Turning Building Data Into Operational Intelligence with Etrit Demaj | Transcript

00:02
Speaker 1
Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original.

00:04
Speaker 2
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 Matters. Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. You've probably been seeing a trend in 2026, in part because I'm also building a tech startup, but I think a big part of this green building movement and decarbonization, we've got to lean in more to technology.

00:49
Speaker 2
It's no more like, hey, this real estate owner thinks this is a black box. It's like, wow, that really is going to help me out. And that's what we've got today. So we've got an entrepreneur on today. How you doing today, sir?

01:01
Speaker 1
Good. How you doing, Charlie? Thanks for having me.

01:03
Speaker 2
Yeah, I'm pretty good. I'm outside of Atlanta. That's where I record the podcast here at the home studio. You're up in Detroit. Can't wait to hear how you got there. So for our listeners, if you would take us back. So where did you grow up and go to school?

01:16
Speaker 1
Yeah, so, you know, I. We moved to the U.S. in 1999 from Kosovo.

01:22
Speaker 2
I was pretty young.

01:22
Speaker 1
I was 10 years old. And then really where I grew up most of my life is we. We moved to a suburb called Rochester Hills, Michigan, here, close to Detroit. And, you know, I went to school. I would. I always went to school in Rochester Hills, even. And even university was there, to be honest. So. But I think what was really helpful for me and where I went to school, where I grew up is I think it. I was able to go to school with many different types of cultures. Diversification. Now, my group of friends, we used to call ourselves and everybody called us the United Nations. And I was many different cultures, many different groups, so helped me a lot. That was, I think, was more important than, you know, some of the things that I learned in school. I learned.

02:13
Speaker 1
I learned about the world, and I learned about food. I learned about, you know, how some things are defined in different areas of the world that I think really later helped me more than, you know, I.

02:28
Speaker 2
Love that the un, it's so important, right?

02:31
Speaker 1
It's, it's.

02:32
Speaker 2
It's one thing if we're going to build a global company, it's another thing if you just can get different perspectives. Right. And just be human and we're all connected. So I love that and that mix. I'm in Atlanta, that's a pretty diverse city. So when my boys go to school or high school here, similar, I just love that. Okay. So early career. Did you know what you want to do? Grew up like, you know, I wanted to be a chef and then I became a construction, real estate, green building, educator, consultant. Now I'm a tech startup CEO. So I didn't become a chef, but I don't know. What'd you want to do when you grow up?

03:03
Speaker 1
Yeah, no, I love that I need to try some new food. But so for me, I always is crazy because growing up before coming to Michigan, you know, my dad had a couple friends who were, you know, again, coming from a war torn country. Right. Business opportunity is very limited as you're growing up. Right. You're more worried about staying safe and not dying. And that was kind of like the first thing. Right. So the second part was my, you know, my dad had a few friends that were just amazing guys and you know, great families, but they were like one of the few entrepreneurs and businessmen that I, you know, I had met and I, you know, we'd go to some other places and stuff and I just, I was infatuated by it.

03:53
Speaker 1
And I think since I was really like six or seven years old, I always said, I want to be a businessman.

03:57
Speaker 2
Love it.

03:59
Speaker 1
All right. And then, yeah. And then coming to the US obviously. And then obviously my whole family, as I got older, my uncles, my, you know, a lot of different people in my family started building their own businesses because they had moved to different countries and they were at that moment where you could see them building. But a really important part of my life was the Detroit Albanian community here, like the Metro Detroit Albanian community and even the New York a little bit. But I started to see it from an early age, the kind of work ethic and passion that you need to be, you know, a founder, an entrepreneur, just a business person altogether.

04:39
Speaker 1
And like growing up around that and growing up around people that worked seven days a week, but somehow still found time to do some personal things or also left some personal things behind, but had the understanding within their families. I think that really helped me believe that hey, anything is possible and it's normal. Like, you know, why can't I be this.

05:00
Speaker 2
Well, I Love that case. Right. We have that opportunity here in the United States to be a business owner, but you gotta put in the hard work, and it's not for the faint of heart. So I know. We'll unpack that more after we connect some dots around decarbonization, sustainability, and running these amazing buildings. So. Okay, so that was early on. I love that origin story. Did you have any mentors along the way? You know, anyone that maybe. A mentor to me sometimes is somebody you read their material, you see them on stage, they influence you, or sometimes it's someone that challenges you, opens doors for you. Any mentors along the way?

05:35
Speaker 1
Yeah, I think, you know, obviously, like, your mentors are always you. You know, I think you. You really still. You see how your parents work and what they do, and they become a really big part of your life. Right? Like, you know, both my parents are huge mentors. You know, my dad, obviously, is. Was a really big mentor to me because, you know, he was. He was. He knew how to push us, and he also knew how to, you know, be a really good friend when you needed it. So that was huge. And then as I got into the, I think the more professional world, I was lucky to work at JP Morgan Chase for a little bit.

06:11
Speaker 1
And somehow on my early, like, few months, I got to meet Jamie diamond, you know, like, and they were like, oh, you're gonna walk this CEO down. You're gonna go with him. And I got to go in an elevator with this guy. And I was, you know, I was just trying to figure out how to make money. And he. I just, like, from the second I, like, I met this guy and he had his team around him, and he was just so real. Even though I was in the elevator right now, he didn't. He didn't stop from what he was thinking about the next thing that he was doing. He's got more and more infatuated about this guy. And I read all his updates to the company.

06:49
Speaker 1
I. I watched a lot of things on him, and I got to meet him again some more times. But I think he. Indirectly, I've been able to, you know, to. To.

06:59

Speaker 2
To.

06:59
Speaker 1
To build a culture and build a mindset that I think has been, you know, has been helpful outside of, obviously, my dad and some of the others. And then, you know, there's other mentors too. I've been personally, I've been really lucky. I. I don't know that I can say, like, I had a direct one one mentor, but many people have affected My life from family to close friends to, you know, even just people that we've worked around and that I've learned from.

07:25
Speaker 2
Well, yeah, every time Jamie speaks and stuff and actually in my previous green building career in my former green building consulting firm, we did a lot of work in New York City and we worked on some of the JP Morgan Chase building, so it was pretty cool. Okay, so those are some mentors. How about sustainability? Right. Arguably today the green building umbrella has changed. I'm not going to change the name of my podcast yet. Ten years strong here, but some would say it's now called Decarbonization. Some would say it's called Resiliency. I don't know. Sustainability. When did it first show up in your career?

07:58
Speaker 1
Yeah, so thinking Cat, I was able to connect with sustainability probably without even realizing that. Like, hey, when I got into actually Marvel and I got into more on the tech space, we always connected to real estate because it was just, you know, where we came from. You know, we got, we just had a weird experience as kids when it comes to war and you know, watching buildings get blown up. But then, you know, I think as we got older, we always wanted to be closer to real estate and as we got closer to real estate and as I got more into my, obviously my career that I have now, really getting into understanding how buildings work, understanding these systems, understanding how people are working inside basements with no windows. Like, literally those are the people that are running the buildings.

08:48
Speaker 1
Every time I'd go into a building, I just got exhausted by it, to be honest with you. But then I started to feel like there's just a better opportunity. And then I think as we started doing code and even before started to realize that like,

sustainability is a huge part of everything. Right? But in order to do sustainability right, you kind of, you know, you can't get ahead of what you need, which is a lot of real time data, you know, to do sustainability. Right. So I think those are the things that, you know, that's kind of what got me into it. Okay. Help me understand what the problems in sustainability were.

09:24
Speaker 2
Okay. Yeah, we need data we can actually measure. A lot of architects I work with at Schema as we're building our AI software for, not just architects now, even direct owners like Chick Fil A and big retailers who can't build fast enough. Hey, let's automate that. It's data, right? And people think they don't have data, but they do. So we're going to get into that. Okay, so you had early banking. I'm hearing that helped you in your business career. But as I look at your bio, I mean real estate, co founder, COO here, different things, got into tech. So connect the dots a little bit before we talk about code.

09:59
Speaker 1
Yeah, I mean, so, you know, I learned something in, I think in college from one of my professors that really stuck with me and I think it helped me just go with the flow more than I think I would have done in my past and really take me to where I wanted, you know, what my dream was and what my dream still is and continues to be. But it was, he said, look in, in our lifetimes at the time when I was going to school, that you are going to go through 15 to 20 career changes in your life. Right. So like, and I didn't understand that because, you know, my parents had a career change because they moved to a different country and they had no choice. But really I never, you know, I never saw people having crazy career changes.

10:44
Speaker 1
But then when I look at my own profile and where. What I've been able to do, what I've been lucky to be able to do is I went from really from big corp, like a JP Morgan Chase. And what helped me there, and that still sticks with me today, was how it just became successful there. What I consider to be successful because I was just able to make good bonus dollars and money on investments and all kinds of stuff. And that helped us kind of get into business. But what really helped me there was the brand of the name.

11:14
Speaker 2
Right?

11:15
Speaker 1
But on top of the brand, the name, the processes that they had, type of flow that they had to really like if you followed that, you put your own personality and then my background and like I said with my United nations friends, understanding cultures, then you were able to just do so much because the company had it. All you have to do is just be yourself. Right? And on top of that, what I think helped me there was everybody did about, you know, 40 hours a week. You know, that was like a good week for them. They were happy. I was able to. All I had to do was just put an extra 10 hours, 15 hours a week. That 10, 15 hours put me ahead of everyone, like literally my peers and they, the people that I was working with.

11:59
Speaker 1
And I was able to just not worry about the noise. That 10 to 15 hours got me to be successful, got me to be a top banker and all these things. And I think that really taught me a lot. So Then when I got into my other, you know, companies as we co founded, you know, the tech companies, everything else that really stuck with me. But the thing that I learned on the other side was that you have no process, you have no data and you have no information. So you know, that was a little bit of a challenge. But you know, quickly overcoming that, I think that helped me get to, and it helped us get to code and, and build the thing that we're building today that I think has helped us be a little bit further ahead.

12:43
Speaker 2
Learn, learn, learn. To those listening, you know, I was fortunate to work at a very large construction company, then a huge real estate, 2.2 billion dollar family owned company, then a small business that I started. And what I'm hearing from you is, man, just put in a little extra effort. You didn't say 80 hours, 100 hours. You and I will do that as CEO and co founder. We're, you know, but that's okay, but just do a little more, but ask questions, right? Say, hey, I'd like to get exposed to that. So one more look back, then we're going to talk about present day. So what's on the highlight reel? What are some of your proudest accomplishments so far?

13:15
Speaker 1
So I mean there's a lot and I know that sounds, but these are.

13:21

Speaker 2
Humbling questions when I, you know, I try to bring in just some amazing people that can inspire others and I give you the mic to say, you know what, it's okay to say, you know what, this was special because. So what's on the highlight reel?

13:30
Speaker 1
Yeah, I mean look, there's a, from a professional perspective, there's a, you know, we all being able to work with, you know, signing and winning the US government is just such a big, big, big for me because it has so much meaning. The US has always been amazing, but I think it's the best country in the world. No matter who the president is, I still think it's the best government in the world. And we got to continue that somehow some ways. And then I think some of the other achievements are really, you know, building the right product and for the market. We've always gotten really great reviews. And I think the last one for me is having the right team members and having the right people around and growing with them and then watching them help you grow and you helping them grow.

14:17
Speaker 1
You can only do that when you find the best people. And I think I've been lucky as one of my achievements and one of our achievements as, you know, as a company and team is we're really good at finding the right core people and continuing to build on that. And I think that's so important. You can't build anything without people and you can't literally take. Have the best client service of people. You can't have money without people, nothing. So, like, I think the people part really helps.

14:47
Speaker 2
Well, I'm big on people and culture too. Do you think it's mission driven work? Do you think you've created a fun place to work? Are you just putting yourself out in these, you know, multinational circles? Like, what's a pro tip on how do you find good people, especially in a virtual world? Right. A lot of us work virtually these days. Any, any tips there? And then we'll move on.

15:08
Speaker 1
Yeah, look, from our perspective, we've tried really hard to be, how do you say, as transparent as possible. And we've tried really hard to show that our core values, you know, we lead with our core values. Right. And then from a product

perspective, we've been lucky to be in a space where it's a challenging space too. Right? So, like, when you are transparent and you're going after people and you're being very honest with them. Hey, look, you're putting it, you have to put a lot of work here and also, like, we're gonna have to learn together to build something because this space needs that. You don't just have something that's just cookie cutter here and that gets defined. That helped us.

15:48
Speaker 1
And, and I think sometimes when you lead with transparency and clear vision and mission, you know, then you can connect with the right people who then find the other people who then continue to keep building on that because they know that, you know, BS just doesn't last here.

16:04
Speaker 2
Oh, that's great, man. I find myself quoting Jensen, CEO of Nvidia. I hear they're doing pretty good. By the way, is he has 60 direct reports. He says there's no one one meetings. He gives all the information at the same time to all 60 direct reports. Good, bad, just everyone gets all the same information at the same time. I love it. And I think that's what you're hinting at here. So. All right, so let's talk present day. So tell us about code. I've got a background. I see we have some similar connections on LinkedIn. So I know a little bit about existing buildings and tech and maybe this dream of A building operating system. So tell us about your company, where you're at in the journey and maybe a day in the life of you.

16:47
Speaker 1
Yeah, so, you know, code, obviously we started the company October 2017. We started with this idea that, hey, it's not like, you know, everybody calls it like the single pane class, right. Like we want from us, the way we saw it was we needed to build an operating system that makes integrating some of the hardest systems that you have much easier and in a more open way and then adding other solutions and systems that are more plug and play to that, you know, and then as you're doing that, finding the solution, finding the applications and having them ready to meet buildings where they are. Because a lot of buildings are different. You know, there's.

17:30
Speaker 1
You can really profile buildings, but like, you know, some are going to take you a little bit longer to just have something smart there versus the others who may

have a ton of systems like you think about. You know, I've been using the JP Morgan Chase thing because it's just, it's, you know, I'm going to continue with that. But like the new JP Morgan Chase, new construction to 70 park, right? Everything I've read about it, were part of the RFP way back in the day that so many systems, right? So that building you can make, so you know, you can make that building one of the smartest buildings in the world very fast with our solution versus a building that maybe has one or two systems you can integrate with, right?

18:06
Speaker 1
So like we've built the applications on top that really make it easier to then do a portfolio wide implementation without having to do building, you know, one or two buildings and then stopping, right? So because you're typically these larger portfolios, you know, just have different types of assets, right. Or different types of profiles of those buildings, especially.

18:27
Speaker 2
You said it, those existing buildings, man, you never knew what you're walking into. Especially New York City. We did a lot of work in New York and. But are you on 270 Park? Because that's an all electric building skyscraper. That's a big one there.

18:39
Speaker 1
So, no, we're not on it yet, but I might, I hope to be it.

18:42
Speaker 2
All right, well, I'll put in a call to Dan Puglisi andrew Cook and Ed Fialo. You tell them, you know, Charlie Cicchetti, I'm very serious about that. Okay. It's the least I could do.

18:51
Speaker 1
Love those. You know, they're.

18:52
Speaker 2
They're all amazing people.

18:53

Speaker 1
We hope one day they choose us.

18:54
Speaker 2
They're amazing people. So. Okay, so let's keep going. So you've got your startup been going eight, coming up on nine years, had different funding.

19:04
Speaker 1
So.

19:05
Speaker 2
So kind of where are you at now in the journey or there's just more tools and everything you need to plug into. Do you want to go from commercial real estate over here to other, like, I don't know where do you go from here?

19:16
Speaker 1
Yeah. So we've been, again, we've been lucky because our platform has made it easier for us to verticalize. So we're in a, we're already in a good amount of verticals. You know, that, that's helped us scale faster. But we're, you know, I think we're in what I would call right now is the, you know, you have your dream, you continue to keep, you know, building the dream and things are going really good and then you gotta keep doing the harder and harder things. Right. So like now we're into our next harder and harder thing which is keeping the same, obviously culture, same idea, same everything that we've had, but growing just as fast, not just from a client base, but continue to make sure that our team members, our people grow and then obviously our clients still continue to get the same experience.

19:59
Speaker 1
So how we're doing that is know we have some new obviously AI agents and initiatives that are, some are out, but some are coming out here soon. But on top of the AI initiatives and agents, you know, we're continuing to keep adding to our data set and our ontology that's helping us really have the right, you know, data structure for buildings where you can enable codes, AI or enable your own AI solutions and tools because it's, you know, getting building data out of these servers that are sitting somewhere is not easy and we've been able to do that and now we're just kind of adding more firepower to that to then where you can pick

and choose but still be able to have code and continue to keep specifying more and more code in all your buildings. And I think that's going really well.

20:47
Speaker 1
And if we can, you know, the next six months is going to be a huge, I think we have a lot more announcements coming out and we're excited about it. It feels like we're back in, you know, those early days of, you know, like kind of continuing to keep.

21:04
Speaker 2
New fire, new innovation. Yeah, you've been doing it long enough. You need to continue to innovate. Not just that early breakthrough in that early product market fit. Well, I know before we get on here, we said, hey, there's probably something here with what we're building at Schema and our design AI so let's make sure we follow up. Maybe we can hand you off an as built BIM file. Who knows where it goes? You spent months, maybe years earning that lead certification. Don't let it go unnoticed. Building Plaques creates custom lead recognition plaques that tell the story of your project sustainability achievement and put your design or operation team's work front and center. Their online plaque designer lets you build a fully customized plaque in under 10 minutes. Just enter your lead project number and you're off.

21:52
Speaker 2
Plaques are made from architectural grade anodized aluminum using sustainable materials and subsurface printing. So they're built to last as long as the building itself. Recognize the work, educate the visitors, show the world what green building looks like. Check them out@buildingplaques.com okay, so anything else you'd recommend for someone that might want to get into commercial real estate? But now by way of technology, I mean, for example, like what kind of background do you need? Someone that was a specialist, an architect or a property manager or a building engineer, Just, I don't know, what does someone need to be learning to maybe lean into the tech side of, you know, sustainable real estate? Any tips there?

22:37
Speaker 1
Yeah, I. Look, the biggest tip that I have is what if you're just coming on, you know, you really have to think these days, whatever your passion is, if this is your passion, you know, you got to, you can always find your passion. Right. And, but I think the big, big thing is if you want to come in really using the

technology data and understanding that buildings are going to change, like they're going to change other and how they're operated, the profitability in buildings has gone down so much so they have no choice but to change is going to be either a forceful change or a change that's that, you know, we embrace more and more. So if you can come in, really learn and specialize, I think you can make, you know, truly really good use of what sustainability is all about.

23:26
Speaker 1
Right, because sustainability got a little bit of a head, get a little ahead of itself. And if you can learn how to work with real data and also learn how to not just build reports, but really follow and track the roi, which means that it has to be an integratable solution or integratable model for the whole company. You're going to specialize and you're going to that's going to be the new sustainability, in my opinion. And then the ones that obviously have been doing this for a while, when to continue to keep doing it or like, hey, you're thinking about getting into sustainability or in just real estate. Again, same exact thing. If you specialize in something else and you're coming in here, you will be faster and better to get to real, you know, outcomes.

24:05
Speaker 1
But these days you've got to specialize in something because to specialize in something, that means you have, you know how to take every step, every piece of the process and actually know what to do with it. And that's a really big deal. And then you can have career changes or have whatever you want. Yeah.

24:19
Speaker 2
Oh, wow. What great career advice. And that's what you get listening here to the podcast. Well, let's think about the future. What's next? What are you maybe reading up on? You're getting excited about what's next in this sustainability or decarbonization movement?

24:33
Speaker 1
I think the next thing in sustainability decarbonization movement I think is obviously from, and from our perspective what we've been seeing, right? Like, I think everyone committed to ESG targets without knowing what their buildings were actually doing, you know. So like now the regulatory deadline is catching up to the data gap that everybody has, right? So when you look at CSRD in Europe, SEC disclosure rules in the US and the companies are kind of starting to scramble now. And those are the ones who thought ESG was just a kind of

more of a reporting exercise. And then to get into the operational side, you have to make sure that those reports actually are like, are real now, right? So now you got to really go backwards and make sure that everything that was done is going to be operational.

25:22
Speaker 1
So I think the buildings that are going to meet their targets are the ones with real time operational, you know, layer, right? So like, you know, where we feel like we're going to continue to keep building on that and then I think how we use, how I see obviously sustainability now is a lot more than just reporting, right? Like a lot more. And if some of the companies have had their data strategy, their smart building strategy already in place there, it's going to help them. But that's just how I see sustainability. I think sustainability a lot more operational, a lot more. You're going to, we're going to see a lot more sustainable sustainability and engineering leaders versus just sustainability or just engineer. And we're starting to see that.

26:02
Speaker 2
Well, and with AI, right, you're Already helping get the data, put it in one place that's easy to use. Now we can get into some predictive maintenance, some. Hey, here's some suggestions. Just who knows how you can make everybody's life easier there? So, man, I love that. Okay, so I like to ask my podcast guests, hey, what's your specialty or gift?

26:21
Speaker 1
I think for me, and it ties really closely to obviously our idea and our solution, but I think maybe this, it's helped me become this way too. And maybe later on I'll think differently. But I'm really good at pattern recognition, so I think I want to continue to keep getting better and better at that, whether it's in, you know, human ability or systems. You know, I think recognizing patterns across, you know, really understanding how to systemize that. I think that's kind of what I'm good at. And then think. I think I'm. I can be pretty good at proactively thinking through whether it's going to be a problem or an issue. Right. And then being able to make those changes. Like, I think the, the older I get, I have zero problem admitting something that I've done wrong or, or working on it.

27:12
Speaker 1
And I want to get better and better. And that's taken me some time. I think in the

last four or five months, I've become a lot better at that. So. But, but, yeah, but the pattern recognition has helped me kind of get to that. So.

27:23
Speaker 2
Oh, man, I. That really hit home this week. We've got a, A safe, A bridge open now because we're going for our big series a hopefully by the end of the year. At Schema is we had an investor come in this week, and one of two main reasons they invested was I admitted, even though I built some other companies and exited them, that I had never built a tech startup. And I'm just learning every day. So the fact I admitted it and I didn't try to just bulldoze through it, they said that was different. So it's what you're talking about. Just keep asking questions, learning, admit when you're wrong. Let's keep moving. You know, a big thing for me was, sure, you want to learn from how you got into the situation, but it's how you respond to it that I think really matters.

28:03
Speaker 2
So, yeah, man. Do you have any good habits, routines, rituals that help you stay on point?

28:08
Speaker 1
Oh, man, I think I'm not looking for yoga.

28:13
Speaker 2
I'm just looking for. Hey, I use this for my to do list. I like pen and paper. I like trello. I don't know, just the little hacks. You know what helps you stay sane, I think.

28:21
Speaker 1
Yeah, for me, it's definitely writing more. Right. And having everything noted more and more. I, and I. I'm not the type of person that just sitting there writing notes all day, but a sense here,.

28:34
Speaker 2
You get it out of your head though. It's in your system. I can clear my mind. It's somewhere. I put that thing aside for now. Right?

28:42

Speaker 1
Yeah, it's a big deal. And then obviously other habits become, you know, a lot it just depends on the time of the year, depends on the other priorities that we have. And then obviously using, not overloading yourself with having a bunch of the update things in. But, but really continuously reprioritizing, I think that's a really big deal. And then making changes. I reprioritize all the time.

29:07
Speaker 2
Okay.

29:08
Speaker 1
Before I used to worry that, oh man, you know, you reprioritizing too much. But you have to continue to keep reprioritizing because time just makes you do that, whether it's personal or business.

29:21
Speaker 2
Man, a lot of good wisdom here. Well, next I ask about bucket list. But kind of leading to that is, you know, I know you enjoy your work here. What do you do for fun? And then in a minute I'll ask you what's on the bucket list.

29:34
Speaker 1
Yeah, you know, I've kind of realized that I really like to travel for fun. I feel like during, you know, when I travel, I get to meet some really good people and then I get to obviously learn from people. And it depends on where you're traveling. Right. So like, I tried to travel in places where, you know, many times, you know, like, you know, not too long ago, I ended up meeting somebody, you know, my daughter was playing and ended up meeting somebody that became. That is actually is kind of funny. They just sent out a really large rfp. You know, just do that. Right.

30:10
Speaker 1
So, but I think meeting people, you know, being able to play some sports and then, you know, lately I've been really, really enjoying, you know, obviously, like not just listening to books, but listening to the podcasts that are a little bit more diversified than just business, but teach you how to think differently and how to really look at outcomes, you know, from perspectives of some, some different people that have done, that have had different careers in their lives. Right. And I think that again, just getting more and more into that,

understanding patterns that just, that's what I Like to do. I actually, obviously, sports. I love watching sports, too, when I can, but I think, you know, lately it's been a bit harder for me because I just. I can't sit there watching TV for more than 30 minutes.

31:02
Speaker 2
Yeah, well, you got some good sport teams there in Detroit, too. I'm in Atlanta. It's usually heartbreak down here, but every now and again, the Brazil win a World Series. Actually, I went to a game just recently. I took my godfather. He was friends with my dad for 50 years. Big baseball fan. We had a good time. So. All right, so, yeah, then that gets us to bucket list. I'm a fan of the bucket list. I got a lot of different things that categorize it, but some people, it's travel, adventure, write a book. I don't know what's on the bucket list.

31:32
Speaker 1
Yeah.

31:33
Speaker 2
So.

31:34
Speaker 1
Oh, man. I think one of the bucket list items is obviously, I know this sounds. They be having code be really the specification of the industry and having kind of like a whole new industry defined. I think that's a really big bucket list. Go. And I can see it. I can really, like. I think the whole team can. Can see that.

31:52
Speaker 2
It's. It's.

31:53
Speaker 1
It could become a reality. And then the other part is, yeah, I think whether it's writing a book or writing something that turns into a movie, they. I kind of want to do that because it's a really big challenge for me. I always sucked at writing. I think I'm becoming a little bit better as I read more. And I think. I think there's a lot in, you know, when you go through a war, you go through, like, a rebuild and then continue to keep going through rebuilds and then grow companies. There's different things that you can write about that can turn into something

interesting. So maybe, you know, 20 years from now, something you can go. You and I will go either watch a movie or, you know, let's do it, man.

32:32
Speaker 2
No, let's keep in touch on that. I. I want to write a book. I had a business mentor. She always said, everybody's got at least one book in them. And these days, I'm not afraid to say, hey, man, we can use AI Just to talk and get our thoughts together and just help. So David Gottfried, he's some say the father of the green building movement. He's actually recently been on the podcast. He just wrote his fourth book, and he admitted he wrote the entire thing with AI For a year when he was walking his dog in San Francisco. He named his AI it was his own project coming out of chatgpt. He loaded all his previous works, his thoughts, and he just conversed for a year, and they wrote 2,600 pages together.

33:15
Speaker 2
He cut it down to 2,000, and so he just said, hey, this one helped me write book number four. So there you go. The guy that helped, he was actually one of the three people that started the u. S. Green building council and the lead movement. Good, good people.

33:28
Speaker 1
He's an amazing guy. He's done so many amazing things. So that's awesome.

33:32
Speaker 2
Okay, so just a few more things here. Let's see. Books. Sometimes our podcast guests, you know, give me a good book recommendation. It doesn't have to be about buildings. It can be. If not a book, maybe a podcast or just something you'd recommend to our listeners.

33:48
Speaker 1
Yeah, for me, I, I, my favorite book, and I, I can read it all the time. It's hard thinking about hard things by Ben horowitz, no matter how many times I read it and the different chapters, you know, I can always find myself in that book. And that's kind of helped me. I really, I listen to Ben Horowitz a lot. I think he's a really great, Obviously one of the best investors and, but also very good at explaining and really helping you from a, you know, from a founder perspective. And then obviously, there's a lot of really great podcasts out there, you know, on a weekly basis, I love to listen to all in. Oh, yeah, nice. Right?

And then there's, obviously, there's a, you know, there's a ton of. There's a ton of things out there.

34:37
Speaker 1
But, but yeah, I think if you're a founder and you haven't read the hard thing about hard things, I think you probably should, or even if you're just, you know, you're, you're, you're in a company that is growing or wherever you are, find yourself in that book because it's, it's an interesting one. There's a lot of hardships and good success.

34:55
Speaker 2
Oh, man. Great recommendations. I'm going to put them in the podcast show notes so everybody can just click and check those out. All right, two final things as we wind down here. As you look back on your career, anything you wish you'd have either learned earlier or wish someone would have given that career advice a little earlier, I.

35:12
Speaker 1
Think, I wish I would have learned earlier that, you know, this is what I think. I think if I would know something from two years from now that, like, you Know, it would be really helpful, like, so, like, if I always can go back, can go four or two years and know that I think obviously I can go much faster because I just see that. Right. You change so much. But then I think some of the things that I wish I would have learned a little bit earlier, like, hey, understanding the phases. I know this sounds like the different phases because you can read about them, you know, and if you. If I would have read maybe more. More about height, how, like where you go, maybe that would have been helpful.

35:52
Speaker 1
But if I had a mentor or if I had the ability to just understand that, you know, when you are in a little bit of a, you know, let's say your first year of business is much different. Your second year is much different. For me, it's been different. Maybe for others, sometimes it can stay the same because you're just having the same product, product, and then maybe sales later. But for us, it's been sales, product, sales, product, sales, product, sales, product, sales, product. And there's just a lot of moving pieces there. Right. So I don't know something very specific that I would say. I think there's a lot. And I just, I think if I had a magic wand, I would just always go with three years from now.

36:35
Speaker 2
I love every bit of that. Yeah. And that's how fast everything's changing. Right? Is so. I love how you said two years, not 10 years ago. You know, it's go back to when that Detroit Tigers pitcher got robbed of that perfect game, you know, should have had to replay back then, stuff like that. So, yeah, that's really cool, man. All right, so last question as we wrap up the podcast here. This has been fantastic. Let's say someone's listening right now. You kind of give some of this advice earlier, but let's say they're just jumping into this movement, you know, it's been good to you. It's been good to me. Any words of encouragement and we'll wrap up.

37:09
Speaker 1
Yeah. Oh, I think it's one of the most impactful things that you can do. And look, there's just. The built world is massive. Right. It's a problematic. And you don't have to take it just like, hey, don't think of this as to me is like everybody gets excited about this idea about this, you know, oh, what this thing is and their own definition of it. But I think the bigger words of encouragement for me is it's. It always gets harder and it becomes really problematic because People get involved, bad data, whether it's up a regulation you like or don't like, but getting through that and finding your ways and being able to say, you know, what effort. I'm going to go ahead with this thing and I'm going to specialize for the next five, 10 years.

37:56
Speaker 1
I'm going to become literally the master of this. I think that's a harder thing, right? So I think if you're thinking you have a dream or idea, regardless of this or anything else, but really from this perspective, it's going to get all. It's always going to get harder. It's going to get more challenging. And, and really, the people that get, the ones that really become the definition of something are the ones that, or can define something or the people that can just, you know, go through the hard times, because the hard times make everything better. And then the hard times really find solutions. So if you can get through them. So I think that, that's the biggest thing, right? Like, don't give up. My own version of don't give up, I guess.

38:38
Speaker 2
Man, that's fantastic. Yeah. They used to say after 10,000 hours on something,

an instrument, a sport, become a master. But, yeah, I think these days, you know, we could probably learn even a little faster than that.

38:51
Speaker 1
So it's pretty neat that like, you're, you know, again, you go back to, okay, you can do your 40 hours, your 35 hours, and many people just do 20 hours, but if you really go do 60, you already, you go do 80 or 90 for a little bit before you can, you know, you get busier with life and personal things, and even during that time, you find ways to do it. Everything is so much faster now and you can specialize so much faster, which is so important.

39:16
Speaker 2
Oh, what a cool podcast, man. Well, hey, I know we're going to connect offline to our listeners. Please check out all the great work that CodeLabs is doing and, you know, make sure you connect here on LinkedIn. So thanks for being on the podcast. This is great.

39:30
Speaker 1
Appreciate you, Charlie. I'm looking forward to obviously, spending more time. Thanks for having me.

39:33
Speaker 2
You're welcome. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building matters podcast@gbes.com, our mission is to advance the Green Building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbes.com podcast for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode. And you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing guests, please tell your friends about the this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on itunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you on next week's episode.