



John Levisay: "Johnny99" Season 3: Episode 8

- Speaker 1: Welcome to Stayin' Alive in Technology. A series of conversations with Silicon Valley veterans touching on war stories from the past and practical advice for today. And now, here's your host, Melinda Byerley, founding partner of Timeshare CMO.
- Melinda Byerley: I don't think I've ever laughed at any job more than I did at eBay when I worked with John Levisay. First, I'll tell you about John, and then I'll tell you about how I know him. John is the founder and CEO of Blueprint, formerly Craftsby. John oversaw the company's growth from four employees to over 250, and raised \$90 million in venture capital. 2017 Craftsby sold to Comcast NBC Universal. John has remained on at NBCU and still runs Blueprint. Prior to founding Craftsby in 2010, John held executive roles at eBay and servicemagic.com. He joined eBay in 1999 as Head of Strategy and Business Development for eBay Motors, helping grow it into a \$14 billion a year global Business. John later ran the various categories on eBay and served as CEO of Cruise International, a 100 employees subsidiary of eBay Motors.
- Melinda Byerley: At Service Magic, now Home Advisor, John was instrumental in the strategy and implementation of a marketplace strategy for home service professionals that help set the stage for the growth that resulted in the eventual merger with Angie's List and their recent IPO. Prior to eBay, John spent six years at General Electric, graduating from GE's Financial Management Program and Corporate Audit staff. John received his MBA from the University of Michigan, and his BA from Colgate University where he double majored in history and English. John is married and has two children, Karen, 11, and Thomas, 7. His wife, Dr. Catherine Levisay, is a neuropsychologist and a writer. John is a musician, avid reader, and a fan of movies, TV, and live music.
- Melinda Byerley: Now a little bit about how I know John. When I interviewed at eBay in 2003, it was probably one of the most significant opportunities I had ever encountered. You have to understand at this point that I had been unemployed for a year after business school. It was after 9/11

and almost no one was hiring fresh MBAs, let alone ones with no traditional business experience and no engineering degree. I had worked for a company in the entertainment industry and sales and marketing, but to real tech companies at the time, that was a very vague thing. My MBA from Cornell was attention getting, and in the spring of 2003, my 10-year-old beat up Plymouth Neon drove me from my shared apartment in San Francisco to the campus of eBay in Campbell, California.

Melinda Byerley: At that time, eBay was the darling of its time, a beacon in a tech industry that had been, for the most part, decimated by the tech bust. I had stayed up all night cramming for the interviews by scouring the site, buying items, and I had read this book called *The Perfect Store*, cover to cover, having just found it at the bookstore. I parked my beat-up old car at the back of the parking lot so no one could see it, and I walked past all the shiny new BMWs and Porsches in the lot for my first Silicon Valley interview.

Melinda Byerley: Imagine my joy when I discovered that nearly everyone on that team had grown up in the Midwest, including John, who had grown up about 100 miles from me. He could tell I was nervous. I wasn't great at playing it cool, I'm still not, probably. So, after asking me some sharp questions, he spent a good portion of his time in the interview reassuring me that I belonged at eBay, and I would be great there. He was, of course, right. And for the time I spent at eBay, seeing John Levisay and teams was one of its highlights. His infectious joy and his sense of humor, his devotion to music, and his sharp mind and strong sense of right and wrong.

Melinda Byerley: John's episode title is Johnny 99, his favorite song off of a critical Springsteen album for those of us from the Midwest of a certain age, called *Nebraska*. We've linked to the live version, not the original album, because this version is John's particular favorite. Now, you won't hear this next story on the podcast because we didn't get into it. But you should know that John listened to Springsteen's *Nebraska* so much as a child that he was inspired to learn the guitar. Eventually, John was part of a band called Negative Feedback, a corporate band named after the eBay feature, that went on to win the *Fortune Magazine Corporate Battle of the Bands* in its third year in 2004, a competition held at the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame and judged by some

pretty great musicians and music industry people. You'll find pictures of the band on the episode page.

Melinda Byerley: Negative Feedback's award still hangs there in the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame even today. John's bandmates tell me that the award is near the men's room. As great as the band is, I have a feeling they're not kidding. So, as you listen to John, think about who else should hear John's unique perspective on technology. You never know, you might inspire the next great entrepreneur or guitar player.

Melinda Byerley: John, welcome to the podcast.

John Levisay: Thank you very much, Melinda, for having me.

Melinda Byerley: So, I know where you grew up, because we've talked about it, but I want you to tell our audience where you grew up and what you wanted to be when you were a little kid.

John Levisay: Sure. My father got drafted for Vietnam right out of medical school. So, for the first, basically 10 years of my life, we were on military bases all around the country, so moving every two years. So, by the time I was in fourth grade, I'd been in four different schools. And we can go back to that. I think that is an interesting formative experience of moving every year. And then we moved back to Illinois when I was about in fourth grade, where my dad grew up. So, small town Central Illinois, it's near LaSalle, Peru, Illinois. We actually lived in LaSalle initially, and then Spring Valley, which is a 4,000-person suburb of LaSalle, but what would I guess be classified as a working-class farming and manufacturing community in central Illinois, is where I spent most of my grade school and high school years.

Melinda Byerley: Do you remember when you were little what you wanted to be when you grew up? Or at least one of the things.

John Levisay: I think interestingly, a lot of your worldview on what you want to be when you grow up is shaped by what you see your parents doing. And in many ways, it can be a nice path, or role model. But in others, it can be quite constructive. My dad was a small-town physician. He was a surgeon. But in his mind, I think we were, my two brothers and I, we were going to be doctors. I think if we wanted to make him happy, we would be doctors, and if we wanted to disappoint him, we'd be

lawyers. So, I didn't know what else there was, other than the requisite, like, "I want to play for the Bears." That was not an option, as I think one of my football coaches once said to me, "You may be small, but you're slow." That dream died pretty early.

John Levisay: And then I assumed I'd be a doctor, and then just decided that wasn't for me, and was at a loss. Both my brothers have subsequently become physicians. And I thought I wanted to be either a teacher or a lawyer. So, I went off to college and left Illinois at age 18 with the idea that I was going to major in History and English, which I was very interested in, and then I would figure it out from there. That was where I was headed at that point. At one point, I thought it would be great to be a TV news anchorman/ interview host on the TV, like a McLaughlin report or something.

Melinda Byerley: It is not too late, and I want to encourage all media people to consider this option. John would be a phenomenal television host.

John Levisay: I was also told I had the looks for radio so that-

Melinda Byerley: The face of radio, yeah.

John Levisay: Yeah, exactly, so. Frankly, I don't think I knew what I wanted to be until well into my 30s. I just tried early in my career when I decided at the end of college, I took the LSAT and interviewed for some teaching jobs. And then someone gave me some good advice at the time, and my grandfather said, "Why don't you go talk to 10 lawyers and talk to 10 teachers, and see what their advice is." And I did. I found everything from corporate attorneys to small town personal attorneys, as well as teachers. And even at age 22, I came away with this general impression from the lawyers that not a lot of them were particularly happy with their work. And maybe it was not a statistically significant sample size, but I didn't know enough about that to know. But I felt like the lawyers weren't happy, and the teachers loved their work, but were in a constant state of frustration over finances, and that they weren't making enough money.

John Levisay: So, at that point, I decided I wanted to go into business, but I didn't know anything about business as a History and English major. So, I went to talk to a lot of people and figured out that General Electric had a two-and-a-half-year Finance Training program for finance and

accounting, where you did rotational assignments at GE businesses and studied finance and accounting. And I thought, "Well, that's something I need to learn, and GE is a good company, and they train their people. So, I'm going to go work there." And so that's what I did out of college.

Melinda Byerley: How do you think studying History and English has helped you in your career? If at all.

John Levisay: I think it's helped, not only as a citizen, but it does help in the professional world. Liberal Arts education, whether it's Poly-sci, or English or History or Philosophy, you have to be able to read and understand a massive amount of information, and then distill it in a very articulate and concise way. You know the old adage, which is, "I would have written a shorter paper, but I didn't have time." And so, being able to assimilate large amounts of information, and then have a point of view about that. And those were always the best teachers, professors I had, which, in History in English, it wasn't just like a History teacher walking through dates and chronological timelines of history. It was digging a level deeper and saying, "Why did this happen the way it did? And what were the factors, both macro, political, social, and even personal, of certain leaders that that influenced the outcomes of history." And really analyzing it.

John Levisay: So, as a citizen, particularly given the times we live in now, I think it's really interesting to see historical patterns repeat themselves at the governmental and societal level. But also, as a professional, I think being able to write, being able to distill information and have a point of view and tell a story, I think it's very valuable. And I'm saddened by the fact that now, because of the cost of secondary education, that people may not be able to justify a Liberal Arts education. That they will have to... You almost have to get more vocational training at the collegiate level to optimize for your first job, because it's so expensive. A Liberal Arts education is somewhat of a luxury in many ways. And when I went to college, and I'm not 80 years old. This isn't that long ago, right? It was \$13,000 a year. And I was fortunate enough to have my dad chip in 7,000 or 8,000. And then I worked during the summer and saved a couple grand and worked at school, and then took out some small loans. But now, a lot of these universities, even public universities, the place where I went when it was 13 or 14 a year, is now 65.



Melinda Byerley: Yeah. It's crazy.

John Levisay: And then you're getting into a level where, if you don't have the means to have parents pay for it, you're coming out with debt that's untenable. And if you're coming out with a Liberal Arts degree, it may be harder to find a job to ever defray that debt, which is unfortunate.

Melinda Byerley: And they're a larger generation than we were. So, there's more of them. So, it's more competitive, it's more competitive to get in, more competitive in jobs, housing-

John Levisay: That brings up a good point. At GE, they had a very interesting philosophy where they were, in the Jack Welsh era, their recruiters would go after, typically, and if you look at the leadership profile at GE during that period and into the 90s, typically, they would rather recruit someone at the top of their class from a big 10 School in the Midwest, than they would from the middle or bottom of their class at an Ivy League institution.

Melinda Byerley: Interesting.

John Levisay: Nothing wrong with an Ivy League institution. Obviously, they're wonderful universities. But there is, I think, a cultural feeling that there was a little more humility, and a lack of entitlement if you came from University of Wisconsin, or Michigan, or Illinois, than if you were coming out of Harvard. And I think that's an interesting viewpoint. Particularly now, as you hire and look at kids coming out of college today. I think there is a lot of... Anyone under the age of 30 right now has never known a recession, who's in the workforce. It came out after 2010. It's been pretty much nine years of up and to the right, in general, on hiring and the economy. And so, there may be a sense of entitlement that is potentially counterproductive.

Melinda Byerley: The children of summer, I sometimes... If you're a Game of Thrones fan.

John Levisay: Yes, yes.

Melinda Byerley: Winter is coming.

John Levisay: Yeah.



- Melinda Byerley: So, you were at GE, and you're going through the Finance on rotational program. Is that how you got your MBA, because I want to talk about that a little bit. How you made the transition to go to business school.
- John Levisay: Yeah. I guess I always...no. If you stay at GE after graduating the Financial Management Program, you don't need an MBA. And they consider it an internal MBA. But GE's manufacturing locations are not exactly in garden spots, right? It's not Chicago, Austin, San Francisco, LA, New York, right? It's Schenectady, New York, Erie, Pennsylvania, Louisville, Kentucky, Cleveland, Cincinnati. And all great towns in their own right, but to be the plant manager at locomotive in Erie, Pennsylvania, ultimately, I guess I was single. I was in my 20s, and I'm like, "Wow, I got to be at a different city. I want to be at a bigger city." And so, I gravitated to GE Capital at the time, and spent some time at GE Capital.
- John Levisay: And I found GE Capital to be... It was a great company and interesting, but it was... And this is banking and finance in general often, it just wasn't for me. It was very transactional. You did a big deal. You work long hours to structure that, and then you moved on to the next one. There wasn't this sense of having a team, and building something that's sustainable over years. So, I wanted to get out of that. And I guess I probably also always had a bit of an inferiority complex after having a Liberal Arts undergrad, that there were things about business that I still didn't know, and that somehow business school was either a stamp of legitimacy of business acumen, or I needed it to learn things that I didn't know. So, I made the decision after about five years of work to go back to business school.
- Melinda Byerley: I'd love to talk about the MBA, because we have people on the podcast who have it, people who don't. One of the things you and I always had in common is that we are part of a group of non-engineers with MBAs, who...we found home for ourselves in tech. And I am curious to hear what you think your secret is to doing that. And if your MBA brought value at all to that, to how you think and make decisions. It's okay if it didn't, but I'd like to hear your journey.
- John Levisay: The overall structure of the MBA program, if I had to fire this point out, the pros and cons, I think the positives are, you're around very smart people who are immersed in thinking about business, talking

about business, for the better part of two years. And there's an elevational byproduct of being around a cohort of very smart, ambitious people. You look at centers of excellence where you see these network effects, almost, where so many of the world's top surfers have come out of two beaches in Oahu. There are towns in Mississippi and Florida, towns of 4,000 people that have produced four NFL players in the last five years. It's almost like there's a Manhattan Project of people together thinking about the same things, pushing each other. That's a real benefit of an MBA.

John Levisay: And I went to the University of Michigan and the instructors were great. It was a really good program. It wasn't hyper competitive, or forced curves. It was also enjoyable. And I learned a lot. I think, to some degree, though, the con of it is, you had to take a core curriculum. Everyone has to take it. And if you were two, three years out of school, that may have been valuable. I found a lot of it to be a little redundant, because I had worked for five years, and been through a two-and-a-half-year program around finance and accounting. So, what I did was I realized, "Well, I don't need to take Accounting 101, but I have to. So, I'll just take an additional class, Accounting 564 while I'm taking 101, and I just won't go to 101. And I'll go to take the midterm and the final, and then I'll put my energies toward the more advanced accounting class."

John Levisay: So, you can work your way around that. I thought the other thing that was probably frustrating, and I don't know the answer to this is, you start interviewing for your summer internship in November-

Melinda Byerley: I know, right?

John Levisay: That runs right through February, and March even. And then you start interviewing again in September of your second year and end up spending... It's like a two-year job fair. And in some ways, that takes away from your ability to focus on the academics. A lot of the people I saw that were most successful in, probably getting the most out of the MBA knew exactly what they wanted to do afterwards.

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, if you don't know, you can get pulled off and find yourself, "Wait. How did I get here?" Because it's what everybody else is doing.



John Levisay: You're interviewing with Wall Street banks and consulting firms, and brand management companies, and you're... I think it's helpful to know, generally, what you want to go into, and not look to an MBA is a two years that we're going to figure it out there-

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, where you're going to find yourself.

John Levisay: Exactly.

Melinda Byerley: So, as you go forward, there's obviously people who are successful in tech who have don't have MBAs, and there are people who are. And in terms of how you think and run your business, in terms of starting and running a business, did the MBA play a role in helping you or hurting you as you went through that process?

John Levisay: Well, I think it helps. Just because, you by the nature of most, particularly curriculum that are built around a case study model, you get to see... It's kind of back to what we were talking about with regard to when you were a kid, thinking about what you want to do. I didn't know, as a kid, the difference between HR and PR, the difference in finance and accounting, the difference between sales and marketing. These are things that an MBA gives you a bird's eye view of the functional aspects of a business. And I think in many ways, it teaches you enough to be dangerous. But the lesson I took from it was I knew enough to be dangerous in a lot of functions, but I also knew enough to know, or realize that you need expertise in those areas. You can't be an expert in everything.

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, they're deep. All the functions are deep. When you meet the people who are specializing in them, and you realize, as a CEO, that you can't know it all.

John Levisay: Exactly. And that is comes to the whole notion of, how do you surround yourself with a team, and with people that... As our business grew here, I realized I needed, initially, a controller. Someone who really could make sure the books were solid. And then eventually that was a VP of Finance, and then eventually needed a CFO. And the same goes for your people team, and the same goes for product, and engineering, and digital marketing, and brand, and being able to understand the various pieces that need to work together, and the level of expertise you need in those was good perspective.



- John Levisay: So, from that viewpoint, I think an MBA was useful. But a lot of it is also working in a real company where it's been done right. I spoke last year to a lot of 22-year-old university students at this event here in Denver, and they all have stars in their eyes and want to be the next Mark Zuckerberg. And I said like Mark Zuckerberg and a lot of these founders that are fetishized in the media, they're once in a generation talents, where talent, drive, and luck, frankly, in a lot of cases, happened to align. It's like a LeBron James comes around once every 20 years. The same goes for tech. So, my message to them was, "Don't try and do a startup when you're 22 because, chances are, even if you have a great idea, and it starts to take off, you'll mess it up. The bobsled will get out of control on you."
- Melinda Byerley: Also, you're a sitting duck. I think young people don't even realize. Like, all of the... I don't want to pick on all of our finance friends, but sometimes they get picked off or they get ideas or even companies stolen out from underneath them.
- John Levisay: Yeah, of course. And working at GE, and then working at eBay through a hyper-growth period there, and seeing how the orgs are structured, observing what were the drivers of the business and how functions related to each other, I don't think you necessarily at a young age realize what you're learning. But a lot of it is just indoctrination into how organizations are structured, and what worked, and what didn't. And that's education that someone else is paying you for.
- Melinda Byerley: Which brings me to my question, which is, how the hell did you get from the University of Michigan working in Finance to eBay? Because the question I didn't ask you is if you remember the first time you touched a computer. Like I don't see you as a nerd, a guy who wants to be a Bears football player, and a guy who's a musician. We haven't even gotten into that. Like, where did that come into play in your life?
- John Levisay: Well, this is... I'm aging myself a little here, and this is-
- Melinda Byerley: Oh, we're there together. So, let's do it.
- John Levisay: It sounds crazy, but in college, and I was in college from 1985 to 1989. I hand wrote 30 page, 40-page History papers. My thesis was 110 pages typed. I hand wrote it, and then paid a buck a page to have it typed.



Melinda Byerley: What?

John Levisay: I did not have a computer in my room at college. And there was a computer center where you could go with a punch card and floppy disks. But that was an accident waiting to happen. And so, the first time I really used a computer was at GE in the early 90s. And they had a proprietary version of Excel. I think it was called SuperCalc.

Melinda Byerley: Yes.

John Levisay: And I even used WordPerfect. And yeah. So, it started then, and remember, before Windows you had to basically go into dos commands, or copy a backslash seven-

Melinda Byerley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Levisay: It was just crazy that that's only 20+ years ago. It's amazing how fast technology has moved. And I left Michigan, I think in '97, and got recruited by... A guy that I had worked with at GE had a big family business. It was, well, a small family business, but a big business. It was in New York, New Jersey. It was an investment bank and a rice and sugar trading company. And that's the, I think, back to our earlier point about the byproduct not knowing what you want to do when you came out, I wasn't sure. It was between that and consulting. But it sounded very interesting, and the money was good, and I liked the people a lot. But eventually, after about two years of that, it came back to what I said about banking and finance, which it was all very transactional, working on deals.

John Levisay: So, I started to get a little jumpy, and I got a call from a guy you know, Simon Rothman.

Melinda Byerley: Ah, Simon.

John Levisay: He and I had been on GE's corporate on staff together, and worked on-

Melinda Byerley: Ah, that's the connection. Got you.

John Levisay: Yeah. We'd worked on a big project at GE Aerospace in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. And then what was more of a strategic consulting six-

month project at GE Appliances. So, we knew each other, and we both left GE at similar times. So, I went to Harvard, I went to Michigan. We kept in touch. And then he reached out to me, in I guess it would have been March of '99, to come to this company, eBay. And he was excited about starting an automotive division of eBay. And we both loved cars and were into cars, and he reached out in March of '99. And I was like, "Wait a minute. What is this thing? What are we talking about here?" Get on the old dial up and check it out. And I'm like, "This looks like a lot of little tchotchkes and shitknacks. I don't quite understand what this is."

John Levisay: And he said, "No, no, it's the future of commerce on the internet, and it's an egalitarian vision of buying and selling. And I have a lot of respect for Simon. He's an extremely smart, in many ways, a visionary guy. Always has been. And so, I wish I had come over in March of '99.

Melinda Byerley: I was going to say... Damn.

John Levisay: I like to buy high, sell low. So, I hemmed and hawed and stood on it till the summer of '99. And then in July, decided, "Yeah. I got to go give this a try. This is exciting." And so, I left New York and moved up to San Jose, and started at eBay in July of '99. And do you know what's funny? In the interview, because I had to interview with multiple people there, the question was asked of me, "So what's your internet experience?" And my response was, "I thought it just got invented. I don't have any. I don't have any." But I think, these are, whether it's an online business, and this is back to your question about how does it translate to tech. These are all business, whether it's Fender guitars, or stay free, or bug spray, or industrial equipment, comes down to unit economics, supply and demand, and the platform where supply and demand meet.

John Levisay: And it's all the same, basically. And we talked a lot about that, about the challenges that a marketplace business faces. If you're smart, and you take the time to dig in and diagnose the underlying levels of a business, I did not find the transition from offline to online hard. I'm not an engineer. I'm surely not then, nor now writing code. But the ultimate business dynamics of supply-side, demand-side, and product, it's just business.



Melinda Byerley: Well, this leads to my next question about starting a company, because this is a question I've always wanted to ask you, which is how you came to pick Craftsy. And straight up, because I've known you for so many years, the last thing I think about when I think about John Levisay is knitting and home crafts.

John Levisay: Yeah.

Melinda Byerley: And so, I got to be honest about that. And I got to say to you, how did you get there? How did you come? Certainly, I would guess...I'm going to put some words in your mouth and guess it's observing the passion and intensity of niche markets at eBay plays a factor. But for you, personally, to dedicate your life to pursuing that, something had to have changed for you.

John Levisay: Yeah. So, I'll back up one step from that, to talk about not only the business itself, but what led me to take the leap, to try something on my own. And when I think about the answer, it's honest, in the sense that I'm not necessarily proud of the way it happened because one of the main reasons I decided I had to do it was, I kept seeing people that you and I had worked with, who I considered myself on par with, or perhaps in moments of hubris, better than, do it, and do it successfully. And at some point I just said, "Why not you? If that guy can do it, and she can do it, and then why the hell not?"

John Levisay: And so that was part of my motivation is, I just don't want to look back on my career and say, "You never took a shot." And one of the, I think, luxuries of being an older founder, because I was in my late 30s, early 40s, when this came together was, "Look, I've worked for 18 years. I've done pretty well. I've put some money away. If I try this for two or three years and all goes to pop, then I'll go get a job," right? I have multiple skills. I can go get a job.

John Levisay: And so it was with that I said, "I'm going to go do something on my own." At that point then it became exactly what you said, is, what have I learned in my recent career? And by recent, I mean 10 years previous to going out on my own, and it's exactly that. The power of what I perceived to be niche businesses, both the avidity and passion of the members of that vertical category, or however you want to characterize it. But also the neglect by mainstream media and technology and entrepreneurship.



Melinda Byerley: It's true. That's true.

John Levisay: 10 years ago, everybody was talking about the next social app, and streaming music, and VC money was piling into that. And I'm like, "How do you swim upstream a little here, and go after something that the average 26-year-old engineer would never conceive of, or would think of as not cool?" Right? And so, looking for ideas like that, what are these areas where there's been a lack of venture capital investment, or entrepreneurial focus? And one of the things was, I think, education is wasted on the youth, right? I looked back, was talking to somebody who eventually became my co-founders, and we were talking about... We're were all in our mid to late 30s and saying, "Could you imagine if someone said to you right now, "You can go for the next four years, and study whatever you want, and just immerse yourself for four years in anything."" What an amazing opportunity? When you're 18 to 22 years old, you don't even appreciate college. You don't know how glorious of an opportunity that is. I can't speak for you, but as an 18-year-old guy, there's other things on your mind that are a bit more pervasive than getting the most out of the academic experience.

John Levisay: And so, we were talking about that and then, how hasn't that unlocked? With all the... I was looking to take a photography class. And my options were these sub-optimal online classes that were extremely passive in nature, and low production values, and just bad. Or I could go to University of Denver, or University of Colorado and take for 12 Thursdays in a row, between seven and 10 o'clock at night, take classes. And it was expensive, because it was degree based. I'm like, "I don't need any more degrees. I just want to get great at photography."

John Levisay: And so, we started thinking about this notion of how do you leverage the asynchronous nature of the internet, the dramatic change in technology around video, which was happening? If you remember back when we founded the business, it was 2010. A few years before that, two or three years before that, there was no such thing as an iPad yet. Not everyone had ubiquitous wireless-

Melinda Byerley: Or broadband.



John Levisay:

Or broadband even. The cameras that you would need to film high quality video were 50 grand. And then suddenly, in a three or four year period, you had broadband wireless, high speed wireless. You had cameras that used to be 50 grand that were down to five grand. You had ability to compress video to stream it. You had mobile devices with screens. So, there's this technology converging with what I felt at the time was the social zeitgeist of the tail end of the first wave of reality TV, where, at least I was just a little disenchanted with programming on TV. I just wasn't feeling good after I watched a two-hour block of television, and I'm like, "I want to use my time better." And I think generally, everyone, there was a social thing there of getting back to hobbies and the beauty of hobbies.

John Levisay:

And so, we did some research, my co-founders and I, and we started to see like, "Holy cow! Quilting is a \$3 billion domestic industry annually. Knitting is about \$1.8 billion. Sewing is \$2 billion. Cake decorating is \$1 billion." You start realizing, "Wow! Are there any startups focusing on this?" "No." Huh. And if you look at the quilting industry and realize: of the 20 million people who have quilted in the United States that spend that \$3 billion annually, 8% of that 20 million people, or 1.6 million, spend 60% of the 3 billion. So, you have this big concentration of spend, which you do in almost all hobbies. But those people are suddenly... You can find those people. They've self-identified through the magazines they subscribe to, the shows they go to, on social networks. So suddenly, you have an easily identifiable low CAC audience that has high spend and avidity for a given hobby. And coupled with a lack of high-quality educational opportunities, aside from DVDs or sketchy YouTube videos.

John Levisay:

So that's where we came to it. And we wanted to build a delivery modality, the two differentiators there from just filming video and slapping it up in a player, where we wanted to democratize. We didn't endeavor to democratize the supply side of the equation, which YouTube has done. Right? You and I could get on YouTube right now and post a class on anything we wanted. It may not be worth a damn, but we could put it out there. We wanted to democratize access to the best instructors in the world. So, people want to learn from the best. And so-

Melinda Byerley:

Curation was ahead of its time then. Yeah. Because-

John Levisay: Exactly. And that's, even early on, when we were raising money for the business, people would say, "Why would people pay for this when they could when they could just find it on YouTube?" And the answer was, "They might be able to find it on YouTube, and they probably could, but how long would it take?" And, I told a story of, at the time we founded the business, I had a two-year-old and another child on the way. And somehow, there was an hour and a half period on a Sunday where I was home by myself. It's unbelievable. You're like, "Oh my gosh! What an amazing-"

Melinda Byerley: Luxury this is. Yeah.

John Levisay: And so, I said, "I'm going to learn this song on guitar by The Black Keys." And so, I searched YouTube and get 380 results, and all lot of them are the actual black keys playing that song. That's not helpful. The rest of... There were some lessons but, it would be like a 14-year-old kid in his basement in Saskatchewan, it's dark, and the dog's barking, and I couldn't see his fret hand, and struggled to... Some of the time I found something that was at all quality education, an hour and 20 minutes had gone by. And so that's where the light bulb went on, is people's time is worth money. And that's why people will pay for it. Because it has well-structured learning outcomes, good audio, good video, easily findable from a great instructor. And all of what I just said is what converged to: "These are the markets we're going after."

John Levisay: And then we quickly built a platform that was not just passive. You can ask the instructor questions. You can watch it asynchronously, but ask questions and get a response from other students and from the instructor. And the response might not be real time. It may be an hour later, maybe, but we had it structured into our instructor agreements that within 24 hours, they would answer questions. And frankly, the instructors enjoyed it. They love teaching. They love meeting their students, if you will. And so, we started producing classes. And once again, I didn't know anything about video production, but I found somebody who did, a woman named Emily Lawrence, who came in and started and built a production team. And the early classes were filmed in a conference room and a small office. And within two or three years, we had six studios running six days a week and producing 400 3-hour classes in a year. So, it became a really scaled operation, which is... I never thought a manufacturing experience would come into play in the internet, but it did. When you're producing high quality



video at scale, you look at it just like a manufacturing process, right? There are bottlenecks, there's anything else. And so, it was fun. It was great.

Melinda Byerley: This episode is brought to you my company, TimeshareCMO.com. But it could be your company here. We've got season three of Stayin' Alive in Tech completely booked already, with an additional 10 more guests on the wait list, and close to 30 more on our list of people to approach. Currently, we publish twice a month, most months of the year. But we could go to a weekly format and more frequently if we could engage more editing and social media time as well as cover our current costs. So, please consider a sponsorship for your company. We've got fabulous content reaching some pretty senior folks in the technology sector, and you're doing your part to help capture the living history of the technology profession.

Melinda Byerley: So, John, we're talking about Craftsby, and the lesson or the lessons that you've learned. And I like to ask founders, because there's so much in the news media about how awesome it is to be founder and all the good things that happen. And I have found, as a founder, that it's very powerful to hear about people, what they've overcome, or problems that they've solved. So, I'll ask you to tell us a story about a hard lesson you learned as a founder.

John Levisay: Boy, there's been a lot.

Melinda Byerley: This life will do it to you.

John Levisay: Yeah. I get asked a lot. We were acquired two years ago, like, "Eventually, what are you going to do next? Are you going to do another one?" And part of me wonders if I have the energy to do another one. But then I realized, like, "Damn it. I know the answers to the test now. Why would you not?" Because I think the best way for learning outcomes to sink in is when you screw it up or when you learn the hard way. And I think, one of the biggest lessons that I just continue to learn is, ultimately, if you have the right idea, there's a product market fit. That's obviously... Successful businesses are predicated on that. This is a people business. And that's having the right person, on the right seat, on the bus, at the right time, on your team.



John Levisay: And I think part of the reason sometimes, that successful early stage startups have problems scaling is because of either hubris of founders, or reticence of founders to bring in smart, functionally adept folks and give them a real voice at the table. You've got to have the right people in place. And that means extremely, particularly at a time when you're scaling quickly, you still have to have real rigor around your hiring process, and making sure that you have folks who come in who are intrinsically motivated, and culturally aligned with your ethos, having people who aren't afraid to speak their mind, and do so backed with data. Right?

John Levisay: I tell everyone since we started the business that I have no problem with you pushing hard against an idea and disagree. Like that is what will get us to a better outcome. What I don't want is after the fact, someone coming to me and saying, "Well, I could have told you that wasn't going to work."

Melinda Byerley: Oh, God. Why didn't you?

John Levisay: And it's like, "Why didn't you?" But sometimes people don't because they don't feel they can. And so, creating an environment where people feel comfortable pushing, but bring the goods, and back it up, right? Like opinions are one thing. We all have our gut instincts on things, but to take the time to understand the real multivariate constituent parts of a problem, and you've done your homework, and you have an opinion, that carries weight. So, getting the right people in, creating an environment for them to flourish, but then, back to hard lessons, is when you see it's not working, it's already probably six months past when you should have made a change.

Melinda Byerley: Isn't that the truth?

John Levisay: So, I tend to be an optimist about human nature, and this person will pull it together, or they'll work through it, or I can coach them through it. And sometimes, you just know it was not the right hire. A job has changed. The profile and necessities of the role have changed, or you've failed somebody at some point in the juncture, we're not giving them the training and the context, or the focus they needed. But when you know it's time, you got to move fast. Because otherwise, it hurts across the org. That's a lesson that you just continue to learn.

Melinda Byerley: Yeah. One of the joys of having a podcast is I get to ask questions. As a founder, I get to pick people's brains. And I know one thing I struggle with is, on one hand, you have to have a vision. You have to know where you're going as a founder, and you have to have your core set of beliefs. But at the same time, if you're not flexible or open-minded, bad and dumb things happen. And I find myself constantly... I often say to myself, "Every time I go against my instinct, it doesn't work." How do you navigate that? How do you navigate when you have a vision and somebody comes with a smart idea? And maybe the answer isn't clear. Maybe the data is suggestive, but not definitive. And it comes down to a judgment call. And how do you navigate that line between your instinct and your vision? And like avoiding a mistake or doing something dumb because somebody has covered your blind spot?

John Levisay: Yeah. I think-

Melinda Byerley: Or breaking the mold. Sorry to interrupt you, but sometimes the whole purpose of doing a startup is to make a change. It's actually to fight the status quo and do it differently. But sometimes there's a reason why things are done the way they're done. Now, I've ended the question.

John Levisay: Yeah, no. There's like four questions in-

Melinda Byerley: Sorry about that. I'm good at that.

John Levisay: No, it's great. I think you have to have a culture where mistakes or wrong decisions are applauded if they were executed. In other words, if you try something and it doesn't work, the person should not be punished if the execution was flawless, because then you take learnings from it. But if the execution was sloppy, like I remember years ago, we tried print advertising. And I didn't love it because it's tough to measure. It's expensive at times. But I said, if you believe in it, but allocate some money and let's give it a try. And then the answer came back, "Well print doesn't work." And I said, "Let me see the creative again." And I looked at it and I'm like, "Wow, it doesn't work if you don't have the URL on it."

John Levisay: So, what we did there was we wasted money, and we didn't get a learning. And that to me is intolerable, right? If we tried it and it didn't

work, you learn. Okay, let's move on. You might have unlocked something, but we didn't. So, it's tolerate mistakes, both in yourself, and in others. As long as you're not betting the farm, right? You have to right size your decisions. There's certain decisions where you can't be wrong. And those are tough. I think, another lesson along those lines is, sometimes it's easy to forget, and this is going to sound stupid, but how long work takes. And in other words, you come out of a planning meeting and you say, "We're going to do these five things." And the differential workload by function on that, that may be: Doing those five things, creative and Marketing may be able to handle those five things, but Product and Engineering may end up doing five things all at 60%. And it should have been three things. You've got to look at your bottleneck for capacity and intellectual setup time to do things well, back to the notion of execute flawlessly, so you can get learnings.

John Levisay: And we started doing something in our meetings, particularly our annual and quarterly planning meetings, which is, not only are we going to call out the three to four top priorities and the things we're going to do, we're going to have a separate page of then, here's the things we're not going to do. Because calling that out explicitly, avoids rogue passion projects.

Melinda Byerley: And Meg taught us. I learned that from Meg. Maybe you learned it elsewhere, but I remember Meg hammering that home. What we don't do is just as important as what we do do.

John Levisay: Exactly. eBay was a... You were there. I think it was... In many ways, I look back at my... If I had to give my 29-year-old self some advice, it would have been, "This is a lot harder than you think it is." We would sit around, probably as all 29-year-olds do and say, "What are they doing here?" And, "This is stupid." And, "We should be doing this." And, "We should be doing that." And in reality, you don't realize just how complicated a lot of these things are at an exact level. And what constituents they may be trying to please, or what pressures they're under, whether it comes down to headcount or strategic scope, or focus. And I think it's a... Looking back, if I had to give myself advice, it would be, "Be part of the solution more." And, "Keep your anecdotal simpleton commentary to yourself."

Melinda Byerley: I feel like I want to go back and apologize to all of managers. At some point, I feel like that was harder than it looked.



John Levisay: Sorry about that.

Melinda Byerley: I always like to tell young people too about all of us sitting around in the cubes at eBay when Google went public and like, "Are you going to invest in Google?" "Nah, man, I want to be diversified."

John Levisay: Well, if you remember correctly, there was a meeting at eBay where, I won't name the exact, but we were, I think at the time, eBay was a significant amount of Google's revenue.

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, we were their single largest customer, at least for a period of time.

John Levisay: And the there was a question of, does that make you nervous? And someone said at the time like, "No, they're in a different business. They'll never be a threat to us." And you don't know what you don't know. But wow. That turned out not to be true.

Melinda Byerley: These are the war stories I love to get at.

John Levisay: Yeah.

Melinda Byerley: So, I know that you are now still owning a company after you sold it. And so, there are a lot of things you probably can't talk about. So, I'm going to invite you back at some point to tell us as our old friend Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story. But to the extent of what you can, I think it's useful to comment on what it feels like to sell your company. And when and how do you know when it's time, or when you're ready? And again, if it's not okay to go there now, we'll ask you back later.

John Levisay: There's general principles here that I think are interesting and germane. I think, in a lot of ways, companies are bought, not sold. And we were not, at the time, looking to sell. So, the moment you go out and start running a sell process, I think it opens up questions of, "Why are they selling now?"

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, what's wrong?

John Levisay: Yeah. Do they see something that we don't? Are their constituencies of execs that are fatigued? Why are they getting out? And so, how it

happened with us was, we were in... Another piece of advice someone gave me is: if you're running a startup, always think about the 10 to 15 companies that could acquire you and make sure you see them every year. And that's just as a check-in to show progress. And I tried to do that, even from the early days. And when we were approached, we were in the midst of a commercial deal discussion, and it just naturally segued into acquisition discussion. And the parameters I always had...as a startup, as you know, you really only have a few options once you make the deal with the devil and take venture capital money. You're either going to go public, sell the business, or build a massive private enterprise that can eventually recoup and buy investors out, and that one's probably the least common. Although companies are staying private much longer now because of the access to capital.

John Levisay: So, I always knew there would have been one of those three outcomes. I'll leave the fourth outcome, which is not making it.

Melinda Byerley: Yeah, exactly. The most likely in most cases.

John Levisay: The most likely outcome. And so, when we started having those discussions about potential acquisition, I just came back to three things. What is best for the employees? What is best for the customer? And what is best for our investors? And I have a fiduciary responsibility to the investors to give returns to them. The customers, how does this affect them? How does this propel the mission of the company, which has always been to be the global leader in education, community, and supplies for makers? And how does this affect the employees? Are they going to be forced to uproot and move or are they going to be downsized and redundant?

John Levisay: And I looked at all three of those things. And none of those top three were what's best for me. It was always employees, customers, and investors first. And it just made sense across those three parameters, and then we moved forward with it. And it's been great. Frankly, I think having a luxury of being able to choose an acquiring entity that you have cultural alignment with, ethics, smart people, good people, it's been great.

Melinda Byerley: So, you left the Bay Area for Denver.



John Levisay: Yeah.

Melinda Byerley: We talked about getting out to the larger city, and I'm not saying Denver is a small town. I know that.

John Levisay: Sure.

Melinda Byerley: But you decided to leave the Bay Area and to go to Denver, and I think you built a business there. And so, what was that about? And what is it like to work in a tech company and work on technology not in the Bay Area? I think it's an important point of view to share.

John Levisay: Yeah. I could go on about this forever. I think I am profoundly glad that I got the opportunity in my 20s and 30s to live in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and the South Bay as well. I think there's a lot of dynamic social and work opportunity there. I think now, as I speak with friends of mine who live in New York or San Francisco, there's somewhat of a, almost a rationalization that is born of a myopic view of the world, frankly. You talk to someone who lives in New York, for example, they live in the city till they have a family and then they move out to the suburbs. And you ask them, "How long is your commute?" And they say, "Well, the train ride's 50 minutes." "Well, that's not too bad. But how long does it take you to get to the train?" "Well, about 15, 20 minutes?" "Where does the train let off?" "Well, then I have to take a subway and walk." And then you're like, that's like an hour and 45 minutes each way.

John Levisay: So, you're over three hours a day spent commuting. Life's pretty short Melinda. That, call it 10, 12 hours a week, for me can either be spent with my loved ones, exercising, sleeping, or working. So, there is a, I think, a beauty to having a 12-minute commute to work. And Denver, and I'll speak specifically, because you asked about Denver, it's one of the fastest growing cities in the country. We have four pro sports teams here, one of the best music scenes, outside of Austin, in the country. There is a real excitement around the tech industry. And you look at companies like... Whether it's Zayo, or SendGrid, or Ibotta is recently a unicorn, us, Evolve Rentals. There are some great companies here that they don't get picked up by Silicon Valley rags-

Melinda Byerley: Picked apart by them.



John Levisay: Yeah, exactly. There's upside and downside. But they're silent assassins, right? They're just creating great companies and driving great returns to investors and bringing people in at a really rapid pace. And in the last two or three years, Google, Facebook, who else? Twitter, Amazon have all opened offices here in Denver. You're an hour from the mountains, your state income taxes 4.63% versus 11%. Your property tax is way lower. It's not Akron or some cities in the Midwest that are even cheaper. Denver's by no means cheap, but there's no question the cost of living is, and as far as a place to raise a family, it's fantastic. And the caliber of people here and the caliber of companies has changed dramatically in the last five to 10 years.

John Levisay: So, when I left the Bay Area, I had Lenard call me about a job with a with an IAC-owned company here in Denver. And when I talked to people in the Bay Area, their thoughts were pretty unanimously like, "That may be a great job, but if that doesn't work out, what are you going to do that?" And 10 years ago, that may have been somewhat true. But even then, I was just like, "Well, I'll move." And as someone who moved nine times as a kid, I'm not afraid to move. This is the longest I've ever lived anywhere in my life. I've been here 10 years.

John Levisay: And so, it's also, there's a real, I think, camaraderie among the startup scene, in the tech scene, where people don't view it as a zero-sum game. If I interview someone who may not be a perfect fit for a role here, but is super strong, I won't hoard them on the bench. And I'll call three other startups that I know are hungry for great talent, and help place that person into the market. And I think it's a nice factor. And all the companies coming in, Amazon, Google, Twitter, has put some pressure, frankly, on talent. And which is a little painful in some ways, however, long term it will nurture and churn out more talent. And so, that's the evolution of an ecosystem that I think is really well set up to continue to flourish as a tech bed.

John Levisay: People ask the question of, "If you start a company in Denver, how are you going to raise money?" Look, venture capital is ultimately the most mercenary industry ever. They want to make money. If they see a good company with a great team that's in Denver, we never... Well, maybe once in a while, but largely, our investors were Foundry Group, which was here in Colorado, Tiger Global, which is in Manhattan, Adam Street Partners, which is in Chicago, and Stripes, which is also in Manhattan. So, there's money out there. If you have a good idea,



you're not going to get discriminated against because you're in Denver.

Melinda Byerley: So, who are some of the people that have helped you along the way? Who stuck their neck out for you?

John Levisay: Well, I think in micro instances throughout my career, there've been a lot of people who helped me, and gave me advice, and steerage. I'd say with regard to this business in particular, Michael Dearing was and is a great mentor. And I remember we founded the business in April or May of 2010. Was out in the Bay Area and had breakfast with Michael in February of 2010. So about four months before we founded. I literally just had the idea and walked Michael through it. I didn't have a deck. I didn't have anything other than, "Here's what I'd like to do." And Michael was like, "You should do that." And like, "What do you mean? Like these are..." "You should go do that right now."

Melinda Byerley: Wow. And he's not prone to hyperbole, for those of you don't know him. He doesn't like tell everybody that. That's-

John Levisay: Yeah. Exactly. But I think also, we knew each other. He knew myself, he knew Josh. And it was just like he said, "Go do it. Now's your time." "Well, I don't know if I have this. I don't know if I..." "It doesn't matter. Go do it and I'll write your check."

Melinda Byerley: Nice.

John Levisay: And then it became... We had to eventually come back with a business plan, and a roadmap and everything else, but we were off and running. And without that encouragement to just do it, I don't know if it would have come together. Later on, Jeff Jordan invested in the business and that was a vote of confidence. And he had great thoughts on the critical levers. These are smart people who really helped us. I think my co-founders have been a great influence. And a litany of employees who have come into the business, who have helped me grow both as a leader and understanding other functional areas. And you pick things up along the way.

John Levisay: I worked for Matt Halprin at eBay and learned from him. I worked for Greg Fant and learn from him. I worked for Simon and learned from him. You've got to take what you want, leave what you don't. You pick

things up along the way, both stylistically and intellectually have been very valuable. And I think, going back to the very beginning, my father has just always been a big influence in my life, about work ethic, right? I tell the story here, occasionally, about when I was a kid, there's two brothers. There were three of us, and he asked us to dig a garden bed in the backyard and he had it staked out. It was probably an eight by four, staked out, rope around it, and we were supposed to dig it two feet deep.

Melinda Byerley: Are you sure it wasn't a grave?

John Levisay: Might have been. That's another story about one of our dogs, which is heartbreaking. I did dig my dog's own grave and then get him in there to see if it was deep enough. Oh God. Crying. I'm doing it. But yeah, maybe that's not a good last story. But-

Melinda Byerley: Back to the garden plot.

John Levisay: Yeah, back to the garden plot. I was the oldest. I immediately took my 33.3%, edged it, dug it, and was heading back to the house. I'm done with my part. And my dad's, "Where the hell you think you're going?" And I said, "Well, I'm done with my part." And he said, "You're not done with anything. You are your brother's keeper. Right now, that's just a f-ing hole in the ground. Go back there and work as a team, and get it done." And that's a lesson in teamwork and responsibility as organizations, as you grow, becoming increasingly tribal and functionally siloed. And you'll hear one organization say, "Well, we built the thing." And, "Yeah, but there's no easy interface for this other function. It's not done." We've got to look out for each other, because ultimately, we all win or lose together.

John Levisay: And so, those things, and just the optics of seeing my dad up and out every day at 6:30, six days a week, to go to work. Rain or shine, no sick days. Not a lot of vacation. Just working and still being a good father, but also, a lot of parents now feel like they have to be super dad, and be at every practice and every game. And I think it's overkill. My dad came to our games when he could. He wasn't at every practice, he had work to do, a family to feed. So, make the time you spend with your loved ones, partner, whomever, be quality time, as opposed to just time spent with folks if you're on your phone or distracted. It doesn't count, really.



- John Levisay: And that's how I've tried to balance it. And not perfectly by the way. I've lost my way a few times during this journey where I was coming home, and going right back to work, and not being present. But, as time went on, I began to learn to manage it better and come home and put the phone in the drawer and be present for two hours. And that goes a long way.
- Melinda Byerley: So, as we get closer to wrapping up, I'd like to ask you, we both love to joke and talk about how things have changed and what's not working. But what gives you hope right now? What do you see that makes you excited for the future, and gives you hope for where we're going?
- John Levisay: Well, if I watch the news-
- Melinda Byerley: That ain't it?
- John Levisay: Not a lot. I hate to say this, but I am a perpetual optimist, and I believe we will get through a lot of the political turmoil we are in now. We've gotten through the Great Depression, and World War Two, and the Vietnam era. Our country has been pretty resilient. I do think this is, in my lifetime, the most challenging time we've faced, politically and culturally. Ultimately though, I think we've all been hoodwinked a little to make these binary decisions, whether it's in party. I think 80% of the citizens of this country regardless of gender, race, sexual preference, believe in the same principles of kindness and hard work and respect. And that, ultimately, that will win out. I think I've got to believe that to get through the day.
- John Levisay: And I don't think that millennials are any different. They're certainly not genetically any different than one generation before. So, what are... Of course, with different eras, priorities change. And who's to say what's better or worse, right? If certain generations of Americans have a better perspective on work-life balance, that may be a real positive for the life that people choose to lead. The problem often becomes whether you want it all, right? Someone may say, "My work-life balance is the most important thing to me, and I don't ever work past five because I take my dog for a run and then I go to trivia night four nights a week." And that's awesome. But then you also may not accelerate in a professional work place as fast as you may if you were prioritizing differently.



- John Levisay: I have hope. I see a lot of innovation in business. I eventually think rational, like-minded people will win out from a political perspective, and that we will, hopefully, address what is the looming issue, which is, I think, climate change right now. Because if that is left unchecked, or written off as a hoax, I think it's something people will look back on in 60 years and be horrified by. I don't know. I just got a little, I guess, meta on you there, and I apologize.
- Melinda Byerley: No, because that's what this is all about. We're putting these stories into the archive, because they're a bit of a time capsule. I would certainly have loved to have heard people talking like this in the '60s and having recordings of that, or in the '70s and to hear what people were thinking at the time. So, who knows? In 60 years when someone's listening to this, they will hear John Levisay's wise words. Maybe they will be us. Maybe there will be a solution, and it will be us.
- John Levisay: Maybe. Maybe. It's interesting, Melinda. I see the arc of... I was recently at a college reunion and the way Colgate, where I went to undergrad, does it is every five-year cohort comes back. So, I was '89, you have '84, you have '79. And they align the tents in a wheel around a central field there on campus. And as you amble around, you see like, "Oh, there's the class of 2014." And you look at them, and you think, "I don't feel that different from that right now, even though I'm 25 years older." But then you arc around the wheel, and you go 25 years older than we are right now.
- Melinda Byerley: Those old people.
- John Levisay: Good God, just sitting at the card table staring at each other. And I'm like, "No." And that's not being ageist, that's just reality of the difference between 22 and 50 is not near as extreme as the difference between 50 and 75. Right? And so, I think, in many ways, you really only work from probably 22 to 65. So, you've got, 22 years before you get into it, and maybe 15 after. So, how do you want to live your life? And what's important to you? It's one of the things... The central tenets of our company and our mission is, it's not all about work or passive entertainment, but there's a true contentment and feeling of achievement when you engage in a passion, whether that's woodworking, or photography, or baking. It doesn't matter. There's something profoundly fulfilling about being on a creative journey as well. And that's something I don't want to lose sight of, and have really



worked to have a balance in my life. It's not always perfect. You can't always do it. But it's worth keeping it in mind.

Melinda Byerley: Well, with that, I will thank you for taking the time to join us. And I hope that you will come back when we have the rest of the story to tell.

John Levisay: I am... Any time you want, Melinda. It's been great talking to you, and thank you. Sincere thanks for having me.

Speaker 1: Thanks for listening to Stayin' Alive in Technology. We want your feedback and comments. Find us on the web at stayingaliveintech.com, where you can talk to us, learn more about the show and our guests, and subscribe to the show. Follow us on Twitter @stayingpodcast. Until next time, keep staying alive.