

Making Zero-Carbon Pencil (Without Killing the Pro Forma) with Finn MacDonald | Transcript

00:02

Speaker 1

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cicchetti, 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. Green Building Matters.

00:33

Speaker 2

Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. Every week, I get to interview someone around the world, usually in and around the green building movement. Healthy buildings, lately, technology, AI built environment. And today, I've got one of the newly minted lead fellows with us. I've got Finn. He's coming to us from just above where I'm at. I'm in Atlanta, Georgia, here in the U.S. he's up in Canada. He's in Ontario. So how you doing today, Finn?

00:59

Speaker 3

Great telly.

01:00

Speaker 2

Hey, appreciate you having time to get on the podcast, tell your story. You know, I like to just take our guests back to kind of your origin story. So where did you grow up and end up going to university?

01:11

Speaker 3

So I'm from eastern Canada. I grew up on Cape Breton island, which is an island in the North Atlantic. One of the really unique things about the province of Nova Scotia, which Cape Breton is in, is that there's actually just as much shoreline as there is from Maine to Florida all wrapped up in a little bow there. So it's also the warmest waters north of the Carolina. So a beautiful spot in the summer. Cold, terrible winters. I went to university in Nova Scotia as

well. St. Francis Xavier. Took a business degree, spent all my great summers and terrible winters in Nova Scotia until I turned 30, and then I moved to Ontario.

01:50

Speaker 2

Okay, all right. And, you know, on the business side, I mean, then when did sustainability show up a little bit in school, or were you connected to nature? What gave you that interest in overall sustainability?

02:03

Speaker 3

I guess, you know, when I was in university in the late 90s, I wouldn't say sustainability was something that was being talked about in the business world. For me, though, growing up in an industrial town in a province as beautiful as Nova Scotia, having the ocean just down the road and not being able to swim in it, I think I knew early on that you needed to protect nature. So I would have to drive a half hour up the road to find a beach where the water was safer swimming. Right. So that's because I lived in an industrial town with a pulp and paper mill and many small towns in Nova Scotia were pulp and paper towns, so. So it was a big part of the economy, but it had a big impact on the environment. So I think that's what motivated me.

02:47

Speaker 2

Yeah, sounds like you're more conscious about it and it's. It affected you. So. Okay, so did you know what you wanted to be when you grow up? I like to ask that question. I wanted to be a chef and it turned out I'll be a green building professional. So who know? But what had influence on you to kind of point you in a direction? I know you have some research, large engineering firm. Obviously we'll talk green buildings, but I don't know, what'd you think you wanted to do?

03:12

Speaker 3

You know, I actually have a project that I do in grade nine in the basement, and I was looking at it recently and asked the question, what do you want to be? And I think I wrote astronaut and archaeologist. So like, I didn't know what I wanted to be and I took a business degree, didn't know what I wanted to do with it, just knew that business was probably going to provide me a good career. I ended up working in finance and risk management because that's what was hiring at the time, to be honest. And I didn't dislike it, but I knew it wasn't going to be for me for the long term. So I think what really motivated me was the environment.

03:53

Speaker 3

So as I was going through the daily grind in my finance job, I was thinking about, well, how can I get a job that gives me purpose? So I, I guess I just decided that something around the environment would be interesting to me and would help motivate me. So sort of led me to go back to school in my late 20s and retrain in energy efficiency.

04:15

Speaker 2

Well, you know, hopefully our podcast listeners understand, hey, you test some things, you it's okay to adjust and in your case retooled and said, okay, I'm going to do this. And you know, looking at your LinkedIn before we got on here, Finn, I saw some thermal solar, eventually some green buildings and leads. So tell us a little more about the next chapter of the career then. When did you first see lead, for example?

04:37

Speaker 3

Yeah, so like I said, I went back to school in my late 20s, did a diploma in energy efficiency and there was actually a course on LEED in that program and it was the second year course and I remember looking at it and going, gee, that's really interesting. I think there's something to this. So I actually bought the Green Associate Study guide, started reading it and ended up writing the test before I got to that course and passing it. So they didn't even make me take that course. But that was my first experience with leed and I ended up working in the summertime between my two year diploma at the lead for homes provider in Nova Scotia. So got to do a lot of case studies on green buildings.

05:23

Speaker 3

I got introduced to the green building community in the local chapter of the Canada Green Building Council. Eventually found my way to my first green build that year which was in Toronto. The first time I was the only time it was outside of the United States. So I would say all of those things had a big impact on me entering the green building industry. I think that the one thing though that I would say that drew me in the most was just the community and the local chapter and the willingness of everybody in the community to help support and mentor and things like that.

06:00

Speaker 2

It's a great community. We're going to talk more about that. I've only missed a couple of green builds in the last probably 15 years and one of them was Toronto. One of my boys was being born around that time so I skipped that one. I hear it was a little chilly but a great conference, so that's good. So how about mentors? I love to ask my podcast guests, you know Fin, have you had any mentors? Sometimes someone you read their material, you see them from stage, but sometimes it's someone that you meet with and they chat, challenge you or they open doors. Have you had any mentors?

06:29

Speaker 3

Well, I, I think there's two categories there, right? There's the people that you idolize that maybe you don't meet with and have coffee that really inform your career and then there's the ones who are your really hands on with and they help shape you and you know, when I was getting my feet wet in green building and being introduced to this, I remember Peter Busby and Jonathan Besteinde and the work that they were doing. Windmill developments and Perkinsville on the west coast of Canada with the Dockside Green Project, the first LEED Platinum community. And I was mind blown by that and wow, this stuff is really interesting. I would love to work on this. When I was at Greenbelt, I met Mark Lucic and Mark Lucic gave me my first big lead job at an engineering firm, Morris and Hershfield in Ontario.

07:18

Speaker 3

And I would say that Mark Lusik was a great mentor to me. He really took me under his wing and helped me understand the industry and how to add value and taught me all about lead. Gave me a lot of great opportunities. I also got to work with Jamie Mackay, who was at Morrison Hirschfeld at the time. He's now with Glumack in Seattle. But both lead fellows. I remember in 2015, I was sitting at work between two lead fellows every day and thinking, wow, this is amazing. I don't think anybody else could say they were sitting between two lead fellows at work in 2015. So that was an amazing opportunity and I think really shaped my approach to green building, motivated me to become a lead fellow myself.

08:00

Speaker 3

I also really enjoyed the work that I did with the chapters of the Canada Green Building Council. And I mentioned the community. Lara Ryan in Halifax at the Atlantic chapter of the Canada Green Building Council, she was an expert community builder. She really made you feel welcome, got you involved, gave you opportunities. And she is still to this day a big cheerleader and supporter of me, you know, so I'm very grateful for that.

08:30

Speaker 2

Holy cow. Some rock stars in there. And early lead fellows. I got my lead fellow in 2020. And so you're talking way back 2015. I love that. So, okay, that's mentors. Next is accomplishments. What's on the highlight reel? What are you proud of so far?

08:47

Speaker 3

Yeah, so maybe I just start at the start, put them in order. You know, I think the work that I did with the local chapters was really rewarding. As I was entering the green building community was also an opportunity for me to get leadership skills early on. So I was on the Emerging Green Builders Committee in Ottawa. I was on the National Emerging Green Builders Committee. I eventually chaired both of those, oversaw some work to build some student groups at the local colleges and universities in Ottawa, helped build a guide on how to set up a local Emerging Green Builders committee in different cities across Canada. So we also had the National Emerging Green Builders Committee, which had representation across the country, allowed us to connect and share stories and help grow that.

09:38

Speaker 3

And I think that was a really great way to pull people in, especially young, impressionable people, a university, and get them into the green building industry, get them excited about Leeds. So, like, when I look back at that, you know, I feel like I had a big impact, even though it was as a young professional helping to recruit and excite the next generation of lead professionals. Aside from, you know, the work I was doing at Morrison Hirschfeld, after I left there, I went to work for the Canada Green Building Council. And I consider myself very fortunate to be the person they put in charge of their Zero Carbon building program and getting to help shape that program in Canada. You know, the Canadian Building Council launched the Zero Carbon building standard in 2017.

10:24

Speaker 3

Around the same time they hired me and my job was to work with the first 16 projects that they recruited to help pilot test that. So we did this two year pilot program which I was the project manager for and we brought together the project teams to share, you know, some of the challenges they were facing and then turn that into education and learning for the whole group. We also took all

of those challenges and opportunities and created a national education program and did that across the country. Went all across the country showcasing Zero Carbon buildings. I remember we actually had to show pictures of the buildings so that we could show people that it wasn't wonky like the Jetsons. You know, these were normal buildings, right, with an roi.

11:04

Speaker 3

And you know, they didn't have to be anything outlandish, but this was the next generation buildings. And we also did a lot of roundtables and listened to people in different cities about the challenges that were in their local market. And all of that we stitched together into the next better version of the Zero Carbon building standard in 2020. So that was a really exciting three year period. I don't think I'll ever forget that. And I managed that program until 2023 and then I went back to the private sector and now I'm working for a group of companies now that includes a private developer who's committed to Zero Carbon and LEED Platinum on every project. I've had the opportunity to help them craft their strategy for Zero Carbon and integrate that into their existing process for LEED Platinum.

11:55

Speaker 3

Also the adaptation of that for Leap version 5, which as you know, or as you probably know has a prerequisite, a set of prerequisites for Platinum projects that included requirements for it to be zero carbon. So getting to work on some of these really high performance projects with our in house developer has been a career highlight as well.

12:21

Speaker 2

You're right. Raise the bar. Now you even more things you have to do for LEED platinum here as 2026 and lead V5 is upon us. So I love those highlights. Zero Carbon, you took a lot of pride in that. And you're right because sustainability, you and I have been doing it a while. It might started with green buildings and then lead and then zero and now maybe the new umbrellas are decarbonization and resiliency. We can debate that if we need to, but we can still do this good work under some of those umbrellas. But before we talk present day, and it's a good segue is, you know, what kind of projects though do you enjoy working on the most? I'm sure you've tackled all kinds of buildings, different shapes and sizes. You even did some Green Raider work on home.

13:02

Speaker 2

So I don't know, do you like them all or are there a couple favorites you have when it comes to product type?

13:08

Speaker 3

I would say, you know, I like residential a lot. I'm not going to say I dislike the other ones. But residential, it's really about people, right? It's about a home that people live in. And when you talk about sustainability, it's not just the environmental sustainability, it's also the social sustainability and the quality of life that those people have in that home. I think that is really easy to get excited about for me. You know, I love my home. I spend a lot of time in my home. I want everybody to love their home. So I would say residential is definitely up there. I also like office though. I've had the opportunity to be involved in some really interesting commercial. Sorry. Some really interesting community centers, skating rinks that are zero carbon. Like these are really cool projects, right? Where they're just, they're unique, right.

13:55

Speaker 3

You can't apply the same solutions to buildings like that. So those are always interesting because they're unicorns, right? Those are the ones that challenge you and make you think outside the box.

14:05

Speaker 2

Man, I love it. I like ebom, but I was still doing it. Now I'm busy building our tech startup and learning a lot about AI. So, okay, so present day, let's definitely talk about your company, the kind of work you're doing. The day in the life of Finn. So tell us about Urban Equation, the team and a day in the life of Finn.

14:27

Speaker 3

Yeah, so I mentioned that we have a group of companies. The Windmill Development Group includes Windmill Developments, which is a real estate developer, and then Urban Equation, which is the consulting arm. We all share an office, we all work together. Windmill is busy building residential projects. We're the advisory arm. So we get to do the strategy work for Windmill. We help them with their zero carbon strategy, we help them with their sustainability strategy and implementation. But we also, you know, Windmill is doing all of these great bleeding edge things and Urban Equation gets to work on them, with them. Take those really hard learned lessons and then share them with the broader community and we can have a huge impact beyond just what Windmill is doing by taking those hard learned lessons and sharing them with the market.

15:11

Speaker 3

And I think one of the things that really makes us unique is that because we are sitting next to developers and you know, our company makes money off development, we really understand the developer mindset, we understand what it takes to make money and we understand how developers make decisions. So what we're really good at and what the zero carbon advisory team that I lead works on is helping developers make the business case for zero carbon. So how do you take your project, whether it's a building or a community, implement low carbon energy efficiency and do that with as little impact on the upfront capital cost as possible. And we use all kinds of different tools for that, whether it's financial arrangements, energy as a service, contracts, sustainable loans.

15:57

Speaker 3

The idea is take the costs that are incurred and make them be paid by the people who will get the benefits from them. So take the upfront capital costs and move it into operations. I'll give you an example. Windmill is a condo developer and the condo market works. As you build the building and you walk away, you're not around to realize any of those savings. So we've been able to put geothermal in every project by setting up an energy as a service contract and selling heat to the tenants. So developer no longer pays that upfront capital cost. So that's the type of thing that urban equation does. Helps set strategy, sustainability, zero carbon and then helps make the money work.

16:42

Speaker 2

Yeah, many of my guests last several interviews have said, look, we gotta understand the business case. It's not like we forgot that we've had to do it all along, but more than ever, right? The business case. Where's the money out the supplements? Here's a newfound revenue stream. Look what you're doing with some of that heat and that waste heat, right? So big problem solving there. So okay, anything else today? I mean any volunteering? Are you still active with the chapters? Plenty. Busy at work. And what's it like to do sustainability in Ottawa? Which say lead credits are easier and which ones are harder for your territory?

17:15

Speaker 3

Well, you know, if you asked if I was still involved, I am involved with the Canada Green Building Council on their lead advisory committee nationally, also their zero carbon steering committee nationally. Part of my role on both of

those committees is to help maintain alignment between the two programs as they continue to refine and improve the zero carbon standard in Canada as well as set up alternative compliance paths within Canada for Leeds in terms of what it's like to do LEED consulting in Ottawa, we are a government town. The three biggest businesses in town are the three levels of government. We've got the federal, the provincial and the municipal here. And it's very much a game of not doing too much and doing just enough so nobody wants to look like they're spending the government's money irresponsibly.

18:11

Speaker 3

So it's very much a game of getting sustainability. You won't find a lot of platinum projects around town. You'll find a lot of silver and some gold in terms of which credits are easier. We've got great transportation here. We just put in a light rail network. Transportation is amazing. So I would say that energy efficiency also one that we do really well on. The new version 5, we've got the electrification requirements and carbon requirements. The grid here is clean. So. So we definitely set up well for that. I think I've answered that.

18:44

Speaker 2

No, you did. Thank you. It's, you know, when I have international guests on my podcast, I'm just always curious, you know, what's easier, what's a little harder in your area. So. Well, let's talk about what's next as we think ahead on the green building movement, decarbonization and so much more. Even AI. I don't know, what are you excited about? What are you reading up on now that you're thinking, okay, this is coming in the green building movement.

19:09

Speaker 3

Yeah. So on AI, I will say I'm really excited, but that's all I'm going to say. I think that story is still very much to be written. I'm using AI a lot. I'm sure you are too, but I don't think we've scratched the surface of what we're going to be using it for in two or three years time. Right now I'm using it to organize my email for me and things like that, but I think there's big opportunities for it to revolutionize our work. It's hard for me to fathom what that's going to look like at this moment, though. What I think is coming in this industry. We've seen this huge shift from energy to carbon in the last couple of years. We've seen this huge shift to being everything being focused on carbon.

19:52

Speaker 3

I think that we're probably going to see full circle come around. We're starting to

see this in Canada already. Maybe we're a little ahead of the curve. We've been doing carbon a little longer, but once the design teams figure it out, and this is something that we found in the zero carbon pilot program was the first time you do it's hard, it's challenging, it's new. And that change is hard to manage. Nobody likes change, right? Especially when it impacts your performer and your business. But once you do it, you figure it out. It's really just a different way of building a building.

20:23

Speaker 2

Right?

20:24

Speaker 3

So you make those changes and then you just keep doing it that way, you know? So I, I would say that once you figured that out, and we're already seeing this on the west coast in Canada, they've had the step code there for a little while and the Vancouver standard, which were very progressive 10 years ago, they're already designing buildings that are electric and high from performance all the time. Right. So they're ready for the next challenge. And I think the next challenge is to go back to holistic thinking. You know, we've some of us, and you know, perhaps I was guilty about this for a little while five years ago. Throwing the baby out with the bathwater and focusing too much on carbon, getting tunnel vision. It's unmistakably the problem of our generation to solve.

21:08

Speaker 3

So you can forgive us for being laser focused on it for a little bit. But, you know, once we solve that, we've got to get back. I think the other thing that I'm excited about on the horizon is sustainable finance and what that means and even just getting more familiar with how green buildings can have an impact on the bottom line. I think as sustainability consultants, we've sort of come to view finance as the enemy. But it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, we're starting to get to the point where a lot of these things make good business sense. There's great research showing that GRE buildings provide financial benefits to owners, whether it's through faster turnaround time or lower vacancy rates. And those things have a monetary value.

21:53

Speaker 3

So if you can get the pro forma out and show that those things saved money, you can work with finance and get a lot more done. I think there's a tremendous opportunity there. We're already working with investors right now to our group

of companies who want to invest in low carbon and the platinum buildings. Right. And there's dollars out there that can be raised that are not available to people who are not doing that so well.

22:18

Speaker 2

We keep bringing it up, you know, the business sense of it. So any tips for our listeners if they feel a little uncomfortable understanding the finances, the green financing, the numbers, what stuff cost, I mean, where should they start if maybe they don't even have access to that? Hey, what's that cost? What do we price our consulting at? I don't know. Do you just go internally and asked to be included on some proposals so you can learn? I don't know. Any tips on how do you start learning some of that side of it?

22:43

Speaker 3

Well, I mean, if you're in a business that has, if you're in a consultancy, it might be a little more challenging. But if you're in a business that is building or designing, talk to your finance team. You know, you've probably got finance in house. Ask them to show you the performer and how it works. You know, you could also ask your client to show you their performer and how it works. You know, one of the things that I was told really early in consulting was if you want to build a good client relationship, you have to understand their business. Right? And that takes a level of relationship building. But the more you can understand how your client's business works and how they make money, the more you can add value.

23:25

Speaker 2

Right?

23:26

Speaker 3

So it can just be simple asking questions to them about how they make money or, you know, what's a priority for them when they want to make money. If it's your client, if you are a consultant, when it comes to proposal writing, you know, that's one of those things. You've just got to write a few proposals before you get good at it. But every time you don't win, you go and you ask for a debrief and you ask why you didn't win.

23:50

Speaker 2

Right?

23:50

Speaker 3

And I've been on both sides of this, and I'm all, I was always happy to give a debrief to a consultant who didn't win and provide feedback and, you know, tell them if their fee was too high or too low or. So I, I think that there's, there shouldn't be any bad blood there when you lose. Should take the opportunity to learn. I think that's how we make sure we don't fall next time. Right?

24:15

Speaker 2

Great tips. Just ask. You know, you need to close that feedback loop or you're not going to learn, you're not going to grow. So that's good. Thank you. Okay, so that's what's next. You know, Finn, let's get to know you a little bit more here. What, what would you say is your specialty or gift?

24:30

Speaker 3

I'm a people person. I like to bring people together to solve problems. When I was at the Green Building Council, I did spend A lot of time hosting roundtables, forums, summits, trying to solve problems related to zero carbon energy efficiency, embodied carbon. We had the first embodied Carbon roundtable back in 2018. I remember that well. And you think about how popular embodied carbon is right now. Well, no one was talking about it in 2018, so bringing people together and finding consensus. I worked through two updates to the zero carbon building standard. We had working groups. I would say that's always been something that I've enjoyed and been good at. I've also been, you know, we talked about this. I'm a finance guy by training, started my career in finance and risk management. So I really get excited about numbers.

25:28

Speaker 3

And it's not just dollars, it's also kilograms of CO₂, you know, and I tell my team, you know, if you're not comfortable with carbon accounting and you're comfortable with financial accounting, then you just need to think about it as foreign currency, right? Because it is all just numbers, right? Just trying to account for it and make sure who owns it gets it. So I would say that's also been something I've been good at. And you know, in the green building industry, you have a lot of architects, you have a lot of engineers, you have a lot of general contractors, you don't have a lot of finance people. So sort of been able to carve out a bit of a niche there where I have the technical capabilities, because I did do an energy efficiency diploma, but I'm also really well versed in finance.

26:09

Speaker 3

So I think that those two things, being a people person, being able to build consensus and understand the business case, have been sort of my go to strengths.

26:20

Speaker 2

Well, people, communication, ask for feedback. I mean, that's, that's a theme I'm hearing here from you. So let's get stuff, man. Do you give habits, routines or rituals?

26:31

Speaker 3

You know, I think that the thing that I do, and this is so simple, is. And I got this from the 7 Habits of Highly Effective people. I don't know that I follow the other six, but every morning when I start my job, I make a list of things I want to do that day and I work for that list, you know, and I measure success at the end of the day by that list. And it doesn't matter if things come up that are more important and I don't get through the list. What matters is that I, I know what needs to be done and I manage it. And if new things come up, I prioritize and I stick to what's important. And I get to the end of my day. Right. So that's.

27:10

Speaker 3

That's the one thing that I've been able to do that's been able to really help me. I like to write things down. I don't like to have my to do list on screen. It needs to be on paper for me. But I'm old school like that.

27:21

Speaker 2

I'm all about planning. You know, I. I kind of do it for the week coming, then I'll check on it the night before, the next day, and then the morning of. Right. And it's similar. It's. And there's something about human nature. Progress, right? Just a little progress. I check something off. And sometimes I use tools like Trello, where you can still check it off, so to speak.

27:40

Speaker 3

So it also helps me manage my efficiency too. Right. Because I have a good idea how long these things should. So if time's passing by and they're not

getting done, I know I need to get. I need to find a way to get into that flow state where I can get some work done.

27:53

Speaker 2

Love that, man. Okay. All right. There's good habits. You know, I'm a fan of the bucket list. I love to ask my podcast guests, what's on the bucket list? Any travel adventure? Do you want to write a book? What are a couple things on the bucket list?

28:07

Speaker 3

And this is going to sound really nerdy, but I've always wanted to speak at Greenbelt, and I have never done that. I've never even written and submitted an abstract. I'm in Canada. It's not really our market. I know it's an international green building conference, but it's largely geared towards work that's done in the United States. So I just haven't had the opportunity. I'd really like to speak there. I mentioned that I went to green belt in 2011 when it was in Toronto. I remember just being blown away by the passion and the knowledge that were in those sessions and thinking, gee, if I could speak here, I would know. I made it, you know? So I think for me, speaking at Greenville is. Is definitely a bucket list thing.

28:50

Speaker 3

I don't know if it's in the next five years, but it's definitely something I'm going to do. In terms of travel, you know, I. I love to travel. I wouldn't say that there's anywhere in particular that I need to go. I just want to keep traveling. For me, though, I'm a big foodie. I love to eat. I love to cook. I'm also really passionate about cooking without Gas. You know, I use induction. I have a few different wood burning appliances. One of them is a wood fired pizza oven. I would love to take real Neapolitan pizza training in Italy or in some Italy approved place in Los Angeles or in Atlanta.

29:27

Speaker 2

They go to Italy for that I guess. Right. Well, way to go on. Just the fuels you're using to cook. Cooking. I could tell you a little that's a passion and I think that's fantastic. So. So thanks for sharing. Those are great bucket list items. I appreciate that. I like to ask about books. Is there a book you'd recommend to our listeners? Doesn't even have to be about buildings.

29:49

Speaker 3

You know, I'll be honest with you. I'm not much of a reader the way some people are. I find my brain works too fast to sit down with a book. I use books to find answers to questions. There's two books right now that I find myself constantly going to look after. One of them is the new reference guide for lead version 5. And the other is the list of proposed changes to the GHG protocol that's open for public comment right now. Lead version 5 has done public comment, but it's about to be launched this spring. So I'm really trying to get my head around those two things. Both of them are going to have a profound impact on the work that I do. So for me, that's the kind of reading that excites me.

30:31

Speaker 3

I know that's not going to relate to everybody out there, but there's something in those books that will interest everybody so especially the lead one. Find the, find the credit you're interested in and see how that's evolving.

30:43

Speaker 2

Oh, thanks for sharing. I mean, these are great resources. My wife's an avid reader. I wish I had more time for it. You know, I do a little more kind of audible and stuff like that. But thanks for giving us a peek into your world. You know, I've really gotten to know you well here. I know we're going to hang out more in the lead fellow circles. Just a couple more things as we kind of start to wind down. So as you look back on your career so far, Finn, is there anything you wish you'd have learned earlier?

31:06

Speaker 3

You know, I would say if you're in this industry, really lean into it. Like don't be scared to ask why. Try to innovate as much as you can. You know, the green building industry is built by people that didn't want to accept the status quo. And I think sometimes when we're young and we're just starting out. We're maybe a little shy to put our ideas forward or to challenge the status quo, but there's a way to do that, and that is totally respectful. Find what you're comfortable with and do that. Because like I said, this whole industry is about not going with the status quo. So don't be afraid to, like, put your ideas out there and innovate and ask why and when you don't like the answer to why, to change the way you do things.

31:52

Speaker 3

You know, I think that for me is something that I. It took me a little bit of time

to learn that. I would also say, like, dream big, you know, like, there's. There's so many amazing jobs in this. In this industry. I think when you're starting out, you're just really happy to have a job, and that's okay. Like, I understand the job market these days is really challenging just to get into the industry, but once you're in, like, dream big because you can have any job out there. There's so many cool jobs in this industry, and there's so many great people that will help lift you into those jobs. So get out there and network.

32:28

Speaker 2

And it's a great community here. I mean, you got involved, local chapters, you work for the National Green Building Council. You go to green builds. You know, you just got to get out. I think, in my opinion, the pandemic which caused a lot of us to work from home, and I enjoy working from home, still got to get out and do business, right? Trust transfers with people that you not only want to do business with, but just that you want to collaborate with. Right? Nothing like a handshake and meeting in person.

32:57

Speaker 3

And I think that's handshake, coffee, a meal and tons of beer.

33:03

Speaker 2

Yeah, beer, Canadian whiskey, you know, whatever. So. All right, as we start to wrap up here, let's say, though, Finn, there's someone listening right now. They're just now jumping in to the green building movement. Maybe they're making a career change or maybe they're, you know, just now passing their lead grin associate exam. Any words of encouragement for them as we wrap up?

33:26

Speaker 3

No. Maybe some advice. You know, I said this earlier, like, don't. Don't view finance as the enemy. Find a way to work with them. They can be your. They can be the reason why things get value engineered out if you don't talk to them. But they can also be a strong ally for you if you can find a way to work with them. You know, that would be. That would be some advice. You know, I. In terms of words of encouragement, I, I think I already said dream big. You know, that's just go for it, go all in. You know, this green building industry has so much opportunity for you to lean in, to let yourself shine, to bring your solutions to problems. I.

34:06

Speaker 3

One of the things that I've always found interesting is that, you know, when I'm in a room with really smart people and it happens all the time in this industry, just listening to the other people talk, like some people like the sound of their own voice. But if you stop and you listen, even things that I know a lot about when someone else is talking about them, it's a whole different perspective. You know, how they see it from their eyes. And you know, that for me is. Is really interesting and really powerful to listen and learn from others. And there's so many opportunities to do that in this industry.

34:39

Speaker 2

Good stuff, but a wisdom here. I think I might have two years on you if I'm calculating while we graduated from our respective universities. But I look forward to hanging out with you, man. Congratulations on your lead fellow. And to our listeners, please, you know, connect with Finn on LinkedIn. Check out the website for Urban Equation. If you're ever up in Ottawa, man, go out for a coffee. That's what this is about. You just said it. And what I heard on here is learn the business side the of it more than ever and let's go do some good green building work. So Finn, thanks for being on the podcast today.

35:09

Speaker 3

Thanks, Charlie, Appreciate it.

35:12

Speaker 4

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