CHRISTOPHER VAN BLERK

Growth Manager — Sales, Marketing & Channel

Cape Town, SA · +27 71 161 1196 · chris46.vb@gmail.com · linkedin.com/in/chrisvanblerk · github.com/ChrisAtDigi
Open to Cape Town / Winelands hybrid and remote roles · Available for UK, EU and US-East working hours

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Commercial lead with technical depth. I run growth for a national FMCG brand across reseller, retail, distributor and NGO channels, owning sales leadership, campaigns and paid media, creative production, CRM and the reporting that shows what is working. I came to sales and marketing from ten years in software development, so I build my own dashboards and data pipelines, find where the funnel leaks, and fix the systems behind the numbers rather than guessing. Strongest in small, fast-moving teams that need one person to connect strategy, creative and the systems underneath, and that measure growth in results rather than activity.

SELECTED RESULTS

- Within 90 days of joining, diagnosed a year-long decline in reseller activity that leadership had not quantified: active resellers down by more than half over twelve months, with roughly two-thirds of churn occurring inside the first 30 days. This reframed the growth problem from acquisition to early retention and triggered a company-wide response.
- Found and corrected a dashboard attribution error that had overstated active resellers by about a third and month-to-date revenue by nearly four times, and surfaced a largely unattributed partner channel representing a significant share of annual revenue.
- Mapped the reseller acquisition funnel end to end (site visits → booked calls → sign-ups), isolated three specific leaks, and presented the fix to EXCo as a systems problem rather than a rep-performance problem.
- Took over the marketing function after the agency exit and brought video and creative production in-house: eight product clips, explainers and a five-module reseller video course that replaced a 26-minute sales letter and the agency retainer.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Full-funnel growth strategy
- Sales team leadership, KPIs & coaching
- Campaign planning, Meta Ads & social strategy
- Cohort, churn & funnel analytics (SQL)
- Commercial negotiation & partnerships
- Channel, reseller & distributor sales
- Retail & key account development
- Video, design & brand creative production
- CRM, marketing automation & AI tooling
- Onboarding, playbook & process design

WORK EXPERIENCE

Growth Manager | Food Sock Meals, Strand, Western Cape — Jun 2026 – present

Joined as Reseller Manager; scope expanded to Head-of-Sales responsibilities within three months and to full growth ownership (sales, marketing, creative, CRM and channel strategy) in October 2026. Report to the COO. Lead two sales representatives and the Reseller Manager. Food Sock is a South African FMCG brand selling affordable one-pot meals through a national independent reseller network (300+ accounts), direct e-commerce, retail and NGO channels.

Growth strategy & analytics

- Built the company's Insights Dashboard from scratch (Node/TypeScript, PostgreSQL on a VPS I rebuilt), unifying WooCommerce, Shopify and Metorik data into one view of revenue, reseller activity and cohort retention; maintain the Metorik → Sheets → Looker reporting pipeline.
- Ran the root-cause analysis on reseller churn: cohort retention curves, activity segmentation and revenue concentration (roughly half of resellers produce 80% of revenue; starter-pack size has no effect on success). Identified day 60 as the decisive retention point and redesigned onboarding around it.
- Produced a 12-month growth plan with revenue modelling and a hiring business case; mapped the SA dehydrated-meal market and identified an uncontested affordable-everyday-meal position.

Sales leadership & channels

- Lead the sales team: daily stand-ups, call logging and reporting, individual KPIs (one onboard per rep per day) and a lead-outreach programme for roughly 600 uncontacted CRM leads, including WhatsApp Business API compliance.
- Restructured starter-pack tiers (Lite, Value, Bulk) with verified margin and profit calculations; led the range reduction from 13 to 8 core products and the associated exit-stock clearance.

- Negotiate distributor and partnership deals, including a regional exclusivity request, a federation representing 720 informal-economy merchants across three provinces, export enquiries and pharmacy and SPAR retail leads; designed the channel-conflict framework separating key-account retail from independent reseller territories.

Marketing, creative & CRM

- Own campaign planning, Meta advertising, the social media strategy and posting calendar (shifting the brand from content-led to strategy-led), brand guardianship, claims and allergen compliance and the AI-content approval policy.
- Lead creative production: an animated product video library, explainers, a SPAR launch piece, a brand mascot concept and print and design assets; lead capture built into the first checkpoint of the video course.
- Administer the CRM (GoHighLevel) and n8n automations and lead the migration to a new CRM platform; launched the monthly reseller newsletter; technical liaison to the external BI consultancy.

Programme & community design

- Designed the First 90 Days onboarding programme (three-cohort model targeting early churn), the 15-chapter Reseller Playbook, a three-tier offboarding and stock-buyback framework and the weekly Community Hall live session, which I founded and host.

Founder & Technical Consultant (part-time) | Rolodex, Cape Town — Jan 2026 – present

- Deliver AI-driven automation and reporting for small-business clients, including LLM-based document matching and supplier-tracking workflows (n8n, Anthropic and OpenAI APIs) and WordPress/WooCommerce builds.

Platform Specialist & Front-End Developer | Genius Platforms, California (remote) — Apr 2024 – Dec 2025

- Delivered client platforms in an Agile scrum team, translating requirements into tailored solutions and supporting stakeholders through Freshdesk, Rocketlane and Jira; produced documentation and training content to drive platform adoption.

Co-founder & Director | Bluelight Software, Cape Town — Feb 2022 – Mar 2024

- Co-founded and directed a software development company: strategy, financial planning, operations, client relationships and technical direction, while staying hands-on in delivery and legacy-system modernisation.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Front-End Developer (Junior → Senior) & Project Coordinator | Brainwave Projects, Cape Town — Jan 2015 – Jan 2022

Seven-year progression leading multiple concurrent client projects from planning to delivery; produced data analysis and reporting that informed strategic decisions.

Digital Content Manager & Technician | Brainwave Electrical, Cape Town — Jan 2014 – Dec 2015

Managed a team of electricians and the company's digital presence; the role that led into full-time software development.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- Diploma in Counselling and Communication Skills (NQF 6), major in Business Communication — South African College of Applied Psychology (SACAP), 2015
- Private Pilot Licence — Morningstar Flight Academy, 2021

TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

Commerce & CRM: WooCommerce, WordPress, Shopify, Metorik, GoHighLevel, WhatsApp Business API, Typeform, Calendly. Data: SQL (PostgreSQL, MS SQL, MySQL), Google Sheets modelling, Looker Studio. Automation & AI: n8n, Anthropic and OpenAI APIs, AI-assisted content and development tooling. Marketing & creative: Meta Ads Manager, animated video production, Affinity, Inkscape, Canva. Engineering: Node.js, TypeScript, React, Git, Docker, Linux VPS administration.

INTERESTS

Brazilian jiu-jitsu coach (Groundworx). Private pilot. Builds hardware and IoT projects (Raspberry Pi, Arduino, 3D printing).