrated it in now to be one of our main offers. And rather than selling it as the feature itself, it's become a supporting feature. So, it's like, "Hey, you're getting the best webinar software." We believe in selling the whole solution. So, not just giving people a piece of the puzzle, but the whole puzzle in general, rather.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, for example, now they get software, we give courses, we give community, but not only that, one of our plans does include the white label. So, rather than it being the whole sell, it's more like, "Hey, you're getting everything you need to scale your business. And if you don't have a product, we let you white-label and sell ours." And for the people who do have products, it becomes another lever in their business where it's like you can sell our product, white-label it, and get continuity in your business. So, if you don't

have continuity, you can use ours. If you don't have a product, you could sell ours. So, just we go from being literally, again, most of the solution to being the complete package, where I have never seen anyone else offer that exact solution before.

Editor:

Yeah, makes absolute sense. Maybe you could walk us through how WebinarKit works and maybe what makes it so unique.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, one of the first reasons we started it was with autoplay. So, for example, all these other automated webinar solutions, because we were doing an automated webinar for a while. And they didn't autoplay. So, what that means is, basically, people still have to go into the watch room and still press play. So, it defeats the purpose of this feeling an event where you're just along for the ride, you have to press play like you would on a normal video, just kills the feeling.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, we fixed that. That was the first thing we fixed. And then what we did was we made it much easier to use, much more modern. A lot of these tools had been around forever. They were legacy. They were not adapted to the modern times. So, we built in better templates. We built in a modern page builder that's drag-and-drop. We built in the ability to embed the entire webinar on your own website, as opposed to hosting it directly with ours. We built in an AI webinar builder that will build your entire webinar presentation for you in minutes, as opposed to having to go out and spend $10,000 to get an agency to do it.

Stefan Ciancio:

That's been huge because anyone who has wanted to take advantage of webinars to grow their business now is able to. Whereas, in the past, it was almost like gate-kept. You either needed to put months of time in or $10,000-plus. And now, you could just go into WebinarKit up, put your site link in, and all of a sudden, you've got a webinar ready to go. And there's nothing like that out there. So, we really take pride. And then on top of that, the white label.

And so, we really take pride on building something that is really the easiest way for anyone to get in there and start getting sales and succeeding with webinars.

Editor:

And that journey's taken you from 2019 through to now. There must have been, I guess, some challenges along the way, as well as there are many successes, but many challenges along the way.

Stefan Ciancio:

That's a good question. We deal with new challenges every day as business owners. Even now, there's challenges. But I would say that, honestly, every time we've dealt with a significant challenge in business, it always comes back down to the core fundamentals. What's your messaging? What's your offer? Is it resonating with your audience? Is it resonating with what the market wants?

Stefan Ciancio:

And if you could focus there, majority of your issues will go away. And markets change, right? For example, if we had not adopted our business into the world of AI by building an AI webinar builder, we would not be ahead of all the other webinar software like we are now. But we also would probably have seen a really big sales drop. Whereas, right now, we're seeing sales increases. People want AI now. And so, we had to respond to that and we had to build it in and we had to keep up with the other tools that were doing AI.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, you need to just be aware of your market, aware of where things are going. And the people who adapt first are going to be the ones that survive. And unfortunately, the ones who don't are going to be further behind.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, we try to read the market. We try to see what people want. We do surveys to our audience quite regularly. And that's usually what does the trick. And if you're really confused, honestly, what I love to do is just host a live webinar to my audience and get on a call with them, call it a town hall, call it whatever, and just get on there and say, "Hey, guys, this is what we're doing. What would you guys like to see?" And get some feedback. And what I like to do on

webinars as well, and this is, I guess, a good tip for anyone who runs webinars, is, at the end of your webinar, you're going to have people on who haven't bought that are not asking questions. They're just on the call. Call them out by name one by one and say, "Why haven't you bought yet? Just curious." Find out what the people who haven't bought yet, what's stopping them. And then you could address that in your product and in your marketing.

Editor:

That's great advice. To embrace AI at such an early stage, Stefan, that must have been fraught with problems. And AI, as you say, is evolving and changing almost on a daily basis. For anybody who is reading this or anybody that's listening to this that has maybe been put off putting a webinar presentation together, what is the process now? And how easy is it with WebinarKit?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah, it's pretty easy. So, more or less, you grab your website link and you put it in WebinarKit, and within a few minutes you've got a script ready to go. You can make edits to that script or use it as is. Once you're satisfied with the script, you go to the slide builder, and the slide builder is going to allow you to just take that script, press a button, choose your styles. And you'll be able to create a slide. And that's it. That's pretty much it.

Editor:

That's amazing.

Stefan Ciancio:

It doesn't get easier than that. I'm using it myself for some of my presentations. And we have people using it every day. And it's only getting better and better. We are listening to our users, like what I mentioned before. We added in a bunch of different features, the ability to build a small webinar, a long webinar, a webinar with more images, a webinar with less images. So, we listen to our users and what they want, and so we've got a really good increase in feature sets and stuff like that.

Editor:

If there's somebody who has never done a webinar before and maybe is a little bit nervous about taking their first steps, what do you say to them, Stefan, to encourage them to actually embrace doing webinars?

Stefan Ciancio:

Well, there's two schools of thought there. If you're going to do it live, I say just go for it. You could start with a small audience. You don't need to get on with five. You can get on with five or 10 people and start building that muscle. That's really what it comes down to, is you just need to build the muscle. But in the age of AI, you could use tools like WebinarKit, which will build the webinar for you. And then within the next month or so, we're going to have the AI voice and AI video live where you can actually just have an AI version of your voice record the webinar. So, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, it's allowing people to circumvent their fears, but if that's the route you want to go, you have two options there.

Editor:

At least giving people those options. Because that's the thing. I think some people are so reluctant to either get on camera or to use their own voice in case they mess up. But actually, as we all know, to err is human, and to have that human connection is key, I would say. But to have the ability to use an AI-generated clone of your voice, I guess it's the next best thing, right?

Stefan Ciancio:

Absolutely. Whether you have or haven't run webinars already, I've run a lot of live webinars, but I can't wait to use that feature myself. It's just going to save me a lot of time. There's so many people already doing AI clones for their videos, but imagine for your webinars. It's going to be pretty wild.

Editor:

That definitely takes it to the next level. As a webinar host yourself, what metrics or KPIs do you use when you are trying to work out whether or not you've had a successful webinar? Are there any your KPIs that you could share with our audience?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah, absolutely. So, the metrics that you really want to look at are, well, a few things. Registration rate on the webinar lander. Then you want to look at how many people are actually attending live. And then what is your conversion? So, I guess I'll start with live webinars. On the conversion rate, it really depends on what kind of traffic you have. But it can really vary. But ideally, you're closing at least 2 to 3% on a cold traffic webinar live.

Stefan Ciancio:

And then what has really worked for us as of late is replays. So, we take a three-day timer and then at the end of the webinar we run a replay period with the urgency and the special deal closing. And more or less, we just look at the numbers like earnings per attendee, how much are we getting per the average attendee that shows up. And if you know your earnings per attendee, you can figure out your earnings per registration. And then if you know your earnings per registration, you can see how much you can spend on ads, because that's your cost per registration. So, really, at the end of the day, that's the main numbers you're looking at.

Stefan Ciancio:

On an automated webinar, it's the same thing. One thing that has worked really well for us in the past on automated webinars is the same urgency using something like Deadline Funnel or WebinarKit, which now has this functionality built in where you can cookie the timer to the end of the webinar. If someone watches an automated webinar, that gives them 20, 48 hours to get the webinar deal. So, now you get the same urgency that you get on a live webinar, but only automated.

Stefan Ciancio:

So, same kind of thing, 2% is a good conversion rate on cold traffic. If you have a warm list, you could see 10, 20, 30% conversions. But really, at the end of the day, you want to know, how much am I paying for a registration? And how much am I earning from a registration?

Editor:

Thank you for sharing those. As you say, for anybody who's not done a webinar before, I think that's a real insight. But even for seasoned pros, to

have that checklist is super handy. In terms of webinars themselves, people who you've seen present webinars, whether they're automated or whether they're live, Stefan, who do you look up to? Who has inspired you or impressed you the most?

Stefan Ciancio:

I really Anik Singal. He actually wrote the foreword for our book, Sell More with Webinars, which is on Amazon. He's been a pretty big person that has helped me in the space. This guy, Caleb O'dowd is another guy. He's an Irish guy. He's built some pretty killer webinars. I've learned a lot from seeing his stuff. Another guy named Stephen Sommers, another Irish guy, actually. I guess the Irish are really good at webinars. And I've seen some of his stuff. He's a really good guy. Russell Brunson has been influential. I've gone through his whole playbook on webinars. And we've adapted a lot of this stuff from him, from the other people I mentioned, and a combination of our own. Taking pieces from everyone that I just mentioned, and then combining with our own findings.

Stefan Ciancio:

And we have a little bit of a unique perspective because we're not just a guru. Really, we're running a webinar platform. So, we get behind-the-scenes of seeing what different businesses are doing. And it's a unique perspective. You're not just being a guy who's running webinars, but you have a backstage pass to all these people who are running webinars on your platform. So, you have a very unique, open-minded view of what could work.

Editor:

Must be a fascinating world as well, because as you say, webinars have really taken the world by storm. And particularly, as we came through the pandemic, I think a lot of people got more comfortable with online presentations. Is that what you found in your experience, that you had that exponential growth over the last, say, five years or so?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah, it was a good time to launch automated webinar software. We definitely experienced sales got a bit harder as people started leaving their homes and

COVID started phasing out. That said, I think that we've stayed on top of it with new features, leveraging AI, and making it easier for people. That's really what we're going to keep doing, is just keep developing more features, better features that give people what they want and make life easier for them. And I think the rest takes care of itself.

Editor:

And what about yourself, Stefan? How do you stay balanced? And what are you working on? I guess WebinarKit could effectively take over your life if you let it. So, what do you do away from work?

Stefan Ciancio:

Well, first thing I do is I make sure we have our automated webinar running 24/7, because that will be a layer of making sure we have ads running that are automated. I was just travelling, and I was working a little bit, but I had the business largely running on autopilot because of the systems that I've built. And those are the same systems that we sell with WebinarKit to other people.

Stefan Ciancio:

Outside of that, I really enjoy travel. I enjoy going out to eat. I'm a pretty simple guy, really. I like my freedom. And I was not someone who did well with the whole 9:00 to 5:00 thing. So, I wanted to just build systems that allow me to sell while I'm not around and allow me to do whatever it is I want do, which is usually travel and eat.

Editor:

It sounds like it was a bit of a gear shift for you when you left mechanical engineering, is that right? And then you moved into, I guess what is now known as a SaaS product.

Stefan Ciancio:

Mm-hmm.

Editor:

How did you find that transition? And were your family supportive of that at the time, or did they think you were maybe slightly crazy?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah, I think that the narrative here is very much. I think America has more of an entrepreneurial community, especially now than before. It's not uncommon to quit your job and go try to start your own thing, especially in 2025. But when I was starting in 2013, it was a lot less common. It was considered a lot more risky.

Stefan Ciancio:

Back then, my co-workers all thought I was crazy. My family were not... they were not totally unsupportive. Their whole thing was, "Hey, you've got a degree that you could fall back on." And I just remember saying to them one day, "I just want to light my degree on fire. I don't care about my degree. I'll never go back to doing that."

Stefan Ciancio:

But I would say that, back then, my family, they were concerned. Co-workers were more the ones who were shocked. And I don't know if that's out of, "Hey, I could have done this myself," and I need to defend my ego or genuinely concerned, maybe a combination of both. But yeah, I had a lot of people in my life that thought it was a little crazy what I was doing. But nowadays, I think if I had told people I'm going to quit my job and try to start a business, it would be a lot more accepted, just because it's become so much more mainstream.

Editor:

If anybody listening to this who really wants to embrace the world of webinars, I think WebinarKit is, perhaps, the most straightforward way of doing this. You've really put some effort into making it straightforward, but also to look great as well. And I think that's part of the battle, because as you mentioned earlier, Stefan, a lot of the webinar solutions that have been around, they look quite dated. Was that a purposeful approach that you wanted to take when you were writing the code behind WebinarKit?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah. We just really wanted to focus entirely on making it super easy for people to get results. I was using tools myself and I was super frustrated with a lot of these tools. I don't claim to be some hyper-intelligent person. I'm just

a very simple person. And I wanted to build something that felt like anyone could use it. So, if I could use it, anyone can use it. That's how I see it.

Editor:

And did you get into the coding yourself, or have you assembled a team behind you to be able to bring this to life?

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah, I actually partnered with my high school friend who was a software engineer. And I was more of the marketing. And we partnered together, started it. He was handling the tech side, I was handling the marketing side. Now, we've got a team that helps with sales, helps with billing retention, helps with support, and helps with development. So, we've built into a team, but we started with just the two of us. And who knows? Maybe we'll have a bigger team in the future. But I love that you can have a lean team and still make a good amount of money. You don't need to have this big giant company. You could keep a lean international remote team and do some damage, which is really cool.

Editor:

Absolutely. It's super impressive to see what you've managed to do in a relatively short amount of time and really disrupted the webinar world. And I really appreciate your time today, Stefan. It's been an absolute pleasure. For anybody who wants to find out more, who wants to, perhaps, even sign up to one of your plans, direct us where we need to go.

Stefan Ciancio:

Yeah. So, we've got a few plans, but you could find everything at getwebinarkit.com. Nice and easy. If you want to connect with me personally, I'm on Instagram, Facebook. I'm pretty easy to find. Facebook, I'm Stefan Ciancio. Instagram, actiontakingstefan. I got a lot made fun of for that username a lot, but I like it.

Editor:

Love it. Thanks so much for your time today, Stefan. Really appreciate it. And we wish you all the best for the future as well.

Stefan Ciancio:

Thanks for having me. I really appreciate it.

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