

Dave Lemont, Former CEO at Revit, on Revolutionizing Material Selection in Sustainable Design | Transcript

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a lead fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why green Building matters.

00:33

Charlie

Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti. Once a week, I interview a green building professional, sometimes a technologist, because that's a big part of sustainability, in my opinion, every single week. And today I've got Dave Lamont with us. Heard a lot about Dave. Some of my colleagues have worked with him way back, and just can't wait to Dave see more of your story. So how are you doing today?

00:57

Dave

I'm doing well, Charlie, and it's. It's great to meet you finally.

01:00

Charlie

Here we are. If you would, for our podcast listeners, give us that kind of origin story. Where'd you grow up, go to school, and what'd you think you were going to do when you grow up?

01:11

Dave

I'm a Brooklyn boy. I grew up in Canarsie, Brooklyn, where the story of Goodfellas was shot and should be, which is kind of fun. I've been in technology my whole career, except I started as a school teacher. I was actually an English teacher that returned to teach at the same junior high school that I went to when I was 21 years old. Unfortunately, I broke my leg early on. And my eighth graders, which is the most difficult grade to teach, stole my crutches and threw them out the window.

01:46

Charlie

That's terrible.

01:47

Dave

And I said, you know what? Maybe I should go into another field.

01:51

Charlie

Oh, wow. Okay. That's a big aha.

01:53

Dave

And a college roommate of mine worked at a computer company called. Well, actually, if you remember, there's an aircraft company called McDonnell Douglas years ago that Boeing had acquired. They had a massive computer company, and he worked there out of college, and I wound up going there and worked there for quite a long time. And at the very earliest days of computing, I hate to tell you, but punch cards were the first thing I was taught.

02:19

Charlie

I love it. I love it. Well, thanks for taking us back there. And. And then that original career, and then. Okay, let's make a change. Leap of faith, in a way. And computers usually I. Sustainability. Aha. But here it's probably technology. I mean, when you landed there, did you realize, okay, this is what I'm going to do for the rest of my career?

02:37

Dave

And ironically, I was probably one. I started in sales before I got into general management and running companies. I was probably one of the earliest computer aided design salespeople in the United States. And so both on the mechanical side and in architecture as well. I saw one of the early architectural systems.

02:58

Charlie

Well, then that definitely helped you with some of the rest of your story. I know that I do

ask about mentors, though. You know, sometimes a mentor, Dave, is someone you read their material, you see them from stage, they kind of influence you. Sometimes it's someone you meet with the challenges, you maybe open the door. One of my mentors is Errol Wolford, who I know. You know, I knew Errol well.

03:19

Dave

What a great guy.

03:21

Charlie

He was like podcast interview number four. So he's here in Atlanta where I am, and. And I would call him a mentor. That really helped me dream a lot bigger than maybe I'd even think I could do. So have you had any mentors along the way?

03:34

Dave

When I was at McDonnell Douglas as a salesperson in my 20s, a. One of the vice presidents there, a senior person, all the management came from IBM, so it's like a classically trained sales organization. And he saw something in me. I didn't work for him. I just interfaced from some meetings. Once a week, he would bring me to his office, and I will never forget that he would print out an agenda for what he wanted to cover with me, even though it was an informal mentoring session.

04:08

Dave

And this level of depression that he prepared so well and cared so much about whoever he was dealing with. And he was one of these people that he always made you feel as if you were the most important person he was talking to. I learned a lot from them, but I learned a lot about working with people, which is maybe the most important lesson. In going and running companies, which is what I did for most of my career.

04:36

Charlie

It really is. Dave, the number one gift you can give someone is your attention. And that's pretty cool. All right, that's a great mentor. Let's start stacking some of this, what some of my colleagues at Schema might call a legendary career. I'm going to tell you what happened next. What were the next things you're doing in.

04:54

Dave

I ran some, I ran very large sales organizations in the computer aided design world. And then I went to run a company called icad, which is one of the first really knowledge engineering companies. So it was rule based engineering to build configurators for custom built products. Engineered built products, way ahead of its time. You know, sophisticated. Wound up selling that company to Oracle. Worked at Oracle for a year and was a general manager at Oracle. And then I went on to run a storage management software company which I had sold to Hewlett Packard. I ran a financial services company which I sold to a company in Canada called Rwanda. I ran a transportation company, a logistics company that I sold to Trimble. And obviously I'm best known for running Revit.

05:43

Dave

That was a great honor, I would say kind of the thing I'm most proud of in my career. Ran that company for several years, worked with some great people, as you said, some of which are at Schema today. And then we sold the company at Autodesk, which is of itself a funny story, but. And then I stayed at Autodesk for a little over a year making sure that Autodesk did not kill the product because believe it or not, it was almost killed two or three times because Autodesk had bought another company and they had a product called Architectural Desktop. I don't remember that product. And those people were very much in competition with the revving people and they were more politically situated in the company. And so I had to fight hard. But eventually Autodesk did put a tremendous amount of engineering resources behind the product. And you know, look, it's the predominant way buildings are designed 30 years later. It's staggering that it's the same, takes very pretty much the same technology 30 years later. Obviously much improved and with lots of plugins and add ons.

06:47

Charlie

But I love these old stories there and I've heard some marketing stories from Richard Harpen, my co-founder and our CRO. Even with the treadmill. Oh yeah, Autodesk upgrade, treadmill, all kinds of stuff you guys were doing back at Revit Technologies. I love it.

07:03

Dave

Well, auto debt. We had a very aggressive marketing person named Alex Niehaus who did a great job and he was a very aggressive guy. And we had a treadmill. We had a person that had an Autodesk sign on him with a chain on him, running on a treadmill. You know, kind of obviously trying to imply that's the Old way and we're the new way. But it did capture people's attention. Autodesk actually tried to sue us. They sent a letter from lawyers to sue us. And that sort of opened up a discussion between myself and Carl Bass and we got together and we found a way to turn a lawsuit into a merger.

07:42

Charlie

That's great. I heard the one about the boxes on the shelf. All kinds of great stuff. Okay, so clearly Revit bim, just a new way to design buildings and homes. And arguably 20 years ago, that really took us from a 2D world to a 3D world dashboard. Today we've got machine learning, AI and data. And I know we're going to talk about that more in a minute with HLabs, but clearly you like to build companies, especially now in the software space, not for the faint of heart. So why do you keep doing that? What do you love about it?

08:15

Dave

I love a mission. I love a mission and I love where all the people can work together behind that singular mission. And I love that we can get in a room and make a decision in 10 minutes that would take a big company that I sold some of these companies to a month to make. Now, we might be wrong in five minutes, but we can correct it the next day if we find we're wrong. And so the excitement of doing something kind of bigger than yourself and getting everyone to buy into that and work towards it's exciting. And every time I've gone to a big company for a little bit of time, I quickly knew I wanted to be back at a startup world where you can make a difference quickly. That's very difficult for big companies to innovate. There's just too much bureaucracy.

09:08

Charlie

Yeah, they usually innovate through acquisition. And even then, it's a cultural thing. Is this an innovative culture or do we buy innovation? Thanks for reminding us of that. You got to stay nimble. And you're right. Mission, especially with today's workforce, they want to work for a mission driven company. Okay, so that's a lot of the background there. One more look back. What are a few more of your proudest accomplishments? What else is on the highlight reel?

09:32

Dave

I think Revit is the highlight reel really, in that it changed the way buildings are designed from two dimensional drafting to three dimensional parametrics. I mean, that's really probably the biggest change I had. And also I would say that I got to travel all over the world and meet some of the most famous architects in the world and really get a sense for the responsibility of architecture. And you know, I mean this is where we work, this is where we live, this is where we this is where we enjoy things. And so what a tremendous opportunity architects have to have an impact on the world. And to make software that has an impact on people that are having an impact is fun.

10:14

Dave

It'd be nice to make a big accounting software company, but just not as exciting as buildings are.

10:21

Charlie

Exactly. And the architects, I love visiting architect offices too. They're the best offices and just talk about a conviction around the work. They sound like you really met some amazing people on this journey. Okay, so let's talk about the present day. Dave, what's keeping you busy today? I know you're an advisor to several great companies, you've got your consulting firm and then we've got to talk about ACE Lab as well. So what's keeping you busy today?

10:46

Dave

I'm primarily in construction technology as an advisor and a consultant. I'm an advisor to Hierarch, which is an absolutely incredible company that's changing the way production building is done. They create a, essentially a complete rule based design, a generative design of homes, home plans that then automatically generates sales configurators so people can buy them from the Internet or in a sales office. They generate the drawings automatically, generate the estimates automatically. A completely sort of integrated homebuilding system. I've been working with those folks for a couple of years. A really exciting company I'm beginning to work with. Amenta, you have Francesco Lorio on your podcast, Brilliant team. AI based generative design, starting with electrical, but going to grow to mechanical and plumbing and who knows where else.

11:38

Dave

Really dramatically shortening the time and making more sustainable buildings as well because there's so much waste that goes into over design that goes into buildings today. And I'm the chairman of ACE Lab, which is very near and dear to my heart because I feel that Asolab can do for material management what Revit was able to do to design and that is to create a new decision making workflow for how materials are chosen. And as you know, and you are passionate about, the materials chosen in a building have a lasting impact on not just what it's like to live in the building, but the environment the long term lasting impact on the environment as well.

12:29

Dave

And so what we've, what's really kind of crazy is that there isn't a workflow today for this, there's a workflow to write three part specs. There's a workflow for project management, there's a workflow design. There isn't a workflow to find the best product solutions, whether they're the lowest cost or the most sustainable or the best performing. And how do I balance all of those? And so the problem is that through a lack of time, army techs kind of recycle what they've done before over and over again. That's not all bad because some of them are good choices. As you know, the innovation in materials is accelerating so quickly. How can any one firm or any one architect stay up to date with the best performing material, the most sustainable material, the most recyclable material? How can they know all that? And that's what we're taking on ourselves at a slab.

13:26

Charlie

That's a mission. I'm fired up about it.

13:28

Dave

So that's, we have a concept we call the language of materials. And what we have is a brilliant gentleman named Andre Barros, who is 30 years HOK and other firms. And he's a material passionate about materials and he's built an entire taxonomy of aesthetics, performance, sustainability, every type of certification, the chemistry, the wood species. And we tagged products for all of these different categories right down to common materials frameworks and other frameworks so that then we unlocked that with AI based search, natural language search, so that people can ask us anything that they

want and find those products. So that's on the research side. But even more important is we're building firm libraries of standards that we host on our platform that gets informed by our technical data. Architects have been trying to build libraries of standards forever, but the problem is they don't have the data of all the products they want to put in it. They can't keep it up to date. They kind of fall by the wayside in a spreadsheet or in SharePoint. So we've got some of the biggest firms in the country now working with us. Karen Timberlake and Shive Hattery and HCM stantec are building firm libraries with us. And then what we built is a workflow tool. So you take the standards in the library and transition it into a project and plan your material decisions in a project with either your standards or the things that are in our database that are the innovative solutions that you need to solve problems on in a project.

15:18

Charlie

And there's a huge need for it. You learned a little more about my background in Construction, but then a lot of green building work, especially lead. And it's not just a somewhat eco-friendly material. There's obviously a huge push to embodied carbon. We can talk about that more than just an energy efficient building. But you're right, the old days of lunch and learning in an architect's office to hopefully get specified, there's just not as much of that. And to your point, there's still a lot of copy and paste, so to speak. So you had mentioned that's kind of a plugin. Can you kind of give our listeners a visual of how this tool is used?

15:53

Dave

We're a decision making platform that the architect and designer would be using to find materials. But then at some point how does it go back into Revit, assuming Revit's a predominant tool being used. And so we're about to release a plugin whereby you will be able to take the decisions you made on materials inside of our system, take that deep technical information or whatever level of information and apply it onto a Revit schedule. We also generate schedules, obviously tabular schedules. If you want to take the counts out of Revit, where you know, the number of windows or the number of panel doors and bring them back into our system, we're going to have a two way approach and then in a future phase, our AI based search where you can say, oh, give me a window, give me an aluminum window with an rfactor greater than 0.3 that meets Miami Dade certification. You're going to be able to ask that question in Revit with a plugin that then gets you the responses so that you can be sort of finding materials as you're designing and sort of a more integrated approach to find the best possible choices.

17:05

Charlie

That's fantastic. I know you need a big database from all these building product manufacturers. Is there a scoring system? Is it a crowdsourced feedback loop? Is it pay to play? How do I make sure my materials at least have a chance?

17:19

Dave

All materials. Our business model is, by the way, free to architects and designers and will always be free to architects and designers. The business model is to charge manufacturers, but with that said, every manufacturer will be in our system whether they pay us or not. Otherwise we're useless. In other words, if you can't do a search on our platform and find the best solutions, this isn't going to pay to play. If the manufacturer pays us, then you find them. This is the problem with a lot of the spec platforms. Today. Now, if the manufacturer does pass, their reps can be listed and then the architect can reach out directly to the rep and the platform and have a conversation. The platform, it could all be kept track of in the platform and that's what they get for. But they're not, there's no advertising. We're not going to only show them because they pay us. We're going to return an honest search transparently so that otherwise architects will not trust us. And we want to be the trusted advisor for them to help them find. Our tagline is make material choices that matter.

18:24

Charlie

Oh, that's good. Okay, so it sounds like you're trying to have a big database of all of the materials, all the suppliers.

18:32

Dave

And as you know, like obviously sustainability teams are loving this because they're trying to build a library of sustainable materials that they can push into their firms and guide usage. But it's not an absolute world, there's a budget and is this more suitable? I can't pick the most sustainable one in this case, but I could pick something more sustainable with a budget than I can afford. So one of the powerful things we do is we've normalized the data so that you could line up three, four manufacturers next to each other and look at the performance next to each other, the R factor, the U factor, which certifications they have what colors, what aesthetics, what size they offer and then make that decision. We're also adding embodied Carbon in our next release and

all the pricing information. So now I can weigh, okay, this is a much more sustainable product and only a slightly higher cost. So now that makes sense for my project. We can afford that. And so allowing people to make those trade offs based on what they're trying to optimize for is again, the way we can help them make material choices that really matter.

19:44

Charlie

Well, we definitely need to talk about because our output is that initial revit file or other venture choice, it'd be great to bake in more of the material. So materials, I mean, that's a huge part of sustainability. It's a huge part of green buildings. There is a lot of waste. I don't know, are there any materials that you've really been surprised by or just something it's like, holy cow, I didn't even know that existed. Like, what are you seeing out there on the kind of sustainable material front?

20:09

Dave

We're working with this company called Slatted, which is a fascinating company, where they're actually taking the wood out of old buildings and they have a process to kind of bring it back to life a little bit and clean it up. And there's nothing more recyclable than that and I just think the whole world right now around circular materials that are being recycled and then being able to use the gain, the the whole getting rid of fossil fuels as the way that we're building whether it's sealants or adhesives or other materials, I think these are important, really important things. And then also it's not even just about sustainability. It's like where is this, what's the supply chain like for these products? Where is it made? Is it made responsibly? Those are things that are important they're important architects, designers, and the people that own the buildings.

21:04

Charlie

That's right. And I've been doing LEED for a long time. 15 years. We have lead version 5 coming out. If your team ever wants to collaborate, tap into me there. I know some of those changes are coming, but it's not just lightweight. Hey, is this within a 500 mile radius? Is it somewhat recycled? It's pushing it back to the manufacturer. What are you doing to green up your process, to green up your manufacturing facility? It's more than the EPDs. There's healthy materials and it's so much with materials. Might have even been slowed a little with the pandemic, but that's way in the rear view. Let's get back to really, what should we be doing a little bit. Okay, so let's talk about what's next. You've got this amazing career in AEC technology and cad. I don't know what's next.

21:49

Charlie

What's even next? What are you reading up on that you're excited about with our industry?

21:54

Dave

At the obvious thing, AI, but it's really about how do we apply AI and be accurate with it. And so what we're doing is we're training our models on the curated data that we've created. You know, you can ask ChatGPT some questions and get some pretty interesting answers, but you can also get some pretty wrong answers too. And so we're trying to curate that data. That's sort of like a lifelong mission for it. It never ends. It's an infinite task. But then train the models on that data. So again, you can ask about anything I'm trying to build in this jurisdiction. Show me the products that match the code requirements here. How can I take different type data sets, tie those data sets together, tab the products with the information in the data sets and then unlock all that knowledge? To me, AI is like, I read every book in the world and I never forgot a thing. I remember everything.

23:07

Charlie

Yeah, I like that.

23:07

Dave

And that's a little bit of what AI can do. Now the next step is to generate something from it. So architects and designers have to spend so much time generating output that is almost enough to drive them out of the profession because it's not the creative piece of its the detailed piece of it. It's important for legal reasons, for communication reasons. So how can we generate that stuff automatically? How can we create that sustainability report? How can we create a list of all the specs that we've chosen? How can we put all those, the outputs of that just generated automatically? How can we put you in touch with a rep automatically?

23:45

Dave

How can we do this? How do we create agents around common tasks that then do things for you automatically that save you time so that now you're thinking, designing,

creating rather than chasing data or formatting data. The computer ought to be able to do that for you. And AI can do it quicker than. It can do it quicker than a special program that we write that is always going to be somewhat limited.

24:15

Charlie

Wow. So you get a good feel for it. I think there's someone you probably know, Dave Gilmore, with Design intelligence. He quizzed me the other day. He said, Charlie, in the last 30 years, what one simple technological advancement do we use every day in business and really in our personal lives? It's simple, but we still use it. Some might say cell phone. No. Some might say this or it's an email. Still used every day. I'm a firm believer in AI now, especially AI assistance to fast forward things. I mean, that's here, stay, it's not going away. And, but it does come down to the data. It's one thing if all of the large language models are being trained on similar data, you're going to get similar results from each. You've got to ingest kind of your own data. Right. And it's not just the generic what's available to everybody. So it's. I know we're early in this movement, but I'm glad that you've already applied the AI. There it is. Lab. That's great.

25:09

Dave

Yeah. And it's complex. I want a product like this, but it's not available. What's something like that? How do we know what's like it unless we create cousin tags in a database that says this is like that. So if this isn't available, let's look there and you know, so there. I think there's just so much opportunity here. And even the stuff you guys are doing which is taking things that are repetitive in design and being able to duplicate that very quickly for people and then let them edit from there and refine from there. Well, refine building blocks. Create building blocks that could be reused and reused. And reused.

25:54

Charlie

Exactly. And you have to keep it lightweight in the cloud and fast. You know, some of my co-founders of Schema obviously back working with you at Revit a little over 20 years ago. I mean that did dis workflow and I know it took a lot, it took a few more years for BIM to really become the thing. And now look at it now, Autodesk is worth \$64 billion. So we're, and I think I hear you saying with asap, trying not to disrupt the workflow but coming in and out of your normal workflow. I think that's it.

26:22

Dave

Oh, I think it's important. And I think you guys have figured this out at Schema too. It's that you're not going to replace Revit because it's such a. I mean somebody might eventually. There are people trying to do this today. Right. But it is such an ache. There is infinite geometry and almost infinite stuff in a drawing. And so what you're better off doing is taking a piece of the problem that's not solved very well and applying it and integrating it. And then you can grow from there. You can grow from there, certainly. But that's really the challenge with design systems is it's a never ending task because a human being can think of any shape now that they can and we can think of any way to build it.

27:06

Charlie

Infinite possibilities. Let's go through the kind of quick rapid fire. Get to know you. Dave. Questions. What would you say is your specialty?

27:14

Dave

Or a gift in business? It's growing startups. There is. I wouldn't be the person to come in and run a 5,000 person division somewhere, but to when it's 10 people and you know, we're trying to grow it to 100 or 200 people I've sort of done it so many times now, I've seen so many patterns and sort of when is the right time to bring the right resources to bear and the other is how do you really get product market fit right before you invest too much in sales or marketing or other things. So I mean that's really as a business person that's what's most important, I think.

28:00

Charlie

That's a great specialty and gift to have and you've proven that time over time. Thanks for sharing that. Do you have any good habits, routines, rituals that keep you on point?

28:10

Dave

I'm an early riser. I can do a day's work by 8:00am you know, I can, I'm usually at my desk at 5:30, quarter to 6. But I have one rule which is that I'm going to do one thing for myself. Not that the work isn't for myself, but something that just whether it's health wise or mental health wise, whether it's, I'm a photographer, maybe I'm going to go out and take pictures, I play the guitar, go work out do something early in the day that you look

forward to the next day. And I try to do that first. I'll answer all the emails and write something if I have to early in the morning, but also do one thing for myself every day.

28:52

Charlie

It's brilliant. Sounds like you really protected that. That's amazing. Errol still walks over three miles a day, every single day.

28:59

Dave

Really kind of a dream.

29:00

Charlie

We have our walking meetings. I'm a fan of the bucket list. Not everybody has a bucket list, but for some it's travel or adventure or writing a book. I don't know, what are a couple things maybe on the bucket list?

29:13

Dave

I'm sort of an amateur slash professional photographer and sort of one of my big passions. And so for me it's, I want to get to Iceland. That is like the ultimate place to take pictures. I've been to a lot of national parks, but I haven't been to Utah national parks. So you know, that to me is getting there at sunrise or being there at sunset half hour before, half hour later, that's when the line's perfect. You know, that's sort of that and playing with my grandkids is sort of the important things on my list these days.

29:46

Charlie

It's amazing. I can picture that now. And I've heard that I'm not a photographer. I've heard that on the light, it's just perfect. You get the best pictures. Do you have an album? Do you have a digital album? What do you do? I'm sure you have some amazing photos you've taken. What do you do with it?

30:02

Dave

I have a website, my brand is called Third Wind Photography. I have a website there. But mostly it's a way to express myself and it's all about nature and being out there and experiencing it, translating what I see into something that's emotional. It's. Photography

is actually all about being in the right place at the right time. Once you know how to use your computer equipment, it's about being in the right place at the right time.

30:30

Charlie

But you gotta get there. I'm sure. You gotta be present, you gotta get.

30:33

Dave

There, you gotta be patient. You might have to come back four days in a row.

30:36

Charlie

Okay, I love that. All of a sudden I'm collecting rare bourbon whiskey. I'm sure my wife would rather I'd be a photographer, so talk to her about that. So how about a book you'd recommend to our listeners, dav? It doesn't have to be about buildings.

30:51

Dave

Well it's funny, I have a house in Florida. My wife and I drove back from Florida and went to a plantation in Charleston and just took in a whole bunch more stuff about the horrors of slavery of what went on. And so I became fascinated reading books on slavery. So there's this book, How the Word is Passed, where a guy named Clint Smith visited all these sites, not all in the south, some in the north as well, because neither the north funded slavery. But. And how the story is told today, whether it's an honest story or excuse the term mindfire story and I, I, I recently read that book and I found it fascinating. Like it they went to Thomas Jefferson's home and so, well, we're all equal except for the slaves.

31:44

Dave

And now they try to tell an honest story there, which is exciting. So I don't know if that's totally off track of what we're talking about today.

31:51

Charlie

But that's what this podcast is about. That's real. I'm gonna get that. And I'm just, I'm glad that you showed us that because I grew up in Georgia, in a very small rural town in North Georgia. Even though my dad's from New York, my grandpa built a lot of

infrastructure in New York City, my mom's from Oregon. They ended up in a small town in Georgia. And let's just say the history books that I learned from weren't really pushing probably some of what really, maybe I needed to learn about that subject. So, yeah, a lot of it is censored. Even though I'm 42 now, Dave, but even when I was growing up, there just wasn't a lot of that in the history book. So it's important that this message is getting out there. Here's what you need to know.

32:31

Dave

Yeah, we can always. It's. It's about learning from history.

32:35

Charlie

Good. Well, thanks for sharing that. I'm glad I asked the question. So, just as we start to wind down here, a couple more things. As you look back on this career, is there anything you wish you'd have known earlier in your career?

32:45

Dave

Yeah. And that is that I don't need to be the smartest guy in the room. I always thought I needed to be. I needed to have the answer walking into the room. And now I've learned it's better to find the people in the room that really have the better answer. And I've learned that in the last four or five years. And I wish I had known that even earlier on because you work in these startup companies, it's all passionate, smart people. And when people start to kind of rev off each other, then you get a better idea. You got to let that happen.

33:19

Charlie

And you want it to be organic there. You can't force that. Can we peel that one back just a little more? You hear that? But is it that you need to be willing to do some of the hard work, you earn the respect from that maybe smarter person on that subject in a different way? Like, I don't know, how does that really play out? You know, when you're hiring someone or you're trying to make sure they. They know you're the boss, you're the CEO, but you totally elevate them on that subject. You really point out that, no, this is our expert on this subject. Like, can you peel it back just a little bit?

33:51

Dave

For us, it's about listening to people. You know, look, here's the bottom line, I think in a laboratory, but I'm not in front of a customer every day. You know, I mean, I may be in front of a customer sometimes, but not every day. Because if you're a CEO or a chairman you're a lot of other things, but we have people that are talking to the customer every single day, or they're writing this or they're testing the software every day. And so who can have a better point of view? It may be a narrow point of view on certain days. But in that specific area, they're the expert, not me. So now what I need to do is to make sure the priorities are right and that everybody is working on the right priorities. Once we agree upon them, then you don't want people running off and working on the things that aren't important to the company. So that's where I can keep everybody on track. But then posing the questions and you know, a lot of people in meetings are shy; they don't want to speak up. You know, they're afraid to be wrong. But a good leader needs to know. I think Bill has the answer to this. Bill, what do you think? Bill, you've been quiet today. I know you're thinking about this. What do you think? You know, and then get to somebody else who you know, may disagree, but that doesn't politically want to have an argument with anyone in front of her John, I know you're not in agreement with that. Why is that? And then, and now people can work together and work something out. We come to a better place. Maybe it's the same place we started, but at least we understand what the trade offs we made are.

35:25

Charlie

Oh, that's great. And what I heard is going to be a great facilitator. But you really have to not just get past this. Everybody might feel a little bit of buy in even if they didn't get it their way. They at least spoke their piece and then got behind that decision in the company. So that's it.

35:43

Dave

And then they know that a decision's been made and that this is what we are going to do today. We're not going to debate it again tomorrow. Maybe we'll debate it again in a couple of weeks. We have to, we measure our results.

35:53

Charlie

That's really good. That's really good. Well, last thing here, let's say someone's listened to this story. They know some of the amazing tools and companies you've been a part of and they're checking out ACE Lab. They're just now jumping into this movement, let's

call it the new version of the AC technology space they're jumping into now. Any words of encouragement for someone just now getting into our space?

36:16

Dave

Try things, experiment and realize that the world is moving at a much faster rate now than when I was running, that's for sure. And so just the improvements in AI over the course of several weeks can be astonishing sometimes. And mainly because it's easier to build software than ever was before. You know everybody's building on top of tool sets. Before they had to build a tool set, the first builder software. Now we all incorporate these libraries and tool sets and so try things and don't be discouraged. When you try something that doesn't necessarily work, it doesn't mean the next thing you try won't work. Now, you can't experiment your whole life. Obviously you've got to focus on things that are reliable for you too. But you know, keep learning because that's the thing that can make you more effective and to have a bigger impact.

37:08

Charlie

A lot of wisdom was shared today over our podcast. Listeners got fired up. Make sure you connect with Dave on LinkedIn. Check out Ace Lab and I just can't wait to be connecting those sustainable materials in the next buildings that are getting designed. I'd love to help you any way I can on this journey, Dave, and I've really been spoken highly of by my colleagues. I'm glad we're connecting here and I look forward to continuing the relationship. Thanks for being on the podcast today.

37:32

Dave

Thanks for having me, Charlie. I appreciate it.

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