

Dan Diehl CEO and President of Aircuity | Transcript

Introduction ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters. The original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry. One of the few to be honored as a LEED Fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. Settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why Green Building Matters.

Charlie ([00:34](#)):

Hi everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti and today I've got Dan Diehl coming to us. He's the chief executive officer of Aircuity. I can't wait to talk about how a company like this that's been around for 20 years ahead of its time on the healthy building movement. They have devices and software that actually helps you save energy too, because I think sometimes we forget that. Dan, thanks for coming on the podcast and being with us today. Thanks for having a conversation. I always like to ask my podcast guests to take us back. Where'd you grow up? Where'd you go to school?

Dan ([01:14](#)):

I grew up outside of Philadelphia and went to grad college in mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland, and then started my career with Johnson Controls. While I was there getting an MBA at Villanova University.

Charlie ([01:34](#)):

Controls? Did you want to get into buildings? Did you have anyone that kind of had some influence on you or is like, "Hey, they were hiring and I needed to go in that direction as a job?" How'd you kind of get towards buildings and controls?

Dan ([01:49](#)):

Great question. I went into engineering with guidance of being decent at math and science, and then really liked the tangible aspect of the work. When I was recruited on campus or whatever, I thought I wanted to do engineering to get some experience, but also get more into the business side and eventually

entrepreneurship. Actually originally went to mechanical engineering school, but I quickly realized I wanted to do something a little bit more tangible. Built environment, I gravitated towards it because I liked working on projects and seeing the outcomes and being something that's very tangible. I stuck with it Johnson, I took the job as a great place to start my career. I was there for 11 years, and loved it. Learned a ton, got to do a lot of different things which led to where I am today.

Charlie ([02:49](#)):

After a couple of years there at Johnson Controls, it looked like that's when you went back for the MBA at Villanova, is that right?

Dan ([02:54](#)):

No, I got my MBA while I was at JCI as part of the strategy to elevate through the organization to further my career to branch management and executive leadership at the company. When I finished my MBA, maybe two to three years later I had an entrepreneurial opportunity that arose from JCI, a friend of mine. I went into a much more entrepreneurial versus a big company just to diversify in that maybe just do something a little bit more on my own. I did that for three years, pretty successfully, learning a whole different side of a small business and being an entrepreneur really getting out there. That was a great experience as well. I was 11 years at JCI and then I was almost eight years, but synergy until I went to a Lutron electronics for two years during business development, I knew a lot of people there. Aircurity ever since, almost going on 13 years.

Charlie ([03:59](#)):

Yeah. That time at Lutron was when LEED was really warming up. LEED has been around for over 28 years now. It's just been a good green building program. You got into energy efficiency early, but I'm not sure if you could have scripted it better to get all the different training you did. The degrees, the MBA at a very large company, then the small business entrepreneurship. You got a taste of all those. I liked that about you. Did anyone kind of open some doors along the way? Did you have any mentors or anyone that had some influence maybe kind of followed their work when you would call a mentor along the way?

Dan ([04:34](#)):

Probably three most significant. I had a boss at Johnson Controls. Joe (inaudible) since passed. He was a long time with the company and he was a great, great leader. A great developer of people and talent. He viewed himself much more as a sports coach. I think he actually rode in the Olympics at one point early in his career, but he only viewed himself as much more of a coach and a mentor than a boss. I've always tried to take that with me. He was a great influence on me in my early days. At Johnson, I got an opportunity to work with Alex Molinaroli, who's the one-time CEO there, and this was early on and well before he was a CEO. We really were part of a group. Part of the team that has kind of changed to help transform the company.

Charlie ([05:25](#)):

This isn't the Johnson that maybe some people know today. This was way before the merger and all those kinds of things. This is early as JCI. We were really kind of transforming it's when building controls was gone, kind of from Dematic to direct digital automation and really starting to work on energy efficiencies. We were doing a lot more sustainability, energy efficiency, called sustainability then. A lot more efficiency and controls projects for customers through the nineties if you will. I learned a ton obviously from Alex, as well in the early days. There's a lot of other people that are part of that too. During that time, it was more of a family friend, but it was somebody locally here who owned a company called PWI energy. PWI energy was outside of Philadelphia doing consulting. They spun out a group that was doing carbon accounting and carbon and energy and sustainability projects for large pharmaceutical companies around the globe. I saw that really early on and they also were way ahead of their time. They developed a software platform. A lot of really cool stuff. A bunch of brilliant people there and Joe was the president of that company. He was always super great mentor and leader again from somebody I saw early on, that was kind of thinking that way again, before the word sustainability was probably the new word. They were doing all the same activities with our customers. Definitely a handful of people, but again, I think it's what I tried to get into. Now it is to give back, but it's more like coaching, mentorship helping others kind of long to further their career. They're interested in helping. It's a great business because you help the end customer, but you also help the greater good, the planet, and in the world. It's a great business in that regard.

Charlie ([07:17](#)):

Absolutely man, thanks for taking us there. Let's talk about how you got to Aircuity 2008. That was a wild year here for most of us. As we got to know each other, I got laid off in November, 2008 from all the largest real estate developers in the US. They were an early adopter of LEED. Always wanted to be an entrepreneur. It nudged me to start my company. It worked out. You were coming in as I understand it around October, 2008. What was it like then? You've made quite a career there and now you're CEO. Tell us what it was like then, and walk us through your evolution of Aircuity probably.

Dan ([08:01](#)):

I can make it super straightforward, so it's really interesting. I did Johnson Controls and Phoenix controls had a relationship in the early nineties. I actually met Gordon Sharp, founder of Phoenix Controls at that time, who also happens to be the founder of Aircuity. I always knew and always really liked, I went to training at Phoenix, while I was at JCI, I was in a lot of large pharmaceutical companies with [inaudible], Merck and J and J and some other companies in the local Philadelphia, New Jersey area as an account manager. I got trained on this product relationship that Johnson, Phoenix had. I met Gordon Sharp. You always saw he was an incredible, brilliant invention and always thinking two steps ahead. I always knew of him and kind of followed his career and followed Phoenix and got to do a lot of work with Phoenix, but like in a lot.

Dan ([09:02](#)):

I actually heard of the opportunity through a friend who was on the board of Aircuity. I was at Lutron at the time doing business development. I really like Lutron and think about the world of the company and the leadership there. I just took a flyer. I actually was really interested in just this care coordinator, what his next vision was, what was going on. I think this is a little bit of a segue. I saw the world from I've been in lighting and energy conservation. A lot of that was driven with lighting and I saw that the advent of LEDs being maybe the last mile of the energy efficiency related to lighting. I was kinda thinking at the time of what's next? What's really going to drive the next wave of massive efficiency in the built environment.

Charlie ([09:50](#)):

In talking to Gordon and learning more and understanding the business the way I did, I kind of felt that that was around ventilation and it was around tackling some

of the biggest energy using buildings on a campus. One thing to learn about when we look at a university campus as an example, and maybe we're doing an energy project for that customer back in the day, we would walk by the lab because they were too complicated and everybody felt they needed the ventilation rates that they had, but they were always the most energy intensive buildings. It wasn't by two-fold, it was by five fold. I kind of was piecing that together in my head and just kind of thinking, "Wow, we can really tackle this big problem" Aircurity be a part of that's really the next wave of efficiency and opportunity in the built environment.

Dan ([10:36](#)):

Early days I started with the company when we had less than 25 customers and they were early adopters just trying it out. The idea that when I joined was to try and really expand it and grow it to what it is today. We're in 17 countries and thousands of projects and just all around all the vertical markets, et cetera. It's been a super fun ride. Luckily I always say luck, but it turned out to be exactly what I thought it would be. It still is actually to this day. It's still largely untapped in terms of managing and controlling ventilation buildings. If we're going to get to net zero requirement, carbon neutrality, we're going to need to continue to adopt technology, to get buildings to do more. The right amount of air, where and when needed and to do it as efficiently as possible, and also do it as healthy and safe as possible. The early days of how I got to Aircurity and a little bit about what attracted you there.

Charlie ([11:28](#)):

Thank you for taking us there, Dan. It sounds like it's been a great ride. I'd argue, we get to look at a lot of different companies and prompt tech and software and how we can help with air quality and energy efficiency. You guys are kind of a legacy in this 20 years. You've been there, 13 plus. Tell us a little more, what kind of products and services I think on your website. I read that air quality as a service. Tell me a little more about what your main offering is and maybe give a couple examples of some projects you're really proud of.

Dan ([12:06](#)):

We install value propositions around accurate, indoor air quality, indoor environmental quality as well, but either one's fine. Indoor air quality, we want to provide accurate measurement and we want to do that over the life of the building. We want to do that as economically as possible for the end customer. So

that's the foundational kind of hardware installed platform that goes into the building. We then ensure that all that system is kind of working as good as new from day one. As you can imagine, people aren't gonna install a system like that in a laboratory or OR or any type of critical environment, if it's not going to be working over the life of building. We provide a hardware assurance, a warranty for warranty full coverage of the whole system.

Charlie ([12:57](#)):

We're always maintaining that for the customer. It's not another deferred maintenance item that gets put in and then forgotten about or doesn't work. It needs to maintain that delivering that sustainable healthy environment. The last leg of that is the analytics and the services. We also take all that data and provide it back to a multitude of constituents. What's really interesting about our platform versus some others in the built environment is most are geared towards facility engineers. When you look at air quality, you start to get into a lot of other constituents, environmental health and safety, infection control, animal care professionals, researchers, sustainability from the C schools. They want to understand that they have a good healthy production environment. It becomes a much bigger value proposition and there's a lot more constituents on the tough side.

Charlie ([13:54](#)):

It makes it a little bit harder for us to kind of really engage with customers. It's not a widget sale. We really work with our customers. We're not trying to do projects. We're trying to work with University of Pennsylvania approaching 30 of their buildings and we'll work with a lot of different constituents on the campus and what we're hoping to do over 20, 30 years. That's kind of the value proposition that we offer projects and customers that we've most proud of. I love the fact that we do schools and Apple board headquarters and University of Pennsylvania or University of California, Irvine. We have over 250 higher ed campuses. We're doing a lot of work now with Bristol-Myers Squibb and data. A lot of life sciences and pharmaceuticals are really coming back in a big way. We were kind of hoping nothing is important to me. [inaudible], I mentioned, and you can not get sick. It's important for the built environment universally. And We hope wherever we can to make sure that we've got that value proposition that we do to all those different vertical markets and customers that we work with. It's like a kid there's no

favorite. I'm proud of them all to be honest with you, but obviously we do get to work with some really top notch clients and that's exciting obviously.

Charlie ([14:57](#)):

Enjoy your work there on the team and growing new locations. Anything else that you look back on that you're really proud of? Again, it could just be some of your personal and career highlights. What are one or two things you're really proud of?

Dan ([15:49](#)):

Personally, I get the most satisfaction. What makes me happy is seeing good successful projects for our customers and seeing them happy and seeing them satisfied with what we did for them. That's like the number one goal. I think about the same thing for anybody that I worked with people. Developing the team around you, this never doing this stuff alone. I really enjoy seeing younger people come into the industry and the light bulb goes off and they get it and they begin helping us just get better and improve and adopt. The one thing about this industry, you probably noticed really well from all the years you've been in. It is it doesn't necessarily move fast. Buildings have a 30 year life cycle, you have a lot of consulting engineers. You've got a lot of old GAAP leaves, the Johnson's and the Siemens and the trains with the world that they're Titanic.

Dan ([16:52](#)):

They're not going to turn quickly. When you, especially from coming from what we've done, which is infuse a different way of thinking in a new technology that doesn't happen quickly, but like all technologies that are better, or if you look at electrification of cars, you can really see five years ago, they said we were going to be driving gas cars with build 2080. They're saying you're going to be completely gone by 2035 or by the end of the 2030s. What happens in all of these technologies, it starts out slow, it ramps up, but then it goes exponential. I do think that indoor air quality measurement, accurate indoor air quality measurement hopefully is going to be ubiquitous in the built environment. I think healthy and sustainable buildings are going to be a very important part of getting to carbon neutrality.

Dan ([17:43](#)):

There's a better way and we've proven it, but it doesn't mean we're the ones that can do it, but it means that it can be done. It absolutely saves a ton of energy. You

can provide a better environment and you can learn a lot with the data that you collect about where it's not working correctly and what needs to be done and where you might need to be. You can also work more smartly to adjust operating controls. Look at all the buyers we've been having lately. The climate is changing and there's times when you don't want to bring any more ventilation into a building because the outside air quality is so bad, or you need to make sure you're really checking in on your filtration and other strategies that you're using to clean that outside air, to make sure it's actually working.

Dan ([18:28](#)):

You start to adjust your operations and controls. Sadly we've had almost a major fire every year for the last five years, whether it's Australia, multiple in California now, recently, Oregon, Washington, Southern California. It's been an air quality battle on the east coast as you probably saw reported this last week. The world is changing, adopting, you need to provide good, safe, clean in all the environments. I think they'll be ubiquitous in the built environment. I truly believe it. I've seen it with other technologies. I watch LEDs take forever. Watching technology in the build environment. Electric motors, and nobody would put an electric motor back in the day. It was an automatic motor. It just took like 10 years and all of a sudden everybody's just switched. The slow moving nature of our industry.

Charlie ([19:15](#)):

Green build now, the next chapter is healthy buildings for a long time and then pandemic hits. How has that affected your business? Have you had to innovate at all? Has it just really accelerated what you already were good at?

Dan ([19:34](#)):

It accelerated what we were already good at, but I think interestingly, we saw kind of the market kind of split. I think some people were just reacting and trying to check the box and throw stuff in saying that they were monitoring air quality and they were collecting data. And that is very different from integrating a control system that actually controls it and providing a healthy environment, ensuring a healthy environment and knowing that the data you're getting is accurate.

Dan ([20:03](#)):

I think there was a reaction post COVID people just doing something. I think this sustainable solution is going to be an active measurement of an integrated control

and a kind of a move towards carbon neutrality. There's a little bit of COVID hangover and people just don't want to think about it anymore. What's really driving a lot of our customers right now is sustainability and carbon neutrality. We are seeing more people adopt for that, but then they say, "but we want to ensure that we have a healthy environment." It's the end. They need that and they have to have it and you want it. But where the dollars are coming from is really a push from ESG and higher ed donors who are putting money towards they don't want to see their name on the building anymore.

Charlie ([20:54](#)):

They want to know that that campus is getting carbon neutral and they want to see that carbon gain, that campus gets cooler energy. It's an interesting switch. I think that it has probably a lot more legs. It doesn't mean that indoor air quality is going to go away at all, but it's going to be there, but I think it's going to need it to be healthy, clean air, but we also need to be really energy efficient and we have to solve this poverty policy. Balancing that is about the optimization of those two things. Balancing kind of eludes trade-offs. I think what we want to do is we want to optimize both for the future, and then it can be done. I think that's where things are headed and our visits we're doing very well incrementally, exponentially better than we have a pandemic. A lot of it has been driven off that combination diet, probably there's not just one or the other,

Charlie ([21:48](#)):

Happy to hear that you keep bringing it back to the ESG, the carbon goals, the de-carbonization. You're right. Is it the long-term play and a systemic fix or is it a bandaid after benchmarking? Am I good or bad with my air quality? Happy to hear what you're doing there. A good segue for what is next. Crystal ball. If you had a Dan, what else are you and your team reading up on with this healthy building movement? Anything else that you're tracking? Something you think's coming around the corner?

Dan ([22:18](#)):

We're going to continue to evolve our platform. I do think we were ahead of the curve in terms of what we measure and if you look at WELL or RESET or any other kind of independent LEED and other organizations that are looking at these issues and in gasoline is forming a committee on indoor air quality. We've been doing it for a long time. We understand it really well. We measure everything really well,

combining that with efficiency again, integrating a little bit of the control system and strategies and doing it from sustainability. I believe that the stuff that I just spoke about, don't want to be repetitive, but it is the next decade of getting carbon neutral. One of the biggest in the market is that we see really smart people, really smart customers. The engineers alike, do not consider the full effect of diversity when looking at efficiency. People say, "I want to get carbon neutral. I'm going to switch over to electric" or something to that effect. We always preach here too, if you want to get everything as official as possible before you make some of these decisions, because it enables you to properly size all that and potentially save millions of dollars.

Dan ([23:27](#)):

We showed that to customers as an example, like in solar, if you're going to offset a building and you're going to provide that net zero, and you're going to do all that with solar, you can reduce your solar capacity that you're required to provide that building by making that building much more energy efficient. That's the common sense explanation. You need to take into account total economic value efficiency when you're looking at sustainability and efficiency and it's one thing I think that's often overlooked or maybe forgotten about. It's because of the way sometimes that discrete projects get put in buildings and it's sold by mechanical contractor, electrical contractor, lighting contractor, Aircuity's and air contractor. As much as we can, we try to constantly kind of go up to the macro level and look at the holistic approach and really help customers understand the total economic impact and how efficiency and sustainability can drive.

Dan ([24:31](#)):

You could even start those kinds of conversations with health and wellness, into the learning and the core mission of the customer. What we really like to do, we'd like to try to do if we can because the benefits are really far reaching. I think the innovation will continue to come. This sounds cliché, but when you look at AI and you look at data and analytics and intelligent data, we are spending money on that. We are trying to evolve that for our clients. To give them people don't want more information or more data, and they don't want to have to figure it all out. They want us to figure it out for them. Tell them where they're having a problem, tell them what the issue is and what the most likely causes and how can that easily be fixed. Also prioritize it. Is it something that they should be really concerned with tomorrow or today, or is it something they can get to and fix next

week? We're trying to constantly evolve the software side of our business to take all the data that we collect and provide them back with meaningful information. So that's really fun, really cool stuff. I love it. It's kind of new to me and it's exciting. I do think that you're going to continue to see that explode in the built environment which is really cool.

Charlie ([25:14](#)):

Thanks for taking us there. I like that. I just have a few more questions here to get to know you more, Dan. What would you say you're best at, what's your specialty or gifts?

Dan ([25:53](#)):

That's a cool question. What am I best at? I probably have said this in the past, but I try to be, and I hope I am balanced between technical and personable and kind of like business-wise. I try to balance, I try to always be up on the technical issues enough to understand them. To be understanding of the business side of things, how things work and common sense kind of a balance between ICU NICU kind of person. Probably not the I'm not Gordon Sharp. I'm not the guy that invented Aircuity, but I am pretty good at understanding technically exactly what we do. I think I try to be balanced on the business side of the people's side of what we do. Probably my biggest asset or strength if you will.

Dan ([26:40](#)):

I come from an outward facing role in terms of, I guess, some CEO's or maybe former CFOs or former operations. I've only been in the business development and customer facing side of the business. I really try to spend a lot of time in the market. I spend a lot of time understanding, talking directly, barring customers to try to hear what they want and they try to move the company as fast as I can towards solving their problems. That is where business is done. It's not about what we want to do. It's about what is going to help our customers. We just did some things you mentioned there were qualities and service where we've done some other really innovative things here just because customers asked us to, and we're small, we're nimble and we can.

Dan ([27:23](#)):

We'll really bend over backwards to solve customer problems. If a customer says, "Hey, can you do this, that, and the other thing for us, normally, I'm going to say

yes, and try to figure it out for the client. So that, they're all things that I think I would hope to say.

Charlie ([27:37](#)):

I'm sure your colleagues will say those things. The next question, do you have any good habits, routines or rituals or habits?

Dan ([27:47](#)):

Yeah, probably more bad habits, the good habits. I try to stay in reasonably good shape to keep a really good energy level. That's something that is a big priority for me and because, and I try to stay as young as possible and up to date with what's going on in the world, it's hard to get over. I try to listen to podcasts. I'm not as good as the readers I'd like to be. I probably work a little bit too much, but do try to take some time to read a combination or put your around business books. I listen to a lot of business podcasts. I try to listen to advice and we have a really good one, Paul Mallee here works for us. He's a consultant and he comes from the industry. I also have a really good board and a great owner of our company. Who's been incredibly supportive and a great mentor and a great leader kind of since I've gotten here to Aircurity in my business life, Wilson and in our board is made up of some incredible people that have been in the industry a really long time and are really great coaches.

Dan ([28:59](#)):

I played sports when I was a kid and I've always been a hope coachable, I try to listen to advice and really take that on. I'm not afraid to buy backed by different ideas or anything, but I also try to listen to a lot of different views and opinions and then try to help navigate us towards where we're headed. Hopefully that's a habit of mine. I reach out to people, try to get other advice and am not afraid of bouncing ideas off other people and seeing what they think. I think that's really smart of people that are coming up in the industry, and it's always been something I've really looked out for. It's a great question. You asked earlier about mentorship and just really look out for other people, ask their opinions, ask them for advice. People love to give advice and they love to kind of help others more often than I find. I'm not afraid to ask that of a customer and not afraid to ask that I've kind of the people around. I think it's a great habit. If I could say that, that's probably a really good one that I wouldn't have.

Charlie ([29:58](#)):

Just a couple more things, a bucket list as you and I get to know each other. I'm actually a fan of a bucket list. I don't know. Is there any adventure, travel, or writing a book? What are one or two things maybe on your bucket list?

Dan ([30:08](#)):

Oh, that's a really cool question. Too. Big bucket list guy in terms of the big scrolling through my head all the time I probably have a hundred I need to get to travel a lot for work and everything. I'm kind of an avid surfer and skier and all that kind of stuff. So I'd love to hit some kind of world famous spots that are on my list for those that love to travel to New Zealand. I've been in Australia luckily, but I have not been easy on so that's really top on my list. I can't think of it professionally, not as much as I only think of bucket lists more than the times of like, what's on your places to go and all that kind of stuff. Travel wise. There's definitely some other places where I'd like to go see, but they're the ones that come to mind

Charlie ([30:41](#)):

That's good, man. Most people, I find, have less than 10 items on their bucket list and that's okay. Some people don't like it and I just want to live in the present and they've maybe already traveled the world and that's totally fine too. I've got about a110 items that I've put in different categories and I try to do four or five items a year. It's just that kind of thing. I've got like an adventure one, a travel one and I've got like a sports thing. I want to sit court side at an Atlanta Hawks game. I can just splurge and spend the money on it, I want it to be special. I want to be kind of like, Hey, when am I going to do that? Unfortunately, I made it to the finals this year, but that's okay. Things like that.

Dan ([31:43](#)):

My alumni, MarylandKevin Huerter really helped out for you guys this year. I was watching closely. He is a great player, former Mr. Basketball in New York, you probably know

Charlie ([31:52](#)):

Books, I know you're a busy guy and traveling and running this company growing it, but do you find time to listen on audible or pick up a book in your hands every now and again? Is there a book you'd recommend here to the audience?

Dan ([32:12](#)):

I started doing the audible stuff, which has all the time. I'm reading a book right now. I try to pick a book each summer, but like I said, I'm not the best. My kids and my family are incredible gracious readers and do them all. I get distracted all the time, but I'm reading. I'm not a big fiction guy. I'm reading a book called last mission to Tokyo. It's a history book. My son just turned me on to a business book that I'm going to read after him, but it's called thinking fast thinking slow and that's supposed to be excellent and gets great reviews and stuff. I'm going to read that as a business book next by Pulitzer prize, winning economist. I like Freakonomics and those podcasts and stuff. I live for those. Yeah, that's pretty much between that. I definitely try to, I probably incorrectly sometimes, but I prioritize typically getting exercise and working out. By the time work's done, I do some, some of that stuff or whatever. Quick read or I'd be falling asleep or a podcast is I have our podcasts when I'm driving. I used to kill it on those when I used to drive a lot, but you don't drive as much anymore, which is good for sustainability, but bad for listening to audible books.

Charlie ([33:26](#)):

Yes, you're right. I'm in the same boat working from home quite a bit more. My wife wants to read fiction. She can flip through books. I will link to these books in the podcast show notes. I can share that with you. You see everybody's recommendations. Last two questions here as we wrap up then is any career advice you wish to not a little earlier?

Dan ([33:48](#)):

No, I want to say he wished I knew earlier but, that wouldn't be answering your question. I think I did realize it is. I think just being well-balanced is really important. I wouldn't say I'm not answering your question, but my advice is to just be well rounded, well balanced. From business, engineering, from a technical side of things, business side of things. I think, well rounded is a big benefit, no matter what you do. I think that's a huge kind of advice I'd pass on, continuing education. I'm a firm believer of it. I've been taught. I talked to the university of Maryland, uh dents quite a bit and going back just to help or give back. I always say like, everybody can take a different path, but I believe that it was very wise to end my academic career at Maryland to get working experience before going back to get a graduate degree, because it gave a lot of context and a different lens of what was

being taught. I certainly actually was a lot more motivated because it wasn't something I really wanted to pursue.

Charlie ([34:55](#)):

From a work perspective, the only other thing I would say is working smart, not necessarily hard or and also, but also kind of saying working hard. It's a little bit of an oxymoron, but I think just one thing you learn over time is that prioritization and being organized in terms of how you spend your time and being wary of where you spend your time and what you're working on. Sometimes you feel like you can really be achieving something, but it might not be well placed or appointed in, either in our business, on the right project or with the right customer. You're busy, you're doing a lot of stuff, but at the end of the day, you need to think that it's not the right fit for that project or for that customer, et cetera. You can spin your wheels quite a bit in any industry.

Charlie ([35:45](#)):

Trying to prioritize and have a methodology for doing that is really good, that is something good that I think earlier on probably time management and stuff is something that I think is not always as well taught to our kids and to the younger workforce about how to balance their days and organize their days. Sales is a great example. Like how much time do I spend on new development of customers versus pushing through existing projects versus working with customers close to working back to reach back and make sure customers that you've worked with or are happy and successful, et cetera. How do you balance all that? It can be really hard and really tough if you don't have a system process in place. Something that I would definitely advise people to try to learn as much as they possibly can.

Charlie ([36:31](#)):

How do you measure success leading indicators, not lagging indicators? Did you get that as a good point? I'm glad you went there. Last question, let's say there's someone listening. They're just now jumping into the green building or healthy building movement. Just what words of encouragement do you have for them as we wrap up, I firmly believe in all my heart that it will. It's extremely important. The built environment contributes massive amounts of carbon and inefficiencies in our current world and the way it's organized. It's very important. The second thing is it's going to be transformed and needs to be improved and transformed

over the next several decades. There's a lot of room for improvement, innovation and evolving basically cities and infrastructure.

Dan ([37:26](#)):

There's a lot of improvement to be made in it. There's a lot of evolution that's happened. It's going to be a very exciting field. It's gonna come with software, hardware, innovations, different workflows, a lot of different aspects of how you can be involved and help improve it. I think personally, you can see it, a lot of private equity money is coming into this. A lot of investment money's coming into this face and people will understand how big and important this is going to be for our future. How we use spaces, how productive and safe and healthy they are, how efficient they are, et cetera. I think it's got a lot of legs to it. It's going to be a very growing, evolving field for some time now.

Charlie ([38:12](#)):

So, jump in everybody. This has been Dan Diehl. He's the CEO of Aircuity and gets his company's role in de-carbonization and a lot of good nuggets today. Dan, thanks for spending some time with us.

Dan ([38:23](#)):

Yeah. Thank you very much for having Charlie. I really appreciate it. I really enjoyed meeting and talking to you. I think what you're doing is great.

Charlie ([38:32](#)):

I just want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the Green Building Matters Podcast. Me and the entire team are stoked and jso glad to continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you.

Introduction ([38:58](#)):

Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters projects at gbes.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbes.com/podcast for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode. You can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing, yes. Please

tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. We'll see you in next week's episode.