



How Showmax Used Data to Drive Growth Across 70+ Markets in Just Three Years

Showmax is a subscription video on demand service. Since launching in South Africa in 2015, the company has focused on a video entertainment product for people in historically underserved entertainment markets—places where providers such as Netflix have not yet reached. With this goal in mind, Showmax has strategically expanded into 70+ countries across Africa and Eastern Europe, amassing an extensive catalogue of original TV shows and movies.

Barron Ernst is the Chief Product Officer at Showmax, where he leads Product, Design, QA and Growth. Since he joined, Ernst has been focused on centralized teams to help drive their expansion into new markets. Each new market is unique, so it's essential for their product and growth teams to be able to track everything they're doing to deeply understand new users and make quick product decisions to drive adoption and retention.

"From the beginning, we wanted to democratize access to our data and then be able to quickly analyze more and more trends and dive in on many variables," Ernst says.

Showmax switched from Mixpanel to Amplitude as their product analytics platform because they said Amplitude gives them more flexibility to mix and match variables to get a complete picture of user behavior. Amplitude also enables anyone at Showmax to pull the data that they need, whenever they need it.

Democratizing Data Access

The product team at Showmax is focused on four key areas of product development:

- The look and feel of the product
- The specific platforms they'll support
- How they'll surface recommendations in the product
- What content they should show users

As they move into new markets, the team looks carefully at how their funnel is converting and how users are finding content. All of the data that influences these product decisions is accessed through Amplitude. This allows the team to explore the data and answer questions themselves, without always needing to go through data analysts from their strategy team.

"The really great thing about Amplitude is that the ability to mix and match variables to get what you need is so flexible," Ernst says.

In Amplitude, the centralized product and growth teams, as well as the local teams in each market, can drill down into the types of content users are watching, such as which shows they start with and which shows they watch regularly. From there, the team can analyze more specific usage trends to better understand the intent behind users' actions.

Ultimately, this data helps the company optimize how users are finding the content that they're interested in and how to keep them coming back—a key driver of growth and retention in new markets.

Setting their product strategy for growth

Showmax's strategy team continually analyzes on-demand video behavior and the analytics behind their growing content library to determine new markets that have a high potential. The product and growth teams then focus on how to optimize and grow those markets once they've been established.

"Being able to evaluate trends in usage and dig in on the data behind our content is fundamental to how we run the business and define our product strategy," Ernst explains. "Product is about talking to the customer, taking the insights from that customer, then marrying that with the data we have about what's actually working."

This method informs how Showmax determines the content to serve up to users, and the content they should invest in across certain markets, he added.

For example, Showmax introduced an original movie called Botoks, by a local director in the Polish market, Patryka Vegi. The movie did incredibly well on their platform, leading to a huge traffic spike when it was released.



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In Amplitude, the team could see that users were coming to the site just for Botoks. It ended up being Showmax's most popular show to date and gave them three times their normal subscription numbers. With this knowledge, they decided to invest in more content with the director. The new content has been similarly successful and had a significant impact on engagement and retention in the Polish market.

"This is a process we replicate across markets to quickly determine where we should be making content investments that help drive engagement and retention," Ernst says.

Showmax's rapid growth has been both unique and impressive, and Ernst considers access to data to be an important piece of their ability to drive this kind of engagement. He advises, "you should want more of your people to do their own data analysis and to be thinking more deeply about how customers are using your product. I'm a big advocate of tools that enable that to occur, and Amplitude is a very good tool for enabling this. It's an important tool we use to give our team that access."



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