Human Cloud Ep. 47

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Matthew Mottola 00:00
What's the largest benefit of of the independent economy? Freedom? Okay, what about uncertainty though?

Azariah 00:06
It's the risk you're willing to take. Yep, you want me to look, we want to go back and forth. But I got to geek out for just a second.

Matthew Mottola 00:14
Yeah. Okay. Please do. Yeah. Welcome to the human cloud. The fun is podcast where you might actually learn something, or the mats, one of us is old, one of us is young. But both of us have driven extreme change through this thing called the human cloud, what the world is the human cloud, we're talking about the transition of work from the office, to a remote digital first world. And guess what it is freelance first, it is remote first. And in this podcast, we're going to keep you updated, and we're going to help you learn how to drive change. Let's dive right into the show. Enjoy. Hey, everyone. Alright, so Azariah. Before I say anything, actually, do you want to introduce yourself? Because at times, like if I try to introduce you, I will totally do in an underwhelming fashion. So do you? Do you want to want to start, and then I'll give everyone the context behind this? Sure. I'm gonna do that. kick us off as arrived? Because it is, I can recall that the accolades, I could read off the current roll and all that. But sure. Yeah, I think you do it way better than I.

Azariah 01:20
Okay. So good morning. My name is Azariah, Lehman. And Matt not too long ago. But I wanted to just briefly go over my background. So my background is really in psychology, actually. So my degree is in performance psychology, and I have background history and researching the independent workforce and understanding the differences between workers, interdivisional employees and independent workers. I myself have a history of working independently, especially when my children were smaller,

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I've always worked in some way. Independently, I worked in a multi systemic therapy system for a while with at risk teenagers, they did that for quite some time. I was also a professor. And now I work with an organization that is striving to bring benefits to the independent workforce and also an association Ypsi us that is trying to create a community and an a mechanism for individuals that do work independently to get the resources and access to benefits that they need to.

Matthew Mottola 02:21
Okay. See, that's why I wanted to make sure you talked first, because I want you to mention the psychology part. So you Okay, so you know that there? Yeah, because one of the things that I think for your listeners out there that's really tough in our space, is we kind of navigate between like three different worlds like staffing, legal and tech. And usually each worlds, they don't talk to each other. And they're kind of stuck in their own little silo. And so when you mentioned the psychology piece to me, like whenever you've mentioned that prior to, I'm always like, holy crap, that's that's way more another word be cooler, I guess, then just the typical lawyer, right, or the typical employment law. So I guess, let's start off, we're gonna start off with sort of, you know, give us a lay of the land of what the legal ecosystem looks like with the independent workforce. Because the number one thing that I hear is, they'll be like, oh, like, what, how can there possibly be a problem in hire independent contractor or hiring an individual, and they just have no idea what they walked into, right. And then I sort of want to go into like that, you know that at a very quick level, then I do want to dive into the wins that you've talked about. Because the past two years, we've kind of as an industry, it's been kind of rough butts. And in only the past week, it's starting to, you know, starting to see the potential. And then kind of Third, we're gonna dig into you individually. And so for context out there, probably listeners, I've known we've known each other for about a year now through Emily. So. But every time we've been on a call, we all have such little time. And so I've always wanted to be like, hey, as right, what about this? What about this? What about your background in this? So now selfishly, I can finally ask those questions. So that's why I'm so pumped up is to finally be able to ask you about your background. And have you talked for more than 30 seconds, since there's not a time constraint. But yeah, let's, let's start with just give us a landscape of legally, why in the world, is there even legislation or laws around the independent workforce?

Azariah 04:17
Yeah, so I'm not a lawyer, but I do work in the areas of advocacy. And I've worked on, you know, just language for a variety of different things that has to do with advocating for the immigrant workforce. Here's what I would say is if people don't realize that there is an issue, there's an issue simply because we live in a society who, what I would say gets very comfortable with the way things are. And so if we look at the history of our nation, we were built, the foundation of our country is built on basically small business entrepreneurs, people who were doing their own thing. I mean, even farmers, they were independent, right? They didn't have a greater structure that was governing them so this is nothing new. Which is always surprising to me, because we forget those pieces of history like this is not a new thing that we're doing out here. But what happened is when we had kind of the movement toward unionization in so many areas, and listen, I'm a proponent of unions for many reasons. But I don't think that it's the right model for every area. And so the norm became that benefits in our country were tied to unions or a primary employer, right. And so you had to get your health insurance, you're about any of

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those life insurance, those benefits and everything, they primarily came through your employer if you worked full time, there's no reason for that, though, is the is one thing, we do have an issue with insurance companies, because they do rate based on groups. And that becomes a problem. If they don't have a group with a demographic data and an understanding of who these people are, then they do have a difficult time rating policies, which can be expensive or confusing. We've seen a little bit of that breakup over the last several years. So that's not as much of an issue anymore. But what it comes down to is, I would say, and this is not a political conversation. In terms of who I like or don't like it, that's irrelevant. To me, my voice is to advocate for the independent worker. And I will say under the Trump administration, we did make a lot of strides towards supporting small businesses, independent workers, freelancers of the gig economy in general. And then one of the first moves that the Biden administration did when they came in, was to pretty much negate almost everything that had been done in that area. I'm not surprised by this. It Over 70% of funding for Democratic Party campaigns comes from unions. And so the movement back toward funding unions and getting union membership backup, I actually listened to a podcast of yours. I don't remember the data, you can spit it out there for a second. But I know the number of people who have participating in unions has gone down so dramatically. So if you have loss of membership, you have loss of control, and you have loss of economics, right? So really, it comes down to who's controlling the shoestring and where's the money? Trail? Where's the money trail being led? The other thing I would argue is that there's an issue just because when you have people working as employees, the IRS has a clear defined line of collection. Right? If you don't, then it's dependent upon your ability, your expertise, your willingness to take care of things the right way, which, you know, they it's confusing, some of it can be very confusing. So, there so there is an issue with hiring independent contractors or workers right now, simply because people are concerned about risks of misclassification, meaning, if I hire you, as a contractor, and are am I going to be like, you know, looked into to see how many hours did you work? What kind of work are you doing? And how frequently is it. So that's, that's the primary concern at this time.

Matthew Mottola 07:54
And so I want to dig deeper into what you mentioned, of like that evolution from pay where a bunch of small time farmers and even to Hey, where you know, you get real meta kind of, hey, we're moving out west to go find gold or go establish a whole new life. There's no rules here, we can do whatever we want. But it was very like individual driven, right, like rugged individualism. And then we did sort of get to this corporate landscape where all of a sudden, every industry had two to five large companies. It was everyone's dream to go work at those two to five large companies, you had your pension, you had your car, your house, your white picket fence, it was a dream, right? And then sort of my, my, what I always come back to because I started manufacturing was like late 70s, all of a sudden, we outsourced everything. And so that dream of just working your ass off and then having a pension, you can still work your ass off, but you're gonna have a pension and your factory is probably going to be gone if you're not living on the coasts. And so, like, what, what really happened, like, what did that movement look like? And I know it, we're getting a little historical. So if you're anyone's out there, not a history nerd. I apologize. But this this stuff is extremely important to understand sort of why we are where we are today. But what happened, like was it early 1920, it was early 1900s that we shifted the large companies, how did how did we get here?

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Azariah 09:06
I can give you my opinion on the topic. And I think it's highlighted by a story I've shared in the past, but it's so relevant. So my grandfather actually was a farmer. And we came I came from a history of family farming. We had 800 acre family farm in Arkansas, and it My grandfather was a very, very wise man. I mean, he was basically one of the first people in town to have a car and to have a TV and like he was just a wise man. So what happened though, is I'm currently located in Michigan and to this day, I blame my grandfather for that because I'm much prefer down south or out west, but currently in Michigan, but what happened was over the course of time, and my grandfather saw the science of the time, the farming equipment, for example, combines everything had become so expensive, and it was so capitalized that farmers were almost being forced to take subsidization and my grandfather has always been a little bit of a rebel. I don't know where I get it from maybe that. But he said no, he said, we're not like I don't want to owe you, I don't want to owe somebody that amount of money. And so he saw a better opportunity and what he my grandfather did, and my uncle stayed on the farm. But my grandfather decided to come to Michigan, and he actually worked for General Motors, which is one of the big three that really helped really motivate and fuel the unionization movement. But he did the same thing. He he came to General Motors, he worked there until he retired, and then he moved back down south, but he got his pension and he got all of that. And then he moved down. So how did we get here? I think that with every movement, there's good intention, right? So it's like you and I saying, like, let's join forces with 100 people, and we can do this great, big thing so much better. But what we're not really good at looking at is the unintended consequences. And we're not really good at looking at how that could look in 10 years and 15 years and 20 years. Ultimately, toward the end of my grandfather's life, it was very disheartening, because they kept the union kept cutting us benefits, his pension kept going down, like so many things just kind of started getting stripped away from them. And he said, you know, no, they didn't, they didn't expect me to live this long. And he's right, like they expect people to live to 68 6970. But my grandfather was very healthy, you know, he was in his 80s. And, and so I think, you know, with that with, with risk of being controversial, you unions are great, and they work great, especially me being in Michigan, I can tell you, I grew up around this. And it does a lot for a lot of people. And it builds a really good life for a lot of people. But what it also does is it creates a wage that is so high, that there's so many unintended consequences, that it begins to break down other areas. And so it can't sustain itself that long. That's my opinion on how we got to where we are now and why people are really moving back toward independent work. I myself seeing my grandfather, blood, sweat, and tears go into an end pride. That's the other thing pride, his sense of honor and loyalty to General Motors. I mean, you it's not a joke, when you some of these, some of these people that are General Motors, Ford people, you are not allowed to like pull a foreign car into their driveway. I'm not kidding. Like, It's that serious. So their loyalty is a real thing. But when I saw you know that everything happening to my grandfather, I think I'm part of the generation that was very disheartened. And I was like, Listen, why would we? Why would I give you my life and my time for you to turn around and smack me in the face? And so I think that kind of also catapulted a little bit of that movement of how do we how do we do something different again?

Matthew Mottola 12:44
Yeah, and I think so what you're talking about, there's a couple of things that I want to highlight in that the first thing you mentioned was the fixed costs. So the high fixed costs, forcing there to be groups and

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centralization, rather than decentralization, sort of the second thing you mentioned was okay, now you're building up this, or you're having these unintended consequences. And that I mean, especially as Americans, boy, do, we fall folly to that. And then the third thing, which we probably won't go down this rabbit hole, but in me living abroad, when I look back at the US, I realized how much we did disincentivize bad behavior, yet like to box people into sort of these little boxes, right. And whether it's our insurance, like you mentioned, whether it's a pension, whether it's the way the unions do business, it's just, we put people into these little boxes, and we kind of assume that they're going to do that make the bad decision, but then sort of make the decision for them in terms of how he structured the environment around them. Whereas when I lived abroad, it was the opposite. It was sort of assumed humans are bad. But if they make good decisions, incentivize them and create a virtuous loop to keep making good decisions. But so digging into this, this point of the technology, because I think one of the things that we're getting around here is that no one has bad intentions at all right? The unions don't have bad intentions, the large companies don't have bad intentions, the current administration doesn't have bad intentions. But I think the climate that they're responding to creates the actual reality no matter what your intentions are. And so for the past 100 years, like large centralized forces made sense, because things were so expensive. And not to get way too meta. But I mean, if we really want to go back to say, like World War Two, thank God, we had large companies, so we could actually produce, you know, the, the Axis powers. So there's a, you know, extreme example of thing, copy this. But so now, we have the technology where things are cheaper to do as individuals, right. And I think that's where when I came into this world of freelancing, it was not because I cared about freelancing at all. It was because I could literally fire up. I could use Slack to talk for free. I could use email and I could use a free Google Drive. And I could have clients while I'm at school, instead of having a full time internship because I couldn't do that. And so technology has made it so cheap to be an independent worker or were to hire independent workers, or even to grow businesses without needing 1000s of people. And you know, the unions have kind of freaked out because all of a sudden their value proposition of we have 1000s of people that we can sort of persuade, and have make decisions. Now, technology has kind of taken that away. So what do you what do you think from a technology perspective, right? What do you think the implications of the current technology that we have? Are? And maybe that question is unfair, because I'm asking it from like, a pure techie lens. But let's kind of jam on, like, let's Geek on this technology, like how is technology really impacted this, just the economy in general, and specifically, the independent workforce,

Azariah 15:39
specifically the independent workforce, and not just the independent workforce, but individuals who might be struggling in other ways, and maybe they do have a company or that they work for that maybe they are an employee? Because we do have a large percentage of people who do both, right. So we don't want to negate that percentage of people. And let me clarify definition really quick, I'll get back to the technology. But I always want to make sure it's it's understood my, my thought, when I go out, and I'm speaking to people about the independent workforce, their first response is generally like the gig economy or the platform economy. And I just want to make sure everyone understands, like, that's such a small percentage of independent workers. And I think that's a really valuable segment. But platform workers are not the largest segment. And we have a lot of really successful independent workers that make six figures. And we have, you know, technologists, we have all kinds of people who work

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independently that aren't platform workers. So I think it's important to mention that because I don't want everybody's mind to go straight to, you know, Spark or Lyft apps, or whatever the case is, I love those get, don't get me wrong, especially me, I don't like grocery shopping. That has been amazing. For me, I also don't like driving. So life is good, right? Like, those are great assets for me. But there's a different variety of independent workers, I think we need to acknowledge the kind of the different avenues that people choose to work in, but with the technology and opportunity, so regardless of if they're some, you know, substituting some income, or they're working full time as independent worker, the first thing that I think it's done is it's given people hope, it's given them hope that they can have a different lifestyle, and that they can earn money, doing something that they relatively like, and they can do it from home. And there's other mechanisms or means to economic stability, than just getting an employment job, which, you know, there's a lot that could go behind that conversation. But I think that we have to look at that to what has it done for the, for the world in general. And I wouldn't say hope is one of those things. One thing that's also overlooked is, and I've had these arguments, oh, gosh, I wish I wish you could hear some of these, and they're not arguments. So don't take that word, too, too heavily. But I've had these conversations with insurance companies and carriers, and I'm like, Listen, you should want our people because historically, and statistically independent workers are happier and healthier than employees. This is a lot. So what else is technology done? Well, it's created a lifestyle of success, and of, and I would say, a mechanism for you to carve out your life the way the way that you want. And if that means, you know, you start working a little bit later, and you take afternoon walks, and you you know, stop working in a certain time every day, because you want to enjoy your work life balance, you can do that. So I think the technology is definitely aided a lot, psychologically. The other thing, though, is I think, and I think I've experienced this myself, so I'll give you a little bit of personal detail here. So our company actually doing COVID closed offices permanently. Now, I have never been somebody who could sit in an office full time. It just is not my personality. In full transparency. I also have mixed type add, we don't do well, in one particular position every day, right? Like it's not going to work for us. So for me, I've always liked to work a mix of both I like an office to go to and I liked to be home sometimes because it just works better for me. But when we close our offices, at first, I was like, Yes, this is amazing. Because I like to be home, I just want to be home and I want to do this, I'm gonna do that. And now I find myself sitting here going kind of want someplace to go. Like, it'd be nice if I had an office to go to one or two days a week. And so I think that that's something we need to be aware of now, do I think the independent workers are building communities in their local area together? Yeah, I do. But do I think that we also need to be aware of what are some of the potential unintended negative psychological consequences, which could be isolation. So those are the kinds of things I think that we need to look at when we talk about biology.

Matthew Mottola 19:44
So I kinda want to go back and forth ping pong, like good and bad, good and bad, good and bad. Because I think one thing that is very unique about you is that you're not coming in in the past year. And so one of the big problems that I've had is that listen I think technically I can say now like 10 years I've been in this even though I have probably like four years of real working experience, because I've been in sort of my whole life. But so one of the problems is that we'll have people that, like they went to on deck, right? And they'll be like, Oh, I'm an expert in the gig economy now. And you're like, What do you mean? Like, you started this three months ago? How can you possibly be an expert in the economy?

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So you, you have actual experience of seeing this before it was called the gig economy? You probably even seen this before. It's called the freelance economy. And there was all this data and all these stats to basically say, this is a venture back will industry or this is something we should care about. So I think it's gonna be kind of fun. So let me start with the first. Actually, you tell me the largest, you start by telling me that what's the largest benefit of of the independent economy? Freedom? Okay. What about uncertainty, though?

Azariah 20:47
It's the risk you're willing to take? Yep, you want me to? We want to go back and forth. But I gotta geek out for just a second.

Matthew Mottola 20:55
Yeah. Okay. Please do? Yeah.

Azariah 20:57
Part of my current research is actually looking at positive and negative aspects in employees, and then

Matthew Mottola 21:07
to be Amazon,

Azariah 21:08
their degree of psychological capital, what is their effect differences between workers? And we're talking about ways in the area of psychological

Matthew Mottola 21:16
is how can I change makers believe that there is no time, please tell us about the freelance, remote work or even I

Azariah 21:24
believe that about traditional employees and more people are more comfortable with a system which there was no thing wrong with my friend. And I will say this, there are so many times in my life, and I'm like, kudos. Again, that'd be really nice. Like, maybe just get Jordan's house, the white picket fence and a little cabin up north? Because that's what people Michigan here do. They go up north, every weekend in the summers, right? That seemed just so simple, and so nice. And but there's that other part of me is like, I need change, and I need experience, and I need, you know, adventure. So that would be nice. But then there's this part of us where it's a risk that we take, but I also feel like it, it kind of feeds, a need us to not have everything be so same same every day. And then going back to what what, what else did you ask? Because I lost my train of thought there for a second.

Matthew Mottola 22:16
Well, okay, let me let me put one thing to that. So because I think this is a very actually interesting dynamic here. So, okay. I fully agree. Honestly, at people, whenever I have these conversations with people that are not in the space, they generally turn back and they say, what you're really talking about

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as a job. And I'm like, What do you mean, they're like, You really just want to have a good job. And I'm like, so my reaction to this is, yes, I want the white picket fence, I want the dog, I want the kids, I want the you know, the wife, I want that, right? I want the stability. Ideally, to be honest, I'd even be cool having a nine to five job going into the office from nine to five. And that's it. The reality is that's not attainable anymore. Because if you if you look at the data, that's that's not the majority, if you look at the real data of the typical American, their income has stayed the same since 1979. Like we mentioned, the pensions gone, there's layoffs for, you know, reasons that are outside of their control. And so I approached this, not from a point of like, hey, you know, I can't deal with that stability, I approach it from actually want that stability. It's just that jobs don't give that anymore for the average American person, which I find so interesting as right, so and I always, when I talk with freelancers who train when I talk with freelancers, who have been freelancing for over 10 years, that's actually usually our biggest disconnect. This will be like, Oh, I needed the freedom. And you know, I need to blaze my own path and pride. I'm actually sitting back being like, no, no, I actually don't want that at all. I just want stability and you know, a stable white picket fence. But employment isn't necessarily the way to that either. So we're both kind of fighting this. Today's sponsor, is the human club book, talk about narcissism being around sponsor, but certainly should be the sponsor today. Because we want you to go to wherever you get your bookstores, it could be Amazon, it could be independent bookstore, wherever. And we want you to collect all the insights that are fueling what we're talking about in the show. What the book is about is how today's change makers use the technology to transform. This isn't just about the freelance economy or remote work, or even just about automation. This is about software, fundamentally transforming how we work. So with that said, Go on, get the book. Like I always tell my friend, hit record is actually pretty good. So if you were at toilet paper, well, who knows? Maybe the COVID offset will have a run on toilet paper again, but come handy. Alright. Enjoy the show. Okay, you mentioned freedom. What are some of the other benefits? Yeah, no, I really want to be i and that's why even people when they get this bullshit of entrepreneurship, I'm like, why are the schools pushing entrepreneurship because usually it's a professor who has a stable salary And in tenure, and I'm like, if you want to learn about real entrepreneurship, you can't have tenure. I'm sorry. Those are like the that's the It's hypocrisy. There. They're out there opposites are my entrepreneurship, you got to be broke living on a couch having a dream that no one else believes in. That's entrepreneurship. But so yeah.

Azariah 25:18
without going too far down historical lens, this, this, this Abin flow is so evident. And I feel like we really failed to just look at history sometimes and go, okay, there is nothing in the world that is that difficult to figure out almost everything is just a pattern, right? So if we look at everything historically, and I think about World War Two, a lot of the different things that came about and what our society had to deal with was, now all of a sudden, we had a great influx of women who get joined the workforce. And by the way, they didn't want to go back home, right. And so then we had like a, a huge number of workers compare it to jobs. And so there was so many different, you know, things that had to take place during that time. You have somebody like me, who grew up with a grandfather who worked for a union, who saw that very stable, but very unengaging lifestyle, it's very much the same every single day, you literally got up at the same time, every day, you got home, you had dinner almost at the same time every day, like it was very, very predictable. And for some people, that doesn't work. But it's interesting. Now when I talk about the ebb and flow, and we're a few years apart, so I'll say, for me, I saw that and

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I'm like, that's all I want the stability, but I don't want that. Right. I don't want that norm that flatline. I want something a little bit more exciting. So it's interesting. I think we're saying the same things. But how we get there. And why we get there is a little bit different.

Matthew Mottola 26:44
I think I kind of want to be your grandpa. Because the opposite. I saw the instability. Like ah, stable and unengaged. Sounds great. predictable. And who knows, maybe because I've been, you know, 10 plus years in this independent economy and freelancing and navigating building businesses and, and so, but, you know, you talk about also the influx of women. And I think one, one thing about the independent economy that you're not going to see in like a DNI report, sorry, if I got the term Trump, but you're not going to see in these yet we all know it is generally freelancing has provided or working as an independent, has provided opportunity to historically underrepresented or, you know, populations that didn't have it. And I will want to call out a couple of stories where the stories don't look like race and gender, they look more like socioeconomic status, and more like circumstances that they couldn't choose. And so like in the book, we talked about this one, you know, this woman, Sharon, and her brother had died unexpectedly, she had to take care of her family, and her employer expected her to be in the office. And so thank God for freelancing because she could still have income on her own. I can't believe I didn't bring it up earlier. But remote Ukraine, they literally spun up in 30 minutes, a freelance talent marketplace to connect companies with with freeing you, Clint retraining refugees, and these people can work wherever they are. And so one person was working out of the bathtub, because that's where the Wi Fi was, and in case there was bombings, he was in the bathtub. It's crazy, but at the same time, thank God for these these the technology behind the independent economy. So what what is the real socio? You know, I don't know the right word to use. But what's the real impact here? Because it's so much more than just race, gender, or any of that stuff? It? It really is a freeing, you know, I call it a technology, but it's a freeing work economy?

Azariah 28:45
Yeah, I would agree with that. I mean, I think everything you've said, is evidenced in the fact that as a country, we still haven't solved the childcare crisis. It's still one of the number one things that families deal with the expenses they deal with. It's unreal. So I agree with everything you said about that? What was the question? Again, let's title

Matthew Mottola 29:06
it more more about, you know, actually kind of want to skip to a different question. I hate to say it, what, what are the challenges in the way actually, because, and maybe you can sprinkle in some of the the real, like the stories of freelancing for good, right? Or how, because they were independent worker, they were able to have, you know, a livelihood, a living, even though their circumstances weren't, I can go to an office Monday through five. So if you have some some data or stories there, but then I also want to get into like, what are the massive barriers in the way of this happening? Because we have the laws, but like, what, what's really in the way? So I guess, whichever one you want to start with the good or the bad, right, in terms of the positive or the or the what's in the way?

Azariah 29:50

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Yeah, so I think we talked about some of the benefits of independent work and that of course, was the freedom that people want, you know, doing something that they love, divided They are devising their own schedule, that those kinds of things are all benefits. Some of the the negatives in the number one thing that we still hear from independent workers is, what are their, what's their biggest concern or need, and that's still on the forefront of their mind almost at all times, is making sure they're securing the next contract or the next job or whatever that might be. How are they getting the next, you know, gig, if you will. And so that's always on the forefront of their mind. So a negative, I think, is that it is kind of this pervasive looming thing that's resting in your mind, okay, you're always going to move forward, you is going to secure this and you always gotta so to your point, it can feel insecure, because you're always having to create your own security. Other challenges, I think, are always of course benefits. It's not that there's not a marketplace of benefits available to people, it's that the accessibility to those benefits is a little bit difficult. And the cost is often much higher for independent workers than it is for employees. So kind of breaking that system down. And making it portable is something that's being looked at right now. There's a bill that's being proposed to create grant, to grant money to companies or organizations that are finding new and innovative ways to make benefits portable for it for the workforce in general, not just specifically for independent workers. But that's something that they haven't quite figured out how to solve. And Aspen Institute recently put out a report around something similar. And really what it comes down to is because they're still looking at it as a need to centralize the money that pays for those benefits. So in the employment scenario, obviously, they collect the money out of your paycheck, and then the company pays the insurance company. So the way that the government is still looking at it as well. Okay, when we set up a centralized collection spot, right, so they're saying, for example, if you work for platform a and Platform B, and you you work for that platform, an hour on this one, two hours, then each one of those platforms need to contribute to this, you know, pot $1, and then $2, or whatever equivalencies that they come up with. And then that money will be used for your benefits. And so that's where it's like, is that really necessary? And again, it's a mechanism of control and track and finances, but I think that's one of the one of the hindrances right now, too, is, I guess, I would ask the question, why do I need you to hold on to my money to tell me how to get benefits. At the same time, I will also acknowledge that, and you asked about some of the difficulties of freelancing is that so many freelancers, and I'm a, I'm very creative myself, so I completely understand this eye. We're not always great at the backend of business, right? So we're great with ideas, we're great with what we do, we can create beautiful pieces of technology and artwork and jewelry, and like, some of my favorite freelancers are artists and put ask them how to run the backend of the business. And it gets a little tricky, right, that's not something that they necessarily always excel in. And that's not an overgeneralization. It's a statement of fact that we need to consider because the counter argument to not having a centralized location for the monies that would then fund the benefits is that then I do have to always take care of it myself. And what if I'm not really good at that stuff? I remember even when I was an employee, when I was a professor, I had God bless her a lady in HR, and she was just the sweetest person in the world. And like, I just don't have the patience to go through every single detail of those benefits enrollments packages, I just don't want to do it. Just tell me like and so my mindset was already so much like that, right? So I can sympathize with an independent worker is just like, oh my gosh, just tell me what I need. Because this is too much to process. And, and by the way, I don't want to be an expert on that. Just tell me what I need. So those are some of the barriers I think right now. And then also, of course, just the misclassification right now, the risks of Miss Pathak misclassification as

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some of the barriers to but that being said, any of the challenges, I still don't think there's anything that's gonna stop this movement from pushing forward. And I think that when we look at this, when we look back in the history books, it's just gonna be another one of those Abin flows, right? The pendulum swings to the left and it swings to the right, we find balance for a while, which is what we did for a while. And I think post 911 really started seeing things shake up right but previous or prior to that, I think we had kind of that pendulum that was a little bit in the middle then occasionally go to the left or the right a little bit but for the most part, it was pretty stable. And and now I feel like we're just we're just seeing that pendulum swing because change and I've always said this so you can you can quote me and I don't know if I made this up, but I'm going to take I'm gonna take credit for it. Conflict brings change and the outcome of that conflict is our is our choice, right? We're in a time of conflict in terms of how the independent workforce, how the workforce in general is functioning, we're responsible for those outcomes. And how we drive these changes in the trajectory that we're looking for is up to us. And so I don't think anything can stop this movement from happening, but how good or how bad it happens, I think that we have a lot of power to have input in that and to really drive the direction of it. I think a lot of independent workers, though, don't know and don't realize that their voice is needed in that they need to contribute to that thought process. That's a lot in a minute. So okay,

Matthew Mottola 35:37
are you ready for the summary? No, no, that was see. And this is why we do it long form. Because technically, we could have 10 questions for you. And you could answer in under two minutes. But that would be so boring. And most of the insights would be super surface level. So when, you know, in sort of summarizing what you said, right, you actually draw drew up four negatives, which I would consider them also like challenges for moving forward. For two to four negatives, you also brought up, you said, I don't think there's anything that can stop this movement from moving forward. So I think that's sort of like the framing of this, right. And Ryan, as plug into the intro you use is there's no stopping is moving for moving forward. But there's a massive challenges now, for you leaders out there, these massive challenges or opportunities. And so after, you know, we're going to kind of get into solutions as awry in terms of what you see as solutions. Because a lot of our leaders, there's kind of two pools of the people listening right now, pool one is they want to directly build something in this space. So they want to go build freelance platforms, they want to build freelance solutions, they want to they want to physically build the software in their pool too, though, is they want to engage independent talent to build what they're already building. So this is the farmer that wants to engage independent talent to do their social media or to do their research. So these are the sorts of tools we're pulling from. So the challenges that you brought up number one, securing the next paycheck, that one, so painful, I recently got a car and the you know, in doing the credit application, whatever it was, they were like, Hey, what's your monthly income? And I kind of chuckled. And I'm like, Ah, I don't know. And you know, of course, I jumped in said one number, because I know what those people you just got to be direct and confident. But that's a massive problem. Because one month, it's 20. The next month, that's five the next month, that's 30, the next month is to like, it can be really difficult. And so and we in sort of the businesses I built, that's usually number one. So number two, is you mentioned the benefits. And the fact that what you said, is insurance is built off of centralizing collections. And so insurance in the IRS is built off centralizing collection. So that's the second thing is benefits is when we have a decentralized workforce with a bunch of individuals, how do we manage benefits? The third is you mentioned back into operations.

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Now, if there's any freelancers listening, I know you don't want to do this, right? I know you do not what you do not care so much about sort of organizing. So W's building client files, making sure that you're sending out your W twos and your tennety nines yourself. So there's the backend. And then fourth, you mentioned misclassification. Now, my brain goes to my immediate question is, is there going to be a bunch of freelance platforms that handle this? Is there going to be a change away from companies but towards freelance platforms? Because when you mentioned those four challenges, freelance platforms, to me sound like the potential next best solution. So so that's sort of let's dig into solutions of where you see the next five years. I will give you context, in terms of, you know, I personally, as a freelancer have always battled that question of, you know, as a freelance platform inherently good or bad. And it kind of goes back to our first talk about intentions were, well, they'll start good, but you know, based off the reality, they adapt in certain ways that are good or bad for either. So that's sort of my context. I've also have navigated back and forth, right. I've seen the good ones, I've seen the bad ones. And so I can't say, you know, negative or pro for a freelance platform, I will say some unions have gotten pretty pissed off at so they I can, I can admit, there's very few unions that I agree with. But um, but let's jump into solutions. Right. What do you see the solutions in this space being and also sort of tell us about the big wins you had recently? Because I think that'll also help frame the solutions.

Azariah 39:26
Yeah. So I wouldn't say me specifically, but we're definitely we're part of a coalition that we helped form the coalition Coalition for Workforce Innovation. And so you and I actually did a talk together. And we had Evan Armstrong on there. And he talked about the kind of the lawsuit that that CWA filed because when the Biden administration came in, there was some things that Trump had put in place regarding the independent workforce and the economic economic realities test. And they came in and just pretty much squash that without giving proper time for comment and for review, which 30 days is pretty much the minimum, right? So yeah, there wasn't time

Matthew Mottola 40:15
that Azariah really burned that like specifically what was what was the trumpet? What was that change? What was that that bill, that law, whatever it was, what was that change? Because I actually, I'm unfamiliar with that.

Azariah 40:29
Yeah, no, it's just so this is the simplest I've, I've heard it put a lot of different ways. But this is the simplest, I think it gets is that the rule that Trump implemented, applied in economic realities, tests that primarily considered whether the worker operates his or her own business, or is economically dependent on the hiring entity. So for example, if you had a contract, and you were considered an independent worker, but that was your only contract, and you were dependent on that for your income, that changes the scenario a little bit, right. And I do know, some companies that do that. I've seen people who are on two year contracts. And I'm thinking, really, because at that point, you do question like, where is that? Where does that sit? So what that did was it gave independent workers a lot more freedom to move about how they wanted and put the businesses at less risk of misclassification because even if I took a longer contract, I wasn't economically dependent on you for my income. It was just that that was a contract that I took. And ultimately, though, I was still independent, and I worked

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freely on my own, I can quit when I want and etc, etc. So under Biden, they, he they came in, and instead of giving, they're giving their time, time to like, discuss this and to comment on if we thought it was good or bad, and why we think it should stay or go. They didn't do that. They, at one point, kind of put a hold on it. And then it was like a really quick movement where all of a sudden, I was like, No, I'm just, we're just taking that out. And it was like, almost felt intentional, like we're gonna purposely not give people a chance to talk about this, because we need to move on something else. And I'm not saying it was tied to like the ProAct and build back better, which I think they're calling now. But it was just interesting that that particular piece of policy from the Trump administration gave so much freedom to independent workers, which then of course, takes away from potential growth. And unions, right. So you look at the balance between the two, it's what's up?

Matthew Mottola 42:42
No, of course, it makes total sense, right. And the union's probably, I hate to say they probably knew exactly about that law. Now. It's probably the first thing they did when he got in office was alright, that's what we want gone. And I it does remind me, you know, this is where I'm not a political expert, right. But I've noticed there's like trillion dollars of student debt that's just getting forgiven. And it's not like becoming public. It's more of just like, dead of the night doing that. And I think this is where a lot of anger, you know, that the typical American right, I think we have a lot of anger, that there's a lot of stuff getting done in the dead of night. And in our industry, what you're bringing up is one of those things where, you know, you're not going to hear on CNN, about exactly what you just said, because it's boring. It's boring, but it's impacting over 50 million people. And so there are people that are livid about this, which is why we've seen such, you know, ground up anger about this.

Azariah 43:35
Yeah. Yeah, because so something like that, it just happened. I mean, that was why we were so glad, you know, like CWA caught it along with some of the companies that are part of CWA. Because otherwise, it would have just gone unnoticed, honestly. And so what that basically what they did is they reverted immediately back to the prior ways and policies of handling independent workers, which was much more limited. And it was very specific to how they worked when they worked. And a couple other factors, like the style of work that they did for the company, there were so many like little fine tune things were almost made it impossible for a company to use a contractor and not be at risk of them saying that they're an employee, right? It was so limited, right? Basically, the only thing that would you know, as a company owner, if I, if I owned a company that did silk screening, and I hired you to come in and do ink analysis, well, it's so close, I need you. I need to understand that if I'm having issues with my printing press or something, I need to understand the ink. But if it's so close to what I already did, then there was a risk of like, well, actually, you're working for me as an employee, but instead of like, let's say, I run a screen printing company and I need you to come in and fix the toilet. Well, that would be okay. Yeah, right. But it was like Why would you hire a contractor and an expert in your area to do to do work for you, but you don't need them full time as an employee? It's not a full time position.

Matthew Mottola 45:09
No, it's back to your point of the second level are unintended effects. Because when I hear that a lot of the pushback is people will say, but it's making the laws explicit. And you say, Well, if you're the

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business owner, now, there's so much work that you have to do just to make sure that you're not legally liable. And even though the law doesn't say that you can't be an independent worker, the amount of effort that's now required for companies to be able to hire you, they're not going to do it, which furthers the needing to have employees and needing to have large centralized organizations. Because the little, you know, the little companies, they can't do that, which also comes back to it's hurting small businesses, because instead of enabling small businesses, to tap into an elastic workforce, and this is sort of where my end comes in from the client side fighting is like, I love small businesses, the less than 100 employees, they need elastic resources, they can't go hire people full time. They can't compete against Google to hire developers, but they still need to build a website, they still need to have a digital presence. And so under those current laws, what the Biden administration is doing is they're saying, no, no, you can't compete against that large company, we're not going to let you we're going to actually give you regulation and red tape, so that you literally can't because we're not going to let you tap into Elastic resources. So we're going to hinder your comp, you know, hinder you to be competitive. Yeah. And

Azariah 46:26
I don't know one of the most extreme examples recently that I've seen. I'm still trying to wrap my head around this. You can take this out if you want. But I'm trying to wrap my head around this push for Starbucks workers to unionize. I don't understand that. Tell me more. So there's a push right now within Starbucks, that they're trying to unionize. I don't understand why. My perception of Starbucks is that they pay decent wages, they fund education for their workers. They have flexible schedules. They have partnerships with so many organizations to help enhance their workers lives. I don't get it. I don't get it. And what I see happening is I feel like if that were to happen that would fundamentally change Starbucks business. And it would, it could end up like the big three is what I'm is what I'm saying. Like, why do you want to ruin something that's already doing really good like one? One of the things I've always been a proponent with Starbucks is that they education like they literally pay for your college education. Like what what do you want? I don't get it, but kind of a kind of a segue there. But I just don't find that out surprising that this movement with the Biden Biden administration to to go backwards, really does. Like you said, now it says, Well, you can't compete with the big misses. Well, guess what most of those big businesses are unionized, which is what made me think of Starbucks is like when you start unionizing, you have like this unstoppable force that is impenetrable. And then you have all these unintended consequences, which is what we're seeing, and I don't want to see happen more, I guess.

Matthew Mottola 48:11
Yeah, it all comes back to that video, you're seeing the video of like, leadership one on one, where it's a concert, and there's like one person dancing kind of crazy. And then like, he'll be doing that for five minutes. And then all of a sudden, two people will come and then they'll, you know, for two minutes, and then two months later, like five people will come. But basically, it's showing how movements spread it's, it's kind of like that's gonna happen no matter what, whether positive or negative, right, kind of like technology. Technology's just value neutral. And with unionization, you know what, and whether it's unionization or the freelance economy, like both follow this dynamic, where it just it starts a small little pebble or starts as a small little snowflake, and it turns into bigger, bigger, bigger, and now it's an unstoppable force, and then you know, an avalanche. So okay, I really last last part of the segment, I

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really want to dive into solutions. And I think starting with what that lawsuit was what what that when was on your side, because I think one of the really confusing things were like, I love that we can have this platform to be able to basically just authentically be like, Alright, what's the deal? Right and our, our listeners, they're not listening for like a little clickbait they're probably working out right now. Or they're driving somewhere, or they're taking care of their kids. Like this is not give me the, you know, five second tweet that I can get mad about and write a cool tweet back or have a you know, a cool share. So, so feel free to get as long winded and as detailed as possible. But what what do you see as the top 123 solutions, that if you're in this space, you should make sure you're implementing that'll really really help the independent economy. And I think starting with the lawsuit, just giving us the lowdown on that would be a good place to start and then dive into those solutions.

Azariah 49:54
Sure. So let me give me just one second here. I'm gonna pull that up so it's easier

Matthew Mottola 49:59
beautiful. And we'll make sure we link it in the notes as well. Sure, yeah,

Azariah 50:02
I was gonna send you the link. It wasn't working right last night, but I will look forward again. So basically, as I mentioned, so CWA, along with some other organizations filed this lawsuit against the this movement to take out the previous economics reality, economic release has the trumpet implemented. And so it was just the other day that a federal Eastern District Court of Texas, the judge granted summary judgment for the plaintiffs, which included the Associated Builders and Contractors. The Coalition for Workforce Innovation, as I mentioned, in the Financial Services Institute, and basically it they agreed that the Department of Labor violated the standards, when propagating both the delay and the withdrawal of the rules. Accordingly, the plaintiffs motion for summary, judgment must be granted. And both rules must be set aside. So basically, the judge agreed with us that the end keep in mind, we weren't discussing which one of the rules per se was better than the other, it was the way they handled it. Right, gotcha. You can't just all of a sudden go in undercover and like you said, rip it out. Before before people have an opportunity to comment, I mean, that not giving us the opportunity to comment and look at it, and to have an opinion, takes away the very source and substance of the of a democratic society, you don't get to just come in and do what you want without giving us an opportunity to look at that and to speak up on it. And so the judge agreed, like, listen, it's one's not right and one's not wrong. It's an issue of how you handled there's a process in place for a reason you did not follow that process. So basically, what that did is it basically bounced it back to the Trump administration policy, which was a much more loosely structured economics reality test, which allowed small businesses in particular opportunity to work with independent workers without risk of misclassification, which is what was happening before. And so it was limiting the economy. And it was limiting the work that independent contractors could obtain, because, frankly, small businesses were really concerned and they just don't have the money to fight these big lawsuits. So they're at risk of getting into that position, then they would opt to just not use independent workers, which, in my opinion, is a horrible decision. Also, you know, when I think about like technology, even having done a couple of different tech implementations myself, and it's like, I can have a core tech team, but then I always need to hire

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that one person who has expertise in this one particular kind of API that has to do with this particular kind of service. Right? So insurance is very specific. That's why you see such a big boom in FinTech. It's because very specific, right, so I have to have people who understand insurance to help me with those API's. Because if you don't understand insurance, then you're not going to do much good for me. So my opinion is that it's needed. And I don't need one on staff full time. But there's times when I need to hire somebody to do those specific things for me for sure.

Matthew Mottola 53:09
Yeah. And just from a client side to what we mentioned there. One of the most difficult things in current state right is we're now seeing the impact, I would say of the past 50 years of unionization, and also the demise of unionization, where we have massive inflation, gas prices are out of control. We have a massive labor shortage, yet we have a wage. What do you call it? Where the wages are actually stagnated? So we have so we have so many problems that are actually like in contradiction to each other. So unemployment is less than 4%. Great, but guess what wages are actually 5% lower than inflation is because inflation is really around 10%. And coffee's actually up 72%. And then when you dig deeper into why this is, you know, and this is where I'm not a economist, right? So I'm not coming at you from like an academic. But to me, the common sense answer seems to be that we had a massive supply chain shortage, and we had a massive pandemic, right? The pandemic, we can't just use that as an excuse. The pandemic was a catalyst that sort of exposed the existing conditions. And one of the existing conditions was that our workforce was very legacy, and it was very inefficient. And we actually outsource things that we shouldn't have. And so instead of having a strong supply chain, we had a pretty shitty one where all of a sudden, everything was stuck in LA. And then prices were going up because there was such little supply and so higher demand, yet we kept pumping stimulus, and we've kept giving people checks so that all of a sudden, we didn't see that real supply and demand sort of equilibrium equilibrium. And then what do we see now? Over 10%, inflation, and who's it really hurting the small businesses, the small businesses that can't raise their price? Because their local community can't afford the raised price? And so what can we do to help them compete? We got to give them access to Elastic talent. But then what is current government policy do? No, no They want to stick with exactly what got us into this problem. So it's an interesting contradiction that we're in right now, where, you know, part of what got us here. And I know, you know, when I went to Ukraine, I've heard they use that as a as a nice another excuse of Oh, no gas prices are high because of Russia. No, no, no, there's there's four, there's four days that that the war was going on during that last report of inflation. So, you know, kind of like the way that the passed the bill as well, right, it was like dead of night, let's just act like everyone's kind of down, and we can tell them, whatever they, you know, we want. So it's very, it's kind of all kind of coalescing in terms of as an individual, you're strong guest when you kind of have your individually that of rugged individualism, but at the same time, it's more convenient when you have centralization. So a lot of topics that, you know, we keep bringing up in this long form. But okay, solutions, did you have a comment for that, or you want to jump straight into what these solutions look like?

Azariah 55:59
Um, so I have, I have about three different possible solutions that I could, I want to recommend. So as far as solutions in, it's not going to solve every problem, but I think it's going to help in a step forward.

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So technology is the first thing I need to look at, from a business perspective, meaning the businesses that utilize independent contractors or independent workers. From a technology perspective, I think that a push for technologies that could adequately handle benefits that are portable, isn't as necessary. So one of the issues that companies are having is attraction and retention. And, and even within the independent workforce, and part of that would be solved if we had a technology that couldn't manage benefit, access, and portability. So as a company, I think that that's something that they should help promote is how do we, you know, I don't want to be as a company owner, I don't want to be responsible for that, because then I do put myself at risk of providing benefits, which then creates employee, so I don't want to do that. But what I do want is a piece of technology that will help manage those things. So I can go about running my business as I should, right. Secondly, from a technology perspective, for the actual independent worker, there are so many platforms out there, and Emily leach would be a good person to get back to about this comment. But there are so many platforms out there for independent workers to assist with running the backend of your business. And I think that there's probably not enough centralized education on what that stuff is where we could help independent workers understand what's available to them. Because let's face it, they're already trying to secure the next job, they don't have 20 hours to spend figuring out which platform is going to work best for them, right, though, that ends up getting pushed off, I'll just do it another day, because I have to focus on getting this job done or whatever. So I think from an infinite worker perspective, accessing and utilizing the technology, will, that help that will help you run your business better, is essential, including those platforms that help you understand what taxes might be due, and things like that, that would be very helpful. I talked to an independent worker the other day, who has been doing it for years and years and years going to, and also has a background in accounting, and still, at the end of the year, has stacks and stacks and stacks of receipts that are just everywhere. So my point is, we're not great at it. So let's use the technologies that help us be great. And actually, that kind of weight lifted off of your psyche would probably help your business run better in general. That's my thought process. Any comments on that? I have two, a couple more suggestions. Maybe.

Matthew Mottola 58:37
My quick one is that when you mentioned the centralized education around back office technology, I'll put in from a technology or from like startup ecosystem lens, what I've seen is that there's lots of them. There's not lots of ones that stay or that are actually for the independent worker. So bonsai in 2016. We those is one of the more recent ones, there's, there's plenty of back office solutions and CO that you kind of hear about. There's another one, there's one called Pluto as well. There's there's plenty of them, right, I got a spreadsheet of over 100 of them. One of the big problems with our flat with our space is that it's not actually that good of a space to build the business in. It is it seems like it because there's large numbers. But in terms of actual purchasing power, it's pretty tough, because we kind of set out to get too geeky, but we sit in between a b2b and b2c space. So if you're building software for freelancers, you're not getting that enterprise check of 5000 bucks a month no matter what, because freelancers are super, super stingy, but at the same time, there's lots of them. And they do have purchasing power usually between 50 to 150k a year. And they do spend usually between 105 100 a month on some sort of professional advancement. So we sit in this weird space where if you look at it from a from an orange airship lens, it seems like a good but a very difficult space. And I think literally, you know, every give it every day, there's a new company in our space, and 99% of those companies won't survive purely

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because they don't actually care about the freelancer, they care about themselves and make new good business. So I hear you what the centralized, that's gonna be the biggest problem.

Azariah 1:00:25
Yeah, and I think by centralized, maybe change that wording a little bit because by centralized What I mean is, maybe somebody who understands technology well enough to continually do reviews to just put so many information about what will or won't work and why it would be good or bad. And, and I and to your point, I've never really looked at it like that. So I really appreciate learning a new perspective. But if I was a technology company owner, I do see your point, and that freelancers are a huge group of people, but you're right. We're kind of in b2b and b2c. That's a really unique space, I totally get what you're saying. So it's a great, great, great perspective. In addition to that conversation, see,

Matthew Mottola 1:01:05
transparency might be the right word. So a transparent system. And the transparency you use, I personally think should be in the founding teams. So I think every founding team in this space, I think it should say if that person has freelanced before or hired freelancers. I can't tell you the amount of people that have started a business in this space, that never freelance before or never hired a freelancer. And usually, their excuse is something like either Well, you know, usually they'll say they freelanced. And they didn't write, it was like for less than six months. Or, or they'll say something like, but I understand Uber and Lyft and on demand economy and you're like, that ain't freelancers. So so maybe it's more of the transparency, I do believe a woman named Jackie Roach about downs. And uh, you know her? Yeah. So Jackie, and talking about this. I think this is where technology specifically web three technology, Blockchain, the blockchain protocol, if there's a way to add in transparency, the problem is where it gets really sticky, is it starts to look like are trying to get social credit score, in terms of we start ranking each other. And then it's like, who, who has the power of waiting? What is good and bad, because you inherently have to have some sort of value judgment. And so it gets really sticky. But in a perfect world, we would have a transparent, a transparent protocol that would enable us to see sort of everything. And even in our industry, like, where do the payments go? Right? That person got on stage? What payment was there? Right? How did that actually happen? So it's sticky. It's sticky. It's not just our industry. But we're definitely extra, I guess you could say frothy, in terms of the I don't know the right word. It's not an integrity thing. But it's definitely a frothy industry.

Azariah 1:02:59
It isn't. It just reminded me real quickly of a scenario I deal with actually on a day to day basis. So the company I work with, and also the association, they're both startup organizations. And so we've had bigger teams that sometimes in smaller teams at others, prior to COVID, we have a huge team, but not like you would expect, right. So it's interesting, because then our corporate companies that we work with, there's always this kind of like, pause, right? So I deal with this, for example, the CEO, like, why don't well, why are you Why are you answering this email? Or why are you doing that? It's like, because we run the company. And we practice what we preach, and everyone else has contractors. And that is like so foreign for them to understand. We don't have a team of 100 people, because we do but they're just not all employees, right? We use contractors for the majority of the work that we do, because why wouldn't we practice what we preach, but that's just so hard for them to comprehend, like, oh, you

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know, like it somehow in some way makes us less successful or an adequate, I'm like, actually makes us stronger? You know, that's just an interesting scenario, talking about mindset of where we're at right now, something interesting to think about.

Matthew Mottola 1:04:07
So maybe that's the topic for one of our longer discussions is literally like, how do you build a sustainable business in the independent economy? Because maybe that's the wrong word. But it's like how to how do you adequately build a business to put the independent worker first, which is really tough. And it actually comes back to the principle of like, the union put the worker first but inherently, when there's money, there's good and bad actors. And so I think what happened with the union was like, they started off great, but then there was lots of money to be made when you were the runner of the Union, not exactly the worker that the union was helping. So and that's and that's the history of everything, right? So it's not, we're not unique in that way. It's just that there's lots of money to be made. Unfortunately, the money isn't necessarily aligned with helping the Freelancer it's usually aligned with using the Freelancer in some way, whether it's to transact them to a client and get 10 to 30% Whether it's to keep them on your marketplace, whether it's to give them benefits that all right, the benefits are okay, but it's better when they're paying you 10 bucks a month. So it's pretty sticky that this larger discussion for

Azariah 1:05:12
another day for sure.

Matthew Mottola 1:05:15
Yeah, but so Okay, so the first one that you mentioned, the first solution was specifically the technology that pushed for centralized benefits. And we'll call it transparency among all the resources for freelancers. And then real quick, because we got two minutes left, what, what are the other two solutions you mentioned, and I think the beauty is, this is going to just spark our leaders and listeners in terms of the things and there's little things for you listeners out there, there's little things that you've said as a right, that are such strong opportunities, we're gonna, so what they haven't told you is, we now take the transcript, and we put the full transcript into into a post, and we bold out the specific things we want them to look at. The reason for that is because you leaders, if you're, you know, trying to pitch internally, if you're trying to pitch investors, or you're just trying to validation yourself, having you as a writer as an actual quote, is perfect. And it doesn't, you know, you're not going through a PR team. So what you're saying is actually a tangible, actionable, and not dealing with all the lines of bullshit of how this look from a PR perspective. So just a heads up, but um, but okay, what are the last two?

Azariah 1:06:23
Last two very, very quickly. Number two would be, again, looking at the company side and the independent worker side, on the company side. I am a proponent of writing statements of your willingness and ethical policies that you intend to practice while working with independent workers. So it's very, very similar to writing like CSR statements. But write a statement about how you will ethically work with independent contractors have it on paper, think it through. And then from the independent worker side, I'm still pushing for a self attestation movement where we rise up ourselves and say, Hey,

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I'm an independent worker, I'm capable of managing myself. And so we have that balance that coupling between the company saying I'm, I'm going to work with you, in ethical ways, and then the inefficient worker saying, Listen, this is how I practice my business. We agree. So we're going to work together. And so that's everything's on the table. That's a second thing, a solution that I would push for. And then the third thing is a little bit more difficult. But I do think that federal policy pushes and advocacy and getting the right bills and legislation moving forward is still critical. Quick example would be we cannot get ourselves in the situation like they did or still are, in many ways, right with medical marijuana, marijuana or legalization of marijuana in general, where you have certain states doing x y&z and then but the federal government says this. And so that created and still has created a lot of complexity, right? We don't want to get in a situation where the states are doing X, Y, and Z, but the federal government is saying something different. So as much as it can be painful, I think it's so important for us to raise our voices and to make sure that we're speaking up and contributing to the the voice in those pilot and the policy documentation and and getting our, our thoughts out there as well. And that's my third and final. Yeah,

Matthew Mottola 1:08:11
okay. So the explicit as I call it, SLA, but the explicit like SLA, contract manifesto, held constitution, whatever you want to call it, I'll say whatever. I really think in the next week, we need to hold ourselves accountable to literally just creating a simple a simple type form or something where there's a centralized database of the independent workers that have agreed to this and the clients that have agreed to this, because I think it does need both. I know we had talked prior about having Freelancer sign this. But freelancers without the client client sign in this, to me just doesn't sound actionable. It sounds more like a dream than than a, you know, real plan. So I, I'm gonna, I'm gonna challenge us to make sure we do that. And have both the companies and the freelancers. And I think it has to be independent of a freelance marketplace. I really, really do there, it can be independent of someone making money off the transaction. So okay, as RIAA This was incredible. As always, we have a little surprise for the listeners that we're not going to tell you you can email us in the newsletter to figure out what it is. But any any final words as arrived before hopping off? This was a nuggets nuggets of gold, as we always have when we talk but I'm finally glad we got these documented. And we'll have them the transcript.

Azariah 1:09:28
Yeah, no final thoughts are just thank you so much for having me. And also just we've covered so many different areas, any one of those areas, I just encourage people to really put some thought into and here's the thing, don't just let life happen to you, you should be happening to life. And that means being engaged and being active in creating your future and solutions for your own self. And I think we've touched on a lot of the key areas that people could really focus on and just grow in success and prosper.

Matthew Mottola 1:09:57
I love it. All right, as right thank you for helping put on.

Matthew Coatney 1:10:02

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