



Transcript for Podcast Episode: 009

Trailblazing In A Unique Industry with Matt Hamlin

Hosted by: Michelle Ward and Shawn Cahill

Guest: Matthew Hamlin

- Michelle:** We are Modern CPA. Our purpose is to provide valuable information to small business owners on our podcast Profit Points. We discuss business how to's, give tax tips, and dig in to real life experiences in the crazy world of running your own business. If you find this podcast helpful, then like, subscribe and follow us on social media. Welcome everybody to Profit Points where we talk to professionals, industry experts and other small business owners about the crazy world of being in business. And today we have Matt Hamlin here. And Matt is running his own business and we want to hear from him. Tell us a little bit about yourself, Matt.
- Matt:** Yeah. How are you doing? How are you guys? I'm good. I'm Matt Hamlin. I live in the Greater Philadelphia area and I started my business called Online Depot in twenty sixteen. I think it was, and we helped salvage yards throughout the country, manage their e-commerce stores. So being eBay or Amazon or Facebook Marketplace, we're mostly pretty happy with the eBay side of it. But I started doing that and that's like I said, it started twenty sixteen. So I've been doing that since I've had been in the Salvage yard industry my whole life. But this particular business has started then, so.
- Michelle:** That's Amazing! When I think of salvage yards, I think of like going to a junkyard and pulling parts. And but this is very different and probably very different for the people who own this off the charts too. Right. So like, how does that work?
- Matt:** Yeah, that's that's the stigma we are always trying to shake in this industry, right? You think Junkyard? You think Sanford and Son? I think oil, you think Greece, stuff like that. And it's just it's just not like that at all. I mean, we were recycling before it was cool. It's the oldest industry in the world. That was the first thing recycled, which was car parts, right? And I think over 95 percent of the car is recycled. And a lot of it for a U.S. So that's what we specialize in is the end of life, ELV, vehicles. And what our clients do is they'll get cars from auction or if you crash your car and they get the car from there and then they properly process them at the end of their life by properly disposing of the oils, any fluids in them and they take the parts off them salvage what's good. So as you said, you have the stigma of the junkyard and we'll still call ourselves junkyards. But really, they're salvaging good parts, good reusable parts of the vehicle and then for resale.
- Michelle:** So how does that work then? With the resale of these parts, do you inventory all of the parts that are at the salvage yard? How big of a project?
- Matt:** Yeah, it's quite the undertaking, and my dad had always worked this salvage yard

and he had a yard. So I work there and I really, really found my love within it with this industry and doing inventory. So for us, particularly what we do is we'll take your inventory that you have inventory and texture and process, and we take it from there and we get it online. But what each one of our clients does is they will take that time, especially if you're spending a good amount of money on a car from the auction, you're getting those parts because, you know, wrecks engines were seven thousand dollars, so you're going to buy that from the auction. Have somebody that hopefully knows what they're doing, inventory the parts of the car, go through that car. And I like I heard a term what someone called it, fighting the money. And I love that term because when I would inventory, I would just go through the motions. You know, they they they give us tools to put the parts in to inventory them with. So I used to print it out on a piece of paper and go out there with this guy, circle the parts and sit down at a desk based computer and input them into the system. So now with technology the way it is, they download that worksheet that I used to print on paper. Some of the paper of Green Bar paper was that right back to that green bar paper was a lot of money. So when we would inventory a Ford truck, I mean, the print out was like that. It was amazing. So now you put them into a tablet and you basically select and input the parts as you put them in and you take a picture of it at point of inventory and that puts it into your system. So that's what these with these clients do is they get those parts in there. And then again, once they have that done and they price all the stuff and and the pictures and all the inventory, we take it from there with the tools provided to us to get them onto eBay so we can sell them there.

Michelle: Wow. So there's a lot of software involved in what you're doing. I guess that was a big learning curve when you were doing this or starting to do that?

Matt: I often like to tell the stories. Like I said, we had a dos based computer and eventually went to Windows Windows. And my dad had never used a computer that was windows. So when he had to use a mouse, he was using two fingers to push you around. You're going to have you're going to do something different. Yeah, he's got to figure it out. So he's still around. He still works in the industry, and he is the fastest one figure keyboard Typer I've ever met. He does it now just to be dangerous.

Michelle: Wow. Wow, that is awesome.

Matt: Yeah. Have you always wanted to own your own business? So had where did that come from? It seems like your dad kicked. Some of that comes from your dad, right? Yeah, he's I've always had a pretty good entrepreneurial spirit. My parents would joke I would sell candy on the corner of our street in the neighborhood. And, you know, the one day I came back with like sixty dollars and they said, What the heck do you get that? And I had a bunch of candy and I sold it to the neighbors, and I'm sure it was probably one point fifty dollars for a Snickers bar, but I just always wanted to do some type of business. Even going back to my Tandy computer when we grew up and Drums Pennsylvania and I remember making trying to make commercials on the computer and writing scripts and stuff like that. So I was just kind of had that entrepreneurial spirit to do something. And

then my dad had worked in a salvage yard in Hazelton, and I remember my first, my first job to get an allowance. He would bring home these part tags and they would put on the salvage parts to put them away. So you would identify him later. You could go find them on the shelf. And he had these really hard wires and they needed to be put on the tag and twisted. And then the guys would write what the part was and put them away on the shelf, one that took a lot of time for the guys to do so. He would bring home a box of them and I would poke the crap out of my fingers, but that's really hard wired to get some money in there. So that was like my first job in this industry doing that and it was for an allowance, but I just fell in love with it. That point, and I kind of always wanted to run my own business, and my dad did end up selling his business. So I never really got a chance to run that. Probably when I was about 17 years old. OK. So I point was pretty young. I didn't have a lot of input on on the family business at that point, just because I was so, so young and just out of school. So I didn't really get a chance there. But I had worked in the industry and I always wanted to run my own business and own a salvage yard, and I got pretty close to that with what I'm doing now. And it's funny how things work out because I absolutely love what I'm doing. I always wanted to run a salvage out. At this point. I really enjoy what I'm doing and I don't have that need that feel to run a salvage yard running this business that I've started because I kind of get to see and do it all without without excess that are involved with that. Because, you know, again, when you're dealing with salvage vehicles, you have to dispose of that oil. You have to dispose of the tires. You know, there's more tires, flat tires and every car. So that was always a struggle within our industry. And I just don't have to deal with that now. My business obviously comes of different types of struggles, but that's just something that that it's just not had to worry about.

Michelle: So you guys made an industry that wasn't tech savvy into something that's tech savvy, really, I guess, pivoted that whole thing into something that can be done online and with people are now ordering online, so they can they have their pick of all these salvage yards all across the country, basically that they could get their product from? Or do people usually just pick someplace close by?

Matt: Yeah, it's funny. My wife, my wife's friends for the longest time thought I was a mechanic and they didn't know what our industry was or what it does, or and they would call a car dealership or auto zone or Pep Boys for parts, and they just didn't know what we did existed. So let me back that up. I'm not a mechanic. You don't be fixing anything. I take a cars. No problem, but you don't only fix them. I can take them apart. I won't put them back together, right? Yeah. So I lost my train of thought.

Michelle: Well taking it from tech to yeah, from non-tech to tech. And then, I guess, selling you parts across the country. I guess it could happen, right? I mean.

Matt: It's funny how many salvage yards still aren't on the platform of that at all online. And one of the business saying is adapt or die. And you know, the cars are getting harder to get. If you're not taking full advantage, your inventory, you're just going through the motions, just put their motor transmission in and out all the other

parts and not the the four hundred dollars subwoofer that's in the trunk of some of these fancy cars and stuff like that. So yeah, utilizing this, the tech that we have and to put it online, it opens it up to the entire world. Yeah, we're not just doing stuff within this country. We'll sell stuff. And one of the nice programs that eBay has is the global shipping program. So, you know, there's certain types of parts that we can send to Erlanger Kentucky, which is a pretty large hub for my understanding within the country, that they'll then sort those out of the country for you. So I've never sold anything online. You have to ship around the country, but with forms and stuff like that, you send it to Kentucky and eBay sends out of the country for you. So that's pretty nice. Yeah. And if you don't take advantage of that, demand is just silly.

Michelle: Yeah, yeah. So you started your business and it was just you, right? I mean, were you doing this on the side while you were still working? Did you? How did that transpire for you?

Matt: Yeah, that's that's exactly what it was. I had started working at Salvage yards, doing their inventory and doing their eBay. I had talked to different people and they found out, Hey, I was doing eBay. This is early on, when not a lot of people were doing that. So they would say, Hey, can you? Can you train us? Can you tell us how to do this? Can you come work for us? And that was just me at that point. Know, and I worked at it at a place, and I would go and teach people and trade people and and talk to them. So this was sort of a side gig, a side hustle. And then that one person turned to another person and then I would trade someone at their facility. And then that person would leave flake out whatever, and they just they just let that go. Well, listen, can you just run this for us? We're already buying the cars, we're doing the inventory, we're taking the pictures, we're doing everything on our end. Can you just handle the eBay side of it, the online side of it? And I said, Yeah, sure, I can do that. You know, I have a job made sure the job was working as long as it doesn't conflict with what you're doing here in the day. So I would go home at night and I would do that for about two or three different salvage yards at night. I would go and clock going to work and clock into work and, you know, working 11 12 o'clock at night, checking their emails and. Listing there stuff to eBay and just kind of just parcel working throughout the whole day with that stuff, and I'd get up before work at 4:30 five o'clock in the morning and I would check all their messages to make sure before I left for my actual job that all their messages were answered. I get some stuff listed to their eBay and would go to my job and they come home and rinse, repeat. So I did that probably for a good year and a half, two years until, you know those two or three yards turned into 10. Wow.

Michelle: And then just word of mouth, or were you now now pushing that a little bit about working with...OK.

Matt: Yeah, a little bit of both. Definitely. You know, once the side hustle turned into me doing this full time. That's really where I start, pushed and pushed all in with trying to get more clients and reach out and hit the ground and hit conferences and stuff like that. So but yeah, it just started with me. I have four people working

for me now and I oversee everything. But yeah, it did in the beginning. Just start with me. And then, you know, that just gets a little overwhelming, especially when you know you're just by yourself. So at some point it becomes a scaling necessity.

Michelle: So, yeah, you need it or you're going to just burn out. You were. You were going from being working for somebody. And then side hustle is a second job. But then you're running a business that's a side hustle. So it's like three jobs. Now you have this year, like running. Running a business is the job in itself, not counting the time that you spend doing the job?

Matt: Yeah, yeah, for sure. I remember my wife, Jen, and she was like, You know, I was like, Oh, I talked to another person. She's like, You know, can you handle that? Yeah, yeah, I'm going to have to. I mean, if I want this dream to come to fruition, you know, that's it. I like, I got I got to go for it. I can't, I guess, be wishy washy. You know, I've got I got to put my foot on the gas and go.

Michelle: Just go.

Shawn: Yeah, do you do all of your employees? They work remotely? Do you guys work together? How do you... I mean, you're you're an online business with online and, you know, people working from home. So how do you manage all of that? Are you able to? You have good processes in place for how to manage your, your employees and all that stuff?

Matt: Yeah, I'm very lucky with the crew that I have. I mean, they're fantastic. They're all within this industry to some degree. You know, one of them worked at another salvage yard and a couple of them didn't come from the salvage yard, but one of them knew a little bit about it. So those are they all work remotely. They all live in different states, and that's that's a challenge. My business was always nervous and worried about, you know, I don't know what they're doing right now. I'm assuming they're working, you know, and they are, you know, but again, I'm so lucky that I that I have a good crew that I trust, you know, I give them breaks. They tell me when they're leaving. If they have to shoot out to the bank being at home, no problem. No, they'll stay on later. They always go above and beyond, you know, especially if they do have to shoot out real quick or something like that. Yeah, absolutely. Being online, you know, we might not have to answer something that second. So if they say, Hey, can I shoot out for half an hour, I'll just clock out a half an hour later or something, I guess. And I'm pretty easy going. Absolutely. And at the end of the day, if everything's done and everything's done properly, you know, I'm really just happy. Well-oiled machine clients are happy, I'm happy, they're happy, you know, just works out that way. There's always bumps in the road. Yeah. I'm just glad that that I have that particular crew. Just they're really good, real trustworthy because it's scary when you go, Oh yeah, you're going to work from home. I just met one of them. I haven't even met one of the other guys. You know, I've been talking them for years now....

Michelle: And you haven't actually actually physically met.

Matt: And yeah, I mean, we've zoomed and you know, we talk on the phone almost

every single day. I just never actually met him and I was going to meet him down in Texas when we went to the conference, but he couldn't make it. So I met the other guy down there. So, yeah, so.

Michelle: That's pretty wild. So when you started hiring people, how did that feel for you? Like, was that a really scary time or like, how did you feel about that?

Matt: Yeah, it was. It was. It was really scary not knowing who you're going to get, but also elation that I'm going to get some help hopefully, Yeah, you know, there's just no way we're not. Yeah, I'm not going to be spread so thin. You will be able to be that much more responsive to a client, whereas in the past, hey, let me check on that. I'll get back to you soon as I can, you know which we would. But still, it's nice to just be there kind of at their beckon. So yes, it's kind of scary thought of payroll and all that stuff. But you know, the if you get the right people on the bus, it's going to move. So you know and hiring somebody and having that extra cost, you'd like to see a return on investment on a good employee where they're getting extra sales on the phone or hear from a client who says, Hey, you know this, this person's been fantastic because I oversee things that obviously I talk to them, but I don't talk to everyone on the daily. So some of the employees are more feet on the ground talking to the clients or the feet on the ground at the salvage yard there because there's a manager there, but they oversee that stuff. So I'm not exactly involved with every day to day stuff, even though check everything on Skype. Mm-Hmm. Which is how we communicate with each other which I'll touch on. So yeah, in hiring those with people's little scary but against release that I'm going to have some help and good help.

Shawn: How many yards do you do service now?

Matt: We're up to forty five salvage yards, and we have the we have one potential in Canada. I met at the URG conference in Texas so we can help people in Canada. I talked to some salvage yards in other countries, but the tools that we use, they don't have them over there. They might in the future, so it's really cool for me to have the vision of having my own business. I would say go international, but it's very cool to me to be able to help somebody say in Canada to do this.

Michelle: Yeah, that is so awesome. Yeah, it's great. Yeah. So when when you were starting out on your own, you had to make some really tough decisions as far as like who to put on your team, not just within your payroll, but like who to hire accountants, lawyers, you know, payroll services. Any words of advice to anybody who was starting out looking at that in their future? Is there anything that you would say you learned from that whole process that like the growth of the business?

Matt: Yeah, absolutely. Find and hire people smarter than you,

Michelle: At least in that particular arena.

Matt: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, if you can, if you can afford to. But yeah, you know, just pick who you're getting advice from. You know, you guys have been a fantastic help in this. So you know somebody who knows what they're doing and listen and talk to

everybody. Don't be afraid to ask questions. You know, they always say any questions are a dumb question. I mean, seriously, I has dumb questions all the time, and it's the only way I'm going to learn. So the only way you're going to learn, you know, if I'm talking to somebody else is just starting out, you know, just just find the right people and ask any question you can. And just be on top of your stuff.

Michelle: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I do. Yeah.

Matt: So what are your you talk a little bit about, you know, going international? Do you have any other, you know, future goals or future aspirations for how you want to run, run the business or where? Yeah, yeah. I'm seeing I'm seeing like envisioning, you know, hiring some more employees to do some more. I guess I want to call it tedious tasks. Mm-Hmm. But you know, little, little jobs like dragging pictures and custom editing titles for an eBay listing or an online listing is very important. The tools we provided, they give us an OK title for a part. But with eBay and eBay's ever changing, you know they're wanting us to customize more of that stuff. So really foresee in the future maybe having a small team of people to kind of just do those tedious small tasks, which I think would returned a good amount of sales for them.

Michelle: Yeah. Wow, that's good. So you're constantly changing what you're doing because of the the whim of like eBay. How are you? Stay on top of that. Just just body like there are announcements like how does that not work?

Matt: Yeah, just recently, probably the last six months, eBay motors particular because we're doing car parts. They had about two or three people in motors department. They're based out of Utah, and I had contacts over there, so I would talk to those guys. But they were just two people dealing with the entire country, and this was just in eBay motors. So eBay has different departments. Just in the past six months, eBay Motors has dumped, I think, they said, almost two hundred and thirty million dollars into eBay motors and advertising for eBay motors. So if you notice we listen to the radio, you'll hear an eBay Motors commercial, you've never heard of it. So in doing this, they hired branch managers throughout the country. So I was assigned, luckily, you know, because we helped so many different people throughout the country. Those two guys, they split up some of the people within the country, and they gave us a direct eBay i don't know what the word is, consultant?

Michelle: Representative or something like that?

Matt: Yeah, he works for eBay, so that's something I didn't have before. Obviously, I could reach out to the contacts. I didn't want to bother them with every little thing. But now I have this, this rep and he goes, bother me with every little thing. So you know how to get that channel inside there, which is wonderful for our clients. Because if there's something new or something changing coming, you know, we're kind of out front of it. So item specifics is a new thing. Many different specifics for car parts know. So we know we have to change that stuff. So it's nice

having that contact over there at eBay to know if things change because things are always changing. I've been on eBay since nineteen ninety nine. Wow. So almost at its inception. Wow, I think it started in 98 or something like that. So, you know, it's it's so different from then what it is now and it's always changing.

Michelle: Yeah. And you just have to continuously adapt as well. And well, your industry is changing also. So you have to kind of handle both sides of the change,

Matt: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

Shawn: I was going to say, it's super important to have those contacts within the organization to be able to get the heads up on or to provide feedback to them to help, you know, better, you know, better run your business and also help your clients.

Matt: Absolutely a 100 percent. We just had an issue with a billing issue. And you know, my clients very upset, and I don't blame my clients upset with me and I'm like, Oh, well, you know, of course they are. You know, I'm their liaison to eBay, even though that wasn't my fault or anything. So I got on the horn and we got that straightened out right away. You know, the clients and I are cool now, you know, now they're not as mad, so.

Michelle: Hopefully they'll be happy again.

Matt: Yeah, exactly. We don't want mad clients, you know? Yeah.

Shawn: Do have a lot of competition in your industry for what you know with what you are doing?

Matt: No, that's as far as I know. There's a couple other guys doing it. So, you know, when I first started doing this, there was just one other guy that I that I didn't know of, which is kind of unique for what we're doing here. Of course here I'm thinking I'm the greatest the world. No one's done this. And then, you know, you start to hear about other people. As far as I know, it's just one other guy on the scale of our level. Got it. You know, there are some smaller people that might help. Like I was doing in the beginning, yeah. And I talked to some of them like, Oh, how the heck do you do that for so many different people? I can. I can barely manage two.

Michelle: I think this that comes down to like the process, right? So like your process that you created and how you handle it? Did you have to create that yourself? Were you creating that as you went along? Like, how did that? Yeah.

Matt: Yeah, exactly. Just it again, our processes of how we run an account for the most part, it might not be run that way. So obviously, we butt heads with people and how they may have run it, or it's easier when they've never done it. But so far, what plans we put in place and all that stuff works for the clients across the board. We custom tailor them, you know, eventually to them. But the processes I put in at the core with account settings and how we manage clients and how we manage

the buyers on eBay and stuff like that, that core is there. And I didn't maybe necessarily on purpose, put the plan together just how I think it should be run.

Michelle: And you were laying the groundwork even though you didn't realize it.

Matt: Yeah, yeah. And you know, and it just works. And again, that's that changes daily that, you know, adapt with that. But at the base of it, you know, it's about giving our clients the best support and care that we can give them and then also taking care of the buyers, you know, because we're the face of that company online. You know, even though they're buying off eBay and that's a large company, you know, they're buying off the local mom pop shop on eBay and you know where their customer service rep. So we want to make sure that they're taking care of, too. Yeah.

Michelle: Wow.

Shawn: So it's really an interesting industry, what you're doing. And it's there's a lot of there's a lot of ways it could go wrong, but you're doing you're doing excellent job for your for your clients.

Matt: It can be a lot to juggle. You know, it's it's really all I've ever done. Not too good at too many things. But you know, again, doing this pretty much my entire life just seems to work.

Michelle: So you're taking on new clients when they're there, ready to come on board with you and you're just going to continue to grow your team then to help satisfy that?

Matt: Yeah, yeah. At some point, you know, you kind of think, like, do I want to be picky, choosy, you know, because you'll your phone blows up and you go to conferences and you know, like, at what point do you scale it where it's like, All right, well, if I get on 10 more clients, I'm going to need two or three more employees. Yeah, you're deciding what? Yeah. You know, like is it worth it? So we do, you know, we do have a little bit of mindset questionnaire where I'd say, Well, how many cards are you buying, what type of cards you're buying? You want to vet the client to see and maybe give them a good idea of what you know, what they might be looking at sales and it might not be a fit. Ya know because you have to pay us for our service. So you're only doing X amount of cars, you're only buying this much, you know, you're kind of just buying 90 lasabers or something like that. You know, it might not be a good fit, so you can't make money on an ideal saver, but you know, it's just just getting the client just to see.

Michelle: So you've kind of identified your ideal client so that you would be able to say, OK, this is kind of the the client that we need that would fit into that would warrant our services and be able to be a good fit for your company as well.

Matt: Yeah, yeah, exactly. And I mean, if it's if it's a smaller client that maybe it wouldn't make sense for it. I'm absolutely here if you have any phone call or something like that to help out, you know, just maybe guide them or tell them some advice, stuff like that. So or if it is a larger client, will well, maybe point more guns in their

direction just to just, you know, they might just need more attention just because it might be a larger one. So yeah, it's it's kind of a case by case basis.

Michelle: Yeah, yeah, of course. Wow.

Shawn: Yeah. And that's part of the growth of the evolution of your of your business. You want to you want to, you know, first you want to take whoever is going to come on board to fill your time and to pay you. But then after a while, you grow a team and now your time is only so, so much that you need to focus. You know, accountants go through that, you know, a lot of different service based industries do that. Just identifying who you want to sell to and who you want to take on. It's, you know, it's important to to kind of evolve that.

Matt: Yeah, yeah, that's that's for sure. I mean, even now clients where you know, everyone I've ever had I've kept and, you know, maybe if they were just starting a cigar, it's a smaller account. But you know, they they do OK, numbers are happy with their service. And I think I heard somewhere sometimes you got to dance with the one that brought you yeah, that's true.

Michelle: That's true. That is accurate. Well, yeah, I mean, I think it's great to hear about your journey and how you have evolved the business into it. It's amazing to me that it's an industry that really I mean, the salvage industry, like you said, has always been there. But this is like a brand new twist on it and you're basically like trailblazing the way. So that's pretty wild.

Matt: Yeah, it's it's it's crazy to see how it's changed so much from going from a notebook inventory. Write it really. What the old guys used to do is they would just know what was out back.

Michelle: Oh yeah, they knew it was all in their head.

Matt: Yeah, they'd say oh yeah I got something out there. But you know, if you're going to really have a successful salvage yard business, I mean, you got to be computerized. And that was that was a big thing for the guys in the 70s spending money. You know, I want to put twenty three thousand dollars into a computer system, but the imagery on there wasn't a thing, you know, you can't imagine doing business like that. So it's crazy to see even even that wasn't that long ago to think about this stuff. So, you know, seeing where the salvage industry is going, it's pretty wild. The electric cars are all the rage right now. Yeah. So, you know, my dad always joked, he said, Well, one day if they sell flying cars, we'll sell a flying car parts.

Michelle: That's right. They're still parts.

Matt: Now it's like electric stuff, you know, they're going to sell. So now those have batteries and the game's always changing and you just got to change and adapt, was it?

Michelle: Yeah. So pivoting and adjusting being flexible is a pretty big takeaway for what

you're doing, isn't it?

Matt: Absolutely. Yeah. So someone told me early on to go to the conferences, and I know you guys do that stuff as well. And I'm such a nerd with this stuff like my wife and I'm like, You want to go, it's in Disney. And she's like, I'd rather watch paint dry. I looked so excited to go and just sit there and listen on a Saturday. You know, it's Disney and instead of a hotel, a geek and outlets and all these people talk.

Michelle: But you learn so much.

Matt: Yeah, someone told me to go to these things early on. You know what? They didn't have money are maxing out credit cards to go, because if you can drive to save a plane ticket drive, you know, if you don't have money to stay in hotel, sleep in your car, in the parking lot in next, get yourself into those conferences. That's where the people who are going to grow are going. And he would say, go there and listen to those people and learn and just be a sponge and again surround yourself with smarter people. You know, everyone in that room is smarter than I am, so I want to go, listen and learn from.

Michelle: Yeah, that's awesome advice, I'm jotting them down so that we can use, you know, and snippets because I think that's really important information that small business owners tend to forget. And we say this often, you know, you feel like you're by yourself, but usually there's other people in the industry really need to become friendly with them and learn from other small business owners. And that's what we're hoping to bring to this as well.

Matt: Absolutely. Yeah. You know, it's it's funny. You can't you can't sometimes just call someone that's going to give you that information. You don't go to one of these, you know, one of these conferences and you sit down in these rooms and people are just giving out the information.

Michelle: Yeah, they're just not forthcoming.

Matt: Yeah, I had a guy. I had a trading day of the season editor of a magazine in the UK, and he said he came over here and he went to one of the conferences and he goes, Oh, let's see what this is about. And he goes to one of the classes and he goes, That guy just told all the secrets, all the secrets. What a moron.

Michelle: And he goes, It's not a secret anymore.

Matt: That guy just gave up all his secret. So and it goes, you know, it's it's just further furthering the industry. But you probably can call them on the phone and tell you that stuff. But if you go to these shows and conferences, learn, you know, people are more than willing to share in the role in the same competition. Everyone wants to sell their part over somebody else's. But that's the one thing I love about this industry is you can go to these conferences and they'll give you they'll give great information that you'll always take something from those to apply to your business. Yeah, yeah.

Shawn: You're not the first business owner that we've talked to, that that has that has done that kind of thing, go to conferences and learned a lot from other people in the industry. I mean, you know, we keep talking to small business owners, there's always better, there's always people that they're learning from. Even if they've been in business 30, 40 years, they're still seeking out the advice and counsel because, you know, you don't want to be by yourself. You don't want to feel like you're you can't you can't reach out and get some help. Yeah. So, yeah, one thing when I deal with my my team is this is I'll tell them, Well, this is how I think this should be done. What do you think?

Michelle: You know? Oh, yeah, getting the feedback.

Matt: Yeah. Like, do you guys think of a better way to go about this or something like that? So there will never be an instance where I'm like, Well, this is just how it's done. This is my way. You know, I'll absolutely ask everyone for their opinion on something to see, you know, maybe elsewhere. You know, that looks pretty good, but always want to get their input on something. And I think that's important, too for a business owner to listen to their crew.

Michelle: Yeah, I hear you. Yeah, that is really important as well.

Shawn: Yeah, especially if they're on the front lines like they are with with clients and you're managing those relationships. I mean, they know they know what your clients are telling them. They're, you know, so you got to provide that feedback or seek that feedback out.

Michelle: One of the things that we do as a firm, we do some growth planning, which is strategic planning, and it is absolutely imperative that you talk with your people, especially if you're looking at ways to grow or change or have different goals in mind. Your people are going to help direct you on what needs to be fixed because most of the time they know and they know what the like you said, the customers are saying, they know what the process is doing or the hiccups. They are the ones that are in that day to day. Now some of us are in some of the day to day as well and and kind of have a sense, but it's different when it's it's not your baby, you know, when it's coming from somebody else, the perspective is different.

Shawn: So, yeah, yeah. And I'd probably just like everyone else I had issues with, you know, relinquishing some duties in certain ways. I did things how I listed things to eBay and stuff like that. Still got to be open to suggestions and learning.

Michelle: Yeah. Again, the flexibility right? Well, we thank you for joining us today on our podcast and we have learned so much from you and about this industry that, you know, is out there that people just may not have thought about. And now, you know, we thank you for joining us.

Matt: Absolutely. Thank you guys. So much for having me it was fun.

Shawn: Yeah. Thanks, Matt. All right.

Matt: See you guys.

Michelle: If you find this podcast helpful and like, subscribe and follow us on social media.