

Mike Merrill:

Hello and welcome back again to the Mobile Workforce Podcast. I am your host, Mike Merrill and today we are sitting down with our guest, Josh Fuller. Josh is the CEO and founder of, uh, Matic Digital, a digital strategy and talent growth company. So we are planning on having two exciting episodes with Josh and today we're going to talk first off about the right time and the right place to expand your business into new opportunities. And ah, then next week we will be talking about how to strategically share your team and resources with the businesses around you to improve productivity and profitability. So thanks again for joining us today, Josh. Looking forward to the conversation.

Josh Fuller:

Glad to be here Mike. Good to be meeting with you.

Mike Merrill:

Awesome. So uh, when we think about the word risk management, um, as it relates to businesses finding success today, what does that mean to you and what are some of the challenges that we would be looking at?

Josh Fuller:

I think to me, uh, and again, not being a risk management consultant, but I certainly manage a fair amount of risk, uh, with our company, with Maddok, um, embracing it a little bit. Uh, most people I think that I've met on the journey that are, that are running a shop have, you know, done a successful exit, are at the beginning looking up, or at the top looking down. Um, they chose to run something, to build something to go into territory nobody had settled and settle into that territory and build upon it. So risk is awesome. Um, risk is the juice. And I think being calculated and learning from mistakes, m, I know that's very vanilla, but that is time and time again just knowing where the potholes are and how to avoid them. Um, and you don't always

see them if you haven't taken the risk to learn about them. So that's kind of my approach to it is embracing it and being nimble and pivoting quick. If you find that it was a risk that didn't net what it needed.

Mike Merrill:

To net, that's a great point. So when you think of the term risk, um, what or how does somebody decide or how do they distinguish between something that's risky versus something that's maybe dangerous or irresponsible, so to speak?

Josh Fuller:

Oh jeez. Like in business or cutting off a car in traffic, that's the same thing, isn't it? In business? Um, we're an agency and um, we were recently, um, invited to pursue some business that is not total wheelhouse, um, it's adjacent to, it's connected within. So we're brand and digital within that we touch a lot. But there's also um, traditional agencies that take on pure, um, creative and that can and is defined a little bit different than a digital agency of record is just going to be focused on different pieces of the business than a creative agency of record. Um, we had the opportunity of kind of having a bit of a 360 degree. It was a very big swing. Um, and we made it to the finals, um, and got in the room with the right people, uh, and ultimately didn't, um, necessarily, uh, we weren't selected, um, and there wasn't investment. So the risk was the investment. I guess the takeaway, uh, of it, um, for us, was really happy we stepped up to that plate. Um, a lot of it was it was kind of like a paid education, um, or I guess I paid for it. Um, but it was an incredible place to go to bat against some much more established traditional agencies. Put our hat in the ring, um, come out of round one as the front runners, and going into round two as sort of the group consensus, uh, choice. Uh, we were, um, overwhelmingly, uh, the choice by many on, uh, the client team. The lead client chose another direction, and that's okay. Um, so our lesson in this one, I think, was, yeah, it was a risk. We did pure investment.

Um, it impacted quarterly, uh, outcome. And as a team, we talked about what it would look like going into it, and we talked again on the retro, about how we all felt coming out and not winning. And nobody said, well, my bonus was smaller, and that's not cool. Everybody took the risk with me, and everybody was proud of the work we did and the place we got getting into that room. We're a year and a half old companies, uh, can work 1520 years and never get into the room we got into. So the risk was, yeah, we may not win, but the reward was really valuable on this one, uh, of just the learnings of where we want to play, where we want to live. How big of a swing are we going to take, um, in the future for unpaid pursuit work? There was a lot of lessons, but, um, yeah, I mean, I'd love to be telling you that we'd won, but I probably wouldn't have time to be talking with you today if we had won. The overwhelming sense of relief was very telling of like, okay, I don't have to hire eight people to run that client now, because that would have just been a massive, massive undertaking. Um, but again, the risk of doing it was there's zero regret.

Mike Merrill:

Uh, that's great. That's great insight. So if I'm being retrospective in my own career, I can look back to times when we did something similar. We took that risk. And I think the value and this seemed to be what you were highlighting, is the education experience that you gain from having been in the room and go through that exercise, and actually to put it all out there, right, put it on the field and see what you're capable of. And now, next time you know where that threshold is, you probably know a little bit more, uh, that you probably have a higher ceiling than you might have thought you had previous, because you were actually in there and you got close. Um, there's a phrase people say, you either win or you learn, right? It's not winning and losing. You win or you learn. I also like to say, you win and you learn. And I think we can learn as much sometimes from our wins as we do from our losses, too. So it's important to learn no matter what we're doing. But what are your thoughts on that?

Josh Fuller:

No, I completely agree.

Mike Merrill:

Uh.

Josh Fuller:

There's many other stories that have involved a bit of a risk or an investment or a chance that are paying off great, but, um, I don't know why. Maybe it's the melancholy in me. I like to really elevate on the non clear wins and look for the win in it. To me, the win in it was, um, it didn't damage morale. It actually lifted it, um, in an interesting way. People saw their work. They got to really push themselves in ways that generally, you don't get the work you want if you don't try to do it and go after it. And, yeah, we do a ton of digital and sometimes in our wins bucket, we do a ton of digital strategy, whether that's web or application. And then we'll kind of be top down, given the creative, uh, direction. And in this one, we got to flex the creative freedom. And how does all this really work? What's a 360 degree brand? Really live and breathe like, um, and where does it sit? Not just at the end of this project, which is often very common formative to be on project engagements. This was a three year vision, um, and on so it was true. Ground up platform building and leveraging a pretty massive audience base. So the fact that we, again, got in there, made it through, uh, to the finals, came out, um, uh, really strong and kind of out of our own hands. Um, relationships are a hard thing to break, and another shop won the business, uh, due to some preexisting relationships. And that happens. That's okay. Um, so I think Smart Business also says, maybe ask a few more qualifying questions in the future. But no, it was a monumental moment for our team to stretch that way, um, and to not get laughed out of again, a room that many would it's a hard room to get into. So, you know, the fact that we did as well as we did, um, for our first our first outing was really impressive to me, and impressive to, uh, some, really it's not dead by any means. It was all for something. We just didn't get the win that day.

Mike Merrill:

Nice. That's a great approach to take. I think we learn from each other when we get scrappy, and we have to be out of the comfort zone and try something different or unique or new. And maybe it's not a new service or maybe it's not a new specialty necessarily. Um, maybe you're just expanding on something you already did. Or

maybe it's just a larger project. I don't know what all the differences are, but how do you determine whether something is worthwhile to go all in on, um, versus you know what, we're actually not even going to go into this deal here because it just really isn't who we are. And even if we want it, I don't know that it would be the best use of our time and resources.

Josh Fuller:

Yeah, that's a great question. I think it's very case by case. I don't think I have a playbook for that. Ah, that is short of many pages. Um, it's very individualistic. So when we're looking at a certain opportunity right now, we don't do a ton of RFP responses. Um, it's not a rule by any means. Um, RFPs do show up, but you kind of know, okay, at the RFP stage, there's a pretty big playing field. Um, there's going to be a lot of capable groups on the list, the Distro list for that. Um, is that the business we want to chase when we've got these really strong relationships that we've been building into? And would we rather be a think tank for what can we do with a client that already trusts us and wants guidance from us? Or should we go after, um, a generated email, uh, Distro we were on and be like, yeah, let's put all our effort on this. So I think one of the ways we're selective is we really look at what we have and how to build into that. Not just new streams of revenue, that's a piece of it because that's business. But again, being in the creative and the user and consumer and software side of this, there's kind of a constant appetite for evolution and a constant appetite for engagement. So even when we're not active for client A, um, on anyone engagement, um, it transcends a sales reach out when you've actually spent a little bit of time thinking about, you know, what would be great for them. Sometimes that's a ten minute lucky moment of inspiration because you saw something on a show that last weekend and we're like, ah, it made me think about them and this would be cool. I'm going to see if we can chat. Um, and there's two sides of that coin are we hassling them with a meeting to pitch them an idea we had and hey, break out the checkbooks. I mean, that's certainly one side, but we really don't want relationships like that. We really try and cultivate more of a relationship where, hey, we had this idea, we think it would be really, um, potentially impactful. It needs a lot more discovery and kind of discussion with you guys to see if it's something you want to pursue. But um, we want the approach there to be much more

seen as partner and as yeah, we didn't just finish your project and say bye.

Mike Merrill:

Um.

Josh Fuller:

When you get with some of the engagements we work on, we get so embedded into the North Star, the pain points, the personalities that are at play there, and the factors driving their business up or downstream that we very much want to, um why throw that away when the finish line is met for the one thing we did? When there's 10,000 things happening in their orbit? We do a bit of the thinking, uh, not on a dime. It's kind of a part of the nature, I think, of, um, at least myself, and definitely the people that we hire on here at Medic.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, you made a reference to maybe asking a few more questions earlier on. So, um, that's always one area I think most of us can improve as probably lead with more questions. But then in, um, hindsight being retrospective, if you look back, have you changed anything since then from what you learned to add those arrows to your quiver, so to speak, on future engagements?

Josh Fuller:

Yeah. So I said this too, and it's a bragging. Right. That's how I intended it, but now I'll say it as a lesson. Um, we're a year and a half in business. Like, getting into that room, into that type of engagement, um, everything would have had to go perfect. And that's why I sensed relief. I believe we would have rose to the challenge. I believe we had support both in our team and in the team we would have brought on and in partners. So I think we would have been very successful on an engagement like that. But, um, it also regrounded where we are. So Maddock just, um, hit its kind of stride or point of inflection last, um, fall, where we were growing at a pace where I needed more than contractors support. Um, and I needed more interfacing with the client than the time I had in the day. So basically, the first year of a company like mine is usually just permalancing. You're just hustling, you're

selling, you're doing the billing, you're doing the work, you're finding the team to help you with the work, and you're finding the client. I didn't start Maddock with a, um, um, war chest. Uh, it was pretty bootstrapped, um, and supported by some really phenomenal colleagues I've met over the years. Who, yeah. Hey, you're doing that? Oh, I might have somebody you should talk to. And it kind of blossomed from there. But no, I mean, it was just me and a laptop, um, back out in the field, and some lucky breaks that went my way. I was able to rise to the occasion. But it was really this year is when we went from, ah, one kind of all around operations support to seven employees in a scaling kind of contractor army. Uh, behind us and with us that, uh, we can plug in and grow with. But, um, having no business in that room means we need to really embrace the opportunities that are great for us. This would have been big, and there's a lot of, like, ah, amazing future and long tail work and all of this and great creative that we could get out there and the press that this will generate if we win this business. Um, all of that was there, and so very happy we went for it. But again, the grounded version is, like, would we go after that exact type of project again, given where we are as a company? And I would say no, um, we'd rather grow into that. I think on the humility aspect, there are, um, some massive, massive projects, uh, that we are doing and that we're looking at, um, that we'd love to have in the digital space, in the digital software, um, and brand engagement and ecommerce, that type of world. Um, we're doing some things in health. It's very interesting. Um, that's the wheelhouse and starting to own okay, we have a wheelhouse. And that wheelhouse is dependent on where we are right now as a company. And we're a good 50 person capability tomorrow. But, uh, are those 50 people dialed in tune to go be the creative agency of record for, uh, a, um, multinational, um, brand, like, possibly not the best fit? Again, I think we could rise to the occasion, but I don't think we'll be chasing that work. By the way, if somebody wants to call us about that, we won't say, no, let's have the talk. But we're not chasing that work right now. The work we're setting our eyes on is the work that, uh, I believe we can be the most, um, successful with, the most profitable with, um, and grow, to be honest. Um, you've heard of growing too fast, right? And I think this would have put us at risk for growing too fast. Um, again, like I said, relief. I received relief on that situation.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. One of my colleagues here, um, shares with our sales team a story, and he had a startup, and they were in this huge deal over in Europe. And to fly there and go do this presentation, um, and you could count the entire company employee roster on less than one hand. Even if you had a lawnmower accident, you still would be fine. You're still not going to run out of fingers. Uh uh, and they were competing against SAP, and they got to go first. And when it was all said and done, they were selected over SAP. And they told them, the reason why we chose you is because your presentation and your proposal were just spot on. They were thorough. They were very professional. Um, and it was from asking great questions and doing all the things. And SAP multibillion dollar company with hundreds of thousands of employees, uh, and they had even made a comment, laughing, saying, for all we know, it's you and a couple of guys in your garage. But your presentation and the confidence you've instilled in us in just everything that you've done here, it just feels like you're the right guy. And he is laughing, being, oh my gosh, I've been found out, it's me and a couple of guys in my garage. But they delivered on it and they did awesome. And was um, one of their amazing accounts that really put them on the map. And so it can happen to any of us if you're willing to ask the right questions. Put the work in and be and look and act like a billion dollar company, and, um, maybe they'll treat you like one. And then maybe you'll end up having an opportunity to grow into a lot bigger pair of boots than you walked in the door.

Josh Fuller:

Yeah, I love that story for your friend. That's amazing. And we've certainly found ourselves in a few really good situations like that, too. I don't know if we've beat out what a scope for SAP might look like, but that's neither here nor there. I love those types of stories. One of our advisors and one of my very good friends and former boss, um, started an agency, a, uh, digital software agency in Denver, late, uh, 90s, early 2000s. So one of the early, it's called Spire, and uh, Spire Digital, I was actually the CD there for a number of years, um, in the early 2010s. Um, and the fable goes, uh, you've heard of Ebags, perhaps? Yeah. So Ebags was founded in Denver. Um, he had started this

company, it was him, and like a developer, um, and he didn't even design. He was just a really good talker. And uh, he did a little design, I guess, but not much. And he ended up, um, going up against some the razor fishes and a few bigger ones out there at the time. Uh, for Ebags, this new cutting edge ecommerce bags for everyone solution that had never existed. And uh, I think it was about a half a million dollar engagement. Ah. As I understand it, and he was very literally two guys in a garage and he built a whole company around that contract and they never looked back. And um, he ran it successfully for you, employed many people, uh, uh, like I said, myself included, um, and they had a very successful exit in 2019. Um, yeah, those opportunities. What's interesting is they took a chance on him. Right. Uh, and he did the right things with it by the client, but also by growing his own company. Um, when they exited, it was a couple of hundred person company. Um, yeah, the ripple effect that had over almost two decades. Uh, it's funny, I love thinking about ripple effects of things. Um, another story for another time. But yeah, uh, there's a lot of ripple in the world. Um so I love that.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. So um, you're talking about yeah, you really probably aren't going to go out of your way to pursue an opportunity like this other one that you maybe got close on but didn't win. Um, to me, that's leadership and I think that's critical, especially in younger startup companies or companies that are really looking to scale somebody's, uh, got to make that decision. And if you make the wrong one and your staff becomes confused as to who you are or where you're going or who's steering this rudder on this ship, who's running this thing, and where are we going? Um, as opposed to just around in circles or island hopping from one to the next versus really trying to get to a destination that you're on purpose with and that your compass is set to. And there's some things that are tangible, that they can count on and that they can plan on and feel like they're on the right ship. They're working with a winner because of your vision and those other things from a leadership perspective. But as a leader, what drives you? Is it your gut? Is it data? Is it a combination? Or how do you decide where you set your course to for that direction of the company?

Josh Fuller:

Yeah, it's a couple of things. Um, I'm not an early, uh, in my lifetime person, I'm 45. So uh, a lot of it is hindsight of where, you know, I think you all want to do, we all want to do things we enjoy. Um, so I think, first of all, it's like, what kind of projects have I enjoyed? And when I asked that question, really, it's come down to what kind of partners have I enjoyed working with? It projects we're fairly um, ambidextrous on projects. Uh, we love native apps or we just build experience sites with heavy animation or we just want to do mega ecommerce all day. Um, we're comprised of strategists, designers, developers, and thinkers that we love all that stuff. Uh, my studio lead, uh, and former colleague from Deloitte headed up the chipotle, uh, UX side for their digital strategy, which is the darling story of the last decade in terms of just showing the dream of DX done right and how it can vastly outperform any expectations put upon it with revenue. And it's because it was user driven. Um, she can apply that exact same thing to a bank. She can apply that exact same thing to um, a credit card, to a health engagement app and then obviously scale that way down to, ah, a website. So it all comes into getting into this because you love solving the problem or rising to the challenge and thinking through the eyes of your users. We don't focus on any one thing as like, what we want to do. So when I'm thinking about what a good fit is, and where we're going to focus. We're going to focus on the relationships, we're going to focus on the brands we like working with. We've worked with massive, um, tourism, governments.

Mike Merrill:

Uh.

Josh Fuller:

Healthcare, uh, groups, uh, food and services groups, big ecom, uh, and construction services. Um, again, it's all about how aligned are we with that leadership team's vision of where they want to go, and can we bolt on, plug in, and do great things together. Um, so that's really where we think about now. I will say there's a satisfaction or a joy when a big digital project comes with, oh yeah. And we're really embracing, um, where our brand needs to go to support this new thing, or

where we, you know, so a bit of a 360 deg involvement. There's a tier of like, we're only focused on the website business of this. Yeah, that can feel a little boxed in. Doesn't mean it's not a fit, just means it's a little boxed in. We hope that we can flex, because I think users don't look at these brands through specific channel lenses. They're looking at this brand as a brand all in from First Touch Display on Meta or TikTok, all the way through to power user using the app every day to move their money or buy their groceries.

Mike Merrill:

Well, a brand or a logo, from my perspective, it's a representation of, uh, an experience that's supposed to invoke, um, an emotion or a feel or something within you. When you see that logo, hopefully it stirs something within you. And so what a company does with that and how they choose to monetize and also leverage and take advantage of that, is there are a lot of opportunities. But I come from construction, I came up in the industry. I used to do primarily residential custom homes. Then I started doing, um, more production homes. It was really hard to do both. And we used to frame our own, and it was like, man, I finally had to just let the framing crew go, help the subcontractor that was framing my homes, because I just didn't have time to. What I would find is my framing crew was the one in the way, holding up the house that I was the general contractor on. And it was like I had to choke my own neck. Right. If there's a problem in the pants, right?

Josh Fuller:

Yeah.

Mike Merrill:

Um, and I remember this one time I got, uh, invited, and very strongly encouraged, and this guy was literally begging. I mean, he was showing up at my house on the weekends, begging me to bid, uh, this build job on this roller skating rink. And it was like, I've never built it. There's not very many of those in the area that I live in. I mean, there's a handful within 50 miles. Not a common thing. And I looked at it and I bid it, and I'm looking at it, and my main, um, project manager and superintendent were like, let's not do that. Let's just keep building houses. Nobody wanted to do it. And so

I didn't end up taking that job. I turned it down. It was our opportunity. We had the bid and just, uh, decided we didn't want to do it. And I've always wondered, should I have done that or not? I don't know. I don't know. Who knows where you pivot from one thing or another. You got to keep moving forward so you can't really play the what if game because there's no winner in that. Um, and you got to fail forward. Right? So if we should have done it, then I'm, uh, going to go find another something like that and then we're going to give it a try because my gut is telling me that that was something I should have pursued. But ultimately we didn't. And it was probably the right call, but, uh, it probably wasn't.

Josh Fuller:

That's the thing about retrospection, uh, is like, yeah, you could okay, let's pull the thread back to your friend's story with SAP or my, my agency friend's story. What if they hadn't won that deal? And what if that was the question they're asking themselves now, today? Well, what ifs? Because I think it's a dangerous, uh, it's a slippery slope between should I have and what if. Um, and I would say resoundingly no, like, you probably shouldn't have because you're here now. You're doing you know what I mean? You've got the employees, the offering, the expertise, the specialties. Yeah. I mean, retrospection is phenomenal for growth and learning. But once for me, I own the outcome. Right. Um, whether it doesn't mean I own the decision, because I don't, I didn't own the decision on the one we didn't win, but I can own the outcome that, hey, that didn't happen, goes back to the cheesy, door closes and window opens and all of that. But I truly did have the feeling of like, well, now we're free to really work on the things that we're most well built for. There would have been a lot of cutting our teeth in real time in a high profile thing on doing pure display work and media strategy buy and placement and calendars and looking for events to promote and, uh, typical traditional agency of record type stuff. That's not wheelhouse. We're all about how do we find, attract, and attain users and get eyes to do things, uh, with our experiences. So m, it's a good marriage, but again, I'm not going to look back. Uh uh. Although the only regret you should probably have is all the savings you would have had at roller skating rings. You probably would have never had to pay.

Mike Merrill:

Right? Yeah. There you go. That's a great point. Yeah. So then if you're feeling melancholy about a project that you didn't win or maybe one that you did, right? It's like, just learn from that. Take that. Lesson and don't feel that way on the next one. We have to continue to it's like a, uh, pinball. You're bouncing off of different barriers and obstructions through life and in business. And that ball has just got to keep moving. There's no redo's. You can reinvent yourself and make different choices to become something different, but you are who and where you are. And every choice you've made in your life led you to here in this moment today. And so the way to change the future is to make a different decision next time.

Josh Fuller:

Yeah. Look, there's plenty of dead ends in business, but while you're breathing, there's no dead ends in life.

Mike Merrill:

There's one, but then it's over. That's what I'm saying. While you're breathing. Right?

Josh Fuller:

Yeah. There's one dead end, and it's coming for a while. Um, but no, I mean, there's dead ends in business, but there's no dead ends for what the next step is. Yeah, I think that's the, um, resolve that I annoyingly and to some people around me, frustratingly have is like, oh, well, we'll move in this direction, or that's a problem. That's an obstacle. This is a rudimentary.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. Call it what it is. Make a decision. It sounds like you try and look at it through the lens of humor and try and be a little bit light hearted in terms of, okay, yeah. All right, cool. New challenge. Great. All right. That one didn't work out so well, so we're going to do something different, right? Yeah.

Josh Fuller:

And sometimes there's challenges. How do we evaluate what we want? That was a piece of the question

earlier. Um, there's another side of the coin of that's just not going to work for us. We don't think we're the best partner for you on this. Yeah, those happen, but that's never a goal to get to. But, like, with the roller skating rink.

Mike Merrill:

Uh.

Josh Fuller:

That's not a space you wanted to become the master of.

Mike Merrill:

Right? Yeah. There was no next roller rink job. It was like, okay, it's a total one off. And yeah, we just felt like it was going to be a distraction from our production and what we were really good at. And so it's like, well, okay. And even our subs, right? What if they got tied up on that? And now I got to find new subs to do my other and just all the domino effect. Um, again, I think that was just wisdom of my staff and my team also recognizing because I'm more risk, um, I guess proactively, um, willing to lean into a little risk, and I'm down for something new and cool and different and exciting. Um, but sometimes, again, that's just not the right approach when you're already busy and you've got a lot going on and you're already trying to balance spinning plates. Um, the last thing you need is someone to throw a basketball at you and say, hey, let's add that in the mix.

Josh Fuller:

Right. Well, when it comes to, uh, I took, uh, my daughter for spring break. We went to, um, Orlando last month, and there was two risks. Uh, lessons in that. One was, um, I took the risk of just by describing how scary a roller coaster could be and listening to a seven year old say, I'm ready. I want to do it. I have to do it. So we rode the Guardians of the Galaxy One.

Mike Merrill:

Uh.

Josh Fuller:

Um, so the risk was, uh, freaking out my daughter. The outcome was her with her arms up in the air at seven, having the time of her life, and me hoping nobody hears me go, please be over, please be over, please.

Mike Merrill:

Uh, right. Okay.

Josh Fuller:

I am not a roller coaster guy. Uh, but when it comes to things like, um, business or starting on a new endeavor, um, the risk voice isn't very heavy. It's usually, uh, do we want it? And is it achievable? And those are the two kind of loud voices in the head. Um, and the risk voice, it's there, but it's not the driver. It's just a concerned citizen.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. Right. Well, now, uh, again, back to your experience with your daughter. You're not a roller coaster guy, but you are a dad guy. And so you made a choice to say, hey, this is about her and her having a memorable good experience and a good time and something she's probably never going to forget.

Josh Fuller:

It's all she talks about. The sad thing is, I was feeling the guilt ahead of it. I wanted to go. I did Lightning Pass to get us into it and everything. I was like, I got to do this ride. And then I remembered, I hate roller coasters on the cold feet. But yeah. So the risk was traumatizing her. The reward was giving her something she loves.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, well, and again, that goes the same with our employees, our staff, um, our customers. Sometimes it doesn't make as much sense to you in the moment that, this is what I really want to be doing, or this is really best. I think the big picture things when you're running a business and you're serving customers are a lot more important. And they're also the things that people are going to remember down the road, like your daughter and this or the client you did some extra things for that. Maybe you gave them a break on or

you went above and beyond and maybe let them, um, personalize something a little more than was agreed on originally, or whatever it was. Um, I think when you take one for the team here and there in good faith, and then you remind them, like, you show them on the invoice, hey, no charge for this. But I did call it out just so that was a trick that I learned after years of giving so much away and never feeling like I got the street cred later for having done that. It was kind of like, oh, yeah, that was cool. Okay, thank you. But when you call it out on the invoice and you acknowledge that, uh, and you could go back and reference it if it becomes an issue, and say, hey, I did you a few solids here, here and here. Uh, and they're accounted for, then, um, I think those things in the right timing and with the right spirit, um, also can help you grow and scale your business in a way that you're going to get those referrals. You're going to get that extra credibility that maybe is going to help you win that bigger job or maybe going to get you in a new space that you're interested in getting involved in.

Josh Fuller:

Absolutely. There's so much in that. I mean, I think there's always a job to be done. And to get to the table that you get to, you got to have the qualifications, the team, the experience, and the resources to accomplish that job. That's how you get to that table. That's how I get to the table with the tables I get to. But there's nothing wrong. In fact, for me, the best part is kind of that whether it's a professional relationship or grows to, like, hey, uh, you're coming into town? Let's go grab lunch. So it goes a little bit beyond professional and into. Like, we talk about our children, or we talk about how we got to doing the businesses we're doing now, whatever relationship starts to happen. And I think that that's, um, so key, the relationships. I've got some that thankfully have lasted a couple of decades, and some of those started purely professional. Case in point, the former boss is also one of my best friends. We've been to Cuba together. We've traveled to parts of the world and hung out and, uh, done things. And, yeah, it all started because I had a small shop at the time, and they were the big one, and, Can I take you guys to lunch and just pick your brains? And then it turned into, well, that guy Josh seems all right. We'll throw him the work. That's maybe not a good fit for an agency our size. And then eventually, they were like, hey, we really need to build out a proper creative, um, offering

here. Do you want to come be the creative director? Because I did my own kind of permalance shop for nine years. Um, right. That's how I cut my teeth. There was no jobs after, uh, the.com boom, so I started a small shop and did that, and I created a good job for myself. I didn't create a business at that point. I didn't know how to. But I created a good job, and I enjoyed it. But then, yeah, when they came calling, I was like, I like all of you, and I want to see how the big kids play. Um, and how you get to the types of clients and engagements and the solution. I was feeling very much the walls of the work I was able to sell and get into. Um, so I took that and then that led to a much bigger leap with, ah, deloitte. Um, but it's all those relationships.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, well, that's what it all is. And then you parlay those experiences and tie those into those relationships and now you own a different business and you're able to circle back and maybe serve some of those people again in a different capacity or, um, just expand again like that pinball. You're just still just bouncing up your way up the board and uh, moving forward, right?

Josh Fuller:

Hopefully, yeah. That seems to be the trajectory, uh, which it's the only one you can have.

Mike Merrill:

Well, this has been a great conversation. Lots of fun. Are there any final takeaways for the audience before we wrap up today and get you scheduled to come back on next week?

Josh Fuller:

Yeah, uh, take risks that's ah, a takeaway it's up to you to measure them, but take them, you don't take them, you don't go anywhere. It's sort of what it feels like.

Mike Merrill:

Beautiful. Well, love that. Well, thanks again for joining us today, Josh. Had a great time and looking forward to having another good conversation here soon.

Josh Fuller:

Awesome. Thanks so much, Mike. Appreciate it.