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François Ribeiro
Head of Discovery Sports Events



The ANA Marketing Futures Podcast Warner Bros Discovery & Infinite Reality

Mike Berberich

I am [Mike Berberich](#). Welcome to the [ANA Marketing Futures Virtual Podcast Studio](#). We have one of my favorite things in the world today, an international episode with Warner Bros Discovery and Infinite Reality. Thank you, [François Ribeiro](#), [Elliott Jobe](#) and [Hope Frank](#), for joining us. We're talking about a massive multi-year partnership that is future facing. I want to set a baseline with our listeners, Elliott and François. Please tell us a little about yourselves and how your journeys led you to the Infinite Reality and Warner Bros Discovery partnership?

François Ribeiro

I am Head of Discovery Sports Events, which is the events organization arm of Warner Bros Discovery Sports. I live in Paris and am part of the European Organization side of Discovery, which is one of the largest media groups in the world. I have always been in sports. I am a former Olympic sailor and I always wanted to spend my life in sports. I built my life always trying to improve experience in the live events we organize. We organize 45 events per year.

Last May I met with the CEO of Infinite Reality, John Acunto. At that time, the Metaverse was only a vague concept in my mind. I came across John Acunto as well as the Metaverse, which was just on the horizon. And suddenly, I realized it could become a reality for the entity I am heading.

This was still very new. However, I must say that over the last 25 years that I have been in business, this is the most fascinating piece of development I have ever seen.

I have spent my entire life in production, in media distribution, in creating events, in trying to revamp formats, and improve the experience for the fans. And suddenly, I realized that with the Metaverse, I could have all or almost all of those options and all of those possibilities under the same umbrella. This is what started my journey with John Acunto and Infinite Reality.

Mike Berberich

That's cool, such a great background!

1. What Led Elliott to Infinite Reality

Mike Berberich

Elliott, tell us about you.

Elliott Jobe

I have spent 25 years in media and entertainment working with creatives. Los Angeles, Hollywood films, commercials –anything where there was an audience and a lead creative that wanted to innovate using technology to reach or entertain. It's really been across the board, from scripted work, commercials, brands or making new models for how to use technology in marketing and more.

Consider automotive, which went from in-person photography to digital renderings. There have always been big leaps at different times. It is often about the creative vision and how to bring that magic to the audience – and of course, for the audience to experience it.

It's been kind of a big kick in the pants for all of us during COVID. I was doing virtual production at the time, creating a content studio. I had an incredible amount of inquiry around interactive. We had many partners that simply could not produce their events. It culminated in a Burning Man experience that my partner, Helix Wolfson, and I created, in conjunction with Burning Man during that summer.

It got us hot and heavy into the new emerging interactive space. We discovered that our capability in virtual environments and worlds (we had created for movies and entertainment) could translate beautifully into interactive experiences.

From that moment, it's been a rocket ship ride at Infinite Reality. We are developing technology and working with partners like François and Warner Bros Discovery. We are learning what is possible within the Metaverse. Keep in mind, it's not that we even fully know. It's just that we now know what's possible. We have been able to shape the overall experience together with François from each of our relevant perspectives.

Mike Berberich
That's so cool. Amazing!

2. The Warner Bros Discovery Partnership With Infinite Reality

François Ribeiro

You must break wide open the idea that there are limitations when you start building in the Metaverse. For example, every time I start talking about it, I think how am I going to walk around? Then I remember, why would I walk around in the Metaverse when I can fly? But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I've mentioned this a few times, yet to put a fine point on it, Infinite Reality is the official and exclusive Metaverse partner of Warner Bros Discovery. It is a massive deal and a signifier of how critical the Metaverse will be figuring into Warner Bros Discovery's future plans.

Mike Berberich

Bring me behind the scenes François. Share some of your strategy and vision.

François Ribeiro

During my first meeting with John Acunto, he asked me a few simple questions: What is your business in the sports industry? What are you doing? And I explained it all to him. He said, "Look. I'm not sure we could find an equivalent of what Discovery Sports Events is doing here in Europe in the USA." For clarification, under the same umbrella, at the same time... I am running championships where I control the organization of individual events. I am also a producer. I am also a broadcaster. I am also a distributor. I have all the sponsorship rights. And I have all licensing rights.

When I explained this to John, he said, "Do you realize the position you are in when it comes to this package?" My answer to him was, no, sorry, I do not. I would be curious if you would explain it to me. Why do I apparently have such a strong position?

John explained, "Look, it's a very simple matter. What's it all about is delivering an immersive experience. You are in that unique position, with full control over the entire value chain. It's a full end-to-end chain! We should be able to do something exceptional together."

I went back to my office and spoke my boss, the President of Warner Bros Discovery Sports in Europe. I said, I think many people are scratching their heads in the group about the Metaverse. Yet I just realized that we, as Warner Bros Discovery Sports Events, are in an ideal position to not scratch our heads, but to just do it! To go for it!

My gut feeling tells me that the only way to learn is to do a partnership with that company, Infinite Reality, and start developing our own Metaverse experience around our own events!

We made the decision at that moment that Warner Bros Discovery Sports Events would be a kind of laboratory for the rest of the WBD group. Because we can include Metaverse experiments around our own events, the entire assets of our rights, including live feed, including interaction with the athletes, because we have a connection with them.

Not just that, monetization, NFT everything! We made the decision that we would negotiate a multi-year partnership with Infinite Reality to cover one Metaverse experience per year. We would develop across four of our assets and it would allow us the time to learn this new business segment.

Frankly, I think our group is moving into Metaverse properly. I do think we need to be very humble, because this is new, because this is vast. The options you have in the Metaverse are almost limitless. It's limited only by our creativity. That's what is so fascinating!

We are acting on behalf of our WBD group. What I am doing at my level is to spread the knowledge, the experience of what we are learning with the rest of Warner Bros. Discovery. Given the portfolio, that the larger group has, the IP, etc. Well, you can imagine what is possible at that large scale down the line. Consider the apps, the IP, the global reach. It's a learning curve for all of us...

This is our first step in partnering with Infinite Reality. I know that all the events we create, we are 100% in control of. That was the key to doing something meaningful, especially given the premium quality of experiences by Infinite Reality. It's a bit too early for me to say what the vision for the larger WBD group is. I cannot overstate my personal role.

Everything we are doing, and we have done has been so quick with Infinite Reality. Would you believe the first preview we released took us only three months of development time? I must say, I could hardly believe it myself. Our partnership raised significant curiosity in the WBD group, an appetite for hopefully a larger picture of what's to come over the next few years.

Mike Berberich

That makes 100% sense, if you control the end-to-end ecosystem, you can create an experience that's seamless through every touchpoint. Whereas if you are only a part of it, you are limited in the experience, because you are entering and exiting from something completely different. It makes perfect sense and clarifies everything for me. Thank you.

3. What Are the Objectives for Warner Bros Discovery?

Mike Berberich

When you start to create virtual worlds where anything is possible, the opportunities speak for themselves. However, in the short term, what are the Phase One objectives for this partnership? I know that you said you were building out experiences, yet what are you hoping for? What is the outcome or the achievement that you're aiming for in the short or near-term?

François Ribeiro

I have a strong belief. But I don't want to say that it was a belief from day one. From day one it was a good feeling. Yet over the last few months, it became a strong belief. I believe that the Metaverse, over the long-term period, will transform the sports industry. I am absolutely convinced because the Metaverse breaks distance. Because the Metaverse can transport any user, anyone, any fan into any event at any moment without any barriers, without any limitations.

I think that we are the first ones, as a sport and rights holder, to go this deep and this quickly. We will likely show many the path forward. I assume that some of what we are developing with Infinite Reality will succeed. And some of our work will need to be adapted. Yes, it may need to be changed over the years.

For Phase One, it's absolutely everything you could dream of when you want to attend a sporting event. It's about the podcast. It's about social interaction. It's about the monetization of that experience. The Metaverse offers not only e-commerce, it also offers the possibility to bring NFTs into the mix.

In Europe, many of my friends, many professional people I meet with, are talking about the Metaverse. Many are wondering exactly what the Metaverse is all about. What can it offer? There is a healthy amount of curiosity to learn how to participate in a Metaverse experience.

Then, when it comes to our sports industry, well - we want to offer something premium, premium quality. We released our first preview last December in London. It was during our track cycling home championship located in the Olympic Velodrome. And then this spring, we will release a full version of a Metaverse in partnership with Speedway. It's one of our other championship sports series that we operate in Europe.

Phase One: It's to tap into a new audience, perhaps an audience which may not be watching the championship on a linear basis. Maybe not an audience which is attending live in the stadium. It's not about the volume of people we will attract. It's about the quality of the experience we can deliver. We want to give them an appetite to talk to their friends about it and invite them to participate in the Metaverse. Basically, to increase the appetite for brands to join us too. It's the quality of the experience that we can deliver – that is it, it's absolutely everything to me.

Mike Berberich

That's a pretty darn good place to start.

4. What's New at Infinite Reality?

Mike Berberich

Elliott, tell me about the new developments at Infinite Reality. Last year, you rolled out two new tools, the Infinite Skybox and the Infinite Showroom. Walk us through what both of those tools do.

Elliott Jobe

These products were created out of our years listening to our customers. Everything we build is because a customer asks for it, not because we presume that anybody needs it. We enjoyed real excitement and interest in the Metaverse around what we would think of as interactive or gaming. When you think of Roblox or Sandbox, those platforms are already in a game type space.

In broad discussions with our partners and associates, the other two categories were the convergence of interactive with media and streamed or live content entertainment. This includes broadcast and commerce. In essence, a twin to content. These elements have a strong relationship for as long as there's been eyeballs, there's interest to get in front of them.

Lastly there is communication. We think of the power of social tools. We realized the two massively underserved categories that had the greatest possible short-term impact are in media and entertainment, and on the e-commerce side of the equation.

INFINITE SKYBOX is a product that is formulated and packaged as an easy on-ramp for content creators. It's a distribution tool. In the same way satellite or cable or whatever is. It's a new distribution tool for media that allows interactivity. It's not just one way. It allows real-time data providing an understanding of who and what your customers select and do when they are in the environment or space.

Now take your advertisers or your sponsors and set up a commerce experience. In our conversations about bringing WBD online and other broadcast partners, they looked at revenue sources in addition to ticketing. And that's in addition to sponsorships and advertising, they wanted to take it further. That is why our developments targeted the e-commerce space. We created an **INFINITE SHOWROOM**. It's a similar technology, like Skybox, that's oriented towards a retail purchase experience.

When it comes to ecommerce, it's helping brands go direct to consumers. In fact, even to the degree of being able to bring salespeople into these experiences. You can bring live retail sales professionals or product experts in or for WBD, they can invite top athletes or Olympians into the experience and connect them directly to fans. Now that is the Ultimate Fan Experience!

François mentioned, the Metaverse removes distance. Well, that's it. We look at these categories and ask: Where can we remove distance and help the most? For brands, we see it in ecommerce, we see it as a direct-to-consumer experience. And for content creators, we see it as building the ultimate or quintessential experience you would like to create for your audience.

Imagine our Skybox experiences populated with several different touchpoints. It's things that François has mentioned such as NFTs, being able to showcase them for sale or allowing people who purchase NFTs to place them on display in their own Skybox. Our Skyboxes are personal spaces that provide a deeper level of engagement in and surrounding the content.

What we built for Warner Bros Discovery was tuned to elevate their broadcast experience and the immersive fan experience within the sport itself. We were able to include material that Discovery had already produced to help fans understand the sport better, help them enjoy a deeper emotional connection to what's happening during the race. Track Cycling is very fast, it's kinetic, and it's exciting. Until our creative teams started designing it, we didn't realize how much strategy was involved. Then suddenly the dynamic envelops you. It gets exciting and interesting. You want to learn more about the sport; it's inevitable.

5. What Can You Offer Beyond Social Engagement?

Elliott Jobe

From the broadcast viewer experience, what more can we offer that adds engagement beyond social? The big one is multiple camera feeds. Imagine a direct stream, with a couple of streaming options or even a couple of unique script streams – well, that's still finite. Now imagine anything and everything that goes is captured in the production during the live broadcast! All those streams can be delivered directly to the fan. François came up with a great term for this. "Be your own director." Literally, you could select from any number of these feeds onboard, cameras, cable cams, additional content pieces – all of it.

Imagine, I want to follow a particular athlete, I'd love to watch them warm up. I'd love to see their engagement with their coach. I'd love to... And suddenly, you start to stumble into an enormous differentiator that has absolutely nothing to do with avatars, right? It has everything to do with the rich content that is already captured and available during a live race. The Discovery crew is already shooting it. It's just they haven't had any ability to distribute it in a different way. This is what is so exciting and why François believes it will "transform sports".

We've started to see a reciprocal relationship. We think, what else can we do in the broadcast or in the stadium that delivers amazing fan impact? We had Infinite Reality team members who were signed into the virtual Metaverse experience in London, while the rest of us were live the Olympic Velodrome. We were in a VIP Booth live. We were sharing the experience virtually with various team members in California, New York, Texas, and Bali. They were experiencing the energy of the stadium and championship! They heard massive cheering. They heard the roar of the crowd. They saw the lights and the teams. It was an extreme VIP fan experience. A ground-shaking experience. They were experiencing a superior level of VIP engagement in the Metaverse.

Suddenly we thought - wait a minute. That's it. It's what we need. Why can't we create that in Speedway? I can have a stadium. A more stadium-centric type of experience right here, right now, The announcer! And I can hear what happens during the breaks. Maybe I want to feel the break in the stadium with the crowd. It's just exciting to consider all the opportunities available. This has really been the guiding light. And why François and Warner Bros Discovery have been so critical for us. We need to understand our partners and their fans. We don't pretend to know what's the ultimate fan experience. It's unique for each client and partner. Or what the value to that audience is more than the content creator themselves.

We wouldn't presume to know what would be best for that brand's customers or for their fans.

What we are creating for Discovery is unique. We are focused on what the fan will love. What is the ultimate fan experience in a specific sport? We must do the homework and ask the big questions with our partner. We know we are fortunate because François can articulate these concepts and has the vision to co-create with us. It is rare and it's exciting. And I'll share with you, our wish list for last year was only 15 things. It's grown to 45 for this year (laugh). It's because everyone is open to what is possible. It's super exciting to be along for the ride!

6. What Are the Opportunities in the Metaverse?

Mike Berberich

You must train your brain to stop limiting new ideas. In the Metaverse anything can be created, any experience. It's one thing to make live broadcasts interactive, which has insane implications. Interactivity, that's something we all crave. We want to control what we are entertained by or how we interact with it or some new way. And to accomplish that in live sports? The opportunities are seemingly endless!

Elliott Jobe

Yes, it's fascinating, Michael. For Speedway, we will stream more than 20 different live feeds at the same time in the Infinite Skybox. And that's more than just as a single user. You can select the live feeds you would like. You can even select the rider(s) you or you and your friends want to follow.

The Metaverse offers you the opportunity to invite your best friend who may be in Australia; you can watch the same program and talk to him as if you were in a stadium with each other in a VIP area. That opportunity is astounding. There is no limitation on the number of feeds you can bring into your personal skybox. This is more powerful than just a second screen (mobile phone or iPad) when watching a linear broadcast.

The interactive options are exciting. You can interact with the athletes or the riders before or during the competition, during breaks or straight after the race or championship. It's very exciting! Take a minute, think through this, who can do this today? What type of tickets or VIP experience would you need to purchase if you went to an NBA or NFL game or the Olympics next year to gain that personal, profound fan experience? What type of access is available today and what would it cost?

Mike Berberich

Yeah, it's just incredible!

7. What Makes Infinite Reality Interesting?

François Ribeiro

This is what makes our journey with infinite Reality so interesting. The possibilities are so large. I believe it all lies in the quality of the partnership and the quality of the people who are guiding you in this new world.

We are a big media group. We organize 45 large events per year. However, when it comes to this new distribution channel and the Metaverse opportunity, we are starting from scratch. I knew from day one that Infinite Reality would be awesome to work with. Because they listen intently and try to understand our specific needs. Very rarely has anyone on the Infinite Reality team said, "No, that's not possible. You cannot do this." Imagine that! I just love it.

Mike Berberich

That's fantastic. Many successes we are seeing in the metaverse are coming from very large organizations. Nike created their sports island. Obviously, Warner Brothers Discovery is a perfect organization to create something big and exciting in the Metaverse also. But many of our listeners are in companies that may not have the deep pockets to buy acreage in the Metaverse and set up mega structures.

8. What Are the Opportunities for Small and Mid-Tier Brands?

Mike Berberich

What are the opportunities for small to mid-tier brands in the Metaverse as a first step and rollout this year?

Elliott Jobe

Great question! Before we walk through the mechanical answer and options. Let's first stop and consider what is the deeper message the brand is looking to communicate. What is the brand wanting to accomplish? What is the audience experience that the brand needs to deliver?

That in and of itself is a journey. We are all comfortable with micro evolutions where we build on top of what we have done successfully before. Yet now, suddenly, we are confronted by larger questions.

It will take time for brands to figure this out. Yet, it's the best flashlight we can start with. Ask yourself, okay, so these are our values. This is what we want to communicate. This is what we can uncover. Brands will need to represent themselves in a clear and authentic way. You mentioned Nike. It translates perfectly for them. It's clear. Because they know who they are and what they want to accomplish in the Metaverse.

It's like colorizing, black and white. Right? Suddenly, the directors of photography didn't know what to do anymore because now it was "all in color" and they had to look at the product in a new way.

Today, we can add almost every kind of possible dimension of detail and nuance to a product all at once. Frankly, who wants to take that kind of risk, all at one time? Therefore, find projects or modules or work with certain brand teams that are comfortable. Dip a toe in or dive straight away. There are plenty of comfortable options in Web 2.2 (dipping a toe in and gaining traction easily) and there are also massive opportunities for larger audiences to be a first mover in their respective category. There are pathways for small and or mid-tier brands and creative teams (or agencies) to bring these ideas to life.

The internet, or the web in the mid-nineties is a good example. Very few brands, companies or even creators could build their own website in any way that felt meaningful initially. Early websites weren't easy to build nor easy to manage. It wasn't until basic technologies for the developers were created that it all snapped quickly into place. The brands hired the developer. The developers jump started the entire process. Within a few years, websites became easier to build and manage.

From an Infinite Reality strategic standpoint, we believe all the value lies in the fertility of the relationship between the brand and their audience. To create maximum value, brands need to be able to develop, own, manage, and control their audience's experience. In essence, we help turn audiences into users.

We see a huge challenge, for other companies that are building right now, like early websites where each website was built from scratch. There's no connectivity between them. It's difficult to structure, therefore it's difficult to invest in building unless your team is poised to build, launch, and scale.

This is why Infinite Reality has a significant advantage. We build, launch, and scale.

With François, in broadcast media, he can leverage our Infinite Showroom product. Our product is easy to onboard. It's not going to immediately be the "Wix of the Metaverse". Yet that is the path. Remember how WordPress transformed website builds? That is how Infinite Reality is transforming Web 2.2 straight through to the Metaverse.

Mike Berberich
Right!

Elliott Jobe
You will see more standardization and tools as partners and innovators including François test and learn. WBD has the authority, creativity, and willingness to invest on instinct and jump straight-in.

Now consider, what cascades down to what we see as the other end of the Metaverse or the emerging creator economy. You have this super high-end top-tier (Warner Bros Discovery) that is going to do it in a very specific way. It will reveal some elements and some commonalities and standards. Everyone benefits!

We will need standardization. Remember how TV worked? The category had to standardize to be effective. We believe you will see the same, these tools and capabilities ignite standardization,

There already is a lot of interest and activity in this in the creator economy. The real meat and potatoes, however, will need to be underwritten by the major brands so that it can be offered at scale and remain agnostic to any particular platform.

Mike Berberich

100%. Empowering creators is essential in any new landscape. I'm happy you tied that in. It needs to be a Metaverse that reflects the world. For that to happen, the world needs access to be able to create experiences that continue to inspire.

As head of the Marketing Futures program for ANA, I am often Mr. Shiny Object. When something new comes up in the industry, it is my job to get ahead of it and help contextualize it in the marketing community.

So, my 2022 was spent talking to just about anyone from across verticals and company sizes about the Metaverse. In January, there was a ton of energy around it. Excitement, new things rolling out, etc. Yet by December, it felt a little bit like a hangover for some marketers. Please share your opinions. I thought that excitement was palpable. By year's end it shifted.

9. How Do You Define It?

Elliott Jobe

That is interesting Michael. In our minds, it's how do you define it. What are you talking about when you say the Metaverse? If you talk about the Metaverse as a hypothetical place, then that is "somewhere else". If it's a giant world you go into, you travel around to see what you can find. Well, that Metaverse concept proved to be a massive struggle for us too, when it came to what is the real utility and value for the brand, audience, and fan.

Hype doesn't last long when people need to hit KPIs.

Other than simple activations or the wow factor, what is the real value? It wasn't until we pivoted in Q1 2022 and really looked. Wait a minute. What exactly can this do for our customers? What can this do for our partners, our partners' customers, and by extension the fan experience?

Here's a simple example, take DVDs. Sure, they looked great. They were cool or better than VHS if you didn't scratch them. But it wasn't until the DVD extended content concept came out where the studios could leverage a bunch of extra extended content. That content was just sitting on a shelf that couldn't quite sell on its own because it didn't fit a big enough audience. But boy, just add that stuff on a DVD. Now everybody must go out and buy that DVD! Never mind just that one. You must get the special edition DVD that has even more of that stuff on it too. So, it's a similar exercise. We needed to do the homework to find compelling use cases.

We asked ourselves and listened to our partners. How is this relevant exactly? We invested the time to determine the exact relevance. And it revealed itself quickly. It has nothing to do with “the space”. It's like making a movie because you focused on “the screen” the whole time. You are supposed to be thinking about the emotional experience of the story and the audience. That's the movie. The screen? Does it matter? It could be shiny, it could be big, it could be tall, it could be small. Like that's going to make something or a big difference? No, it's fundamentally emotional, it's about the story.

Fundamentally, what is it for the audience? Fundamentally, what is it for the brand?

For us a huge difference between January and December 2022 was exactly that. Are you here to provide value to others authentically, transparently? Are you here to earn business and earn partnerships? What is large, what is real, what is evergreen? What ultimately matters? Listen to your partners. Understand the audience. Learn how to turn more of the audience into raving fans. Learn how to turn the fans into users.

Mike Berberich

Very interesting. François, over to you. What would you like to add?

10. Warner Bros Discovery and the Impact on Sports

François Ribeiro

I don't really feel any hangover from where I sit. For the sports industry, I had many debates and discussions about Metaverse. I would say that probably late in 2021, the sports industry was curious. Yet now, it's not a question of will it happen, it's simply when and how it will happen. 2022 has been an accelerator when it comes to a Metaverse coming into the mix of delivering an experience and engaging with fans in our sports industry.

It's only a question of how it will happen and what we can build first. Will it be a real-life type of experience or a linear experience or an auditory experience. I'm convinced that the Metaverse will be a complement for linear television and cable. I'm absolutely convinced about this. I'm absolutely convinced that the Metaverse will not replace an in-person experience, but it may offer the opportunity to experience that in-person experience and feeling virtually.

Imagine, I am in Paris and Infinite Reality develops an experience with a U.S. sports franchise, maybe it will allow me to attend those events virtually from here in Europe. That experience will be immersive, multi-faceted, something I do not have any access to today.

That's why I'm 100% convinced that it will, I just don't know the exact timing. We are at the beginning of the journey. Yet there is no doubt, I'm absolutely convinced that the Metaverse will completely transform the sports industry by offering all these new ways to engage.

Big brands in sports, big franchises will become even more global with the Metaverse because they will be able to tap into an audience that they cannot reach today. I see all of this as new and a massive opportunity. And I do think of this as an absolute.

Mike Burbridge

I think it comes from a misunderstanding of what the Metaverse is and what the opportunities are. I love this quote and forget the author. I apologize to whomever said this. It ties into what both of you were explaining. "The metaverse isn't a destination, it's a dimension." It's going to expand and deepen things that already exist. As you said, François, it's not going to replace anything. It's going to add an extra level of immersion and control eventually. I get it. So well said. Thank you, gentlemen.

11. The Removal of Distance

Elliott Jobe

Yes, Mike! It's also the inverse of that too. Considering what it removes, as François mentioned earlier, I wish I could remember who I heard this from because it was so compelling.

Mike Berberich

Marketing Futures Podcast. Contact us. Let us know who we're quoting. (laugh)

Elliott Jobe

"The Metaverse is the removal of distance for creativity, commerce, connection and collaboration." That quote really turned my head around when I started seeing it that way. You realize how much of it is already here today. How much of it is here when we use Zoom or our mobiles for FaceTime. It's already been happening for quite a long time.

And when you look at youth and you look at these Metaverse goals from so many brands and content creators to reach younger audiences. You quickly realize they have been here the whole time. They don't even know what you're talking about because it's their daily life. It's interesting what lens that you look at from it, I love that description as well. The dimension one I mean, as well as the distance one.

Mike Berberich

Hope and I were talking the other day and I said -- one great thing is that for Gen Z and Gen Alpha there's no education necessary, no training required to enter the Metaverse, it's just a Fortnite for groceries, it's a Fortnite for this and Fortnite for that. The language already exists, the context is already here. So that is something interesting regarding the adoption rate. don't think there's going to be any time required for the next generation. I don't think there's going to be much, if any, friction at all, which is odd for a technology advancement or transformation for something so massively new.

12. What Are the Possibilities?

Mike Berberich

If you don't mind, I'd love to look at the horizon. I know you said earlier that you're learning things as you go. You don't have an end destination in mind. Yet, what do you see as the possibilities? Elliott, you said, it went from 15 to 45 things in 2023. What do you see on the horizon for Warner Bros Discovery?

François Ribeiro

We have defined Infinite Reality experiences for championships— one per year. The long-term vision and our near-term roadmap are aligned. We hope to launch our own ecosystem where you will be able to navigate from one Metaverse experience to another. We will test and learn over the coming months and years to create many new options.

Should the Metaverse be available on a subscription basis? Should you pay with your credit card? Should you buy an NFT to access a metaverse? Should some parts be accessible as a teaser. Other parts being premium?

Should premium experiences be accessible on a subscription basis? How do you build the relationships with advertisers? And for e-commerce, what should the retail experience be like? Should the Metaverse be the place to launch special products or even a signature series? Special editions exclusively available in Metaverse? I mean, this is what we are doing... We are going to learn through our multi-year partnership with Infinite Reality. I say to you Michael, we are at the beginning. We need to be at the same time very humble and also very daring.

Mike Berberich

I love it. I love it! Now we are going to pivot the podcast. We ask the same three questions of all our guests. Are you ready?

13. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Mike Berberich

Let's begin! I would love to hear what your thoughts are on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

François Ribeiro

Well, for me, it's simple, because the group I am working for as far as diversity, equity and inclusion is right on the front door. There is no need to say how much diversity and inclusion; it is important to Discovery. And I have so many examples.

It's part of the culture of the group. For me personally as a manager, this is nearly everything around me. 90% of my closest staff are women. Many are moms and from different backgrounds. It's also a principle for me, when I recruit a new candidate – I do not look at the CV before my interview.

Diversity and inclusion? Yeah, this is nearly everything for me and I'm glad to be part of WBD, a group which has placed so much effort behind this topic.

Mike Berberich

That's cool. I might start trying that, not reviewing the resume before an interview. It keeps your mind completely open! Fantastic!

Elliott Jobe

That's that Olympic sailor; he is feeling the wind, man. Yeah. I'll give you the numbers. I got it. I can see the whitecaps! (laugh) Mike, this is an awesome question. I think creativity and inspiration are everywhere. We want to see the opportunity for that creativity and that inspiration to find its path. When we think about the creator economy, we think about finding ways and using technology to let all talent come forward.

The other piece is the audience. Everyone wants to see themselves reflected in the media. We want to see ourselves in the product. Everybody does, right? We all gain a richer experience, the more broadly diverse the opportunities are.

Mike Berberich

I love both of these answers. And we ask it because, in my opinion, diversity, equity and inclusion is the future. It's not negotiable. So well-said. Both of you.

14. Best Album of All Time?

Mike Berberich

All right, here come the big guns. I hope you're ready. You've been fantastic guests. I hate to do this to you, but I'm going to need an answer. Favorite album of all time. And why?

François Ribeiro

It's not exactly my generation, just the one before. Yet, it's "The Best of Queen". It has always been part of my life, probably because of the energy I need on a day-to-day basis to deliver 45 events across five continents! This is not a part time job.

Yes, I do need a lot of energy. Whenever I put on "The Best of Queen", it gives me goosebumps. That's the album for me and will likely always be.

Mike Berberich

Awesome Answer.

Elliott Jobe

My wife is taking me so far, deep into the world of jazz and other music forms. She's a musician, there isn't even an album in that spectrum that I could necessarily name. I'll cheat and say that that one of the ones that really got me early on was one The Doors produced well after Jim Morrison was gone.

They took his poetry, which had been recorded, and then the keyboardist and some of the other groups crafted music around it. It's called "An American Prayer". There is just something in growing up in Southern California, you know, then moving to L.A. when I was 18 and realizing suddenly, I was on the Sunset Strip. You just see the Whisky... It's so hard to deny. Do we even have albums today that feel like this?

Mike Berberich

Such a variety of music in a way. It's how it's distributed. Yet, a great question. In a few years, I will have to ask what is your favorite Spotify playlist? (laugh)
Elliottt, I forgot about "An American Prayer" until right now. You are right, it's a powerful album.

All right, let's wrap it up on a little bit of a lighter note. You both crushed the hard questions. So, let's bring it to today. What are you listening to? Whether it's a song, an artist, a podcast, maybe a book, what is exciting today?

Elliott Jobe

Well, you said exciting. I mean, I must admit, I mostly hear the soundtrack to Frozen daily as well as when I wake up. I have a one- and three-year-old... (laugh)

Mike Berberich

I was about to ask how old? (laugh)

Elliott Jobe

It's a deep dive for sure. (laugh) I don't know how obscure these are to the audience, but Underworld and M83 are two groups that I always seem to love. When something new comes out. I enjoy orchestration. I enjoy music that goes toward hymnal impactful, you know, cathartic. And, with that sort of, technological and sometimes dance beat. So, you're either going to hear Frozen or you're going to hear some Underworld and M83 with the kids. We do our own dance parties around the kitchen and have a great time.

Mike Berberich

Your music streaming algorithms must be so... (laugh)

Elliott Jobe

It's a mess. It's a mess. Forget it. The Netflix algorithms too, oh, it's all of it (laugh)

Mike Berberich

François, what's lighting up those synapses for you?

François Ribeiro

A French singer [Orelsan](#) he is a phenomenon in France, and throughout Europe. I'm fascinated about what he does. He started in a very small city singing rock in his garage.

And what I found absolutely fascinating about him is that he started when he was 14. He said to his brother, look, you're going to record everything I do in our garage, because one day we will do a documentary, a docuseries about this. Well, the second season of his docuseries just went live on Amazon Prime in France.

This guy is fascinating, because the vision he had he was a teenager, and he knew that he would become someone special. He knew that the content around him would mean something. It's exceptional. I would pay a lot of money to go to dinner with him.

Mike Berberich

Yeah, vision is the word for it. When you're 14, you say, "Trust me, bro..." (laugh) That's impressive. Gentlemen, thank you so much for stopping by the virtual studio today. This has been a great conversation. It's been my honor to have you here on the Marketing Features podcast.

François Ribeiro

Thank you, Mike.

Elliott Jobe

Thank you, Mike.