

Firsthand Secures \$26M in Series A Funding to Scale Industry's First AI-Powered Brand Agent Platform

Firsthand unlocks AI as a new communication medium, enabling companies to engage consumers directly with their expertise in real time, wherever consumers are



NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ --

[Firsthand](#), the AI-powered Brand Agent platform transforming how brands attract and engage with consumers, has secured [\\$26M in Series A funding](#). The round was led by Radical Ventures, a return investor, with participation from FirstMark Capital, Aperiam Ventures, Michael Ovitz's Crossbeam Venture Partners, and angel investors including David Rosenblatt, Brian O'Kelley, and Bob Lord. The investment will support product expansion and team growth to meet increasing market demand.



AI-powered Brand Agents represent the biggest leap forward in the advertising and marketing technology space...changing the very way consumers experience digital content..."

Michael Rubenstein, co-CEO and co-founder at Firsthand

AI as a New Communication Medium

AI isn't just a new technology; it represents a new communication medium through which companies can have direct, highly personalized interactions with consumers wherever they are. The Firsthand Brand Agent Platform™ enables marketers and publishers to engage consumers through AI, driving higher engagement, unprecedented consumer insights, and more sales. Some of the world's largest brands and publishers are already

using Firsthand, vastly improving the engagement driven by traditional ads.

"Unlike traditional AI tools focused on workflow efficiency or optimizing existing marketing channels, Firsthand shifts AI's role from back-end support to front-line consumer interaction," said Jonathan Heller, co-CEO and founder of Firsthand and a co-founder of FreeWheel. "We've invented something completely new to transform how marketers and publishers engage with consumers. Firsthand's Brand Agents are the first AI-powered brand representatives that can truly engage consumers in moments of curiosity or intent, learn dynamically, and deliver real-

time, adaptive and experiences that respond to those consumers based on their interests and behavior, everywhere.”

Firsthand’s Brand Agents operate across a brand’s owned properties or as paid media placements, securely blending both a brand and publisher’s knowledge to deliver a new kind of consumer experience.

For example:

- In the place of static ads that direct to a single destination, Firsthand’s Brand Agents can help retail consumers navigate vast product catalogs by showcasing the right products in real-time based on their needs and preferences.

- Brand Agents can support financial service providers by assisting consumers as they make high-consideration decisions, providing them with customized education, product comparisons, and tailored recommendations based on individual needs and context.

- Brand Agents can empower travel companies to dynamically adjust their offerings so they correspond with different traveler personas — such as the budget explorer, business traveler, or family planner — and deliver relevant recommendations and branded content that drive bookings.

- Brand Agents can allow publishers to create new revenue streams by serving as an AI-powered ad product — all while increasing engagement by surfacing the most relevant content to readers and keeping them immersed in high-value media experiences.

At the core of the Firsthand Brand Agent Platform™ driving these use cases is Lakebed™, the company’s AI-era data and knowledge rights management solution. Lakebed ensures that marketers and publishers retain full control of their content, allowing companies to define what Brand Agents can access and how that information is used. It also enables partners’ AI to safely cooperate on data while ensuring that all parties retain full ownership and control of their intellectual property.

“AI-powered Brand Agents represent the biggest leap forward in the advertising and marketing technology space since the birth of programmatic, not just reinventing the advertising experience but changing the very way consumers experience digital content — and marketers and publishers communicate with them,” said Michael Rubenstein, Firsthand’s co-CEO and co-founder and the former president of AppNexus. “Brand Agents will allow marketers and publishers to take the power of AI into their own hands, delivering powerful consumer experiences on their own terms instead of letting Big Tech platforms dictate the terms of the AI era.”

"Firsthand turns AI into a direct channel, dismantling big tech’s gatekeeper role and empowering brands to own customer relationships," added David Katz, Partner at Radical Ventures, an AI-

focused VC firm. "With full control over their data and knowledge, Firsthand's AI Brand Agents act as real-time extensions of expertise, meeting consumers in moments that matter. This isn't just innovation leveraging AI — it's marketing reimaged for the AI era, and Radical is excited to double down on our conviction in Firsthand."

Firsthand is led by Jonathan Heller, Michael Rubenstein, and Wei Wei, digital advertising pioneers who architected programmatic and streaming TV advertising. The prior companies they founded and built now power advertising businesses at Google, Microsoft and Comcast. The company is experiencing rapid growth, with plans to double its workforce by year's end. Firsthand is driving 2025 campaigns for enterprise-level marketers and publishers, shaping the future of AI-powered brand engagement.

About Firsthand

Firsthand has built the first AI-powered Brand Agent platform, transforming the way marketers and publishers engage consumers through their own AI agents, anywhere online.

Brand Agents make a company's expertise accessible in real time, adapting to consumers' interests and guiding them towards the information they need to take action. Operating across both owned properties and paid media, they help companies connect, inform, and build trust in ways never before possible.

While most AI applications in marketing and advertising focus on back-office automation and efficiency, the Firsthand Brand Agent Platform™ is focused on front-line consumer engagement — directly shaping the consumer experience rather than optimizing internal workflows. Central to this is Lakebed™, the company's AI-first data and knowledge rights management system that ensures brands retain full ownership and control of their content and data.

Backed by leading investors and built by digital advertising pioneers, Firsthand is shaping the future of consumer engagement. To learn more, visit www.firsthand.ai.

Joe Zappa
Sharp Pen Media
+1 516-477-1617
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/790733939>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.