



← Chris Kronenthal  
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**RTIH: Can you explain your current role and what you do at FreedomPay?**

**CK:** I joined FreedomPay almost 14 years ago, and since then, we've become one of the world's fastest growing FinTech companies.

We're delivering Next Level Commerce™ to some of the biggest brands in the world across retail, hospitality, F&B, gaming, and much more. Companies such as Marriott, IHG, HMS Host, Delaware North, Foot Locker, Sephora, and Dine Brands.

My workday is never the same. From a strategy call at Marriott to technological innovation with Klarna as the President, I drive our strategic business development, product innovation, network infrastructure management, and software development processes.

I continually advance a security focused perspective to the scalable needs of companies worldwide.

**RTIH: What is FreedomPay?**

**CK:** FreedomPay is a Philadelphia-based tech company and global leader in secure commerce technology for merchants internationally across retail, hotels and lodging, food and beverage, and hospitality, including restaurants and stadiums.

We deliver a revolutionary technology platform that allows businesses to serve their customers with best-in-class security, speed, and personalisation.

We have a long history in secure and innovative payment technology. We were founded over 20 years ago, and our genesis was a stored value proposition for contract food service companies.

Fast forward to today, and the company is an industry leader. FreedomPay continues to transform the world of commerce and drive the future of payment innovation.

From PoS integrations to cashless solutions, business intelligence to data management, and electronic payment services to loyalty: our Next Level Commerce™ solution provides a fully integrated infrastructure for managing commerce in omnichannel environments.

In other words, we're the engine inside the world's ever expanding, interconnected ecosystem of commerce and payments.

**RTIH: Why is there a need for a unified commerce platform like yours?**

**CK:** An increasing number of merchants, especially at the enterprise level, have multiple technology partners and solutions that are fundamentally important to their operations.

However, many continue to utilise legacy systems which are old, outdated, and deficient in their relevant

data delivery and functionality.

In many cases, an "if it isn't broken, don't fix it" mentality has long hindered the evolution and progression of retailers' payment solutions. Their tech stacks may operate in silos that create friction and disconnection in the commerce experience, from security to data and loyalty.

FreedomPay is the tech that connects. Our fully agnostic and open platform offers maximum flexibility for merchants and consumers.

Rather than ripping and replacing outdated, disconnected tech, we surround and expand on the existing infrastructure to unify existing commerce platforms.

Our new partnership across the Americas with French beauty retailer, Sephora, is a prime example of our integration. Sephora's Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Sree Sreedhararaj, commented on the value of FreedomPay's solution:

"Now, more than ever, it is critical for us at Sephora to be able to adapt to the quickly changing retail environment and that's especially important at the Point of Sale.

Our clients desire a seamless experience in every step of the shopping journey, and our partnership with FreedomPay allows us to maximise efficiencies and capabilities at checkout."

This is what Next Level Commerce™ is about: enabling our merchants to offer their customers a frictionless

payment experience, enhanced by speed, security, and personalisation at every touchpoint.

**RTIH: Supporting loyalty programmes is a key plank of the FreedomPay offering. Can you explain how this works?**

**CK:** Our loyalty proposition sits alongside our payment gateway to provide a full 360-degree view of consumer and cardholder behaviours within their environment.

Our business intelligence capabilities empower merchants to offer personalised incentives to their customers, such as customized rewards and discounts to build long-term brand relationships.

If we look back on the pandemic through a retail lens, it really shone a light on consumer behaviour and customer loyalty to specific companies or brands across demographics and countries.

The paramount importance of consumer loyalty and the purchase experience became apparent to businesses. It highlighted the criticality of understanding consumer behaviour and preferences through smart, insightful data.

Unless you fully understand your loyal customers and how to communicate with them, how can you upsell and cross-sell? Customers need and expect to feel valued and rewarded for their loyalty.

In the race to secure customer loyalty through better connected user experiences, the winners will be those that can connect the data dots within their businesses



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# Interview

and the multiple touchpoints along their channels.

FreedomPay intrinsically intertwines the payments process and the loyalty journey. We track each brand loyal customer to interpret their purchase habits and how certain variables affect their consumer behaviour.

We help retailers envisage those consumers and how to target them best. Are they Gen X or Gen Y? What is their gender? Are they located in a rural or urban area?

Do they exclusively shop online or in-store, or both? FreedomPay can even tell how the weather correlates to an individual's buying power.

**RTIH: With many retailers planning to invest in omnichannel excellence, why is it important to have a commerce tech partner who supports this approach?**

**CK:** In 2021, FreedomPay commissioned an independent study to understand the pain points of mid-to-enterprise Chief Technology Officers.

The number one finding was that leaders are increasingly dependent on third-party vendors as 'business consultants' and 'guardians of reputation' to democratise data, drive stakeholder value, and cope with compliance and ethical complexity.

FreedomPay hasn't lost a single enterprise client on our platform, and our guiding principle is customer satisfaction. We behave almost as the consultant tech partner for the merchant.

We often hear about how businesses struggle with the complexities of managing disparate, siloed systems such as Point of Sale devices, payment processors, and incentive engines. Meanwhile, the customer is unaware of the merchant's struggles.

Across all touchpoints, the entire commerce experience should be safe, secure, and uniform for customers and merchants.

FreedomPay's technology prepares retailers to deliver Next Level Commerce™ using a growth solution that is efficient, agnostic, and open.

The one key principle of omnichannel operations is to safeguard your investment with an enterprise payments platform that supports you and your customers.

**RTIH: Tell us about your future expansion plans and FreedomPay's expansion from the US across the UK, EU, and the globe**

**CK:** We are expanding across the Atlantic and beyond, with capabilities in more than 100 countries that power billions of transactions annually. We recently announced our expansion into Mexico, bringing our Next Level platform to millions of merchants and consumers in the region.

Data is seen as the new, borderless, virtual currency within the digital economy that we live and work in, and that our businesses operate within.

**RTIH: Payments architecture is changing rapidly, especially with the introduction of open banking. So, what do retail businesses need to be aware of?**

**CK:** Retailers must meet consumer expectations of the checkout process regarding flexible payment processes and personalised customer experiences.

Businesses have the means and motivation to revolutionise their customer acquisition and retention approach. This involves constructing new, dynamic pathways to 'meet consumers where they are' with competitive offers tailored to an individual's specific wants and needs.

This demonstrates how data management, data tools and smart technology will be vital to every merchant's growth strategy.

Evolving 'open banking' legislation around data sharing and protection has changed the availability of customer and potential customer information to non-banks.

The way that retailers and their consumers approach loyalty is changing. Fewer consumers hold physical loyalty cards for their favourite grocery store or airline. Instead, these have shifted online, creating access to a wealth of valuable customer data that can be used to personalise incentives.

Data sharing allows merchants to target potential customers they have no prior relationship with and those they have on file; this impacts companies' acquisition and retention strategies.

This technology is changing commerce. A successful retailer needs to choose the right partner, to identify and manage customer eligibility, acquisition, satisfaction, retention, and reward strategies.

Chris Kronenthal is the payments industry's preeminent security expert, bringing a world class experience to FreedomPay's software development processes and compliance solutions.

He is widely recognised for his management and architecture of global ISV solutions and omnichannel environments. He received his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Information Technology at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

**Find further information on FreedomPay at:**  
[corporate.freedompay.com](https://corporate.freedompay.com)