

Podcast Episode

Season 1, Episode 3: Innovation in Community-Centric Branding, Architecture + Design

From the WLI British Columbia Innovation Podcast Series

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00:00:05 --> 00:00:09: Thank you for tuning into the real estate and Evasion
00:00:09 --> 00:00:09: podcast.
00:00:09 --> 00:00:12: Brought to you by EU Li Women's leadership initiative.
00:00:12 --> 00:00:16: The utilized mission is to provide leadership and the responsible
00:00:17 --> 00:00:20: use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving
00:00:21 --> 00:00:21: communities
00:00:21 --> 00:00:21: worldwide.
00:00:21 --> 00:00:24: The Wli is the engine that drives you will IBC
00:00:24 --> 00:00:27: to be recognized as a leading organization,
00:00:27 --> 00:00:30: supporting women as leaders in the industry.
00:00:34 --> 00:00:35: Hello hello, this is Judy,
00:00:35 --> 00:00:37: host of the Innovation podcast,
00:00:37 --> 00:00:39: for EU LIBC's Women's Leadership Initiative,
00:00:39 --> 00:00:43: where we talk about everything and everyone taking part in
00:00:43 --> 00:00:47: innovation and what that means in the real estate business.
00:00:47 --> 00:00:50: And this episode, I'm chatting with HDMI's very own Melissa
00:00:50 --> 00:00:50: Higgs.
00:00:50 --> 00:00:54: Melissa is an architect who's passionate about creating
00:00:54 --> 00:00:56: innovative public
00:00:54 --> 00:00:56: spaces where communities come together.
00:00:56 --> 00:00:59: She's a believer in the power of architecture and design
00:01:00 --> 00:01:00: as a catalyst.
00:01:00 --> 00:01:02: For positive change in the world,
00:01:02 --> 00:01:05: her practice with HDMI is focused on designing buildings,
00:01:05 --> 00:01:08: brands, and shared experiences that connect people and
00:01:08 --> 00:01:08: community.
00:01:08 --> 00:01:10: Melissa, welcome to the channel.

00:01:10 --> 00:01:12: I'm very glad to be your host today.
 00:01:12 --> 00:01:14: How are you? Oh, I'm great.
 00:01:14 --> 00:01:15: I'm so happy to
 00:01:15 --> 00:01:19: be here, Judy. Thanks for having me awesome so I
 00:01:19 --> 00:01:21: would love to give you the floor to speak a
 00:01:21 --> 00:01:23: little bit about yourself.
 00:01:23 --> 00:01:26: I know I gave a little introduction but I'm sure
 00:01:26 --> 00:01:29: a lot of people are interested in what HTML is
 00:01:29 --> 00:01:32: all about the rebranding that you've done.
 00:01:32 --> 00:01:34: And the sort of work that you do,
 00:01:34 --> 00:01:36: and with with the practice.
 00:01:36 --> 00:01:36: Yeah,
 00:01:36 --> 00:01:39: great. Maybe I'll start a little bit about HCA now
 00:01:39 --> 00:01:41: and a little bit about me,
 00:01:41 --> 00:01:44: so I'm an architect and I'm a principal in one
 00:01:44 --> 00:01:46: of seven principles at HC Me now and I feel
 00:01:46 --> 00:01:50: really privileged and lucky to work on primarily public
 buildings.
 00:01:50 --> 00:01:53: So I get to work on community centers,
 00:01:53 --> 00:01:56: aquatic centers, libraries, and we do quite a bit of
 00:01:56 --> 00:01:57: that work across the firm.
 00:01:57 --> 00:01:59: We also do some education,
 00:01:59 --> 00:02:01: so everywhere from you know,
 00:02:01 --> 00:02:03: child care right up through elementary school.
 00:02:03 --> 00:02:06: Schools post secondary and we do projects from small scale
 00:02:06 --> 00:02:07: things to you know,
 00:02:07 --> 00:02:08: really big significant community buildings,
 00:02:08 --> 00:02:11: and I think the what ties it all together for
 00:02:11 --> 00:02:12: us is really around.
 00:02:12 --> 00:02:15: How do we find ways in all of our work
 00:02:15 --> 00:02:18: at all scales to kind of maximize our impact through
 00:02:18 --> 00:02:19: our work?
 00:02:20 --> 00:02:22: Your team is made of so much more than architects.
 00:02:22 --> 00:02:24: What can you tell me
 00:02:24 --> 00:02:25: a little bit about that?
 00:02:25 --> 00:02:27: Yeah, I'd love to. I mean,
 00:02:27 --> 00:02:30: the the firm has been around for more than 40
 00:02:30 --> 00:02:31: years actually.
 00:02:31 --> 00:02:33: And we, you know, are kind of roots really started
 00:02:33 --> 00:02:35: in more traditional architecture.
 00:02:35 --> 00:02:37: So a small firm that was focused really on architecture
 00:02:37 --> 00:02:40: and to some extent to urban planning and urban design

00:02:40 --> 00:02:41: and overtime,

00:02:41 --> 00:02:44: especially in the last kind of five to 10 years.

00:02:44 --> 00:02:47: We've really kind of changed our focus in our direction

00:02:47 --> 00:02:49: and it is really around that idea of creating kind

00:02:49 --> 00:02:51: of maximizing our impact.

00:02:51 --> 00:02:52: And I think you know.

00:02:52 --> 00:02:54: So we've evolved. I would say over the last ten

00:02:54 --> 00:02:57: years into being more of an interdisciplinary team and the

00:02:57 --> 00:02:57: catalyst,

00:02:57 --> 00:03:00: I think really, for that big change for us was

00:03:00 --> 00:03:00: this,

00:03:00 --> 00:03:03: you know, this desire to try to help communities to

00:03:03 --> 00:03:04: solve the kind of pressing issues.

00:03:04 --> 00:03:07: But I say maybe the big challenges that we're facing.

00:03:07 --> 00:03:09: And by that I think we mean,

00:03:09 --> 00:03:11: you know, they're really big things like loneliness,

00:03:11 --> 00:03:13: which I know Vancouver gets tagged with quite a bit,

00:03:13 --> 00:03:15: and I think a lot of urban centers do.

00:03:15 --> 00:03:17: There's this density and proximity,

00:03:17 --> 00:03:19: but maybe a lack of connection that leads to loneliness.

00:03:19 --> 00:03:22: You know the idea of health and mental Wellness?

00:03:22 --> 00:03:25: Resilience that both as individuals but also in a community

00:03:25 --> 00:03:26: scale.

00:03:26 --> 00:03:28: You know the climate crisis and you know they're really

00:03:28 --> 00:03:29: big things.

00:03:29 --> 00:03:32: Racism, discrimination, inequity, like. They're really wicked

00:03:32 --> 00:03:34: mixed up problems,

00:03:34 --> 00:03:37: and I think as architects you know,

00:03:37 --> 00:03:37: we're pretty well trained to deal with that kind of

00:03:37 --> 00:03:37: complexity,

00:03:37 --> 00:03:40: but I think we recognize that you know,

00:03:40 --> 00:03:42: to solve those kind of problems through our work,

00:03:42 --> 00:03:44: we just we need multiple voices,

00:03:44 --> 00:03:47: and we need different perspectives and lived experiences

00:03:47 --> 00:03:50: and really

00:03:47 --> 00:03:50: design ideas and different ways of thinking at the table

00:03:50 --> 00:03:52: to really kind of solve those problems.

00:03:52 --> 00:03:56: So yeah, we really changed our team and we have

00:03:56 --> 00:03:56: now,

00:03:56 --> 00:03:59: you know, quite a wide range of creatives at the

00:03:59 --> 00:03:59: firm.

00:03:59 --> 00:04:02: From architects, graphic designers, industrial interior design

00:03:59 --> 00:04:02: strategists,

00:04:02 --> 00:04:04: social environmental researchers, community engagement specialists.

00:04:04 --> 00:04:06: And, you know, we really try to work together to

00:04:07 --> 00:04:09: bring those different perspectives to the table.

00:04:09 --> 00:04:11: To kind of tackle those problems from,

00:04:11 --> 00:04:15: you know, from different or unique angles.

00:04:15 --> 00:04:15: It

00:04:15 --> 00:04:18: seems to be the discussion of R times today.

00:04:18 --> 00:04:21: Rethinking. Who is it? That's on this discussion table and

00:04:21 --> 00:04:23: who's really voicing the opinions?

00:04:23 --> 00:04:28: And are we actually capturing the voice of the diversity

00:04:28 --> 00:04:31: and inclusive nature of our communities?

00:04:31 --> 00:04:35: Could you share some insight on the artist in residence

00:04:35 --> 00:04:38: program that HMA takes part of or or or provides

00:04:38 --> 00:04:41: a platform for in your practice?

00:04:41 --> 00:04:44: I think that really highlights a lot of the interdisciplinary

00:04:44 --> 00:04:47: and collaborative approach that you take.

00:04:48 --> 00:04:50: I'd love to talk about that.

00:04:50 --> 00:04:51: About five years ago we haven't.

00:04:51 --> 00:04:53: We have a almost like a sub,

00:04:53 --> 00:04:56: but we have something called tilt which is our tilt

00:04:56 --> 00:04:56: Curiosity labs,

00:04:56 --> 00:04:59: which is a it encompasses a range of things,

00:04:59 --> 00:05:02: but the short, the short description of it would be.

00:05:02 --> 00:05:04: It's areas that we want to investigate that are not

00:05:04 --> 00:05:06: project or client driven.

00:05:06 --> 00:05:08: So giving us a little bit of a freedom to

00:05:08 --> 00:05:11: investigate issues or ideas in our cities that we want

00:05:11 --> 00:05:14: to dig into it and one of the initiatives that

00:05:14 --> 00:05:17: came that is run through tilt is artists and residents,

00:05:17 --> 00:05:18: and it's a pretty simple system.

00:05:18 --> 00:05:20: Where we offer a stipend and we have a an

00:05:20 --> 00:05:24: application process and we work with artists for usually

00:05:24 --> 00:05:26: around

00:05:24 --> 00:05:26: right now where it's about 10 weeks per artist in

00:05:26 --> 00:05:29: residence and they only ask really is that the artist

00:05:29 --> 00:05:31: share with our team so they are welcome to work

00:05:31 --> 00:05:32: in our space.

00:05:32 --> 00:05:34: A lot of artists need space to work,

00:05:34 --> 00:05:37: so we ask that they engage with us through their

00:05:37 --> 00:05:39: process so that we can learn from them and that

00:05:39 --> 00:05:40: they can learn,

00:05:40 --> 00:05:42: learn from us through the process and we it has
 00:05:42 --> 00:05:43: been like Judy,
 00:05:43 --> 00:05:46: it's just been so much more than I can imagine.
 00:05:46 --> 00:05:49: Like one of one. They're so in so many standouts.
 00:05:49 --> 00:05:51: But one of the standouts for me would be we
 00:05:51 --> 00:05:51: worked,
 00:05:51 --> 00:05:53: we had a woman come to us who is a
 00:05:53 --> 00:05:55: choreographer and dancer.
 00:05:55 --> 00:05:57: And she said, I want to work with you to
 00:05:57 --> 00:05:59: think about how bodies experience space,
 00:05:59 --> 00:06:00: because dancers have, you know,
 00:06:00 --> 00:06:03: they experience and think about space in a different way.
 00:06:03 --> 00:06:05: So I would like to choreograph a dance for one
 00:06:05 --> 00:06:06: of your buildings.
 00:06:06 --> 00:06:09: And so she choreographed dance for Aquatic Center in Surry
 00:06:09 --> 00:06:10: called Grandview Heights Aquatic Center,
 00:06:10 --> 00:06:13: where she tried to understand what the concepts basically
 the
 00:06:13 --> 00:06:15: building was and then represented through dance.
 00:06:15 --> 00:06:17: And it's just so it's just been incredible.
 00:06:17 --> 00:06:19: We're working with an artist right now called David.
 00:06:19 --> 00:06:22: Ellingsworth, he's just finishing up with us.
 00:06:22 --> 00:06:25: We've we have worked with.
 00:06:25 --> 00:06:27: Oh my gosh, names work for me right now.
 00:06:27 --> 00:06:30: So many we've worked with a food based artist animal
 00:06:30 --> 00:06:30: toy.
 00:06:30 --> 00:06:31: We work with the woodcarver,
 00:06:31 --> 00:06:34: we've worked with painters. We work with Ola Volo to
 00:06:34 --> 00:06:35: do a mural.
 00:06:35 --> 00:06:37: So I think and it actually changes us.
 00:06:37 --> 00:06:39: I guess there you might ask,
 00:06:39 --> 00:06:40: why do we do it?
 00:06:40 --> 00:06:42: We do it to push ourselves and to see things
 00:06:42 --> 00:06:43: through different perspectives.
 00:06:43 --> 00:06:46: And it's one of those things that has really.
 00:06:46 --> 00:06:48: It brings us together as a firm.
 00:06:48 --> 00:06:50: It also we share the outcome and it gives the
 00:06:50 --> 00:06:51: artist.
 00:06:51 --> 00:06:53: Hopefully some kind of a platform for their work as
 00:06:53 --> 00:06:53: well.
 00:06:53 --> 00:06:55: So there's a, uh, hopefully,
 00:06:55 --> 00:06:57: mutual benefit. But I think it just changes our thinking.

00:06:58 --> 00:07:03: It's it's very different when you commissioned those artists.
 00:07:03 --> 00:07:05: Not to showcase their work,
 00:07:05 --> 00:07:07: but rather learn from their work.
 00:07:07 --> 00:07:09: There's so much inherent value.
 00:07:09 --> 00:07:11: In that in that
 00:07:11 --> 00:07:13: approach, yeah, it's it's been really,
 00:07:13 --> 00:07:15: really rich, like beyond our expectations.
 00:07:15 --> 00:07:19: I don't know if a lot of people know this
 00:07:19 --> 00:07:21: who are listening to this podcast,
 00:07:21 --> 00:07:25: but HDMI recently went through a very significant rebranding.
 00:07:25 --> 00:07:27: I mean, the logo, communication,
 00:07:27 --> 00:07:31: Web style, website style reads very different than the
 previous
 00:07:31 --> 00:07:31: version,
 00:07:31 --> 00:07:35: and I'd love some insight on your approach to branding
 00:07:35 --> 00:07:36: and communication.
 00:07:36 --> 00:07:39: And why. Take the pivot into this rebranded version.
 00:07:39 --> 00:07:41: We're seeing today. Yeah,
 00:07:41 --> 00:07:43: I'd love to and it it kind of ties into
 00:07:43 --> 00:07:44: the conversation.
 00:07:44 --> 00:07:47: We just had around around the fact that we were
 00:07:47 --> 00:07:49: changing as a firm and changing who not as who
 00:07:49 --> 00:07:51: we are but how we how we go about our
 00:07:51 --> 00:07:53: practice and what we want to do.
 00:07:53 --> 00:07:55: And so I think we realized that our previous brand
 00:07:55 --> 00:07:57: really reflected it was still hanging on a little bit
 00:07:57 --> 00:07:59: more to more traditional architectural practice.
 00:07:59 --> 00:08:02: You know it had the name architecture and design in
 00:08:02 --> 00:08:02: it,
 00:08:02 --> 00:08:04: which was a move for us to acknowledge that we
 00:08:04 --> 00:08:05: had other design types.
 00:08:05 --> 00:08:07: But you know the actual logo itself was,
 00:08:07 --> 00:08:09: you know there was black and white.
 00:08:09 --> 00:08:11: It had quite kind of hard lines.
 00:08:11 --> 00:08:13: Even the photography style. The way we kind of captured
 00:08:13 --> 00:08:16: our our buildings and spaces and places was you didn't
 00:08:16 --> 00:08:17: have a lot of people in it.
 00:08:17 --> 00:08:20: It was much more traditional in terms of how architecture
 00:08:20 --> 00:08:21: kind of shows up in magazines and things,
 00:08:21 --> 00:08:24: and I think we we felt a little bit.
 00:08:24 --> 00:08:26: Honestly like my analogy would be it felt a bit
 00:08:26 --> 00:08:28: like we were wearing clothes that still fit us but

00:08:28 --> 00:08:30: didn't quite reflect who we were.
00:08:30 --> 00:08:31: Or maybe who we wanted to be.
00:08:31 --> 00:08:34: So yeah, it's been wonderful having our own internal kind
00:08:34 --> 00:08:35: of graphic design and branding team.
00:08:35 --> 00:08:37: And so some of the things you might see is
00:08:37 --> 00:08:40: that we kind of moved away from that kind of
00:08:40 --> 00:08:42: upper case firmness to sort of lower case.
00:08:42 --> 00:08:44: Letters that are a little bit less legible.
00:08:44 --> 00:08:46: They focus a little bit less on the names and
00:08:46 --> 00:08:47: more about the idea of.
00:08:47 --> 00:08:49: I think we're trying to reflect the idea of collaboration.
00:08:49 --> 00:08:52: You know, HC may have some market values we didn't
00:08:52 --> 00:08:52: want to,
00:08:52 --> 00:08:54: you know, move entirely away from that,
00:08:54 --> 00:08:56: but. You know we wanted to,
00:08:56 --> 00:08:58: just to be honest, we want to place ourselves differently
00:08:58 --> 00:09:00: in the industry and have people know about all these
00:09:00 --> 00:09:03: other things that we were doing that weren't really reflected
00:09:03 --> 00:09:04: in how we are showing up in the world.
00:09:04 --> 00:09:06: From a branding perspective. Uhm,
00:09:06 --> 00:09:08: yeah. So I think one of the things we've had
00:09:08 --> 00:09:10: for quite some time as this website experiment which was
00:09:10 --> 00:09:12: was kind of it was our old brand,
00:09:12 --> 00:09:13: but we would be kind of instead of having A
00:09:14 --> 00:09:16: traditional website that kind of showcased our work,
00:09:16 --> 00:09:17: we always had this quite.
00:09:17 --> 00:09:18: We started off with a question saying,
00:09:18 --> 00:09:20: you know, we'd show a photograph and say,
00:09:20 --> 00:09:22: you know, what would you like to see here?
00:09:22 --> 00:09:25: Or how do you feel about you know this issue?
00:09:25 --> 00:09:27: So we were we were we were getting to this
00:09:27 --> 00:09:30: idea of inviting people in to be more a part
00:09:30 --> 00:09:30: of US,
00:09:30 --> 00:09:32: and I think we reached the brand,
00:09:32 --> 00:09:35: hopefully really. Celebrates, I think a couple key things would
00:09:35 --> 00:09:37: be this idea that we wanted to acknowledge that there
00:09:37 --> 00:09:40: are so many people with individual curiosity's within the firm,
00:09:40 --> 00:09:42: and we wanted to kind of lead with that.
00:09:42 --> 00:09:44: I think there's been this long kind of myth that's
00:09:45 --> 00:09:46: been sold about architects.
00:09:46 --> 00:09:48: As you know, a single individual at the top of
00:09:48 --> 00:09:49: a pyramid,

00:09:49 --> 00:09:51: and you know one big idea that comes from one person.

00:09:51 --> 00:09:52:

00:09:52 --> 00:09:54: And in practice anybody who works with architects.

00:09:54 --> 00:09:56: Kind of, I hope, knows that that that's not the way it is.

00:09:56 --> 00:09:57:

00:09:57 --> 00:09:59: It's really about a collective of ideas.

00:09:59 --> 00:10:01: And then I think the other really big thing we wanted to showcase in the brand.

00:10:01 --> 00:10:03:

00:10:03 --> 00:10:04: Was that moments of real meaningful?

00:10:04 --> 00:10:07: Life happened in our in our community buildings and the spaces that we work on and we wanted to reflect that even in terms of how we document our buildings.

00:10:07 --> 00:10:09:

00:10:09 --> 00:10:12: And I think one of the interesting things we did was start kind of crowdsourcing photographs.

00:10:12 --> 00:10:14:

00:10:14 --> 00:10:16: Actually, where we, if we found images of our work through other people's Instagram feeds, would reach out and say hey we love this picture of the you know you and your family playing at this space or getting a book in this library.

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00:10:24 --> 00:10:27:

00:10:27 --> 00:10:29: Are you OK if we use this image on our site and we just got all this kind of amazing richness of people actually being human and?

00:10:29 --> 00:10:31:

00:10:31 --> 00:10:33:

00:10:33 --> 00:10:35: And doing the things we want them to do in our buildings.

00:10:35 --> 00:10:36:

00:10:36 --> 00:10:38: Yes, I think the logo really is was a big way of reflecting that.

00:10:38 --> 00:10:39:

00:10:39 --> 00:10:41: It's much more playful. It's got warm colors in it, and I think I guess the last thing I would say is that it's I think what we want it to be.

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00:10:46 --> 00:10:46:

00:10:46 --> 00:10:48: As kind of a promise to the communities that we serve,

00:10:48 --> 00:10:49:

00:10:49 --> 00:10:51: that that's how we want to engage with them.

00:10:51 --> 00:10:54: It's how we want to go through our design process.

00:10:54 --> 00:10:56: And then it's hopefully reflects,

00:10:56 --> 00:10:58: reflects that that that about us.

00:10:58 --> 00:10:59:

00:10:59 --> 00:11:03: I really like that. You've sort of taken an intangible quality and reflected that through,

00:11:03 --> 00:11:04:

00:11:04 --> 00:11:08: you know, graphics. Can you tell me how does that now get translated into the architecture?

00:11:08 --> 00:11:11:

00:11:11 --> 00:11:15: So I love that you guys have changed your approach

00:11:15 --> 00:11:19: with regards to I want to say almost post completion,
00:11:19 --> 00:11:24: right? Like you're, you're now crowdsourcing photos and you're crowdsourcing.

00:11:24 --> 00:11:27: Experiences, let's take let's rewind and say we're at the
00:11:27 --> 00:11:29: we're at the schematic stage of a drawing,
00:11:29 --> 00:11:31: and we're thinking about a building.
00:11:31 --> 00:11:33: How has that now rebranding and new approach?
00:11:33 --> 00:11:35: How does that manifest in that stage?
00:11:35 --> 00:11:36: That's such a great question,
00:11:36 --> 00:11:37: and I love
00:11:37 --> 00:11:39: that you asked, and I think you started that you
00:11:39 --> 00:11:41: started your question with the idea.
00:11:41 --> 00:11:43: I think of the intangible,
00:11:43 --> 00:11:44: like how do we like?
00:11:44 --> 00:11:46: How do we make that tangible?
00:11:46 --> 00:11:48: And I think that is something that when we when
00:11:48 --> 00:11:50: we talk about maximizing our impact,
00:11:50 --> 00:11:52: that's always the really challenging question.
00:11:52 --> 00:11:54: It's one we've we've been working actually for several years.
00:11:54 --> 00:11:57: Now on a framework called the fresh for calling it
00:11:57 --> 00:12:00: the social impact guide where we can figure out.
00:12:00 --> 00:12:02: OK, we we may have set out these visions and
00:12:02 --> 00:12:05: these values with the community about you know community building
00:12:05 --> 00:12:08: and connections and maybe perhaps making a welcoming,
00:12:08 --> 00:12:10: inclusive space. How do we know in the end that
00:12:10 --> 00:12:13: we have achieved that through through the work and we
00:12:13 --> 00:12:16: have all these great metrics for environmental performance of our
00:12:16 --> 00:12:18: building and for years. And you know,
00:12:18 --> 00:12:21: really proud of that and part of the whole industry
00:12:21 --> 00:12:22: for kind of shifting around.
00:12:22 --> 00:12:24: You know, lead and addressing the climate.
00:12:24 --> 00:12:27: Prices through those, those really tangible metrics,
00:12:27 --> 00:12:30: but we don't have a way of capturing the intangible
00:12:30 --> 00:12:33: things like the communications between people,
00:12:33 --> 00:12:35: how people's ability to access a building,
00:12:35 --> 00:12:37: so we're moving cultural barriers,
00:12:37 --> 00:12:39: removing social equity, and cost barriers.
00:12:39 --> 00:12:42: All the intangible barriers to people coming into buildings,
00:12:42 --> 00:12:45: and what that actually means at a community scale around
00:12:45 --> 00:12:47: addressing loneliness and community resilience.
00:12:47 --> 00:12:49: So we're trying really hard,

00:12:49 --> 00:12:51: actually, that's part of the answer.

00:12:51 --> 00:12:55: The question to develop a framework where we can actually track.

00:12:55 --> 00:12:55: Track things like access Inclusion,

00:12:55 --> 00:12:57: health and well being community resilience so our post occupancy

00:12:57 --> 00:13:00: work is actually going back and saying OK,

00:13:00 --> 00:13:02: we set a vision statement with the client and we

00:13:02 --> 00:13:05: had a series of principles.

00:13:05 --> 00:13:07: How can we measure those outcomes in let's say?

00:13:07 --> 00:13:11: Better attendance rates and better academic performance,

00:13:11 --> 00:13:12: perhaps at some of our high schools.

00:13:12 --> 00:13:14: If we have a before and after,

00:13:14 --> 00:13:15: we can check from a usage rates,

00:13:15 --> 00:13:17: but also just can we go back to the community

00:13:17 --> 00:13:19: and engage with them again?

00:13:19 --> 00:13:21: Two years five years after and say,

00:13:21 --> 00:13:22: you know, do you feel more connected to your community

00:13:22 --> 00:13:25: as a result of this building?

00:13:25 --> 00:13:26: So there's so? I guess part of the answer to

00:13:26 --> 00:13:28: the question is,

00:13:28 --> 00:13:29: it's around what are we trying?

00:13:29 --> 00:13:30: What are we trying to achieve?

00:13:30 --> 00:13:32: And I think it's been huge for us establishing and

00:13:32 --> 00:13:34: really getting our clients on board.

00:13:34 --> 00:13:35: And again, they're really lucky to work with community,

00:13:35 --> 00:13:37: you know, Parks and Recreation a lot of time there

00:13:37 --> 00:13:40: and libraries and.

00:13:40 --> 00:13:41: Certain culture folks. They're really.

00:13:41 --> 00:13:42: They're all about the impact in the and and you

00:13:42 --> 00:13:44: know the end result of that at a community scale.

00:13:44 --> 00:13:47: So they're really on board with working on that with

00:13:47 --> 00:13:50: us.

00:13:50 --> 00:13:50: But in terms of your really specific question around schematic

00:13:50 --> 00:13:53: design,

00:13:53 --> 00:13:53: I think that doing the kind of engagement that we

00:13:53 --> 00:13:56: are quite often now able to do.

00:13:56 --> 00:13:58: You know, having the social impact researchers on our team

00:13:58 --> 00:14:01: to be able to sit with us and talk a

00:14:01 --> 00:14:03: little bit about the impact of putting something here or

00:14:03 --> 00:14:06: there or creating social moments in spaces.

00:14:06 --> 00:14:08: I think one of the big things for us would

00:14:08 --> 00:14:11:

00:14:11 --> 00:14:12: be.
 00:14:12 --> 00:14:14: Really working with our clients to convince them that some
 00:14:14 --> 00:14:16: of the program spaces that make up a place,
 00:14:16 --> 00:14:18: whether it's like the gymnasium,
 00:14:18 --> 00:14:19: the fitness center, the pool,
 00:14:19 --> 00:14:20: those are huge and important,
 00:14:20 --> 00:14:23: but actually almost equally or maybe more important is what
 00:14:23 --> 00:14:25: we call the in between spaces like kind of the
 00:14:25 --> 00:14:28: glue spaces where people actually they might come to
 engage
 00:14:28 --> 00:14:30: in a sport or to get a library book,
 00:14:30 --> 00:14:32: but I think if you put a cafe there and
 00:14:32 --> 00:14:35: you provide seating and Wi-Fi and you know a great
 00:14:35 --> 00:14:38: view of people will stay longer and they're much more
 00:14:38 --> 00:14:40: likely to kind of bump into someone they know or
 00:14:40 --> 00:14:42: make a new connection.
 00:14:42 --> 00:14:44: And so it wasn't really seeing the needle shift quite
 00:14:44 --> 00:14:47: a bit in terms of people understanding that the kind
 00:14:47 --> 00:14:47: of really,
 00:14:47 --> 00:14:49: truly public spaces, interior and exterior,
 00:14:49 --> 00:14:51: are really the fabric of the community and rentals.
 00:14:51 --> 00:14:53: Really important connections happen, so that's kind of
 shaping our
 00:14:53 --> 00:14:54: thinking.
 00:14:54 --> 00:14:56: But I think the other piece of it is how
 00:14:56 --> 00:14:58: do we know we're making progress?
 00:14:58 --> 00:15:00: And that the how do you measure the intangible?
 00:15:00 --> 00:15:03: So we really as a firm trying to get out
 00:15:03 --> 00:15:04: and get onto that.
 00:15:04 --> 00:15:05: I
 00:15:05 --> 00:15:08: love how you touched on the spaces in between because
 00:15:08 --> 00:15:10: it's it's sort of that leftover space where you know
 00:15:10 --> 00:15:12: we're focusing on private.
 00:15:12 --> 00:15:15: It's it's almost like we're focusing on the private and
 00:15:15 --> 00:15:16: focusing on the public,
 00:15:16 --> 00:15:18: but there's that semi private semi public.
 00:15:18 --> 00:15:20: That sort of falls through the cracks,
 00:15:20 --> 00:15:22: something that I think definitely works in.
 00:15:22 --> 00:15:24: Your benefit is that HDML works with a lot of
 00:15:25 --> 00:15:25: public entities.
 00:15:25 --> 00:15:27: You mentioned, you know, park boards,
 00:15:27 --> 00:15:30: community centers, how do you see that?

00:15:30 --> 00:15:33: Approach in the non public sector you know.

00:15:33 --> 00:15:36: So if I I'm where I'm HDMI working with a

00:15:36 --> 00:15:40: private developer who just wants to build,

00:15:40 --> 00:15:42: you know, a spec house.

00:15:42 --> 00:15:45: Four to six story wood frame as little amenities as

00:15:45 --> 00:15:46: possible,

00:15:46 --> 00:15:48: you know maximize floor plate efficiency.

00:15:48 --> 00:15:52: How do you? How do you see that your learnings

00:15:52 --> 00:15:56: and your your results inform and and maybe alter that

00:15:56 --> 00:15:58: that very traditional approach?

00:15:58 --> 00:15:59: Yeah, that's

00:15:59 --> 00:16:02: also really interesting question and I will.

00:16:02 --> 00:16:03: Touch a little bit on,

00:16:03 --> 00:16:05: we are we are I am right now working with

00:16:05 --> 00:16:08: a private developer on a planned Community facility in

00:16:08 --> 00:16:11: Coquitlam

00:16:11 --> 00:16:14: that is quite they're really trying to achieve incredible and

00:16:14 --> 00:16:15: high social social outcomes. The work and maybe I'll talk

00:16:15 --> 00:16:18: a little bit about that,

00:16:18 --> 00:16:20: but I guess to your question it's really,

00:16:20 --> 00:16:23: I think about values and when we think about if

00:16:23 --> 00:16:26: I look back on the idea of branding and and

00:16:26 --> 00:16:28: having the the kind of interdisciplinary team that we have,

00:16:28 --> 00:16:31: I think a lot of the time it is.

00:16:31 --> 00:16:32: It is trying to understand what is valuable to people

00:16:32 --> 00:16:34: and I think.

00:16:34 --> 00:16:36: You know, for a lot of our,

00:16:36 --> 00:16:37: for a lot of private developers,

00:16:37 --> 00:16:40: the value is in, you know,

00:16:40 --> 00:16:43: the reality is they they wanted to have a competitive

00:16:43 --> 00:16:46: edge.

00:16:46 --> 00:16:49: You know what makes their four or six story walk

00:16:49 --> 00:16:50: up more desirable and perhaps cell versus the one down

00:16:50 --> 00:16:53: the street.

00:16:53 --> 00:16:54: And I think we are increasingly understanding that people

00:16:54 --> 00:16:56: are looking for more.

00:16:56 --> 00:16:59: People want to be able to connect so that there

00:16:59 --> 00:17:01: is actually value.

00:17:01 --> 00:17:04: And that's you know, I think I think our our

00:17:04 --> 00:17:07: community clients see that and they get and they understand

00:17:07 --> 00:17:10: that that's the business that they're in.

00:17:10 --> 00:17:13: But I think our role in terms of branding communication.

00:17:04 --> 00:17:05: And in visual visual languages,
00:17:05 --> 00:17:08: is trying to explain what the differences explain what the
00:17:08 --> 00:17:10: benefit is and try to make it visible to people.
00:17:10 --> 00:17:13: And I think in terms of branding people are so
00:17:13 --> 00:17:14: much more savvy now.
00:17:14 --> 00:17:16: I think there's we have so much more access to
00:17:16 --> 00:17:17: information.
00:17:17 --> 00:17:20: Social media is everywhere, so I think people can start
00:17:20 --> 00:17:22: to see and I think we're getting more engaged,
00:17:22 --> 00:17:25: especially in the built environment and spaces that people
want
00:17:25 --> 00:17:27: to live in terms of demanding what it is that
00:17:27 --> 00:17:27: they want.
00:17:27 --> 00:17:32: And I think the industry will shift a little bit.
00:17:32 --> 00:17:35: You know to try to provide those social more social
00:17:35 --> 00:17:35: amenities.
00:17:35 --> 00:17:36: No,
00:17:36 --> 00:17:38: you're right, especially when it comes to branding.
00:17:38 --> 00:17:41: I mean, marketing is faster than than construction.
00:17:41 --> 00:17:43: To take on innovation and redefine the story.
00:17:43 --> 00:17:46: And we're certainly seeing a lot of branding.
00:17:46 --> 00:17:49: Now, take the approach of community building and you know
00:17:49 --> 00:17:50: new tech,
00:17:50 --> 00:17:54: new condominiums and apartment projects come out with
branding that's
00:17:54 --> 00:17:56: very different than what we would have seen.
00:17:56 --> 00:17:59: You know 510 years from now.
00:17:59 --> 00:18:03: What I love about your process with the rebranding is
00:18:03 --> 00:18:06: is is you have your branding team in house.
00:18:06 --> 00:18:09: So you've fully managed that process from A-Z.
00:18:09 --> 00:18:12: That's first of all very different than you know,
00:18:12 --> 00:18:14: a lot of other businesses,
00:18:14 --> 00:18:18: particularly architecture, that's also very different than how
the development
00:18:18 --> 00:18:20: industry markets its projects.
00:18:20 --> 00:18:23: So you know, you want to imagine that you've nailed
00:18:24 --> 00:18:26: down your branding as a company,
00:18:26 --> 00:18:30: and then, let's say a private developer comes in.
00:18:30 --> 00:18:32: Works with you guys to build a building.
00:18:32 --> 00:18:36: They then outsource their marketing to a third party that
00:18:36 --> 00:18:39: may or may not capture the right message that may
00:18:39 --> 00:18:41: or may not highlight the right spaces.

00:18:41 --> 00:18:43: How does that you know?

00:18:43 --> 00:18:47: First of all, how has why take your branding in-house

00:18:47 --> 00:18:50: has how what has been the successes and results behind

00:18:50 --> 00:18:51: that?

00:18:51 --> 00:18:54: And how do you see that evolving when it comes

00:18:54 --> 00:18:55: to the developer side?

00:18:56 --> 00:18:58: Yeah, I I think for us,

00:18:58 --> 00:19:00: if I'm honest, we've been on a journey at least

00:19:00 --> 00:19:01: for five years.

00:19:01 --> 00:19:05: Maybe a little bit longer than that where we really.

00:19:05 --> 00:19:08: At the leadership level sat down and decided you know

00:19:08 --> 00:19:09: what to do.

00:19:09 --> 00:19:12: Maybe silly to understand our vision and to really lead

00:19:13 --> 00:19:15: with our vision and our values.

00:19:15 --> 00:19:18: And. I think that as I said it,

00:19:18 --> 00:19:20: like that idea to have more impact.

00:19:20 --> 00:19:23: I think our first thinking was that you know we

00:19:23 --> 00:19:26: can bring in our visual and communication team when we

00:19:26 --> 00:19:29: brought them in at a very small scale and I

00:19:29 --> 00:19:31: think our first thinking, if I'm really honest,

00:19:31 --> 00:19:33: Judy was like these, you know this these this team

00:19:33 --> 00:19:36: will help us better communicator architectural ideas and they

00:19:36 --> 00:19:40: will

00:19:36 --> 00:19:40: amplify our architecture and we were very architectural

00:19:40 --> 00:19:41: centered about

00:19:40 --> 00:19:41: it. And then, you know,

00:19:41 --> 00:19:43: in really quickly, really early on,

00:19:43 --> 00:19:46: we just saw the impact was so much greater than

00:19:46 --> 00:19:47: that that.

00:19:47 --> 00:19:49: You know the way that they were able to help

00:19:50 --> 00:19:53: us communicate ideas to our end customers like the

00:19:53 --> 00:19:56: Community

00:19:53 --> 00:19:56: and our clients was quite transformative and they helped us

00:19:56 --> 00:19:59: with that. So I think we immediately saw the impact

00:19:59 --> 00:20:00: there.

00:20:00 --> 00:20:03: But we also. They were helping us communicate ideas more

00:20:03 --> 00:20:06: effectively through branded campaigns with our existing

00:20:06 --> 00:20:09: clients.

00:20:06 --> 00:20:09: So if we had a new community building and we

00:20:09 --> 00:20:10: would have,

00:20:10 --> 00:20:12: like I said, we have engagement in House and we

00:20:12 --> 00:20:15: wanted to connect with the Community in a real in

00:20:15 --> 00:20:17: a really meaningful way.

00:20:17 --> 00:20:19: We had them. We brought them in to help us

00:20:19 --> 00:20:22: kind of create a wordmark and a branded campaign for

00:20:22 --> 00:20:25: those initiatives and we just saw the impact in terms

00:20:25 --> 00:20:27: of the uptake in in participation rates.

00:20:27 --> 00:20:30: Even just the idea of getting people kind of excited

00:20:30 --> 00:20:31: and again telling a story.

00:20:31 --> 00:20:33: But what this building could be like?

00:20:33 --> 00:20:37: We're just amazed by their approach and their perspective

00:20:37 --> 00:20:38: and

00:20:37 --> 00:20:38: where and where it took us.

00:20:38 --> 00:20:41: So you know what? What happened from Watford.

00:20:41 --> 00:20:44: Something quite small. We had all these engage

00:20:44 --> 00:20:47: engagement campaigns

00:20:44 --> 00:20:47: that really kind of grab peoples attention and got a

00:20:47 --> 00:20:49: little bit of of notice.

00:20:49 --> 00:20:51: I would say and then pretty quickly we had external

00:20:52 --> 00:20:55: clients asking us if our team could could do rebranding

00:20:55 --> 00:20:58: for them and a classic like really great significant values

00:20:58 --> 00:21:00: align client for us was was pacifist Canada.

00:21:00 --> 00:21:04: It's now possible Canada it was at the time.

00:21:04 --> 00:21:06: Canadian Passivhaus Institute and I hope A lot of your

00:21:06 --> 00:21:07: listeners dealing in the built environment.

00:21:07 --> 00:21:09: I've heard of passive house,

00:21:09 --> 00:21:11: but just in case, it's a really kind of ultra

00:21:11 --> 00:21:13: low energy certification program that I think is one of

00:21:13 --> 00:21:15: our really key tools and India dressing.

00:21:15 --> 00:21:17: Reduction of climate emissions. So when we had came and

00:21:17 --> 00:21:18: passed,

00:21:18 --> 00:21:19: both institute come to us and say,

00:21:19 --> 00:21:21: could we do a re rent?

00:21:21 --> 00:21:23: Could be worth one rear and we were just absolutely

00:21:23 --> 00:21:23: thrilled.

00:21:23 --> 00:21:25: And I think if you want to kind of Google

00:21:25 --> 00:21:28: that as a case study the the difference from can

00:21:28 --> 00:21:30: fee which I think most people didn't know to pass

00:21:30 --> 00:21:32: those Canada which I feel like is is the rear

00:21:32 --> 00:21:34: ending was incredible and amazing.

00:21:34 --> 00:21:36: And right now we're doing.

00:21:36 --> 00:21:39: Work with Squamish Nation, which is again so so impactful

00:21:39 --> 00:21:42: and kind of the work that we want to be

00:21:42 --> 00:21:42: doing.

00:21:42 --> 00:21:44: So that work is just incredible,

00:21:44 --> 00:21:46: so I guess I'm losing track of what your original
00:21:46 --> 00:21:47: question was.
00:21:47 --> 00:21:49: Maybe around the power, the power of branding.
00:21:49 --> 00:21:51: I think it evolved overtime for us,
00:21:51 --> 00:21:54: where we saw really how much more reach we could
00:21:54 --> 00:21:55: have to have more impact.
00:21:55 --> 00:21:58: I think it's that that's the real motivator for us,
00:21:58 --> 00:22:00: and I mean our team has grown.
00:22:00 --> 00:22:02: Since, you know, from one one creative joining us just
00:22:02 --> 00:22:05: specifically in terms of communication and visual branding.
00:22:05 --> 00:22:06: We have three creatives now.
00:22:06 --> 00:22:08: We have a client lead and the services lead and
00:22:09 --> 00:22:12: we are just really seeing the incredible potential they have
00:22:12 --> 00:22:13: to tell stories too too.
00:22:13 --> 00:22:16: Help us advocate on issues that we want to advocate
00:22:16 --> 00:22:17: on by kind of translating.
00:22:17 --> 00:22:20: Sometimes you know written or verbal thoughts into
something that's
00:22:20 --> 00:22:22: really engageable and digestible for people.
00:22:22 --> 00:22:24: So I think in terms of I think your original
00:22:24 --> 00:22:27: question was what did it look like to do it
00:22:27 --> 00:22:27: internally?
00:22:27 --> 00:22:30: I think we had this incredible advantage of feeling really
00:22:30 --> 00:22:30: known,
00:22:30 --> 00:22:33: like we had people on the inside who kind of
00:22:33 --> 00:22:36: knew what our vision and values were and saw how
00:22:36 --> 00:22:37: we how we actually operated.
00:22:37 --> 00:22:40: In some ways, I think they reflected us back to
00:22:40 --> 00:22:43: ourselves as leaders of the firm in a way that.
00:22:43 --> 00:22:46: That we couldn't have expected it to be honest.
00:22:46 --> 00:22:48: Maybe if we'd gone with an external.
00:22:48 --> 00:22:51: Branding UM company, but I think that's the that's the
00:22:51 --> 00:22:52: trick is to is.
00:22:52 --> 00:22:55: They're great listeners, and so if it was in terms
00:22:55 --> 00:22:56: of our external clients,
00:22:56 --> 00:22:59: I think they're listening really deeply and trying to understand
00:22:59 --> 00:23:02: authentically what an organization or or client is and then
00:23:02 --> 00:23:03: trying to reflect that visually.
00:23:05 --> 00:23:07: It really touches on the importance of bringing in people
00:23:07 --> 00:23:10: with different skill sets and different experiences.
00:23:10 --> 00:23:13: Because you know me and you could be sitting on
00:23:13 --> 00:23:16: the table and we could listen to the same.

00:23:16 --> 00:23:19: We could hear the same thing but not interpret it
 00:23:19 --> 00:23:19: or or,
 00:23:19 --> 00:23:22: you know, brand it. The right way to actually reflect
 00:23:22 --> 00:23:26: the message that's been said and it's really important to.
 00:23:26 --> 00:23:30: Lupin, those players as part of our team who have
 00:23:30 --> 00:23:33: that expertise and know how have their ears on the
 00:23:33 --> 00:23:34: ground.
 00:23:34 --> 00:23:38: And no, you know, whenever we actually captured the
 00:23:38 --> 00:23:41: diversity
 00:23:41 --> 00:23:45: of the community or one have we fall into the
 00:23:45 --> 00:23:47: gap of a very niched survey that actually in fact
 00:23:47 --> 00:23:52: captures only a specific part.
 00:23:52 --> 00:23:55: Little did we know there's so much of those.
 00:23:55 --> 00:23:57: So much of the community that's seen that survey,
 00:23:57 --> 00:23:59: for example, but not actually responded,
 00:23:59 --> 00:24:03: so I commend you guys for bringing in your your
 00:24:03 --> 00:24:05: team in house and and starting to invite people that
 00:24:05 --> 00:24:08: challenge your skill set and add to that.
 00:24:08 --> 00:24:10: And having a very open approach to com pounding your
 00:24:10 --> 00:24:14: skills rather than than soloing them.
 00:24:14 --> 00:24:16: How do you? How do you see that?
 00:24:16 --> 00:24:18: In the future, how do you you know?
 00:24:18 --> 00:24:21: It seems like you guys started off by,
 00:24:21 --> 00:24:23: you know, let's let's do a test run and and
 00:24:23 --> 00:24:27: bring in someone to to brand it and it somehow
 00:24:27 --> 00:24:30: exploded into a burst of opportunities that you didn't expect.
 00:24:30 --> 00:24:30: How do you see that unfolding in parallel or or
 00:24:30 --> 00:24:32: you know,
 00:24:32 --> 00:24:34: with the practice of
 00:24:34 --> 00:24:36: HDMI? Yeah, I think it's just going to keep growing.
 00:24:36 --> 00:24:39: We're a little bit we're loving.
 00:24:39 --> 00:24:42: I think you kind of touched on the idea of
 00:24:42 --> 00:24:44: challenge like I think the other disciplines coming in are
 00:24:44 --> 00:24:45: kind of challenging us and pushing.
 00:24:45 --> 00:24:47: It's in a really good way,
 00:24:47 --> 00:24:49: which is kind of humbling,
 00:24:49 --> 00:24:50: but also it gets us somewhere so much better like
 00:24:50 --> 00:24:52: we're kind of.
 00:24:52 --> 00:24:55: I'm loving that part of like we're working with an
 00:24:55 --> 00:24:56: environmental psychologist right now on that social impact
 00:24:56 --> 00:24:56: framework that
 00:24:56 --> 00:24:56: I touched on,

00:24:56 --> 00:24:59: and it's been really great to have her perspective and

00:24:59 --> 00:24:59: say,

00:24:59 --> 00:25:00: yeah, you're saying this book?

00:25:00 --> 00:25:02: Is that really happening? And how do we?

00:25:02 --> 00:25:04: How do we capture it?

00:25:04 --> 00:25:05: How do we document it?

00:25:05 --> 00:25:07: And you know, I think the the idea of bringing

00:25:07 --> 00:25:10: more people in just makes the ability to sort of

00:25:10 --> 00:25:13: solve those bigger problems and to hold us accountable for

00:25:13 --> 00:25:14: the things that we do.

00:25:14 --> 00:25:17: And I'm really in a more robust way,

00:25:17 --> 00:25:19: so I think for us it's just.

00:25:19 --> 00:25:21: It's just the beginning and we see whether it's through

00:25:21 --> 00:25:24: collaborations on project specific things with people outside,

00:25:24 --> 00:25:26: or bring it into our own team.

00:25:26 --> 00:25:29: I think I think the I think we they can

00:25:29 --> 00:25:29: summary.

00:25:29 --> 00:25:32: I think the problems we face are getting more complex

00:25:32 --> 00:25:35: and we just need more voices at the table and

00:25:35 --> 00:25:37: it especially at the city scale,

00:25:37 --> 00:25:39: right? I think for a lot of people who are

00:25:39 --> 00:25:43: in the development industry or see this incredible impact we

00:25:43 --> 00:25:45: have on people's behavior and.

00:25:45 --> 00:25:47: Their sense of safety and happiness in cities.

00:25:47 --> 00:25:50: I think working the built environment it's so critical to

00:25:50 --> 00:25:52: always be questioning how we're doing things.

00:25:52 --> 00:25:56: And are we doing things in the right way?

00:25:56 --> 00:25:56: I

00:25:56 --> 00:25:59: think the key word of this podcast really is what

00:25:59 --> 00:26:03: you just mentioned is that projects are becoming more and

00:26:03 --> 00:26:04: more complex,

00:26:04 --> 00:26:06: and this idea of of wanting to grab it and

00:26:06 --> 00:26:09: run with it by yourself is just not going to

00:26:09 --> 00:26:13: work anymore and we need to start really incorporating more

00:26:13 --> 00:26:17: and more of that. Those diverse speakers and those diverse

00:26:17 --> 00:26:20: voices that can speak to the potential problems and solve

00:26:20 --> 00:26:23: the existing problems so that we can future proof our

00:26:23 --> 00:26:26: our cities and communities for the future.

00:26:26 --> 00:26:29: Thank you so much. This was very informative.

00:26:29 --> 00:26:32: I'm really excited about the evolution of HCMS practice for

00:26:32 --> 00:26:34: all of our speakers.

00:26:34 --> 00:26:36: HDMI has a ton of books that they publish terms

00:26:36 --> 00:26:39: of community building pools and public spaces,
00:26:39 --> 00:26:43: and I really invite anyone who's at the other end
00:26:43 --> 00:26:45: of this podcast to check them out,
00:26:45 --> 00:26:48: check out their work and their recent rebranding,
00:26:48 --> 00:26:51: Melissa. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak
00:26:51 --> 00:26:54: with you and learn a little bit more about HTML
00:26:54 --> 00:26:55: practice.
00:26:55 --> 00:26:57: Thanks Judy was a pleasure.
00:26:57 --> 00:26:58: I love the conversation so thanks for having me.

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