

Annaka:

Hey and welcome everyone to Startup Savants, a podcast dedicated to helping aspiring entrepreneurs and startup enthusiasts by bringing you news, insights, and stories about the startups and founders that are making waves right now. I'm your host, Annaka.

Ethan:

And I'm your host, Ethan.

Annaka:

Our guest today is Jamie McCroskery of Bluebird Climate. Jamie is a former project manager at Dropbox and Glossier. And in his spare time, an alpine climber and expedition leader for this Sierra Mountain Club. During his tenure at Dropbox and Glossier, McCroskery introduced technological innovation while leveraging the power of analytics to grow conversions and strengthen customer loyalty to each brand. If you could, tell us a little bit about the history behind Bluebird Climate, its mission, and how you got started.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, sure. I mean, it starts with kind of a personal story. So I, as you had mentioned, it started in hard technology over software companies. It's trying true big tech, just solving functional problems for people connecting us via the internet. But as you can probably empathize with, tech companies are really good at functional problems, but consumers make up their minds for all sorts of reasons. They're often emotional and brands really understand that. That's why I went to Glossier to help lead their technology department and do a bunch of experiments on different types of community projects they can build. And that's where I saw the sustainability problem first hand. Their employees are all millennials who care about sustainability, customers really care about it, investors care about it. But no one really knew how to potentially introduce sustainable products in a way that wasn't going to blow up the business and also communicate that to customers.

And so personally for me, I saw that happen. And, as you mentioned, I do teach rock climbing classes and ice climbing and backcountry skiing and mountaineering in my free time and would see glaciers receding and a bunch of people constantly talking about climate change and seeing it firsthand. And it seemed like an opportunity to kind of actually help make a difference. Because beauty, personal care, fast moving consumer goods, apparel, and food and beverage are three of the top 10 carboning supply chains. Yeah, there isn't a ton of tooling to help them, product developers and marketers essentially have to hire consultants. If you're lucky enough to get buy-in from the CEO, it takes months and months.

But we essentially saw an opportunity to help use software to make it easier to produce low carbon products and then market that to their customers, which is what we do at Bluebird. Essentially make it so that you can in-house sustainability knowledge without having to hire if you're a brand. So you can make better decisions during product development. For example, the age old glass versus plastics debate has an answer. And then even if you do that great

work, we help you transparently and authentically communicate that work to your customers. So that they're brought along with the journey for all decisions you made.

Ethan:

So tell us, is it glass or is it plastic?

Jamie McCroskery:

The answer is it depends on your supply chain. I mean that's why it's like, the answer always changes. So for some of our customers, they're producing products in the United States and sourcing packaging in the United States and all their customers are in the United States. So in that case, glass, which is way heavier and has a lot of breakage issues, which is not great for customers or sustainability, the carbon footprint's actually pretty good. But if you're getting stuff from China, which is the majority of customers, that's a long distance, especially for small companies who are often at air freight, cause they could be better at planning. Then if you're air freighting glass from China, the carbon footprint's going to be massive. The reason for that is weight is a huge part of it. And it really depends on your supply chain, how you're transporting this stuff.

Ethan:

Good answer. All right. So Bluebird Climate, what is this product? Do you provide actionable tools to make your clients more sustainable or is it a process of managing and optimizing their sustainability?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. And to zoom out, I mean, if you're producing products, most of your sustainability impact comes from the products that you produce. It's like, yes, your employees could be driving to work and then using electricity in the office, but 95% of carbon emissions come from the products and their supply chains. And that stuff is really hard to get a grasp on. So what we do is essentially if you upload products to Bluebird, we do a lot of complex, essentially machine learning intuition about your products and supply chains. So that you can essentially make apples to apples comparisons across different products, concepts. So imagine you have five different pairs of jeans, different cuts, different fabric, weights, materials, vendor locations, you can effectively see carbon emission estimations before you get into production, which is super helpful for both the designer and then also the marketer who wants to know what kind of stories they can tell around sustainability from the beginning and design it into the ethos of the product.

And so the idea is like, okay, you have this economy pretty easy to use sustainability decision making software for your products. And then once you have all that data, cause you have it in there, then you can press a single button to then communicate that to Instagram and emails and onsite to your customers. The idea of being, oh yeah, if your customer goes to your website, looks at your product that wants to understand, hey, does this company actually care about sustainability? You can transparently say oh wow, this product actually travels 50% fewer miles than the average product of this type. And this leads to this kind of carbon emissions savings.

And then we have all the data to back it up. So it's a software tool for product developers and marketers in these companies.

Ethan:

So you really just have a ton of data. And in the background you're synthesizing that data to give actionable information to the brands before they make the product.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. And the idea is sustainability and supply chains are super complicated. And the reason why we're able to make it really easy is so we essentially are taking a very designed forward way of developing products. So our head of design used to be a designer at Kickstarter. So making software that brands actually want to use, not something really, really complicated and archaic. And we also work with a bunch of people from Patagonia and Levis to take a lot of institutional knowledge about how to essentially assess carbon emissions and circularity. We bake all that knowledge into these computer algorithms that then abstract all the complexity for people in the brands and say, oh, you actually only need these five pieces of data from your vendors. And then we can do all the rest for you. So yeah, behind the scenes there is a lot of data because that's what sustainability is, it's carbon emissions and waste calculations. I know you wrap that into something that's really useful for the brand so they can communicate to their customers and make better decisions.

Ethan:

Got you. So you mentioned a word and I want to go into the next question here. You recently wrote an article, "Why Carbon and Circularity Are the Two Most Important Elements of Building a Sustainable Beauty Product." I think I know and I think most people know what carbon is, but what is circularity? That's a new concept to me. Can you tell us what circularity is and expand on its importance when building a great product?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. Well, first of all, I'm amazed to see you're really doing your research and reading this stuff I'm putting out there. Yeah, that was written for a bunch of... we talked to beauty company founders and sustainability teams all the time. And so they always ask us, oh, how do we think about sustainability? Is it biodiversity loss? Is it microplastics? Is it all the stuff in the landfill and in the oceans from a plastic perspective? Is it carbon emissions? And so the point that I was trying to make in that article was essentially boiling down a lot of complexity, just to two things that you should care about, which ultimately go back to the two most important kinds of sources of environmental impact for the industry. One is carbon emissions, as you know, which is global warming, climate change.

And number two is circularity, I'm thinking about changing this already cause people are confused. It's just waste and the way think about plastic waste ends up in landfills or oceans, one in three articles in landfills in the United States is essentially beauty and personal care products and packaging. And so the idea is if you can design for less material using either recycled components or recycled plus resins and also design for circularity, meaning it doesn't

end up in a landfill. So it's either biodegradable or refillable or reusable or even just recyclable then you're essentially diverting waste that would otherwise end up in somewhere that you don't like, some landscape that you love and actually goes back into the production stream. And it uses up way less resources as well in the planet, which is always a good thing.

Ethan:

That is a good thing.

Annaka:

Yeah, absolutely. I know, unrelated completely, but doing research into bioplastics and the different materials that are even available today is wild. If you haven't looked at it, just go look and see all of the crazy stuff. You can get clamshell packaging that's made out of algae, and it looks and feels and behaves just like plastic. And it's like, this is we've come really far. So the value I think that sustainability and focusing on sustainability brings to brands is huge. And now we talked about working with brands as their ideating products and things like that. Is there any kind of structure for businesses that maybe already have products on the market? And they're like, hold on, we want to go back and rethink this. And how do we kind of get that sought after sustainability badge, if we're an old brand that's already got stuff in the works?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, totally. And a quick point on the plastics piece, I'd be remiss cause we talk to...there's innovation happening all over the supply chain and materials, packaging formats, transportation even, it's fascinating. And so we talk to those kinds of vendors all the time who are making low carbon adhesives or low carbon plastics. One of my favorites is [Sway](#), they essentially are making a kelp drive plastic bag that a lot of companies are starting to think about using in retail shops. Like, oh, you have an amazing story about this regenerative technology that's now this bag that customers can feel and use. It's a great story for the brands and retailers as well.

But what's really great about it is they actually are going through the entire bit, the end to end own the entire supply chain so they can know which kelp farmers they're working with can do all the quantitative analysis to like, yeah, this actually is carbon negative. So a lot of stuff like that's coming out. And I think I just like them personally also, and our brands do as well. I think to your point, yes. If you are a brand that's producing products already, we're essentially trying to meet you where you're at. We're not trying to make every single product this paper bag granola version of it.

It's essentially Maslow's hierarchy of, well, how much do you want to invest in sustainability? You're just getting started and trying to figure out what to do for your existing brand or are you trying to create this insurgent, really innovative brand that's going to destruct the space, we build a software that works for both. So the idea is if you already have products, you can upload it to Bluebird, and you essentially get a burn down with something like, hey, here are the things you're doing really well that you can celebrate today. A lot of stuff might be hidden. It's like, for example, if you're not air freighting and you're actually co-locating your manufacturers and

vendors and distribution centers, I'm like, you're saving a ton of transportation emissions. That's a real story you should be able to celebrate.

And from there, get you a lot of the same tools to say, hey, here's how you can embark if you want to, that's not going to completely destroy your P&L and margin. And then we similarly have the same kind of communication tools. So it's a lot of this kind of carrot creating with like, oh yeah, here's the sustainability story you can tell about, that brings customers along. And then we highlight things you're already doing well, if it exists and then give you the tools to find out things that you can improve without just blowing up your entire supply chain.

Annaka:

Yeah. So little small wins, like, hey, switch this out, switch that out and rather than overhauling the whole thing. No reinventing the wheel.

Jamie McCroskery:

Totally. I mean, that's like a big misconception. It's like hey, well, I know I have to use recycled plastic, it's super expensive because companies like Unilever, whoever are just buying up all the recycled plastic in the world. So it's expensive for small brands, but there are other things you can do here that are not just spending tons and tons of money on different types of plastic. For example, a lot of it's hidden in the supply chain. There are pretty easy wins that don't disrupt your business.

Ethan:

Are those easy wins something that you advise on to companies that you work with?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I mean, so right now we don't... I think that the vision here is right now, we're essentially providing information. Okay, here's the types of things you should be doing because the brands kind of already have vendor networks or existing relationships. They can just ask their vendors to help make the changes. But I think over time, what we're trying to do here is essentially say, well, if we know what products these brands are producing, and it's really hard to make these changes, if we know who all the vendors are and how to organize transportation and do everything in a low carbon way, it should be as simple as pressing a button to say, oh, I want this low carbon bag for my supply chain. And so we automate a lot of that, that's where we're going to go in a little bit, that's the vision. But for right now, we're essentially just advising cause we know these companies just need help.

Ethan:

Right, that's cool. That's cool that you've got that knowledge and that you're willing to share it. Let's talk a little bit about marketing or rather just storytelling as brand. Why do you think that sustainability or telling a business's sustainable story is an effective tool for businesses to drive conversions?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I mean that if you asked me a couple years ago, I would be essentially giving an answer being like, I hope the world exists in which customers care. So if you think about the state of the world we're in, every summer you're seeing climate... essentially climate change is all over the place, right? It's like, Australia was burning horribly a couple years ago, you can't go outside the West Coast for two months straight, it's pretty crazy. And so what that does is actually changes the customer... Sustainability then is in the forefront of customer's minds, which means that they're talking about it, which means that retailers and brands are paying attention.

And so there's been a lot of research over the past few years to say, oh, customers say that they care about sustainability, but their dollars don't actually follow. There actually is a bunch of research and it depends on the product category and how much performance is really important or identity is really important to either the customer or the product. But NYU came up with a study, it says sustainably marketed goods are growing 7.1 times faster and command this massive price premium compared to conventionally marketed goods.

Ethan:

Wow, that's huge.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, it's amazing. So that's the academics are saying that stuff. And for us, we essentially see these table stakes rising both for retailers who are demanding this kind of stuff and giving preferential treatments. For example, Target has a pretty interesting merchandising program that rewards sustainably marketed goods backed with real data. And so we see a few of our brands getting preferential treatment using some of the stats we come up with. But for us, it's I think at bare minimum, there's a brand value in which customers want to support brands who hold similar values.

And you can demonstrate that to them, even after they make a decision post purchase, there's a lot of interaction we see that demonstrates, okay, yeah, this actually is going to increase the repeat buying and the relationship they have with brands. I think over time, we're getting more and more sophisticated to see harder and harder data around like, oh yeah, for the late adopters who don't care about sustainability, does it actually move the needle? We'll see, but I think the tide is definitely rising here for sure. And it's every single brand we talk to essentially say, yeah, we need to say something about sustainability. And to help us figure out what we can authentic do because customers are asking for it.

Annaka:

Yeah. And it seems like if a product that you're looking for meets A, B, and C and the second product is A, B, and C, but product two also has D which is sustainability, that's going to start steering that direction as it becomes more and more prominent in the world. So that would at least sell for me. I'd be like, yes, give that carbon negative, thank you.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. We like negative carbon emissions and that's the thing. There is some bit of a misconception period cause... not misconception, but customer preferences are changing so fast. So if you're a gen Z, if you're marketing gen Z is like they care period. It's not like, oh, which portion really cares, they all care. In higher age groups, there are later adopters who would care about it less. But if you just look at demographics, it's all kind of moving in that direction, it's just a matter of time. That's why all these large companies are making these commitments about being carbon neutral or negative by 2030 because they know they have to essentially figure it out. Whether or not they actually do know how to figure it out, a different story, but at least they know. That's important to the brand.

Annaka:

That they're going to have to, right. And so Bluebird Climate is a public benefit corporation. It's a difficult process to go through compared to other structures like a C Corp or an LLC. For anyone who might not be familiar, what is a public benefit corporation and why was it important for you to structure the company this way?

Jamie McCroskery:

I'm so glad you asked that. So what a public benefit corporation is, it's essentially a legal framework developed by B labs so B Corp. And the point of it is to essentially put in your legal charter guardrails so that you are essentially mandated to go after not just profit but also some sort of impact that you define. And that was really, really important for us upfront because we are a mission oriented business, we're in the business to decarbonize the consumer products to industry. And so we know if we bring on investors and other stakeholders, we essentially want those guardrails to be in place so that it is very clear that we have to. We can't lose that impact amongst the profit or whatever.

And that's essentially a discussion that me and my co-founders had from day one. It's like, this business isn't worth it if we're not going to be there for the impact, otherwise we could just go sell widgets or whatever, we don't care about. And so the major difference between LLCs and just to be clear, a public benefit corporation is actually a type of C Corp.

And it actually isn't that much more rigorous. It's just like, we essentially just have to report on impact on a yearly basis, which can be difficult to do. But it's baked into our products because that's the whole point is measuring impact. But it's really, really helpful to also signal to investors and customers that you mean, you essentially had some... you're not greenwashing, you're essentially putting some real stake in the ground that you care about this stuff. So I would definitely encourage it. It's not difficult to do at all. It's a pretty new thing actually. And it's going to make it way easier for us to become B Corp as well, which we're I think paying certification as well.

Annaka:

Yeah. It just sounds to me like, hey, this mission is so important to us. We're folding this into our business structure and it's there to hold us accountable.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, exactly. It's accountability, which we like. We like accountability.

Annaka:

Yes, we do.

Jamie McCroskery:

Go ahead, Ethan.

Ethan:

No, go ahead.

Jamie McCroskery:

I mean, I was going to be like-

Ethan:

Your answers to that.

Jamie McCroskery:

... LLCs. I mean, I'm just talking... guys. But yeah, the LLCs, I don't know. You guys probably have better guidance on LLCs versus C Corps and all that stuff. We actually started as an LLC and then eventually switched over to C Corp and we were bringing on outside investors because we need that kind of governance structure. But yeah, it's funny, it's like I liked the days where it was just me and my LLC, go and do whatever I want to. And that business structure can go a long ways. But I think once you bring in outside capital there's... it just gets a little nuance, depends on who your investors are. But I think the C corporation was helpful cause you have regular board meetings and all that stuff. So that we have to make documented notes for, and then also can bake in this mission based impact reporting as well that holds us accountable. So it just made a lot of sense to go with the C Corp or public benefit corporation route.

Annaka:

Yeah. Well, and I don't think that there are many people that are familiar with that structure and that it even exists. So, if you want a public benefit corporation, go get one. I didn't know.

Jamie McCroskery:

It's not a non-profit, nonprofit.

Annaka:

Yeah. It's like a non-profit but with profit, that was a horrible joke.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, kind of like that.

Annaka:
We'll edit that out.

Jamie McCroskery:
Yeah, you're not wrong.

Ethan:
Right. So what we're talking about... Try that again. We're talking about certifications — let's talk about the Bluebird certification. What is the Bluebird certification and how did you take a concept from nothing and turn it into something that an entire industry cares about?

Jamie McCroskery:
Well, I will say off the bat, that that is a work in progress. It's like anything in software startups, you essentially put something out and then you get secure reception, then you iterate how valuable just the market is actually doing what you think you want to do. And just taking a step back on certification, so I think there's something like 250 ecogreen sustainability certifications that are just massively consuming or are massively confusing to the consumer. It's like how do you know what each one of these things are saying? Okay, organic, what does that mean? Versus carbon neutral versus plastic negative versus EWG skin deep state for my skin. And so if you look at Amazon's website, they essentially are taking a lot of those certifications and then putting them upfront for the customer to kind of filter through.

I think what's interesting about them is they're all proxies for environmental damage. The whole point of sustainability is to say oh, environmental impact and also health and social issues as well. And so what we are trying to do here is essentially say, yes, all those things are very important. A lot of them have very specific purposes that are very beneficial, but a lot it's super confusing. And so what we're going to do is actually in our data models, put a lot of those things in and do quantification of what it means at the end impact for the environment. And then just show that end impact, that's what everyone cares about anyway. And so when we talk about the Bluebird certification, what we're actually doing here is helping brands demonstrate their customers a few things. One is that they are actually systematically measuring and reducing environmental damage, which is not common.

Even if you're a big corporation, you have a sustainability team, it's really difficult to do. And we're making that available for all these small, medium-size businesses to do it without hiring people. And then beyond that, being on a product level can essentially show the customer, it's like, hey, this product has less carbon emissions than other similar products for these reasons that are hidden. So for example, like the example we went to before, it's like, how maybe you changed how you're shipping or where your vendor's located. That is an opportunity to show customers that you're doing the hard work that's otherwise hidden. And so the whole point of this "certification" for Bluebird certified is not actually a single certification. They're essentially different stories you can tell to customers that are based in data that demonstrate that you care and are reducing your environmental damage and even making positive benefits in some cases

like using packaging like Sway. So yeah, it's not this... I think we're wary of the certification game because there's so many out there.

And so confusing to everybody. God, I mean, I don't even want to check in two years to see how many they're going to be. And so our whole point here is to essentially... the whole function of that for customers is to understand how a single product is. And we're just going to tell them — in an abstract way, all that complexity is what we're trying to do at least.

Annaka:

Yeah. And you don't have to hunt down the definition of all of this stuff in one, make it a little bit easier.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I mean, we'll see how the market receives it and brands receive it because ultimately this stuff comes down to brand value. It's through heuristics and decision making. It's like if a company sees a B Corp logo, that means a lot to customers. It's like, oh, okay, this brand probably cares about the same things I care about and is doing the right thing. Organic, oh, this is probably healthi"er" depending on whatever it is. Yeah, and so for us, I think our challenge right now, part of it is actually just solving that problem if we're talking about for branding and customers being able to effectively communicate in a trustworthy way. But at the same time, we also know we need to build a brand around those things so that people trust it and recognize it and everything, which is always going to be a challenge for startups, is getting that mind sharing credibility in whatever space you're in.

Ethan:

Right, absolutely. Now you said something interesting in there with Amazon. So I talk a lot about two-sided markets where you're marketing one to the consumer and to the brands that are facing the consumer. But in this case, you're kind of working with a three-sided market. You're not only marketing to the consumers that are looking at your certification and the manufacturers that want to have your certification on their product. But you're also marketing to Amazon and these other marketplaces and platforms. I mean, is that when you can tell that it means something, or is it pretty easy to get onto the Amazon marketplace and say, hey, this is a certification that your users care about.

Jamie McCroskery:

Oh, that's interesting. So yeah, this space is complex. You have customers at the top, which everyone cares about cause they're the ones who are giving the dollars to companies. You have retailers who are looking at customers and managing relationships with brands. Brands are responding to what customers and retailers want. And then you have vendors who are responding to what brands are asking for. And so they're all kind of looking at each other and being like how much do people care, like each individual stakeholder here. And so what you see is kind of competition starting to happen across all those different groups. So vendors trying to become more sustainable and market that to brands, brands are trying to become more sustainable and market that to vendors or to customers and retailers and on and on. So I think

for Amazon in particular, I don't entirely know how their system works, how hard it is to get in, but we definitely have seen a lot of interest from retailers.

So like, oh, all of our customers are asking for us to create a database eco kind of safe zone in which if certain products have the Bluebird logo or whatever, they know that it's low carbon or whatever. And so for us, that's huge in developing credibility in this space. And also just increasing awareness. We're talking to a bunch of major retailers around it because they also have carbon emission reduction commitments that they can only hit if they help their vendors decrease those carbon emissions cause that's part of their footprint. And so that obviously is a much larger conversation in which you're strategically working with a retailer to audit all of their vendors and give them tools to make improvements. That's different than just showing a certification on Amazon, I would imagine.

But yeah, I guess just wrapping this up because I'm meandering here a little bit, is retailers definitely care cause they're on the front lines responding to what customers want. They have a very interesting job though because they have to manage the brand relationships. Imagine someone doing 50% of your volume in your retailer, you're like, oh, they're not sustainable as the customers want, what then do you do about that? Do you help them change? If you have enough power, do you give them tools to make improvements or just not really do anything, which is a lot of what retailers are doing until they really, really have to.

Annaka:

I can imagine it's a little tough to untangle. If you are a retailer, that's huge. Probably hundreds of vendors at that point, how do you then kind of walk all of them through that? That just seems to me like I'd be looking at that like yeah, let's wait on that for a little while. Untangle the ball first.

Jamie McCroskery:

Totally. I mean, and you can actually watch the evolution happening. I know I'm getting so deep into sustainability and all of this stuff.

Ethan:

We love it.

Annaka:

We love it.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, it's fascinating cause you look at like Walmart did five or six years ago. They had the vendor scorecard, which is like, hey, we know this isn't perfect, but this is our stake in the ground, we're going to start measuring this stuff. And then they come up with the Gigaton project, which has higher fidelity kind of questions they're asking their vendors around renewable electricity usage, for example. I think you just have to start somewhere in all this stuff. So saying we have this 200-year-old infrastructure from the industrial revolution and globalization has made it so all these supply chains are just duct taped together. I can't even

describe to you how convoluted some of these apparel supply chains are. I think on average, some of the brands we're working with, in order to get a t-shirt for example, really simple dumb example, how far do you think total mileage, all the constituent parts have to go? You probably have no idea, but I'm curious what you guys think.

Ethan:

I'm going 6,000 miles.

Annaka:

Oh man, I'm going 3,000.

Jamie McCroskery:

Okay, 3,000 miles. Okay, what is the circumference of the earth?

Annaka:

Oh God.

Jamie McCroskery:

It's 25,000 miles. It goes for a lot of these brands we've seen you'll ship... you'll get cotton from India, for example, have that be woven somewhere else and then shipped somewhere and shipped to the US to add a fastener and then shipped back to them, be cut the right way. These products are being shipped around the earth four times. And same thing with beauty products, not as bad, 25,000 miles is not crazy. And this is what I'm talking about, it's around some of the hidden stuff on supply chain, it's like, well, you actually just buy stuff locally, which again is probably going to be more expensive cause China is so cheap for a lot of this stuff. But there are hidden things you can talk about here if you're a brand, why not think leaning onto that a little bit?

And not just how to be a cost trade off, it's actually a marketing upside. So yeah, if you're I guess zooming back out to Gigaton and all of these other retailers are trying to help these brands. It's like, man, it gets really complicated, you've got to start somewhere. And what we're trying to do is essentially get the next layer. It's like the web is 3.0 version of sustainability calculations that everyone can easily use because we just use big data to make it easier. Is the hope and intention here, at least.

Ethan:

He just said web 3.0, and I'm just going to let it slide. I'm just going to let it slide right now.

Jamie McCroskery:

I know seriously, I think they're... I barely

Ethan:

We're not going to talk about turning the Bluebird certification into an NFT. We're not going to talk about it, we're just going to blow right past that

Jamie McCroskery:

Totally. Buy this podcast NFT and tokenize it.

Ethan:

Exactly.

Jamie McCroskery:

I think I'm just surrounded by too many founders in Silicon Valley. I intentionally don't entirely understand the topic by design, it's too much.

Ethan:

All right. Well, then I will just move right past that. We're going to change gears, let's talk about your team. So Bluebird has a pretty impressive team with experience and some big name companies like Patagonia, Google, lots of other places. Were all these folks from your personal network as you moved through companies in Silicon Valley?

Jamie McCroskery:

So no, I went through the long... No, I'm just thinking back about when I started, I essentially left Glossier and tried to plug into the climate technology scene a little bit. And was stuck in my parents' basement during COVID trying to figure out what product to launch, what problem to solve, and how to get people in my core... in the folds I helped build something. I was bootstrapping for a while and that's a whole other topic we can go into about fundraising and when it's time versus not in the trade offs. But no, I essentially was like, man, I have invested all my time in big technology and working in brands, but I really care about the sustainability stuff. I'd studied neuroscience in college and business to combine technical stuff and business stuff to bring discoveries to marketplace.

And I'd always love the idea of sustainability, but it's actually a pretty emerging science, lifecycle assessment to which you quantify carbon emissions are changing, methodologies are changing rapidly as is the underlying measurement of swell carbon, for example. So I was in my parents' basement and then eventually I connected to a mutual friend Anisha, who was my first co-founder. She had worked at Unilever and also helped dozens of brands set up supply chains sustainably. And we just kind of hit it off, and it's like all startups are momentum games. It's yourself and then you get another person and then you bring another person and all of a sudden you have a company or a product people like and recognition in this space. So for me, I essentially just from my parents' basement started hacking away and talking to interesting people.

So the Patagonia guys, Eric Wilmanns and Mike Brown founded the Patagonia environmental assessment program, which essentially pioneered the space in being able to quantify environmental impact from producing products. I think they were just pumped, they're like, oh wow, you seem smart. And are really motivated clearly, because you're just giving your job and you're working in your parents' basement, through your parents' basement. And then once you

have someone there in your court then, okay, great. Now you have some momentum and can then say hey, other person, I know you care a lot about this stuff, do you want to join this thing that is moving whether you're on it or not? And that is always kind of the game that... it's a little bit of a game you're playing because at the end of the day, companies and businesses are all just people and how they feel. And momentum being a part of something big that's going to succeed.

And so you got to kickstart that in some way. And that for us came by going after people who were really motivated to work together early, even when there was nothing there and that's where Patagonia guys came in. And then it made it way easier to convince other people to come on as well. So from there, we essentially then were able to raise venture money. We bought on really early customers who were just motivated by us and our mission that we were able to hire the rest of the team from Google and Kickstarter and Levi's and Flatiron Health. I mean, and it's going to be the same game too that we're going to continue to build momentum, but yeah, you've got to start somewhere. But yeah, personal networks are really, really, really key. That was how I met my co-founders through a friend of a friend, total serendipity. So it helps.

Annaka:

And those are huge brands too. You're just listing off these brands, I'm like, wow.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I mean, well it helps. I mean, I don't know, all this stuff comes down to... not comes down to, but a big element of it is people are trying to suss you out. And so they look at your credentials. It's like, oh, you went to a good school or oh, you worked at a good company. And so it's de-risked a little bit. And so that stuff definitely helped and the personal networks that come from that, that's largely how we were able to fundraise really, really quickly because I knew a bunch of people in Silicon Valley space that knew me personally. And were like, oh, yeah, I believe that you're going to grind away at this thing and figure it out.

And if you don't have the personal network, luckily people want to support founders, especially other founders. It's like, most of my friends now are founders and they're our customers also. So I went into slack channels and found people working similar stuff. And then, I actually talked to someone yesterday who I'd met in a slack channel for climate tech two years ago and circled back when talking about hiring him. One of my roommates now is actually, I've met him at a slack channel for climate tech. He's also working some similar stuff. The value to build all of this, is just getting out there really.

Ethan:

That's awesome. So you care and that puts you into rooms where other people care and you knock down that first domino. That's great, love it.

Jamie McCroskery:

And everyone says no at first of course, but yeah, all it takes is one yes and then it goes from there.

Ethan:

Oh, of course, yeah. All right, you brought up funding. I'm just going to ask you the most basic question, tell us about your funding journey. What worked, what didn't work, what would you do differently if you could go back?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. What would I do differently? So I for a long time had really resisted the pull of outside funding. And the reason for that was I was so... I mean, I am still but very mission oriented and I was like, no, I want to do a thing. A, don't like having a boss. It's like why you got to come. B, I want to run this my way and with my people and essentially, not be beholden to whatever outside force. I think that was a bit of a naive perspective cause I was essentially slogging away trying to build stuff with zero resources and it was really, really hard. And the trade off essentially is time and resources, so you can go way faster obviously. And therefore have a higher likelihood of surviving, which is the whole point of the startup game is that you're by... a founder friend told me this and it's kind of a negative thing, but you're really default dead.

Founders can will stuff to happen, but you need resources to make it happen, or you can bootstrap it. And it's really, really amazing people can do it, it just takes longer. And so you have to think about what are the tradeoffs here? For us, sustainability is moving really fast. And we know there's a ton of venture money going to similar areas that we're in. And so we're not really going to have a chance. I actually was bootstrapping an idea with building this app through Upwork and contractors and then was like, oh, okay, great. I got my first few customers and I saw someone doing the exact same thing and raised 10 million dollars and was like, I need to do something else. Yeah, I need to do something else. And so I had then made a decision to go raise money once we had a few customers.

So I think the fundraising journey for us was essentially investors, you can either raise on metrics and traction or you can raise in hopes and dreams. It's wise advice I heard once. And the combination of both is the best and metrics never lie. So you have traction, it's like, oh, okay, great, guess it's going. And so what we did was essentially find our first champion customers and get letters of intent to say, hey, if you build this product, we will buy it with some degree of commitment on that. And then between me and Anisha, we had a compelling story to then go out into this market and say hey, we know how to solve this problem. We have these Patagonia guys who are going to help us do it.

And we were able to fundraise pretty quickly. I mean, there's a lot of tactical tips on fundraising, but I think for us, it was pretty important. And being able to then hire other real team members and have a chance here. If we didn't do it, yeah, I owned 100% of the company when I was in my parents' basement, 100% of what? Of something that doesn't exist. And now I own a way smaller portion of that, but it's... I think startups are binary outcomes, they either do well and survive and become a real business or you don't. And you kind of want to, at least for me, want

to fail fast, just not going to work out, which means you have to have resources. And give a real shot, not be stuck in preparatory for a long time wondering if it's going to work.

Annaka:

Yeah. I think I'd rather know sooner than later if I wasn't going to make it. I'm having a moment where I had a thought and it was a good thought, and now it's gone.

Jamie McCroskery:

Lost, a sense of time.

Annaka:

I know it happens pretty frequently, unfortunately. So you came from, I don't want to say corporate, corporate always sounds... It's a negative buzzword these days.

Jamie McCroskery:

No, and start a podcast, yeah.

Annaka:

Right. But you came from well established companies, Dropbox and Glossier. And now you're in a startup — the startup world. How did your previous experiences kind of change how you run your company now?

Jamie McCroskery:

I mean, how I run my company now? Yeah. I mean, like anything, you pick up experiences, and you see things. And you're like, that works really well. Oh, wow, okay, hard lesson learned. I'm not going to forget that one. So yeah, I mean that happens across the board. I think the most important thing is product, how you develop a product, people want to know that. How you develop a team, those two being... I mean, team being the most important thing. And when you're working at these companies, you see how people are organized into these organisms with their own cultures and ways of operating and that keep people happy, motivated, or really demotivated unproductive. So yeah, I mean, I don't want to get too deep into lessons, but there are a lot of amazing lessons that I could... both on the positive and negative side or constructive and whatever — however you want to phrase that.

And so I think specifically I came into the intent to say, hey, I want to design a culture that's really supportive, empathetic, and clearly people really communicate and are outcome oriented. And so that, I had influences from management with Adam Grant that is a management guru from school. A lot of Patagonia guys we work with are almost spiritual advisors about how to organize our team and be outcome and mission oriented. And then you essentially hire a bunch of people and bring them on. Or as co-founders also but people who care about the same things, have the same ethos and then you can construct from there this foundation that builds the same way and treats people the same way. So yeah, I mean, nothing's perfect.

Obviously, you're iterating on your cyber product and culture and everything. I think experiences will definitely maximize likelihood of success, but it's not necessary. You'll figure it out as you go, just surround yourself with people who kind of know what they're doing, and make sure you're on the same page with their team about what you're trying to learn and if things are working or not, and then how to improve. And then that ultimately is probably the lesson is just iterate, be receptive to feedback at the end of the day.

Annaka:

Yeah, and then when you find something that works, run with it. And I mean, y'all have a pretty impressive client base so far. How have you really built that up? Was that from connections that you had built previously?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. So, and this is kind of the same dynamic that I was talking about earlier with fundraising and hiring and everything. It's like, people want to pick winners. At the end of the day, they want to pick people they believe in and missions they believe in, and then things are going to work. And so if you have a really small startup, it's a big risk for a larger company to take on, but if you are selling to other startups, they get it. You're talking to founders who want to support you. And so the way we got started was finding the first customer, it's always the hardest. It's like begging... not beg, but you have to really hope you find the right person who believes in what you're doing and will give you, work with you to co-develop this stuff cause they know that it's influx.

We kind of fell into a trap a little bit trying to say oh, we have this amazing thing, but it's still in development. And then you don't hit expectations, and it doesn't work out well. So the way we have handled it I think a little bit better is saying hey, we're super transparent here about where our product is and where it's going. And we just want to find the champions in the organizations who are going to get us started. So for us, I had worked at Glossier and then Russ who actually comes from Patagonia really cared about sustainability internally and was driving it. It was like, oh my god, yeah, what you guys are building is amazing. The general shape of it, we'll just be design partners.

And you can refer to us as a logo and we'll give you feedback on an ongoing basis. And it's from there that similar thing, we pointed to Glossier, hey, we have them and it makes it easier to get more and more startups. And I think over time too you kind of-

Annaka:

Right, they feel like you're listening.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, exactly. It's the same thing with like, oh, we have... It's not just me, I had this other amazing co-founder. It's like, oh great, maybe I'll come join, same thing with customers. But yeah, I think over time too, you figure out the sales process a little bit better or it's like, you're not really sure how to pitch things, you're not really sure what problem you're solving and then you

crystallize that. And then it's way easier to have the same conversation and know how to disqualify customers or get them on board.

Annaka:

Yeah. What was kind of your marketing strategy as you were trying to get on the map?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I think a lot of engineers and myself included have kind of a negative interpretation of marketing, so it's like, oh, you're selling things to people they don't want. You've got like spam and you go on Instagram, be like, I don't want to see this crap. But really what marketing is, is essentially you're like, if customers have a problem, you're essentially letting them know that you have a solution. That is the constructive way to look at it. And so for us, we essentially don't have a marketing strategy really. The way we think about it is we're essentially just going through personal referrals. It's like, hey, we have our own networks here. It's like, I know a bunch of people who work in the beauty space, it's how we started there. We know there's real problems there.

Same with Anisha, my co-founder and yeah, so it's all personal referral base. And if we wanted to market it, we actually wouldn't even know how to do it at the beginning. I mean, we essentially had a bunch of landing pages and surveys and stuff that tried to test out different types of messaging around problems that we could solve and solutions to solve those problems. And so we kind of know how to talk about it from that. But really, it was all personal relationship based because especially at the beginning of the startup, you essentially need partnership.

And so it's like, we haven't purchased any ads or anything like that at all. And then the strategy here is like, well, work with a bunch of brands and who really care about what you're doing and then they will market on your behalf. So they're going to be taking a lot of our data and putting it on their websites and PR and everything. And the idea is then other brands will be like, oh wow, okay, that's actually impactful and customers hopefully will ask for that kind of stuff. We'll see how it goes but that's how we're starting at least.

Annaka:

Yeah. I mean, I don't know if I can say I work in marketing, but I have a marketing background. And I think the marketing as a four letter word is pretty common in the startup sphere and personal referrals end up meaning a lot to customers. It's like, all right, these people have a connection and that's why I'm seeing this in front of me now. Or like if Ethan recommends a restaurant to me, I'm more likely to go there than if Yelp pops up in my email inbox like "hey, try this restaurant. So it's a valuable strategy."

Jamie McCroskery:

It's the highest likelihood to convert, for sure. LinkedIn cold DM rate is pretty low but having personal referrals I think is always, can at least get you a meeting.

Annaka:

Right, exactly.

Jamie McCroskery:

Which is kind of fast forward to continue getting meetings and then learn.

Annaka:

Yep, perfect.

Ethan:

Absolutely. So I'm going to take it back to the basics. What was something that surprised you when you launched your own startup? What was something that was 10 times harder than you wanted it to be, that you thought it would be? And what was something that was a whole lot easier than you thought it would be?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, it's a good question. People say startups are hard — they are hard. It's like an emotional rollercoaster that I didn't fully appreciate. And I knew it was going to be hard intellectually. And then you're like, oh, okay, I'm sitting in this and this is the slog. For example, on a given day, this is such a stupid example, but I laugh at this. I actually said it to my founder friends and like, oh, look at this ridiculous day I had. We were really excited about a candidate, we signed them the day before. I then sent out an offer letter with a wrong equity that was signed, it's dumb. We had a customer come through and then two customers dropped out and then a major retailer comes through, who is interested — and then our product doesn't work, all on the same day.

It's you have these series of existential threats that make you question why you're doing it. And you're like, wow, is this really worth it? Which is why I think it's really important to bake mission in, cause that's the fire that keeps people going, especially new hires. Because we all really care about the outcome rather than just increasing sales or getting rich or whatever. Not that that's a bad thing, everyone has different preferences, but I think that the mission orientation really helps with persevering, especially for climate stuff. So, yeah, but I didn't fully appreciate that. And I'm like, now I know it and you get tired. But this is where things get easier, to the other side of your question, is you have a good team around that supports you. And so having co-founders is so critical for me, at least, because if one person... you essentially need at least one person carrying the baton forward and willing things into existence, wherever you can. You can't will product market fit, but you can will presence in the market.

And so that has made things way easier. And have been some of my highest functioning relationships I've ever had in my life. And I have a whole host of tips about how I do that. But yeah, then that has made it way easier in some ways, even the hard parts. Man, there's a lot of other things. Getting initial customers is always going to be hard, but that's just what it is, unless you I think get a little lucky. I mean, we're in a harder, I think, place, because we're essentially creating a market. It's not like, oh, all these brands already buy sustainability software right now, they're just buying this better one. They haven't done that before and are making investments, but they don't know how to think about it or see it, they've never seen it before.

So creating a market is definitely hard as well. I guess just quickly on the co-founder point, I would highly recommend, with a, depending on the personality type, some people are just visionaries and can go by themselves. I am not like that. And so I was very clear in trying to find someone whose like skillset is kind of complementary and also values aligned. So I used the first round capital founders dating questionnaire, which was super helpful, honestly. Yeah, it was great. So for example, you kind of know, oh, hey, what happens when you get stressed or anxious? How do I recognize that, and how do I support you? That's a huge thing if you know that up front. What are those triggers? Okay, great, we'll organize the work so that happens not that much.

And so I kind of wish I had it. I mean, this is a ridiculous thing. I'm not even going to say it, but I think let's just say I've had some friends who have dated and have gone through this stuff. And like, "oh, my relationship I'm not sure how to show up for them," just use the freshman capital dating questionnaire, it will solve your problems. But it was really helpful in getting aligned, especially because co-founders if that relationship blows up, the entire company's toast. So you want to make sure you get it right from the beginning.

Annaka:

Oh yeah. I would fully support the dating app of startup founders and how to add to your team. There's algorithms for that, I mean, it would be so cool. Sorry, I'm looking at some messages. What does scale look like for you? You're here, you're now this is your present, what does it look like in an ideal world?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, I think for early-stage startups focus is important, like one of the most important things. You're kind of threading the needle here a little bit in which you're trying to start in such a narrow focus where you crush a pain point for one type of customer because you don't have that many resources. And if you try to do too much, you're going to be nothing to everybody versus something to a very small number of people. Then the question is like, oh, well can you hit the scale so this becomes a meaningful business? So you have to essentially either layer on pain points that you can solve for this person. Or find other people who have similar pain points. And for us, a challenge in the beginning was there's demand for sustainability decision making and marketing everywhere.

Big companies really are spending tons of money on it, but they have way different levels of sophistication and needs than the startup who has 10 people. And so for us, our key job here at the beginning is to make sure our initial customers... A, we have initial customers, B that we keep them really happy and that there's a path toward growing after that. So we essentially have this pilot program, which is designed to be small, to prove out that this stuff really and our product really works, that we know how to price it. And so it becomes a no-brainer and create all these case studies in the market so that when we're ready for launch, we can essentially go and say, "hey, this is the new way of doing things." So for us right now, scale is explicitly not the goal, but it is the goal to eventually get to scale and do it in a sane way.

So yeah, I think the idea is start small and then in the background, I'm also... There's actually a really great book on this called "Traction" by the DuckDuckGo go founder who talks about paralyzing both product development and essentially figuring out distribution. Cause the idea of being like, well, so you have a great product but you can't figure out how to distribute it, what's the point? And vice versa. And which actually was a new way of thinking for me, cause I'm like a product person. And so while we have this pilot program and are really laser focused on solving problems, keeping these customers happy with good product, I'm also experimenting on how we can figure out distribution, get a scale for when we're ready a little bit down the line when this pilot program is done. And that's where some of these retailers come into play, some of these editorial outlets.

And so we're essentially experimenting with a lot of those things and seeing what's going to create this interest list that we can deploy to. So it's an iterative process. So I think over time, by the end of the year, we... a year from now, it's going to look way different. We'll have way more brands, we'll have way more presence in the space. But by design, we're keeping it small now so that we are really sure that we're doing the right thing and can go to market.

Annaka:

Yeah. Well, in a year we're just going to have you back so heads up on that.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, retrospective.

Annaka:

We'll be like, where are you at now? But yeah, I love the honesty in your answer. It's like, here's where we're at and we're not just going to throw features out to see what sticks. We want to make sure we're making the most solid moves that we can. So definitely, like that a lot.

Jamie McCroskery:

It's been tough because... I mean, especially for any company that's thinking about like, "oh, look, what's my target customer?" I mean, this is super zoomed out, but it's a small business or an enterprise deal. You can get small businesses way faster, but they're lower contract value versus a huge deal that takes forever to close and has custom requirements or you might be divulging forever. For us, it's been a challenge because we've gotten interests from both of them and then how do you prioritize? And so you're simultaneously being like, I want to develop value really fast because that's our core venture as a start up is going fast. At the same time, I want credibility, which comes from large companies and logos.

So you essentially have to get really creative but still maintain focus. And I think ultimately the key thing is finding those champions you want to work with you and co-develop so that you are on the right track. But yeah, focus is the number one thing. Our designers do it all the time, he literally has... He's going to kill me for saying this, but he has a less tattooed on his hand as a

principal to live by. It's like just do less and focus and you're going to survive. You die from indigestion, not doing too little.

Annaka:

I'm a designer and now, so I'm totally going to get a tattoo that says less somewhere. So that's the biggest chunk of feedback for product designers and graphic designers and UX designers is like "do less." Your point A to point B should be one step instead of 16, but we like to see pretty fancy things so who knows? All right, Jamie, what is your advice for aspiring entrepreneurs, specifically those in the sustainability or SaaS industries?

Jamie McCroskery:

My advice, yeah, general advice is always funny cause it's kind of shooting from the hip a little bit, saying this may or may not be relevant to you. I think the general principles though that come to mind are, one to just put things out there. I know myself and a bunch of other founders are afraid to like "oh, I have this idea, but I'm either not sure it's going to be right. And I'm embarrassed by getting negative reception or I have this amazing idea and it's going to be the next billion dollar company so I don't want to tell anyone about it." You need feedback and your company is the product of a shared pool of knowledge and expertise to make better decisions. So you need feedback, and if you don't do it, you're not going to know if your idea's good and you'll just spend a lot of time. I wasted a ton of time like that, that's product 101, is like making sure you're solving a real problem and knowing what the problems are.

So you have to make sure there's a real problem and you have to talk to people that way. I think there's many interesting ways to do that, I've actually found... So the good book on this called "The Mom Test," which has some strategies about how to get rapid customer feedback. So it's like how do you find people to talk to about this stuff? Do you survey, do you go to trade shows? Depends on your company and what you're doing, but for B2B, going to trade shows is great cause there's customers there. You can just talk to them all the time, super casually. And then the trick is how do you actually know that they're telling you the truth? Cause everyone, people want to be liked, especially around sustainability, there's a lot of signaling in there. So, it's hard to know if you're solving a real problem, if people want or actually are going to buy the thing you're building, that's a whole difficult thing, a difficult lesson we learned as well, honestly. That's I would say number one, read that book, it's great.

Number two, I think is being really, really thoughtful from beginning about what it is your vision is and what you're trying to accomplish as a company. That has made it way easier to hire, way easier to get through hard times. And people talk about like, "oh, mission, vision, values, that stuff is big company things." But we put up a job description, people really resonate with that stuff. And also customers too cause we treat them the same way they're outlined in our values. So I think that's actually pretty important. It can feel academic, but it's really good forcing on function especially if you have co-founders to be like, wait, hey, instead of having to reinvent the wheel every single time to make a decision, just point to the values, it's already there, we already did this, this is making...

That resolves do we have a 401k plan or whatever, stupid questions like that. It's like, well, it's kind of already covered in the values. And it's really helpful to reinforce culture top down and bottoms up too. I think another one is be thoughtful about the resources you need in order to be successful. That's human capital to the knowledge expertise, financial capital and relationships, there's probably another one I'm missing. Yeah, this is all outlining... I'm just name dropping books at this point for people, "The Founder's Dilemma" and also "The Hard Thing About Hard Things." We talk a lot about this stuff. That's really important because if you're going to go fundraising, you should know why. Cause there are... Bringing on VC investors or whatever, isn't a bad thing, it's just different.

There's a different set of expectations you have, they can also lend a ton of help as well, our angel investors have been amazing. So we have for example, the CO grow collaborative, a marketplace for sustainable goods, essentially helps us all the time with intros and strategy. So it's amazing so think about what you need both from a money standpoint and from a people and knowledge standpoint, both for your team and advisors and you can actually solve both things with fundraising versus just saying, oh, I'm going to want to raise a shit ton of money as fast as possible and then, do what? You might be biting off too much, for example, setting yourself up for a gnarly series A. Those are three things that come to mind. I'm sure there's a bunch of others, but...

Annaka:

Yeah, you'll think about it later tonight when you're trying to go to sleep like, oh man. But I, just to interject real quick, Ethan, I'm sorry, I personally love that your mission and values keep kind of nudging you back in the direction that you intended to. It just seems like a theme that keeps occurring as you're talking and I love that. So yeah, it's like bumper bowling. You have one direction and it's the one I wanted it to go in so perfect.

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah. I mean, and for us, it holds us accountable. So for example, we see if you were talking to customers, you can find problems to solve they're willing to pay for. But does it actually lead to an impact you want? Those are hard, that's a hard venn diagram to get right. And so we essentially have to resist that stuff and maybe layer it in as a way to then get to impact. But you have to be super honest about it and even potentially more importantly, then it essentially is this co-developed way of instructing the entire organization for how to treat each other and make decisions too. Cause I don't want to make any decision as a CEO, I'm hiring people because they're smarter than I am and know things that I don't. And so I would rather equip them with values like, "hey, here's essentially what we're trying to accomplish from a mission and vision standpoint. And the way we want to make decisions with these values, way of essentially operating principles to go forth and own the outcome," just makes it way easier for everybody.

Ethan:

That's great advice, Jamie, we really appreciate you coming on the show. Is there anything you'd like to share with listeners before we wrap this up? If people want to follow Bluebird Climate or reach out to you, is there a best place for them to do that?

Jamie McCroskery:

Yeah, and I appreciate it. I mean, sustainability is this conundrum that means everything and nothing at the same time. It's really important to people personally but also takes a back seat sometimes. I think if you are a brand and apparel, food, beverage, beauty, personal care, and you're curious about this stuff, just let me know. You can find me @jamieatbluebirdclimate.com or on our website @bluebirdclimate.com. And we're essentially in the market here educating people, not trying to sell you things. So if you have questions, we are always happy to help and are going to point you in the right direction, whether you're just starting out or are this crazy insurgent brand trying to make a carbon negative whatever it is.

But yeah, I think perseverance, if you're a startup founder also just know that things can be hard. I think Ben Horowitz said in 'Hard Thing About Hard Things,' you're in a constant state of elation and just complete dejection going back and forth. You can decide to make things not crazy as much as you possibly can and your values and how you work with each other. Also, know that those things are going to come up and make your life a little crazy, but it's okay. You know why you're doing this and for yourself and that should be the fire. And if you need, I would highly recommend finding other founder friends who you can get advice from to and support if you need it. But it's a fun journey and I definitely encourage people to get on it.

Ethan:

Awesome, excellent advice. Go find your founder friends. Well, folks, we're going to put all of these links, all the book recommendations, everything from this show, we're going to put in the show notes. But that's a wrap, that is another episode of the Startup Savants Podcast in the can. Hey, thanks for hanging out with us today. You know what, we want to hear what you think. If you think we're doing a good job, let us know in the comments over @startupsavant.com/podcast. You know me, I'm always fishing for compliments. But hey, if you think we're awful, let us know in the comments over @startupsovan.com/podcast. We're always looking for ways to improve and bring you the inspiration and information you need to succeed.

Ethan:

If you really love the show, head over to Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcast, leave us a five star review. As you know, this is a new show so reviews really help us to get the show in front of more listeners just like you. For tools, guides, videos, startup stories, and so much more, head over to truic.com, that's truic.com, T-R-U-I-C.com. See you folks.

Annaka:

Bye, everyone.