

## **Embedding Sustainability Into Core Real Estate Operations with Ethan Arbiser | Transcript**

**00:02**

Speaker 1

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cicchetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a lead fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building.

**00:18**

Speaker 2

Professional from around the globe to share.

**00:20**

Speaker 1

Their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why. Green building.

**00:31**

Speaker 2

Green Matters. Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. You know, every now and again, I'll have, like, a public service announcement, but most of the time, I'm interviewing someone just to get a peek into their career, and that's what we've got today. We've got Ethan here in Atlanta. I'm in Atlanta. He's a senior manager, energy sustainability at cbre, and we got connected through our network. Ethan, how you doing today, man?

**00:54**

Speaker 1

I'm doing excellent, Charlie. Thank you so much. How about you?

**00:57**

Speaker 2

Yeah. Hey, you know what? This year's going by a little fast, but besides that, today the sun is shining, and I'm doing pretty good. So thank you for asking for our listeners. I love to just kind of get a little bit of a background. So where did you grow up and go to school?

**01:11**

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. Before I dive into that, Charlie, just thank you so much for having me on. You know, it's an absolute pleasure to be, you know, being interviewed by a legend in this space. You know, you have a growing clean tech and sustainability ecosystem blossoming here, and a lot of the framework and groundwork and aspirations. You're a great example of a lot of that, too. So thank you.

**01:34**

Speaker 2

Thank you.

**01:35**

Speaker 1

Well, yeah, a little bit about me, you know, my name is Ethan Arbeezer. I was raised in Atlanta, never really left. I went to Emory undergrad. I graduated in 2017 with a dual bachelor's degree in environmental science, Jewish studies, and, you know, really just loved all that Atlanta had to offer. So I stayed and, you know, have a diverse background with analytics, built environment projects, and just project management revolving around different kind of assets and.

**02:10**

Speaker 2

Yeah, well, Emory, amazing school. You're wearing your Emory shirt now. Our listeners can't see that. And then you even went back for the. The mba, too, right? So that's awesome.

**02:20**

Speaker 1

Yes, I did.

**02:21**

Speaker 2

They.

**02:22**

Speaker 1

They took my money two times, but it was well worth it. And it's a great product. Great school. So very much enjoyed.

**02:30**

Speaker 2

I love that. Yeah. I don't know if one of my old colleagues, Asa Posner was

coming out of Emory around that same time. I don't know if you know asa, but good people. And yes, a lot of leap projects. And so we worked together for many years.

**02:40**

Speaker 1

So. And at sig, you guys hired a lot of really great talent out of Emory. So I was just like, I. SIG was on the map even when I was in college.

**02:51**

Speaker 2

So I'm proud of that. That's great. Yeah, really good farm system interns roll on full time. So, okay, so that's grew up in Atlanta, Emory twice over. But. But so, yeah. How the heck did you get into buildings?

**03:05**

Speaker 1

Yeah. So, you know, I'll talk a little bit about my like, journey after college. So, you know, I graduated 2017. Admittedly I didn't have like a really robust plan going out of school, getting into like environmental science work in your typical. Work in your typical journey, per se. So I actually started my professional career as a high school teacher at a local school, the Weber School in Atlanta. And they hired me as a history teacher, environmental studies teacher, and then also to do some sustainability work with the school and then also the students. So that was a really great opportunity just to brush up my chops on presentation, stakeholder engagement, but then also seeing what kind of built environment projects could I do at a bit of a smaller micro scale.

**03:55**

Speaker 1

I had a school campus and I did a lighting project, water initiatives, and then took a look at solar. It wasn't feasible at the time, but that kind of sparked my interest in the green building space and combining that with analytics and projects. From there, I got to join. I quickly realized after one year, teaching was not for me. It's a great opportunity, great experience, but got an opportunity to join a real estate accounting software company doing energy analytics, energy benchmarking, building performance standards for disclosure across North America. It was an amazing opportunity.

**04:34**

Speaker 1

Really got to understand how data can influence decision making and also understanding the disclosure landscape in the US and then after that, broadened

my skills at Cox Enterprises, doing carbon accounting work with the Cox Conserves Environmental group within Cox Enterprises, focusing in on their automotive business and then at the time their communications, also doing some of their new businesses and just merging all this data into a single source of truth carbon accounting platform and then using that data to help engineers, procurement professionals make educated decisions on energy and utilities. And more recently after that, got to join cbre, merging my two skill sets of doing projects within the built environment and the Data back in 2023 and it's been a great journey ever since. Doing that with multiple clients in different arenas.

**05:35**

Speaker 2

We'll learn more, all kinds of different projects. But hey, what a great backstory. I love how you went in this direction, got into buildings. And those are some really cool companies too. From the software provider side over here to a very large private company in Atlanta, Cox, and then, I mean, cbre, largest real estate company in the world. So, yeah, man, I see how you stacked all that. It's good stuff.

**05:59**

Speaker 1

Thank you.

**06:00**

Speaker 2

So I like to ask about, you know, mentors as you look back. Sometimes a mentor someone, you read the material, you see them from stage, sometimes, you know, it's, you know, some of the challenges you open doors for you even. So have you had any mentors along the way?

**06:15**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I mean, first and foremost, my parents are my best, biggest mentors, incredible parents. But one of the biggest takeaways that they, you know, I've taken away with professionally, how they've, you know, treated me is just always puts your best foot forward, you know. You know, every day, all that, every day you do that, it stacks up and makes a really great journey and you generate a good product for yourself. Just trying your best effort. You're not going to be perfect at first, but you'll get a groove. And they also just gave me a really good set of like valuables and principles to live by, ethics, things of that nature. So shout out to my parents. They did, they, I gave them a run for their money, let's put it that way.

**07:02**

Speaker 1

But then also there's a few other folks beyond my parents that are mentors to me. Gentleman named Ray Seegers actually worked with me at the real estate accounting software. You know, that was my first real corporate job, learning the landscape of energy efficiency data. He worked at an Esco, you know, energy service contracting company prior to him coming on with that company. And I, he was just a really great mentor for me, just understanding the landscape, broader energy management and opportunities within small, medium and large business. And also just a great person, Very nice. And then at Cox, another gentleman named Bill Baker. He was focused really in on employee mobility, getting people in the right areas and moving them across the country.

**07:50**

Speaker 1

For Cox is really a jack of all trades, but just a very wise person when it came to like conducting yourself in personal and corporate life, corporate America and just living with compassion. So those two gentlemen, in addition to my parents, made a big impact on me.

**08:08**

Speaker 2

I know Ray and I'm glad you gave him a shout out and those professional mentors and sounds like you got some awesome parents. So thanks for giving the shout outs to our mentors along the way. Yeah. What are some of your proudest achievements? What's on the highlight reel so far?

**08:22**

Speaker 1

Yeah, no, so most recently and probably the most proudest is that I'm a new father. So. Yeah, thank you so much. As of June of last year. So still all very new to me. Constantly changing, but you know, it's incredibly rewarding and it's transformed my life and my outlook on things. I'm sure, you know, any parent can understand that. But within the first six months it just taught me a lot. Teaching me how to lead by example, be a better person overall. If you want, you know, your son to eventually do things that you're he's proud of, you got to do it. So I want that for my family and my kids as well. So just trying to lead by example. So that's the most thing. That's the most proud as of now. Now.

**09:10**

Speaker 1

But then also just being a good husband to my wife, she's a major reason for my

success in personal, professional life. Gives me a lot of meaning and fulfillment and drive and just in a great, A great partner. So shout out to her additionally to that. You know, I'm a proud Jew. I'm very into my faith. Faith is very important to me and allows me and my family just have clarity and guidance and like a incredibly chaotic world. So very proud of that. Do a lot of things revolving around my faith every day, every week. So that's another. And then just generally speaking, I am a disciplined person and a hard worker. I'm really proud of that, you know, proud of my work ethic and my commitments to the things I've done. You know, working full time.

**10:03**

Speaker 1

As you mentioned, I am a graduate of the business school. I did the part time 3 year MBA program, so worked and did that. And then while I did that, you know, just maintain positive relationships with mentors, friends, community members and just positive behaviors. And then dedicating time to my family as well.

**10:25**

Speaker 2

Love every bit of that. That's good stuff, Ethan, man, Faith and family and some focus. That's good stuff. And hey, right down the road so you know, we gotta maybe get some coffee. That'd be good.

**10:35**

Speaker 1

Absolutely too. It sounds like you're ingrained in the wine. Wine space.

**10:40**

Speaker 2

Okay. You did your research. G. Bourbon. Yeah, in my 40s I'm drinking more wine and bourbon, so that's a thing. But no, yeah, we helped a friend out of Sonoma who makes some Amazing wines get his is a wine label off the ground and our ties go back to Georgia Tech. So let's do it. Okay, so let's talk about this sustainability journey that's landed you here in this role of cbre. You know, I know you've done projects. There's decarbonization, there's fine, where's the money at? So how have you seen sustainability evolve and kind of since you've been in this industry and then let's talk present day and what you're doing today?

**11:17**

Speaker 1

Yeah, you know, it's changed a lot since, you know, I've entered the built environment, real estate services space. I'll say. You know, we all know what it

was like, you know, very. Everyone doing a lot of investment in sustainability when it comes to reporting and voluntary reporting. And that drove a lot of projects because people wanted to see impact. Now we're kind of seeing a shift, a paradigm shift. And some people may say it's not great. I actually think it's an evolution. So the first thing I would say when you know, we're talking about this shift is from, you know, core sustainability, altruistic motives to, number one, resource optimization. How are we effectively managing our resources, making sure that they're being, you know, responsibly managed and essentially having positive outcomes, you know, triple bottom line, people, planet, profit.

**12:14**

Speaker 1

And then number two is, you know, hospice, hospitality focused amenities within the built environment space that promotes, you know, healthy behaviors and the sentiment of I want to be in this place or in this space. So, you know, we have to focus on, you know, resource optimization. What drives people, nine times out of 10, it's going to be money. So I think sustainability must drive those outcomes while mitigating risks, finding efficiencies in operations and then just our overall impact, our environment in communities. And then with the amenities, you know, return to office is back in full force. You know, whether we may like it or not. How does the workforce, how does the workplace make people want to be there? My opinion, part of its company culture, part of it is if I'm an employee that has to make a long commute.

**13:07**

Speaker 1

Especially in Atlanta with our traffic situation, people almost want to feel pampered at the office. And a lot of that is built environment related. So I'm seeing a shift towards a hospitality focused workplace that have amenities like full stack gyms, shower with towel service, full cafeterias, rooftop common areas, tons of natural light, ergonomic furniture. And all this promotes, you know, collaboration also. Notably, a lot of these Places with accessibility to walking paths, public transportation, things of that nature. So in my opinion, these are like some green building elements that are becoming really core to like the workplace experience. So if these sustainability and wellness elements continue to become embedded in that experience, that actually makes our jobs a lot easier for a sustainability professional and more impactful for like an end user, whether it be a tenant or you know, an employee.

**14:07**

Speaker 2

Yeah, well, you've seen a lot and you're right before and now during and now after the pandemic. So you're right. Come back to the office. But it is that

hospitality feel and, but it is happy. So. Okay, so that's the sustainability evolution.

**14:21**

Speaker 1

Yeah.

**14:21**

Speaker 2

Let's talk about more about your role. So what's a day in the life of Ethan right now? What kind of projects you working on you can talk about?

**14:28**

Speaker 1

Yeah, no day in the life of my role. I can't get in too much specifics, but generally speaking, we're like really driving sustainability value to like core real estate functions. So these things are like facility management, engineering, workplace experience, transactional activity, and then like the leasing and leasing admin. So for me personally, and what I'm trying to break, like essentially draw down to my team and other folks that we work with is like breaking down the silos of sustainability of like reporting and project work and try to find ways that our team can drive value in those other areas in the core real estate function. So whether it be like the money, risk mitigation, enhancing workplace culture, all these things are some way that I'm trying to focus in on to make it mutually beneficial for my team.

**15:22**

Speaker 1

And then also these teams on collaborating this, like I said earlier, trying to embed this in certain processes that are core to real estate functions. In addition to that, we're like really gung ho on leveraging new technologies, unconventional ways about getting people's attention and allowing for more of these partnerships. So there's obviously the AI applications we're heavily doubling down in our AI case, like what we're utilizing it for, whether it be, you know, utility budgeting, forecasting, we have some really great tools that are getting razor sharp accuracy forecasting, budgeting, giving our clients a lot of trust in what we're doing to ensure that volatility doesn't hit them in their pockets and that they can prepare for it. So there's that with utility performance and building intelligence, also utilizing AI to reevaluate our contracts and the services we provide.

**16:21**

Speaker 1

So right now there's just some really great exploration happening behind the scenes in my personal, that is a personal project. And allow us, can just allow us to make better decision choices on financial decisions when we first engage with a client. And then we have, you know, the core, you know, new renewables aspects, you know, energy management renewables. We're constantly trying to find opportunities to get our clients off the grid, have them have, allow more destiny for their energy volatility that we're seeing. A lot happens. So there's a lot of that happening.

**17:02**

Speaker 2

Okay, yeah, I, I heard that we've got to get back to core real estate function. And sustainability is a big part of most of those functions. Right. So yeah, I mean, who better do that than you guys? That just makes sense. All right, so that's what you're working on here. I know. Sometimes we're even asked to find where's the money at for decarbonization. Right. I would argue today if we're not saying sustainability or esg, maybe we're saying resiliency or decarbonization. Right. Maybe these are the new umbrellas we can do this work under. So I don't know, what are some of the things you're hearing and you know, do you present a menu of options to your clients and they pick or do you just say, hey, here's the best practices we should do no matter what?

**17:42**

Speaker 1

Yeah, we're cbre. At cbre, we're really fortunate to have really great people, department technical services that allow us to go into a site and essentially identify all the low hanging fruit and then, you know, lofty decarbonization plays that a client can make and then, you know, leveraging those things that are readily available to every client or, excuse me, every real estate operator, which are typically like utility incentives, tax incentives as well, those are some really great levers on allowing, you know, a client to do a big decarbonization process. You know, in Georgia we have a pretty robust utility incentive program and in other areas of the country it's even better. So sometimes you can get up to 40% of project costs funded through.

**18:34**

Speaker 1

And then, you know, we're tapped into like this big beautiful bill area where you know, there's some really great nuggets allowing for energy efficiency plays. And you know, as that's expiring, we're trying to utilize that to make an even better case to fund these projects and get them across the finish line. So for folks that are not, you know, don't have someone like a CBRE or equivalent that can do it, want to do it on their own. I would leverage some of those resources and

tools, you know, that are in the taxes or in the local utility markets. And then there's also some finances. So you know, Escos do a lot of this. That's how they make money on performance contracting revolving around energy services and energy efficiency.

**19:21**

Speaker 1

So you know, from a big macro perspective, what I'm offering to clients may not necessarily fit some of these small businesses that don't have an engagement with a large facility management service operator.

**19:37**

Speaker 2

That's good perspective. I mean you guys, huge company sharing a lot of good in house experiences. Hey, this might apply and you can scale it up. How about waste? You know, one of my colleagues, Brian, and you know, we're focused, we got a passion around recycling, composting, but just in general, hey, what are we doing with waste? Or are you seeing that trend up or how's that going?

**19:58**

Speaker 1

Right? Yeah, it's really, it's admittedly it's really tough to say. Some clients have more appetite for it. I have a personal passion for waste. I think it's probably the most underutilized resource that we have now and it's constantly generating, we're constantly generating waste. It really depends on the business case. But what we're trying to do with waste currently is get. It's actually the most visible energy and sustainability activity for employees to see so and do. Because energy efficiency we can be in decarbonization, we're making these decisions not necessarily in a silo, but the employees are not doing it. So we're utilizing the waste story and the waste engagements, you know, that anyone does in the office. Throw out throws, recycles a coke can, throws out a wrapper. We are trying to make those decision making a little bit more in an employee's face.

**21:00**

Speaker 1

And we have some really unique ways of gamifying it and utilizing technology to make it a really compelling experience for the employees. So tapping into the employee experience and allowing folks, hey, when you go to an office, I can get all these sort of things done. I go to the gym, get my food, et cetera. What can I do that's eco friendly? Waste is the most present and you know, active engagement that folks can engage in. And that's where we see a lot of benefit and impacts from. So it's, it's a little bit spotty. I think the hard part, the hard portion is justifying costs when you do certain waste things. So if you want to

add streams in your office space. It's going to cost you money, but you know, it's a great thing to do.

**21:53**

Speaker 1

But you have to understand that there's going to be a level of education around in that too because if you don't educate, we're going to throw things out in the wrong places and ultimately you're going to miss out on the landfill diversion and the impact. But then also you could get charged for contamination or having your janitorial staff sift through this stuff. So it's not a one stop, it's not like a clear per se trend in my opinion.

**22:21**

Speaker 2

All right, great, Ian. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about what's next in this green building decarbonization, healthy building movement. And then I want to talk about our great city here, Atlanta. So yeah, what are you kind of excited about? What's next in the green building movement?

**22:36**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I'd say what's next, it's kind of driving home this theme of getting things embedded in the core real estate service lines. You know, these, the green building. You know, here in Atlanta we have a, like now everything's lead silver. That's the standard now. So we're seeing that sustainability like standards are becoming the general standards and that's really exciting to see. We're also seeing just a lot of, I'm seeing a lot of investment in like hardware, clean tech, climate tech and it's one of the most invested verticals, you know, beyond like, I think it's third to, you know, fintech and some AI stuff as well. So I think there's going to be a lot of disruption in the space, especially with like data centers, energy scarcity coming online. It's going to become more of a topic that's going to be talked about.

**23:27**

Speaker 1

Also with water, of course, you know, water has been underappreciated resource in the US But I think that's going to become, come under the spotlight as well because it's a very, it's going to become very scarce. So I think that just the natural shift of, you know, technology, AI demand, data center activity is going to put sustainability in a different spotlight. And while we have to continue to be altruistic and have the impact, we also have to find ways to make it, you know, affordable and efficient financially that allows for it to become a good business play. And I think there are some really good players out there that do it. But it's

not the right now, not the standard per se. It's just Becoming, like, talked about becoming a standard, but not there yet.

**24:23**

Speaker 2

Yeah, to our listeners, I agree with what Ethan's saying. We've got other resources. We're so focused on energy. And remember, energy, you can break down into operating carbon and energy star scoring. And how efficient is my building when I run it? And don't forget over here, you know, when it comes to our body, carbon, too, and materials, but next thing you know, water. Next thing, you know, these other important angles. So thanks for that. Let's talk about Atlanta. Hey. While I technically grew up in North Georgia, I have spent most of my life in and around Atlanta. So, hey, what do you love about Atlanta? What do you see that we're doing well at here? And I see some green buildings popping up, too. So what do you think?

**25:02**

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. There's a lot to love about Atlanta. Like I said, I never really left, so I have a biased take. But how it kind of. I mean, there's so much to the history, the culture, the pace. It's great. But, you know, for those that are not in Atlanta is dubbed, you know, within a city, within a forest. So when you fly into Hartsfield Jackson, you get this lush, green city and that. It's just beautiful. But in regards to, like, sustainability, I think it's actually a unique, very unique city. You know, first of all, there's a massive historical theme of mobility. So, you know, it was. Atlanta was literally founded at the end point of, like, the Western and Atlantic Railroad in, like, the 1830s. And that was how we got dubbed the name, like, Terminus, you know, from Atlanta United. Everyone knows that.

**25:52**

Speaker 1

So site planners, you know, built. State planners really built the rail line and intentionally located it where Atlanta stands now. And Atlanta actually still leverages its rail heritage and central geography to dominate emerging highway and logistic networks for the rest of the country. Big players like CSX and Norfolk Southern doing that. So mobility is really big here. Even though we have a not so great public transportation system and traffic is one of the worst in the countries, there's a lot of economic benefits that are coming in through. Another notable area of mobility is, like, the Georgia port. So Savannah, Brunswick, some of those inland terminals, they generate like \$122 billion in economic output, which is a national powerhouse. It's one of the top three, I think, port containers spots in the U.S. so I don't know if people know that.

**26:51**

Speaker 1

And then the most famous theme of mobility is the airport. It's the busiest airport in the world. Major advantage for, you know, locals, for business and local economic Growth, especially with Delta having their hub here. Like I said, Atlanta is notoriously bad for bad traffic. And I think city planners, the mayor leaders are finding ways to mitigate this. I wouldn't hold your breath on public transportation, but I think there's an interesting development happening slowly and that is the bolstering of like mobility within the trail systems here. So notably the Path foundation has done a really great job in collaboration with the Beltline connecting different neighborhoods and local cities. It's also going up to like north, you know, Sandy Springs, Roswell, Johns Creek and then the Beltlines continuing eastward, westward, southbound.

**27:45**

Speaker 1

So I think that's something that's going to be very unique to Atlanta with a massive trail system that is really blossoming now. And then additionally we have a massive hub for corporate 500, you know, corporate 500 companies, HQs are all here, they all have, you know, responsibility goals, really great talent here, focusing in on clean tech, sustainability, you know, corporate responsibility. And Atlanta is more of, you know, definitely more progressively minded and does embrace sustainability as we can see with you know, new building standards, lead building performance with energy star, all of that fun stuff in the built environment. And so this is I think a really big thing to note. And you know, also just construction wise, you know, in the midtown area, at one point it was the most busy 10 mile construction density in the entire country.

**28:39**

Speaker 1

So the growth is here. It's big. I'm sure. You know, Charlie, you see that, you know that. And then lastly, I want to call out like the tech scene. So there's a large tech landscape here. Do you want to give out a shout out to the Cox Georgia Clean Tech Innovation hub, bringing, you know, clean tech into a forum that can continue to impact the local communities, but then also deploy clean tech solutions across the country. But mobility and EV charging is becoming a really big facet here, you know, with SK Battery, Hyundai settling a little bit north of Atlanta. And then as we talked about data centers, are very much active in the Atlanta corridor, North metro Atlanta corridor. It's one of the most active development corridors in the entire country.

**29:28**

Speaker 1

So between all of what I just said, this positions Atlanta really well to continue to drive sustainability within our cities and neighboring areas. And I think that because of that, Atlanta is going to be on the map. So it's really great to be in Atlanta. I think there's a lot that's going to happen in the next five to 10 years.

**29:47**

Speaker 2

And I agree with everything you said. So if you're listening, you're not in Atlanta, come on down. Your money goes far here. We do get all four seasons. This is a great place. And good point on the tech hub side too. You know, there's Silicon Valley, there's New York, there's Research Triangle, North Carolina, but there's Atlanta. Atlanta has an amazing tech startup scene, including for the built environment. So cool. Thanks for doing that. All right, we talked about what's next, so let's get to know you more. Kind of the rapid fire part of our podcast. Join the seat. And what would you say is your specialty or gift?

**30:20**

Speaker 1

Yeah, my specialty and gift is, you know, just a passion for sustainability. You, I really enjoy it. Making impact. Another thing is just being intellectually curious, learning from others, learning from things that I don't have necessarily a particular, not necessarily interest, but a goal in mind. But just learning really drove this home. My MBA experience at Emory also just being able to see big picture connect systems. How can we collaborate in different ways and cross pollinate with services and things like that. Then lastly, just building like meaningful relationships and caring about others.

**31:04**

Speaker 2

All right, you're quick to that one. You must have been told that by others. So you got good self awareness and you know, not everybody has what you just said. So that is a specialty and a gift. Do you have any good habits, routines that keep you on point?

**31:16**

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. So as I said, I'm a man of faith, a Jewish faith. So I do pray every morning. You know, practicing gratitude is very important. You know, perfection is theft of good. And so you just have to keep that in mind. You know, if you're doing good and you see perfect, sometimes it makes you

unhappy. So being grateful for what you have is very important. I also like to exert myself physically once a day. I participate in, you know, weights, I do jiu jitsu, Pilates. Just doing something active that's really just helps me just stay sane. And then lastly is just being intellectually curious, trying to learn something new every few months or whenever you get a chance.

**32:05**

Speaker 2

Those are fantastic, man. Thanks for giving us a peek into your world. So I like to ask about, is there a book you'd recommend? If not a book, maybe a documentary or podcast. Just anything you'd share for our listeners here.

**32:17**

Speaker 1

Absolutely. So there's two books I really want to call out. So number one is how to Win Friends and influence People by Dale Carnegie. It's a 90 year old book that is like still really impactful today. Like in many jobs, an energy and sale, energy and sustainability job is really a sales job. We're selling new ideas, new concepts, new products and processes often to folks that don't know about it or like pretty skeptical about energy practices or energy management. So it's important just to be generally personable when you're interacting with these folks, but also know what motivates them and how you can partner for like a common, mutually beneficial outcome. And then the second book that was really impactful as well is a book called extreme how U.S. navy SEALs lead and Win by Jocko Willock and Leif Babin.

**33:13**

Speaker 1

Essentially what it is, it's a book on how you can create a winning team during incredibly difficult situations. Building trust, holding people accountable, especially like yourself, if you're a leader. So as a newer people manager and even a newer father, it's been a total mindset change. And it just through this book and the learnings and able to build trust quickly with different teams and leading the charge on, you know, some high stakes initiatives personally and professionally.

**33:45**

Speaker 2

Love it. You went with the classic and everybody needs to check out, you know, how to win friends and influence people. Right. And then a monitor on some Navy SEAL mentality. I love it. So it's good stuff. Okay, so we're starting to wind down here. Just two more things. Ethan, as you look back on your career,

is there anything you wish you'd have learned earlier or maybe some career advice you wish someone would have told you earlier?

**34:08**

Speaker 1

Yeah, it's a tough one, but I would say, you know, master for the generation getting into the job market now or you know, maybe more junior like master the job that you have now before you think of going and being ambitious for your next role. Not to say, you know, don't consistently build your skill set. I actually think you should always be doing that. But you know, just master what you can now be, get good at, you know, the day to day grind and getting in the weeds. And over time you'll build confidence and trust with, you know, other leaders and other professionals to where they can trust you with higher stakes things because you know these things. So don't be so quick to jump and try to get into your next role, but obviously continue sharpening your, your tool set and whatnot.

**34:58**

Speaker 1

But for the younger generation looking to get into green building per se, I would say like, and this is probably overkill as well, but learn and adopt like an AI skill set. So there's a lot of really good, you know, good information out there. Really Cool products out there to really just become more productive. I am doing this in a Personal, My own, personally, just to stay competitive. But it's here, and it's the future of working. You know, every app now has an AI sort of facet to it. So like. Like, become comfortable with it, learn how to showcase it. It's really important. People are looking at that because I think the younger generation can do more with. With these.

**35:45**

Speaker 1

These tools and then you know, kind of piggybacking off of them, you know, with green building, real estate, like, learn more about core essential, like real estate functions and embedding sustainability into those processes. Sometimes as sustainability professionals like myself are just so focused in on sustainability, new technology driving impact, that we kind of miss and miss the mark on engaging other folks. I say that's really important to, like, come to their home field and speak their language, and that's really important.

**36:19**

Speaker 2

A lot of wisdom here, man. All right, last thing. Let's say someone's listening. They're getting excited about your story, and they're just jumping into this green

building movement. Maybe decarbonization. Any words of encouragement for them if they're just now jumping in and we'll come to a close.

**36:35**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I mean, I think there's a lot of. I think there's a lot of really great momentum that the sustainability and green building space has. You know, the job market is. It's challenging, but I see. I think there's a lot of growth in the sustainability realm. So that's fantastic. It's a changing market, and that's really good too, because you don't want to be in an industry that's plateauing or constantly the same. It's. The change is good. Chaos brings opportunity. And so that is really important. And, you know, there's going to be ebbs and flows as any industry or any kind of term within, you know, society. And you just gotta have to ride the wave, but you gotta stay committed to what you. If this is what you want to do. But also, like, you don't have to be dead set on sustainability.

**37:26**

Speaker 1

To be quite frank, the end goal for sustainability professional is to have every professional in an organization think about sustainability themselves and incorporate that element into their workflow. So if you're thinking that's an ideal for us. So like I said, learn core business and see if there's ways to incorporate that. And that's actually a pretty impactful as well. So those are kind of my two sets. Oh, love it.

**38:00**

Speaker 2

All right, everybody listening. Make sure you connect here with Ethan on LinkedIn. If you're in Atlanta, look either one of us up. Let's get together. Let's talk buildings. Let's talk what's next. I can tell you like to really think about the future and that you've got some good discipline to also be present. So Ethan, I'm glad we got reconnected here, man. I love your story and journey and keep up the great work. Thanks for being on the podcast.

**38:22**

Speaker 1

Thank you Charlie. I really appreciate it.

**38:25**

Speaker 2

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